

‘You Cannot Live Without Money’: Women Balancing Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work in Rwanda

National report for Women’s Economic
Empowerment Policy and Programming



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generating new knowledge about Women’s Economic Empowerment.

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Photographer credits: Birasa Nyamulinda.

Abbreviations

WEE	women's economic empowerment
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AAR	ActionAid Rwanda
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VUP	Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme
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NGO	non-governmental organisation
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The Rwandan context

In Rwanda, agriculture provides work for nearly 78 per cent of the population, and almost 80 per cent of the rural population are subsistence farmers (CIA 2017; FAO 2013).

The country's Vision 2020 Programme aims to (1) replace subsistence farming by a fully monetised, commercial agricultural sector by 2020, and (2) move towards a knowledge-based society, with a vibrant class of entrepreneurs (MFEP 2000).

Traditionally, Rwandan women's roles have been focused on 'running' the house and raising children, while men have been expected to work to provide for the family. Daughters have not had the same rights to inherit land as sons.

However, Rwanda's recent history has shifted traditional gendered roles and responsibilities. In particular, the 1994 war and genocide left many women widowed, turning them into household heads and the sole providers for all household needs and in control of family

property including land (IFAD 2010; Abbott and Malunda 2015).

The Government of Rwanda has made significant strides towards gender equity and equality, and has introduced progressive laws and policies that promote empowerment for girls and women (UNDP 2013).

A variety of government and non-government programmes have helped to increase women's political participation, reduce gender-based violence, raise awareness of women's rights, improve girls' education, increase women's involvement in off-farm activities and other forms of paid work, particularly in rural areas, and increase women's access to finance (UNDP 2013). In addition, men have been encouraged to become more involved in family work traditionally designated to women, such as childcare, weeding, fetching water, and cooking (Doyle *et al.* 2014). However, despite these efforts, Rwanda remains a highly patriarchal society (UNDP 2013).





Women remain the primary caregivers in families, although spouses and older children also engage in some care tasks. Nuclear families receive little help with care from outside the household.

Older children – both boys and girls – help with care tasks, often more than their fathers, although girls tend to help more than their brothers.

Women's paid work is important for meeting household needs, and is vital in female-headed households; but, whether sole earnings or combined, it is not always enough to meet household needs.

The majority of women work primarily in agriculture-related work. Their paid work opportunities are more limited than men's because of gender norms around certain types of work and because they have less time to find out about paid work opportunities due to their involvement in care work. Women may do more than one job, and much paid work is temporary, occasional and irregular, as well as seasonal. In addition, it can be far from home. Serious health problems or domestic problems can lead to insecure situations and adverse

coping mechanisms, which leave women and their families worse off.

Balancing paid and unpaid work is a daunting task for the majority of women in the research study. Both care and paid work are often physically challenging and time-consuming. Women have little time for leisure and personal care.

Women who are the sole adult earners and carers for their families make-up the vast majority of those case study families who are struggling the most. Women who are doing relatively better off tend to live in families which have other adults also contributing to providing income and care.

Many of the women who are struggling to achieve a positive balance between paid work and care work, work long hours, far from home, and have no childcare support from work. Women and children are negatively affected if the combination of paid work and caring of children are not well balanced.

Support in the form of childcare centres can help women access work opportunities and achieve a positive balance.

KEY MESSAGES

The study

This report is based on survey data gathered from 200 women and their families in Muko sector in Musanze district, and Simbi, Gishamvu and Mbazi sectors in Huye district; case studies based on multiple in-depth interviews with 30 of these women and their families; and a number of participatory focus groups. Data on the interaction between care work and paid work were gathered via these three methods, encompassing both women participating in women's economic empowerment (WEE)

programmes in Muko, Simbi and Gishamvu and women who were not involved in these programmes in Muko and Mbazi. In Muko, women involved in WEE programmes participated in ActionAid Rwanda's (AAR) Food Security and Economic Empowerment Programme, while women in Gishamvu and Simbi participated in the public works element of the Government of Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP). Mbazi acted as the control area for the VUP.

Women's economic empowerment (WEE) programmes

ActionAid Rwanda: Food Security and Economic Empowerment Programme

The three-year Food Security and Economic Empowerment Programme, which started in June 2014, aims to enable 1,200 of the most vulnerable women smallholder farmers and 300 vulnerable male smallholder farmers in Muko sector of Musanze district (Northern Province) to improve their food security and economic security through increased agricultural profitability.

The programme aims to:

- Mobilise smallholder farmers into 23 existing and 27 new cooperatives, representatives of which receive training in leadership, community mobilisation, networking and coalition building.
- Enhance livelihood security and build disaster resilience through the establishment of community seed/grain banks, the enlargement and rehabilitation of the Susa stream (the main stream running through Muko), the establishment of four Disaster Management Committees, and the training of 200 women in sustainable agricultural practices and disaster risk reduction.
- Construct a maize processing plant and a cold room for storing fruit and vegetables to give women smallholder farmers more control of and profit from their produce from production and processing to marketing and sales.

Government of Rwanda: Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme

The VUP is a large-scale social protection programme owned and led by the government. It was launched in 2008 by the Government of Rwanda in order to accelerate the rate of poverty reduction. The programme started in a pilot sector in each of the 30 districts (about 600,000 people), and was then rolled out to cover all 416 sectors by 2016.

The programme's three key components include:

- Public Works, which creates off-farm employment through paid activities such as terracing, water harvesting, irrigation, roads construction, and building of classrooms, health facilities, village settlements, etc.
- The Ubudehe Credit Scheme, which fosters entrepreneurship and off-farm employment opportunities through credit to diversify or specialise farming and livestock activities and develop off-farm skills.
- Direct Support, an unconditional cash transfer to those households where no members qualify for Public Works.

