



STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY TO GENDER EQUALITY AT THE DECENTRALISED LEVEL

CASE STUDY

“Under my leadership as a female governor, the Southern Province is committed to serve as a model for gender accountability and share lessons with other provinces that may inform the positioning of gender accountability at decentralised levels.”

—Governor of the Southern Province

Rwanda has established gender-responsive policies, legal frameworks, strategies, programmes, and institutional mechanisms to ensure gender accountability at all levels and in all sectors. Furthermore, the National Strategy for Transformation affirms that “the Rwandan economy will be more productive when women and men are full participants and when all special groups’ needs are addressed.”

The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), which is mandated to seek accountability for gender equality, has identified challenges related to monitoring and evaluation systems at various levels, notably at the decentralised/district level.

The national planning and budgeting system requires that gender equality is fully mainstreamed and well-integrated into the planning, budgeting and accountability tools at the different levels, including Sector Strategic Plans, District Development Strategies, Performance Contracts (Imihigo), and Gender Budget Statements (GBS).



APPROACH

The Rwanda Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) is a U.K. Government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office funded programme and implemented by DAI. With TAF support, GMO initiated a gender accountability programme that addresses gender inequalities in all development sectors. DAI's technical assistance experts supported and guided the implementation of this model. The objective of the model was to enhance accountability and gender equality in the following ways:

- Institutionalise gender equality in Imihigo and improve the quality as well as the relevance of gender budget statements.
- Promote institutional effectiveness and capacity for gender accountability in service delivery at the decentralised levels.
- Improve the monitoring of gender indicators through increased staff capacity to manage situation rooms whereby data will be collected and disseminated to inform planning and timely decision-making on gender equality in the province.

RESULTS

The Rwanda TAF piloted the model in the Southern Province as it has the highest number of districts. The choice was further motivated by the provincial leadership being particularly interested in strengthening accountability for gender equality.

The Southern Province districts started institutionalising gender accountability in October 2021. In line with these commitments, the Rwanda TAF carried out public engagement through accountability dialogues and capacity development, involving community and village leaders, service providers, provincial and district leadership, district technical teams, and civil society organisations. The discussions on gender accountability focused on equipping participants with knowledge and information on how to account for gender equality and provide effective services for victims of gender-based violence.

As a result of the engagement and capacity building efforts to strengthen gender responsiveness by the leadership, community and service providers, districts in the Southern Province have included GBS activities within their Imihigo. This ensures that districts are accountable and responsible for implementing those activities as they are part of the annual Imihigo that are subject to performance evaluation. The alignment of GBS and Imihigo is an excellent model to be replicated in other districts and is expected to influence policy change in the ways that Imihigo articulate gender equality in different outcomes.

Finally, a set of indicators was developed with district/provincial technicians and approved by the leadership. District statisticians were taught how to use gender-responsive data collection systems and started to report gender data. Such reports will provide an accurate update on progress and gaps, and contribute to informing policies and programmes in the province and beyond.

“Thanks to the dialogue, I feel better equipped to raise awareness or teach couples about their rights, in particular the rights to property, goods or income for both women and men.”

—Executive Secretary of Mbazi sector, Huye District

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