



RWANDA

Women for Women Rwanda – Unleashing female entrepreneurship in Rwanda



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Women entrepreneurs in Rwanda face many obstacles. But when their businesses succeed, entire families and communities benefit.

Thanks to the support of the Julius Baer Foundation, the NGO Women for Women Rwanda is empowering talented, socially and economically disadvantaged women in rural Rwanda to realise their potential as small agricultural business owners. The project recognises that women's entrepreneurial success has a ripple effect: female business owners' gains directly translate into more economically

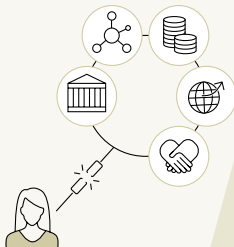
stable families and villages. The NGO's flagship 12-month social and economic empowerment programme trains women in business leadership, negotiations, communication, networking and more. Trainings are complemented by events and activities that introduce women micro-entrepreneurs to potential investors, buyers and mentors. Thousands of women have graduated, with many developing concrete business plans and obtaining seed money. Among other achievements, three women-led farm cooperatives whose members joined the programme were successfully linked to established buyers and exporters.

Quick facts

- Rwanda, districts of Nyaruguru, Muhanga, Gasabo, Kicukiro, Bugesera, Rwamagana and Kayanza
- Project support: 2021–2024
- Grant amount: CHF 100,000 per year
- Bringing economically disadvantaged women micro-entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector together with investors, buyers and successful business owners who can provide them with guidance.
- Goal: Supporting women in Rwanda to unleash their full entrepreneurial potential.

From unsung economic heroes ...

Women in Rwanda have long been a significant force in the country's economy. But despite significant government efforts and progress, gender discrimination continues to undermine women's entrepreneurial activities. Women still struggle to move beyond provision of modest extra income and sustenance to their immediate families.



... to acknowledged breadwinners.

Women for Women Rwanda is helping female entrepreneurs obtain the skills and connections necessary to formalise their economic activities and step out of the shadows. Over time, the programme is building an ecosystem of profitable businesses powered by rural women.

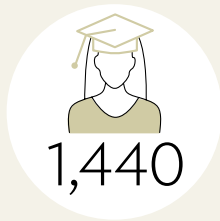




“I used to sell my strawberries for less because I had no business knowledge and the quality was not good. But after participating in the Women for Women Rwanda programme, I gained agri-business skills that transformed my way of doing things. Before joining the training, I only earned RWF 1,000 (USD 0.92) per day, but today I earn RWF 25,000 (USD 23) per day due to the good quality strawberries I am harvesting.”

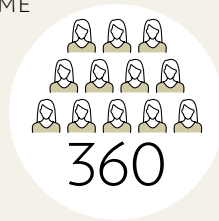
Irène Nyirabarigira, Age 55,
President of CODFM Cooperative

OUTPUT



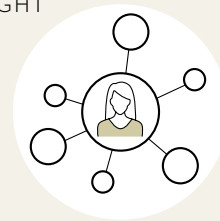
Over **1,440 women** have graduated from Women for Women Rwanda’s flagship entrepreneurial education programme.

OUTCOME



A total of **360 women** have successfully accessed new buyers and export markets through the project.

HIGHLIGHT



Two **networking and financial fairs** were held. These introduced participants to key stakeholders, including funders, exporters and policymakers. **Twenty business plans** were honoured with cash awards for investment.

Obtaining skills and funding

- Even before Women for Women Rwanda launched its current project, women were responsible for 43.2% of all entrepreneurial activities in Kigali, Rwanda’s commercial centre. But gender bias and poverty have prevented many from achieving sustainable, formalised businesses.
- Although women make up 67% of the Rwandan parliament, they are under-represented in the formal labour market.
- Without support, female entrepreneurship in Rwanda tends to remain limited to micro-businesses and subsistence agriculture.
- Project activities supported by the Julius Baer Foundation focus on women’s education, building their marketable skills, and facilitating access to private and public funds for entrepreneurship.
- Whilst enrolled in Women for Women International’s flagship programme, many participants join Village Savings and Loan Associations to fund independent businesses or become part of a cooperative business.



Watch the Women for Women Rwanda video

Do you feel inspired by the Women for Women Rwanda project and would like to support it?

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us! We would love an exchange.



Find out more about us and our projects online or write us at foundation@juliusbaer.com

Julius Baer Foundation

Established in 1965 by Walter J. Bär (1895–1970), the grant Foundation of Bank Julius Baer is focused on reducing wealth inequality. It convenes leading thinkers and actors on the topic and supports projects around the globe where the privileged and disadvantaged work together towards a world of equal opportunities.

WfWI

Women for Women International was founded to support women survivors of war to rebuild their lives. It responds to their acute needs for greater social and economic power. Since 1993, it has served over half a million women in 17 conflict-affected countries, both to build brighter futures for themselves, and to support their families and strengthen their communities. Since 1997, it has worked in Rwanda providing education and training to thousands of women, equipping them with life-changing resources, skills and knowledge.



More information about Women for Women International and its work in Rwanda: womenforwomenrwanda.org

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