VUP uses a community-based poverty targeting mechanism (*Ubudehe*¹) together with land and labour criteria to identify extremely poor households. The programme then targets the poorest, labour-constrained households. As such, there are no special provisions to include or target women specifically. In 2013/14 the number of male workers engaged in public works was 28,565 compared to 20,946 females in the same period.

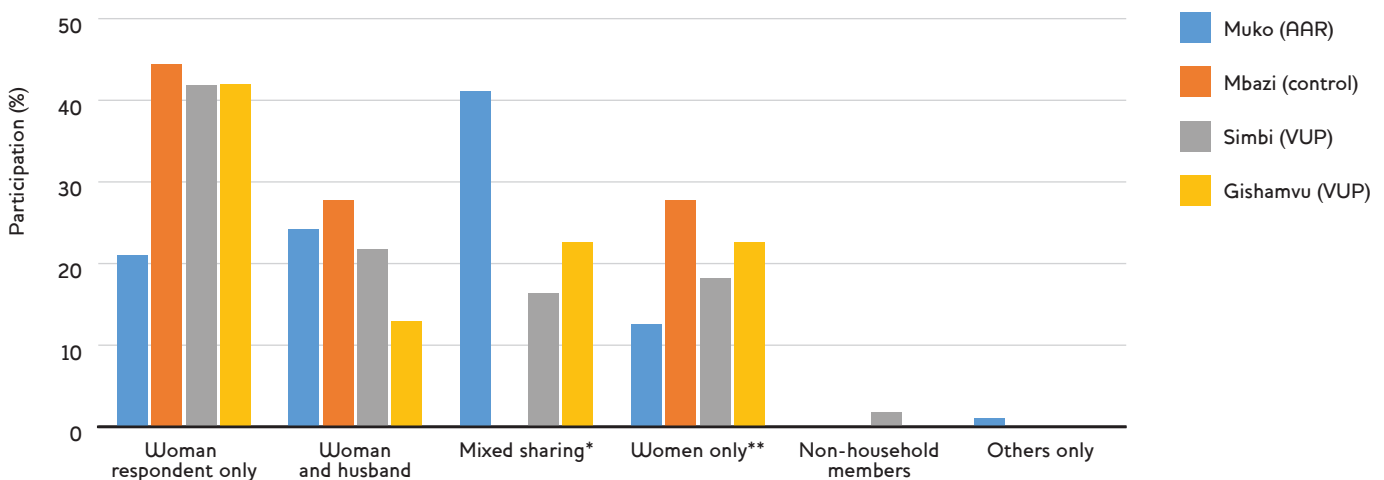
Social organisation of care

Across Muko, Simbi, Gishamvu and Mbazi, care tasks for women were found to mainly include the care of children (and occasionally the elderly); cooking; cleaning the house and compound; washing clothes; fetching firewood and water; care of animals; and family farm work. Women, their older children, spouses (where present) and, to a lesser extent, extended family members and non-household members all engaged in these care tasks to different degrees. How care tasks were shared in the family depended on the nature of the activity itself, although most often adult women were still the primary caregivers.

As Figures 1–3 show, husbands more frequently participated in childcare than in household work inside and outside the house, which includes washing; ironing; house and compound cleaning; meal preparation; and water, wood and fuel collection. Women respondents and other women and girls in the household tended to do most of the inside household tasks without the help of men or boys, particularly if the household was not part of a WEE programme. On the other hand, outside jobs, such as gathering fuel or water, were more often shared across genders and age groups.



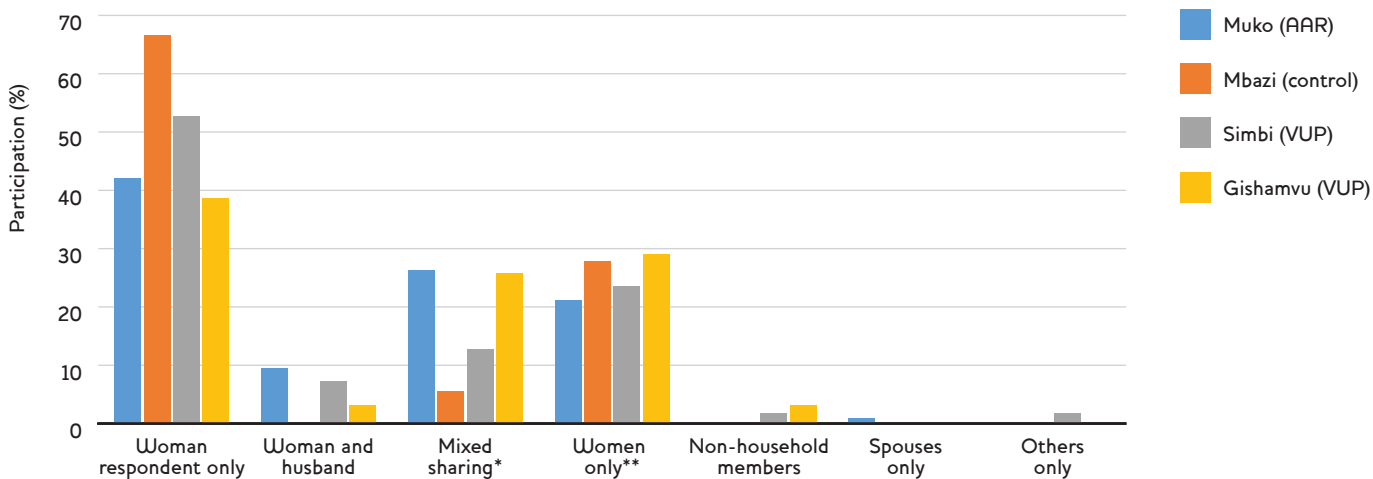
Figure 1: Person(s) responsible for childcare



Notes: * Both female and male household members carry out a specific task, irrespective of age; ** Irrespective of age, i.e. the task could be carried out by a daughter aged six or above, or another (older) woman in the household.

