



RAPID ASSESSMENT REPORT ON RWANDA CHILD LABOR

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Children
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
EICV	Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ILO	International Labor Organization
GS	Groupe Scolaire
KII	Key Informant Interview
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labor
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Administration
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
NCC	National Commission for Children
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
REWU	Rwanda Extractive Industrial Workers Union
RNP	Rwanda National Police
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
US	United States
USDOL	United States Department of Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REWU is a Rwandan Extractive industry Workers Union, which is organizing all workers in Mining, Quarry Companies and cooperatives in Rwanda since 2014 and has a sounding experience in social dialogue with mine and quarry companies' owners as well as to organize, mobilize and sensitize their employees. This sector employs around 120,000 workers.

REWU is affiliated to CESTRAR (Central de Syndicats des Travailleurs au Rwanda) and National Commission of Human Rights (NCHR) at national level, affiliate to the COSOC – GL (coalition des organisations de la société civile luttant contre l'exploitation illégale des ressources naturelles dans la Région des Grand Lacs), is also an affiliate at international level to the IndustriALL Global Union through its STRIGECOMI Federation, and to the Building Wood Workers International Union (BWI); REWU is a key partner of Ministry of public services and labor (MIFOTRA), Rwanda mines, petroleum and gas board (RMB), Provinces and Districts in local government; Rwanda Mining Association (RMA) and Rwanda Quarry Association (RQA) as employers' professional organizations in mining sector. REWU was published in Rwanda Official Gazette No. 49 Bis of 08/12/2014.

This rapid assessment on Rwanda child labor and access to child rights information through media was conducted by (REWU) within four targeted districts namely Muhanga, Rwamagana, Gicumbi and Gakenke of the intervention's catchment. The rapid assessment was motivated by the existing critical situation of child labor in order to collect accurate insights from beneficiaries and other decision-makers come out with more strategic measures of preventing any form of child labor. Furthermore, through the rapid assessment, students, parents, and local leaders have identified the most followed media houses in the study sites. This rapid assessment aimed at measuring the extent of the community child labor and the access to child rights' information through media in Muhanga, Rwamagana, Gicumbi and Gakenke Districts, Rwanda.

Specifically, this rapid assessment was intended to:

- Identify working sectors with high number of child workforce;
- Measure the level of parents' involvement in child labor situation;
- Find the required solutions to promote child rights in respective communities;
- Assess the level of community perceptions towards child labor policies established by child right partners;
- Identify influential media houses to share information on child rights.

In response to these objectives, the tools of data collection encompass literature review in supplement to structured and semi-structure interviews and through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was carried out to informants (including 89 students, 40 parents and community local leaders from 4 selected districts and the consent was acquired beforehand from all participants in the group discussions. The Data freshly collected from FGDs and Key Informant Interviews were used to complete to the existing data while all other field notes were considered as complementary records from the beneficiaries and stakeholders. Qualitative data from interviews

and FGDs notes were organized into themes with ATLAS, software using a thematic content analysis approach.

In line with the used sampling, the most targeted sectors by child labor included industries (36%), domestic services (32.5%) and agriculture (31.5%). In Rwamagana District, most of respondents confirmed to be involved in service (43%) and agriculture (38%) sectors. In Gicumbi District, children prefer to be actively working in industry (48%) and agriculture (36%), and this situation seems to be similar to that of Gakenke District (35%) and (34%) respectively. Muhanga presents a slight difference in terms of child labor situation per working sector where 34% represents the industry sector, 33% the service segment and 33% the agriculture domain.

The results of this rapid assessment comprise also the identified main roots of child labor and came out with related recommendations for mitigating the factors that lead to such child abuse.

Main causes of child labor:

- (1) Parental poverty: lower family income, lack of school fees and other costs;
- (2) Neighbors' increased needs in domestic services and economic activities;
- (3) Poor control upon children by parents and guardians;
- (4) Lack of education, awareness and sensitization on child labor consequences;
- (5) Search for cheaper workforce by entrepreneurs.

Measures to tackle and mitigate child labor:

- (1) Empower poor families in order to improve their socioeconomic conditions by funding social programs and economic projects;
- (2) Provide free education to all children from poor families;
- (3) Avail free school meals to all children from poor families;
- (4) Deliver vocational training to unemployed youths for skilled labor;
- (5) Sensitize the general population on child labor existing laws and policies;

1. INTRODUCTION

Child labor is widespread in today's world; the International Labor Organization (2012) estimates that 182 million of the world's children are child laborers, most living in developing countries. Child labor refers to the employment of children in any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful. This practice is considered exploitative by many international organizations. Legislations across the world prohibit child labor (UN, 2006; ILO, 2011). These laws do not consider all work by children as child labor; exceptions include work by child artists, supervised training, and certain categories of work such as those by Amish children, some forms of child work common among indigenous American children, and others (The Economist, 2004). Child labor was used to varying extents through most of history. Before 1940, numerous children aged 5-14 worked in Europe, the United States and various colonies of European powers. Children worked in agriculture, home-based assembly operations, factories, and mining and in services. Some worked night shifts lasting 12 hours. With the rise of household income, availability of schools and passage of child labor laws, the incidence rates of child labor fell (Hindman, 2009).

In developing countries, with high poverty and poor schooling opportunities, child labor is still prevalent. In 2010, sub-Saharan Africa had the highest incidence rates of child labor, with several African nations witnessing over 50% of children aged 5-14 working (UNICEF, 2012). The incidence of child labor in the world decreased from 25% to 10% between 1960 and 2003. Nevertheless, the total number of child laborers remains high, with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Labor Organization (ILO) acknowledging an estimated 168 million children aged 5-17 worldwide, were involved in child labor in 2013 (UNICEF, 2013).