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

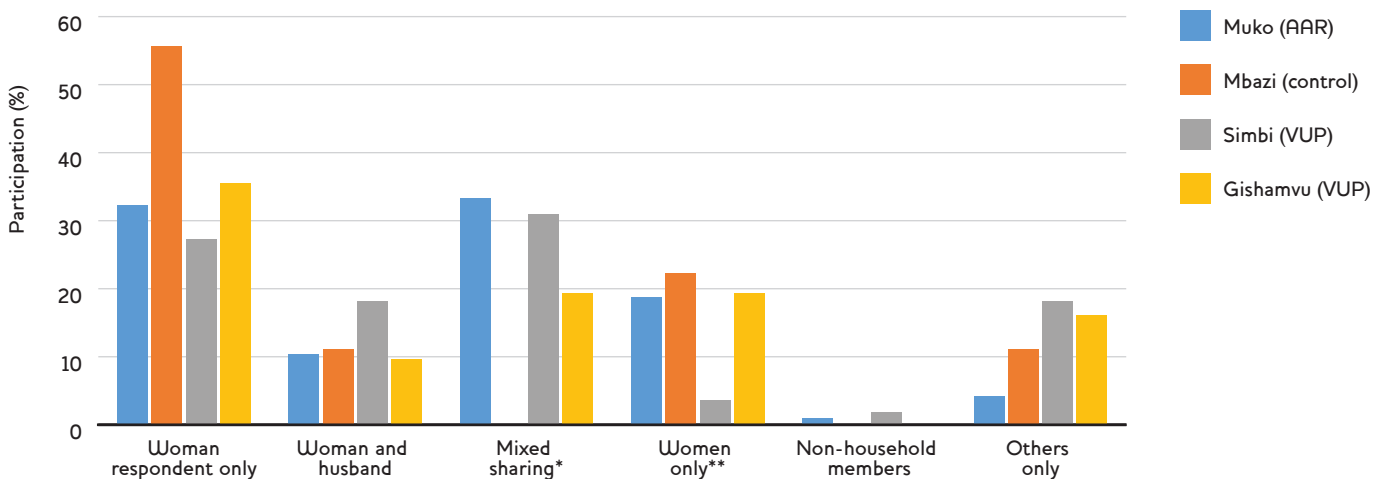
Figure 2: Person(s) responsible for household work inside the house



Notes: * Both female and male household members carry out a specific task, irrespective of age; ** Irrespective of age, i.e. the task could be carried out by a daughter aged six or above, or another (older) woman in the household.

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

Figure 3: Person(s) responsible for household work outside the house



Notes: * Both female and male household members carry out a specific task, irrespective of age; ** Irrespective of age, i.e. the task could be carried out by a daughter aged six or above, or another (older) woman in the household.

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

I and my siblings receive the care from our parents but most especially my mother.
Kajyambere Eugene, son of Ineza Alice, living in Simbi.

In [Rwanda's] culture, women are the ones responsible for doing most care activities, though husband may help.
Ingabire Eliza, 28 years old, a farmer in Muko who is a divorced single mother with three sons.

Men's involvement in care work

Husbands helped with care tasks when women were sick, travelling or working. Indeed, some men explained that even if culture dictated that women should do home-based care tasks, they felt it was important for everyone to get involved with care at home in order to contribute to the family.

According to the culture, women have to deal [with] the home activities. However, that is about the culture but to me I feel well when everyone gets involved in the doing care work at home. This indicates that everyone has something to contribute to the family.

Barore Kelly, husband of Mukamusoni Anita, living in Mbazi.

Families in Musanze spoke about men's participation in care work twice as much as those in Huye. Gender norms often shaped perceptions around who was better 'suited' to carry out certain tasks, and men were said to help out with 'activities which require much energy such as fetching water and collecting firewood' (Kamikazi Rose, Muko³). However, during participatory exercises some women in Musanze mentioned that 'most of the time their husbands do not like helping them.' Men's involvement in care activities also depended on the amount of time they had available.

Many fathers returned late in the evening, tired from their physically challenging work, and this affected their participation in care. This also reinforced and reproduced prevailing gender norms of who does what better, and who therefore was expected to take on which tasks.

When I come back from work I always help my wife to do some of the care works at home. This reduces her workload and prevents her from overworking.

Hakizimana Fabrice, husband of Munyana Liliose, living in Muko.

In female-headed households – 18 out of the 30 case studies – women assumed responsibility for care even more so than in male-headed households, as they were generally the only adult.

One single mother suggested that her responsibility for care work related to being a single mother, and that 'in normal circumstances both men and women should share all house work except for a few activities which can be best performed by women or men separately' (Niyonsenga Jeannette, Muko³).

My household members have no problem with regard to sharing unpaid care work. They feel happy to see everyone at home working. Children feel proud of helping me... They know that when I work, I will be able to support the family. However, sometimes, they are not happy when I overwork because I feel tired and fail to provide them enough care.

Niyonsenga Jeannette, 31 years old, a farmer in Muko who is a divorced single mother of two daughters and two sons.

Children's involvement in care work

Older children – both boys and girls – helped their parents with a variety of different care tasks, and in male-headed households, their involvement was sometimes greater than that of their fathers. In female-headed households, children's involvement in care tasks was even more critical. Parents, and children themselves, appreciated this involvement and its positive impact for the family.

The gender of the child mattered in establishing who helped their mother most in care work, and the findings indicate that daughters were more likely to help than their brothers. The oldest daughter was often the one responsible, with her older brother helping her rather than assuming responsibility for organising care.

Children's participation in care was crucial when their mother was away from home, especially when she travelled for income-earning work. Their involvement in care tasks generally depended on whether women were present to do the work themselves; children whose mothers engaged in paid work did

more care work than those whose mothers stayed at home. In a participatory exercise with girls in Musanze, one explained, 'when my mother goes to work I will be involved in many care activities at home as compared to my neighbour whose [mother] is at home.'

The care tasks children typically helped with were caring for younger siblings; fetching water, firewood and fodder; and sometimes cooking and cleaning. Children usually carried out these tasks upon return from school and before their mothers returned from working long hours, often far from home. Our findings indicate that frequently more than one sibling helped their mother with care tasks, although their patterns of participation and activities still reflected the influence of gender norms. Girls did more of the indoor care tasks and boys more of the outdoor care tasks when there were siblings of mixed sexes who were old enough to do care work. During a participatory exercise in Huye, boys mentioned that they could not do care tasks such as 'carrying the baby and cleaning because we might be laughed at.'

Extended family and community involvement in care work, and government provision of water

There was little help with care from outside the nuclear family. Most of the women respondents were living in nuclear families, and extended family members rarely helped out.

If help with care was provided, it was usually by female extended family members such as mothers or sisters. Even single parent families received little adult assistance from elsewhere, including from their extended family, making single motherhood particularly tough.

Neighbours or other community members sometimes provided support, usually to single mothers. For example, one single mother and her two sons were hosted by a friend who also sometimes provided them with food when the family had none.

Another single mother lived in a house provided by the community after she left her

abusive husband. This support helped, but rarely enough to transform their difficult situations.

Another example of external help is of a woman from a family without an adult male who hired someone to take occasional care of her livestock and farm, to free her up for other care activities. Paying for outside help is, however, a costly way of filling the care gap for which few households have the resources to pay.

Where available, public provision of water significantly alleviated the household care burden and freed up time for other, including paid, work. A woman in a participatory exercise in Musanze stated that 'the government, by supplying us with water... helps us to get enough time and makes housework easier.' However, many families in Muko, Simbi, Gishamvu and Mbazi still had problems with accessing clean water.

Women's paid work

The majority of women in our study – 36 per cent in Simbi and 61.5 per cent in Mbazi (see Figure 4) – worked primarily in agriculture, the main source of livelihood for the majority of the overall population. Often, they could take their children with them while doing this work, which was vital in a context where women had little access to other forms of childcare.

Figure 4 shows that other activities women mainly engaged in were VUP public works, when and where available in Gishamvu, Simbi and Muko, and non-agricultural daily wage labour in Mbazi where there was no WEE programme. Other jobs included income-generating activities such as selling surplus agricultural produce – including animal products (sometimes alone, sometimes through a cooperative); household work for others; construction work; tailoring; and selling local beer. A few women shared work with their husbands in small businesses.

I get problem mainly when my baby cries while am working in VUP, carrying her on my back and then she cries for breastfeeding which affect usual works.

Umutoni Liliose, 21 years old, a VUP participant in Simbi who is a single mother with one daughter.

Women might do more than one job, and much paid work was temporary, occasional and irregular, as well as seasonal. Even where there was some support for childcare at work, the distance from home and other factors such as arduousness of the work, made it hard for women to undertake paid work.

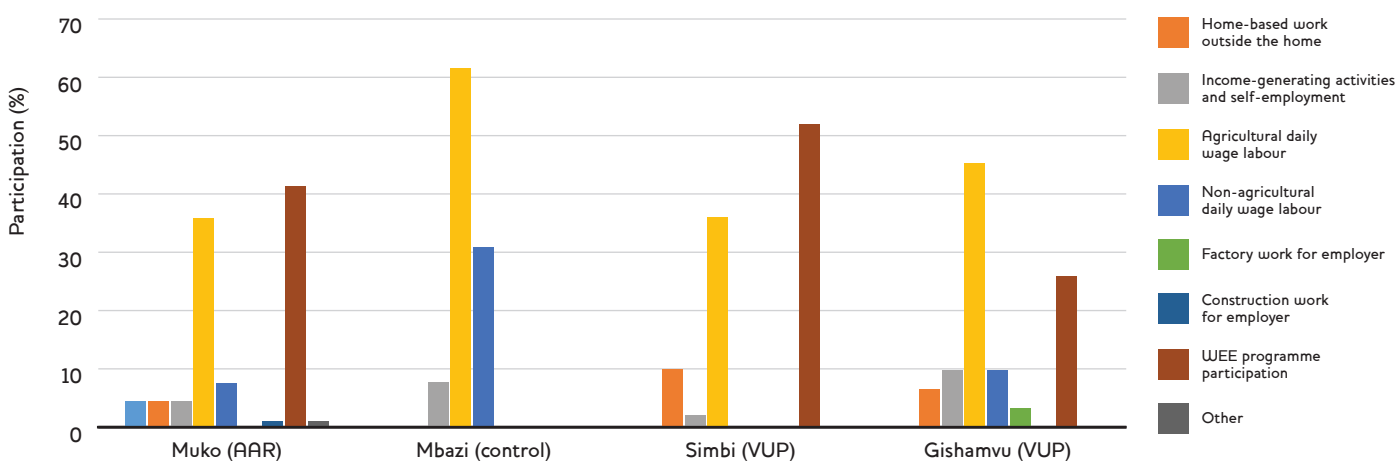
Some of the [VUP] beneficiaries have little children and are allowed to breastfeed babies for about ten minutes. But one can see that it is hard for them to combine care [for those who bring children to work] and paid work.

Mutabazi James, key informant interviewee, Huye.

It is difficult to take care of children if they are still young. If they have to go for paid work, the care for the children is not enough and some [women] might fear to participate.

Niyigena Daniel, key informant interviewee, Huye.

Figure 4: Current types of work of female survey respondents across the sites



Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

The range of women's paid work opportunities was more restricted than men's. Gender norms frequently played a role in this; for instance, demonstrated by the assumption (mentioned in Musanze) that work involving machinery, such as carpentry, was too hard for women, and better suited to men.

The VUP programme has provided road construction work, thereby enabling women to undertake such work traditionally perceived to be only suitable for men. Study participants also noted that women's engagement in unpaid care work leaves them with less time and fewer opportunities to find out about

paid work. As such, women in participatory exercises in Musanze mentioned that 'you cannot find work when you do not have free time to get information about it.'

Whereas women without land or livestock were reliant on finding paid work for food security, women who owned land usually spent much of their time working on their own farms and gardens, both for sale of produce and their own consumption. Being able to do so gave them some level of food security; however, being a labour-intensive activity, it also reduced the amount of time they had available to search for or engage in other forms of paid work.



Woman working with a child on her back on a farm in Huye. Due to lack of available childcare, women may take their children with them when engaged in agricultural work.

Gender norms around paid work

Norms of the male breadwinner compete with more gender-equitable ideas about the responsibilities of adults to provide for their families. Men often considered themselves to be the ones responsible for income earning as they were the 'heads of the family' in male-headed households. However, women often felt it was the responsibility of both parents to provide for the children, and generally, paid work was shared between husband and wife.

My husband and I are ones who are supposed to do paid work since we are mature people and the ones who hold the responsibilities for the family. This requires us to be the ones to perform the paid work.

Munyana Liliose, 42 years old, a farmer in Muko who is married with two daughters and a son.

Most women reported that their income made a difference to the overall household income. Married women's income contributed substantially to household expenditures (e.g. food, school materials). Women who reported doing relatively better off lived in families where other adults were also contributing income and care. The combined incomes of adult family members provided families with greater security and support, easing the responsibility on women for providing for their families through paid work. However, even in these families, women's paid work was necessary for meeting household needs. Women's income was particularly crucial for providing for the family in cases where their husbands had health problems that affected their ability to engage in paid work.

There is no any other choice, I have to work for my children because I am alone.

Kaneza Josiane, 34 years old, a farmer in Mbazi who is a single mother with one daughter and one son.

Men in the family should do paid work because they are the heads of the family. They must do anything to support their families; they are also the most energetic people who can afford most paid work.

Barore Kelly, husband of Mukamusoni Anita, living in Mbazi.

Women from female-headed households spoke about being more regularly engaged in paid work than married women who lived with their husbands. Women without adult males in the family had no choice but to work to provide for their families as they alone were financially responsible for their children. That said, it is not clear to what extent they were in paid work before their divorce, separation, or widowhood. Fathers who were separated from their children's mothers did not appear to be providing financial support for their children. However, single women also shared that having no husband to share childcare with could make doing paid work difficult.

There was a strong sense that paid work is an adult's responsibility, and that children are too young or not allowed to do paid work. The only instance encountered of children working reflected a situation of high vulnerability, where the oldest daughter substituted for her frequently ill mother in the VUP work, and had to drop out of school as a result.

Working for the home and children when you are alone without a husband to help you it is really challenging.

Kirabo Agnes, 29 years old, a VUP participant and daily wage labourer in Simbi, who is a divorced single mother with two daughters and one son.

Women's experiences of paid work

The regularity, frequency and types of jobs and payment were the main factors affecting women's experience of work and their decisions about whether to work or what types of paid work to take on. For example, agricultural paid work is seasonal: in the rainy season women could find paid agricultural work but in the dry (summer) season there was less available. Public works were also not a regular source of paid work; for example, repairing roads may only take a week and then the work is complete. As a result, many women lacked a reliable source of income, which made life stressful.

When I am working in public works here am safe because I know I will be paid. However, sometimes I do not go for VUP instead find small job somewhere else in the village because I know that I will be paid immediately whereas for VUP payment is done after some weeks.

Mukamwezi Josepha, 45 years old, a VUP participant and daily wage labourer in Simbi, who is a single mother with three daughters and three sons.

The wages women earned by working under the VUP were fixed, but payments were frequently late. Conversely, wages for agricultural work were sometimes negotiated, especially in periods when there was little work (i.e. dry seasons), which meant that women's earning was contingent on their negotiating power. In Huye, wages could

be paid in food rather than cash. Payment for small jobs in the village was immediate and therefore sometimes preferable to VUP work. Women who sold their agricultural products through the cooperative did not individually set the prices as these were set collectively by the cooperative. Those women who were not members of a cooperative and who sold agricultural surplus bargained with their customers, but did not always receive favourable terms. Most of the women interviewed felt that being part of the cooperative was advantageous.

Many jobs were far from home, and families reported that women left early or returned home late, and had little time available for their children and/or care tasks. Some women reported that their employers dealt unfairly with their working time: Hirwa Yvette, a VUP participant from Simbi, noted that 'the nature of [VUP] work is tricky because when she is late for work, that day is not counted and she does not get paid.' Byukusenge Jennine,⁴ a VUP participant and daily agricultural labourer from Simbi, also reported that when she worked overtime, her employers did not pay extra.

The distance and time spent travelling to the working place was seen as an important factor affecting the balance between paid and unpaid work, resulting in some women having to work late in the evening on care tasks – leaving them little or no time to rest. Most women walked to work, with 54 per cent travelling for up to half an hour and 14 per cent travelling for over an hour (see Figure 5).

The value of work

Earning money was often seen as a priority over care work as ‘you cannot live without money’, as women in Huye put it during a participatory exercise. The money earned by women was used to pay for a range of family needs – mainly food, education and health-related expenses. Being able to pay for these different things and support the family was the most common reason why women chose to do paid work. Their earnings were also

appreciated by their families, especially in relation to getting food and school support.

However, women did not always earn enough money to pay for all these needs, including food and rent. Those women without their own homes had the added responsibility of needing to earn money for rent each month on top of living expenses, which they found a struggle.

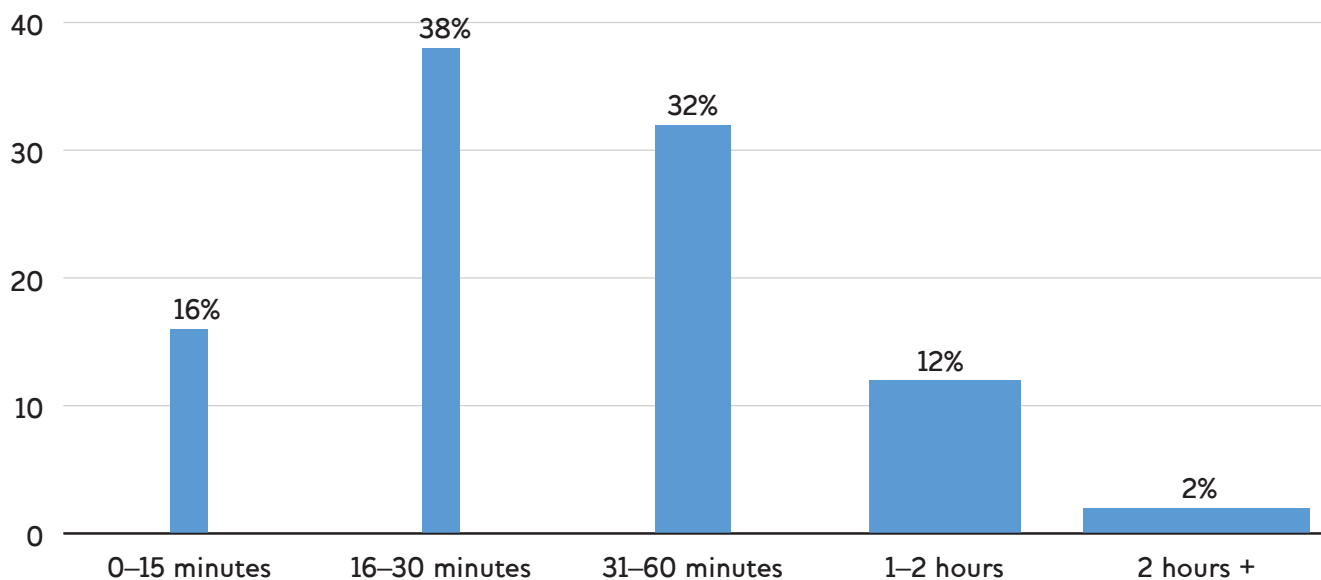
When I do the paid work, I am able to support my family in one way or another. I can buy food and solve some simple home problems that require money.

Uwera Claudine, 40 years old, a farmer in Mbazi who is a divorced single mother with one daughter and one son.

Sometimes I fail to get money to pay for monthly rent and when this happens we are in trouble... I do not get paid regularly and... when there is no job then it is difficult to find food for my children.

Mukamwezi Josepha, 45 years old, a VUP participant and daily wage labourer in Simbi, who is a single mother with three daughters and three sons.

Figure 5: Estimated time taken by respondents to travel to the working place



Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

The drudgery of care work and paid work, and its effects on women

Women described care work as ‘very tough’ (Mukamusoni Anita, Mbazizi⁵). For example, care of babies and small children in particular was seen to take a lot of time, especially when other family members were not available to help. Women in a participatory exercise in Musanze mentioned that ‘tiredness or stress often happens when children are ill or when there is no food to give them.’ Cooking was considered to be very tough, especially in the rainy season because of the need to collect and use wet or not completely dry firewood, and because the smoke it develops whilst cooking can lead to ‘headaches and feeling dizzy,’ as well as other ‘illnesses especially when one do not have complete dry wood’ (women in participatory exercises in Huye and Musanze). Women in Huye mentioned fetching water and cultivating their gardens as being difficult and ‘tak[ing] too much time’. The hilly terrain in these communities means tasks such as collecting water and firewood become more time-consuming than they might have been otherwise, having a negative impact on the balance between care and paid work.

Sometimes I overwork while doing unpaid work especially in the season when I have to do home activities and participate in agricultural activities at the same time.

Kamikazi Rose, 31 years old, a farmer in Muko who is married with three daughters.

Women were generally busiest when their children were at school and therefore could not help them with the care tasks. Feelings of being overburdened were greatest during the agricultural season when women had to combine their usual care work with agricultural activities on their land, especially

because farming and cultivation are particularly time-consuming activities. Women in a participatory exercise in Huye also expressed that it was harder to feed families in the dry season (summer) when they struggled to find agricultural work, thus just shifting the ‘worry’. Due to the irregular nature of much of the work which women engaged in, ‘it’s hard to get time to rest and... it’s hard because it’s not a guarantee to get work to do’ (Ineza Alice, Simbi⁶). Not being able to find paid work was particularly stressful for women who were solely responsible for their families.

Overwhelmingly, women found the effort to combine paid work, unpaid work and care work stressful and exhausting. They had many competing demands on their time and therefore multitasking – or ‘time stretching’ – was a very frequent strategy. Women explained that care tasks were sometimes missed altogether. For example, women in Huye felt that they did not have enough time for care work as a result of their paid work, which made their families unhappy. Many women returned from work already tired and then had to complete care tasks inside and outside the home. Other women were going to work already tired as a result of the time they had to spend on care work before going to paid work.

The considerable amount and intensity of care work and paid work often meant that women were always busy and unable to rest. This is reflected in Figure 6 when looking at the scant time women had at their disposal for leisure and personal care. The average time during which time was spent on leisure and personal care was very low (less than one hour). This was the lowest across all countries in this research project.⁷

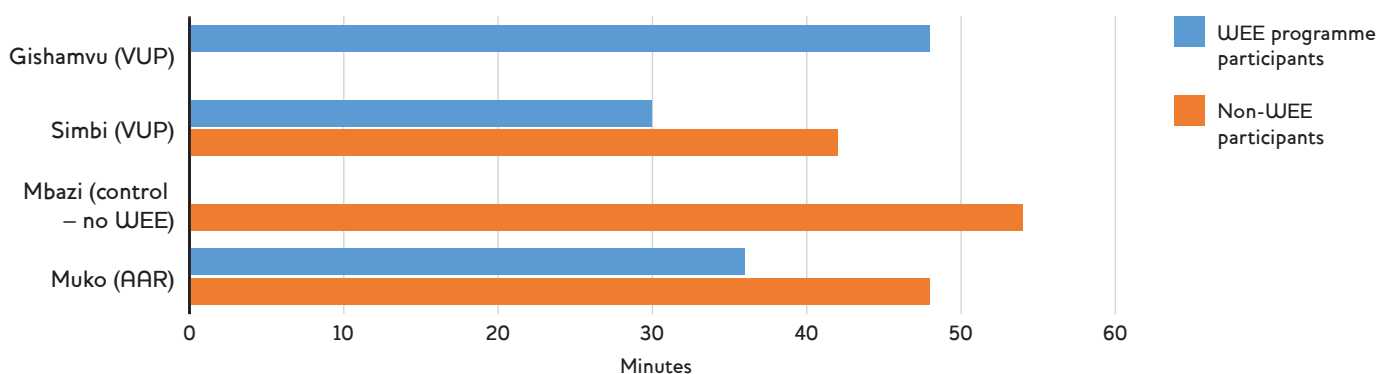
I get home tired and now I start doing the unpaid care and there is also a client who wants me to help repair his or clothes and my baby wants to breastfeed, so it becomes too much for me and I end up failing to get time to rest.

Abayisenga Dancile, 46 years old, a tailor in Mbazi who is married with four sons and one daughter.

My wife sometimes gets so tired due to combining both paid and unpaid work. As a result, she misses out some care work at home. We take supper very late and little time is given to children.

Hakizimana Fabrice, husband of Munyana Liliose, living in Muko.

Figure 6: Average number of minutes during which women spent time per day on personal care and hygiene, and leisure by site



Note: Only three respondents in Gishamvu were non-WEE participants, and therefore averages for this category are not displayed here.

Source: Authors' own, based on the project's quantitative data.

Being overworked – feeling unable to get all their work done on time and feeling stressed, tired, and lacking in time to rest – can have significantly negative impacts on women's health. One woman said she 'suffers constant sickness due to overworking' (Niyonsenga Jeannette, Muko⁹). Due to the physically challenging and time-consuming nature of the paid work and the high drudgery of the unpaid care work tasks women did, they experienced health problems including headaches and back, chest, arm and leg pain.

Husbands acknowledged that it was exhausting for their wives to combine paid and care work. As a result some tried to help their wives when they had time. One woman explicitly mentioned this support and its positive effect: 'Combining both paid and unpaid work is difficult but I do it with the support from my husband.' However, despite his help she still had 'to wake up early in the morning or sleep late night in order to perform all activities as planned' (Umuhozza Agathe, Muko⁹). Women who were doing relatively better off were those supported by their husbands, or other adults, and their children.

Women household heads felt that being the only income earners made balancing paid work and unpaid care especially challenging. The responsibility for providing for the family falls upon them so they are forced to find work where they can, but they are also primarily responsible for the care work in the family. The children of a married woman who is the family's sole earner due to her husband's age and ill health pointed out that 'there is no choice, however much hard it is, she has to do it for us to survive' (Kajyambere Eugene, son of Ineza Alice, Simbi). While older children in female-headed households may help extensively with care tasks, their mothers still often have a lot of care tasks to do when they return late from work or when their children have school commitments. Furthermore, not all of these women have children who are old enough to provide much assistance. The only way for some women to get everything done was to get up very early to prepare food before work, and to take their infants with them to work. The longer the distance they had to travel for paid work, the harder it became to balance all their tasks.

The impact on children

Combining both paid and unpaid work also affects the children so much since sometimes they go to bed before eating; especially when the food is prepared late and they cannot wait until the food is ready.

Hakizimana Fabrice, husband of Munyana Liliose, living in Muko.

Children both appreciated the paid work their mothers did and the care given to them and were unhappy when their mothers were not around to care for them. Women's work limited the time they had with their children. Some children ended up hungry and eating late when the nature of their mother's work meant they returned home late and were not there to cook. Some children mentioned the care they got from their fathers, but this was rare and mothers were seen as the primary caregivers. The children living with single mothers were especially negatively affected by their absence: feeling tired if they were helping with care tasks, and generally missing their mother's input in their nutrition, education, and wellbeing.

The effect on my children is that I do not give them much of my time as a mother; they do not get me when they need me since I am always busy with paid and unpaid work.

Tuyisenge Marie Rose, 28 years old, a farmer and construction worker in Mbazi who is a single mother with two sons.

My mother takes care of us, giving us whatever we need. But not everything we need. When my mother is at home, she cooks and this makes me happy. However, sometimes [she] works very far away from home and we may spend the whole day without seeing her. It would be better if she worked at near home.

Kayiranga Samson, son of divorced mother Kirabo Agnes, living in Simbi.

Children generally understood that their mothers had to go for paid work to provide for the family even if it meant they did not receive all the care they would wish for. Many children wished that their mothers worked less, and nearer to home. They also expressed concerns for their mothers' health, especially as they saw them getting home late after having commuted long distances to and from their paid work. Women were also well aware of the impact their time poverty had on their children and worried about the little time they could spend with them.

The effect of combined work on my children is that I do not find enough time to guide them when they are doing homework which affects their performance at school.

Ingabire Eliza, 28 years old, a farmer in Muko who is a divorced single mother with three sons.

Similarly to adults, children felt overloaded with care tasks. Tasks that children found particularly difficult or did not like included collecting firewood, water and grass, which were often amongst their main tasks. Collecting fodder and firewood was found to be tiresome as the children had to travel far into the hills. Boys in Huye mentioned 'when I fetch water, I put a jerry can on the back which makes it painful,' while girls in Huye mentioned 'carrying firewood is tough work; it causes a headache' and 'our back hurts after cleaning for too long,' while 'collecting grasses and washing make arms tired and causes pain on fingers.'

My daughter and son get tired too since they combine school and unpaid work at home. It is so tiresome and for instance my daughter does a lot of care activities to the extent that she does not get enough time to play with friends due to some duties assigned to her.

Uwizeyimana Grace, 35 years old, a farmer and daily wage labourer in Muko who is a divorced single mother with four daughters and one son.

Some children found it hard to combine their school work with the care work they did upon return from school, and reported getting tired and not having time to play with their friends. Girls tended to have less time than boys to rest, study, or play with friends – because of how care was distributed between boys and girls and their parent(s).



Solutions proposed by interviewed households

Provision of decent work

- The government should provide more jobs or expand the VUP programme to provide more work.
- Many of those in the VUP programme wanted their payments to be made within three days of the work being carried out, as they relied on the money for immediate needs.
- Women from both districts said that wages should be raised as they were underpaid for the work they did.
- The VUP programme should provide women with private and safe spaces where they can breastfeed their children and leave them for naps, as well as providing flexibility with start times to accommodate those with childcare responsibilities.
- Providing work opportunities closer to communities or providing transport facilities to work would greatly reduce the time and physical effort spent on commuting, and thus free time and energy for paid or unpaid care work.

Provision of an enabling environment

- The government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should provide women with credits to start or expand businesses.
- In addition, they should provide training and capacity building in relation to both improved farming skills and new businesses.
- The materials needed to start up these small businesses or to develop agricultural work should be provided by the government and NGOs, including seeds, fertilisers and domestic animals.
- The government should provide villages with feeder roads so that women and others in the villages can get their produce to markets.
- There were requests for buildings to serve as the offices of cooperatives or as a space to host businesses.
- The government should also support farming by providing veterinary officers in villages and sustainable measures to control soil erosion.

Recognition and valuation of care

- There is a need for advocacy at the household level about sharing care activities so that husbands are aware of the need to help their spouses.

Redistribution of responsibilities

- Care responsibilities could be distributed more in families.
- Men could also support women with cultivation and cooperative work so that they can sell the harvest together.
- Some women would like the community to be more involved in the care of their children when they are not around.
- NGOs could set up childcare centres where women could leave their children if they had to go for paid work.
- Women also suggested that employers should provide them with health insurance.
- The government should provide families living in poverty with health insurance and assistance with housing and children's education.

Reduction of drudgery

- Quality work should be provided nearer to home so that women would not have to work so far away or such long hours.
- The provision of improved stoves, use of biogas, and piped water and water tanks could ease the care burden on women.

Notes

1. The process used to classify the level and type of poverty that exists in the community.
2. 31 years old, married, three daughters, farmer.
3. 31 years old, divorced single mother, two daughters and two sons, farmer.
4. 46 years old, widowed, four sons and one daughter.
5. 35 years old, married, one son and two daughters, farmer.
6. 42 years old, married, two daughters and three sons, VUP worker and daily wage labourer.
7. Research was carried out in four countries: India, Nepal, Rwanda and Tanzania.
8. 31 years old, divorced single mother, two daughters and two sons, farmer.
9. 31 years old, married, two daughters and one son, farmer and brewer.

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'You Cannot Live Without Money': Women Balancing Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work in Rwanda

National report for Women's Economic Empowerment Policy and Programming

Balancing unpaid care work and paid work carried out qualitative and quantitative research in India, Nepal, Rwanda, Tanzania across 16 sites. This research explores how women's economic empowerment policies and programmes can take unpaid care work into account, in order to enable economic empowerment to be optimised, shared across families and sustained across generations. It focusses on the social

organisation of care in low income households, and at the role of families, state, private sector and not-for profit sector.

Ultimately it aims to identify measures that can lead towards a 'double boon', creating paid work that empowers women and provides core support for their unpaid care work responsibilities.

The Balancing unpaid care work and paid work project explores the successes, challenges and lessons for Women's Economic Empowerment programmes and policies.



RWANDA



Research was undertaken in 2016 in four sites in the districts of Musanze and Huye in Rwanda:

- 📍 Muko (Musanze District)
- 📍 Gishamvu (Huye District)
- 📍 Simbi (Huye District)
- 📍 Mbazi (Huye District)

PROJECT LEAD:



Institute of Development Studies

RESEARCH PARTNERS:



BRAC REU

Data in Rwanda were collected by BRAC REU team, led by Dr Jenipher Twebaze Musoke.

UPTAKE PARTNER:



ActionAid

For more project background information, publications and access to datasets and case studies, visit interactions.ids.ac.uk/wee

Balancing unpaid care work and paid work is part of the global Growth and Equal Opportunities for Women programme (GrOW) bit.ly/1PbKwAd



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