Not all work done by children should be classified as child labor that is to be targeted for elimination. Children's participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. These kinds of activities contribute to children's development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life (Khakshour, *et al.*, 2015).

The term "child labor" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that: is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and interferes with their schooling; by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; by obliging them to leave school prematurely; or by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (ILO, 2002).

In 1999, the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention No. 182 was adopted at the International

Labor Conference in Geneva by delegates from employers' organizations, trade unions and governments of the 175 countries that are member States of the International Labor Organization (Basu, 1999). The vote for this international agreement was unanimous, expressing a growing international consensus that certain forms of child labor are so fundamentally at odds with children's basic human rights that they must be eliminated as a priority. The individual member governments may each ratify the Convention, and more than 140 of them have already done so. They commit their country to take immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate all worst forms of child labor for all children under the age of 18 (ILO, 2004).

In Rwanda, a solid environment for children's rights and sustainable development has been established, and the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" (CRC) and other human rights instruments have been ratified. The country has achieved remarkable progress by actively promoting the rule of law, the fiscal and administrative decentralization for the purpose of well-being of children, families and communities. A comprehensive legal system and the policy environment that are supportive of children and families have been developed, and lay the foundation for sustainable development under "Vision 2020" and successive economic-growth and poverty-reduction strategies. Since 2012, the "National Integrated Child Rights Policy" has been implemented and the "National Commission for Children" (NCC) was established under the leadership of the "Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion" (UNICEF, 2017).

In 2012, the government enacted the Law Relating to the Rights and the Protection of the Child, updating and replacing the previous Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child against Violence. The most recent state reports to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and Committees on the Rights of the Child were submitted by the government in 2015 and 2011, respectively. Clearly, children's rights are preserved within the constitution and are protected in legislation. Yet, as is the case in many countries, gaps and inequities in relation to the implementation and enforcement of child-related laws and policies require further attention (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013).

Under the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been developed, and some of them address issues related to children's well-being, including: multidimensional poverty (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2) and health (SDG 3); early childhood development and quality education (SDG 4); gender equality (SDG 5); water, sanitation and hygiene (SDG 6); and violence against children (SDG 16) (UNICEF, 2018). The pursuit of SDGs presents opportunities for the government and development partners to advance child well-being at the same time as enhancing sustainable social and economic prosperity. Investing in children's welfare is essential for achieving broader SDG objectives of inclusive sustainable development (Ministry of Finance & Economic Planning, 2019).

In this regard, REWU focused its attention on different forms of child work in order to participate in creating a safe environment for prevention and elimination of child labor. This assessment report may guide the government and stakeholders' actions towards the achievement of children well-being, considering the critical issue of child labor in Rwanda, where minors are engaged in economic activities.

1.1. Country Context

Children in Rwanda are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and domestic service (Government of Rwanda, 2008). They are involved in the production of sugarcane, bananas, and tea (Win rock International, *et al.*, 2010). Although information is limited, there are reports that children also work in the production of cabbage, coffee, manioc, peas, pineapple, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, beans, sorghum, pyrethrum, and rice (Ngabonziza, 2011; Win rock International Official, 2013).

Children working in agriculture carry heavy loads, use dangerous tools such as machetes, and are vulnerable to insect and snakebites. These children may also work close to harmful pesticides and fertilizers (Win rock International *et al.*, 2010). Although the full extent of children's involvement is unknown, children herd cattle and care for sheep, goats, pigs, and chicken. These children may work long hours and carry heavy loads of food and water (Winrock International *et al.*, 2011).

In 2011, approximately 20% of children tending livestock in Rwanda reported having been injured while at work. Children work as domestic servants (US Embassy-Kigali, 2013). They may be required to work long hours, performing tireless tasks, without sufficient food or shelter. These children may be isolated in private homes and susceptible to physical and sexual abuse. Children also work on construction sites and reportedly engage in strenuous manual labor such as digging pit latrines. There are reports that children are also found making bricks (Kisambira, 2009; US Department of State, 2013).

Even though the extent of the problem is unknown, there are reports that children work in mining sector (USDOL Official, 2012; All Africa, 2011). These children are at risk of eye and lung damage from stone dust (Kisambira, 2009). Commercial sexual exploitation of children and trafficking also occur in Rwanda. Older women sometimes coerce girls into commercial sex work in exchange for food and living quarters. Loosely structured prostitution networks recruit children from secondary schools for commercial sexual exploitation (US Department of State, 2012). Kigali City, Rusizi and Musanze are the areas most affected by commercial sexual exploitation of children (ILO Committee of Experts, 2012).

Children are also trafficked to Asia, Europe, and North America; and to eastern, central, and southern Africa for forced agricultural labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and domestic service. Children are also trafficked into Rwanda from neighboring countries and from Somalia (UNODC, 2009; Asiiimwe, 2012). However, there is a lack of information on the extent of child trafficking into, transit through, and from Rwanda (UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants and Members of their Families, 2012).

In Rwanda, kids involved in child labor are generally found in agriculture (79.3%) and in other activities, including domestic services (12.6%). They work for instance in Irish potatoes and tea plantations. Children below 18 years are estimated at 49.6% of the entire population and children of the age group 6-17 are 63.7% of the population aged below 18 years. The Integrated

Household and Living Conditions Survey (EICV 3) indicated that 10.74% of children aged 6-17 years were exploited in working either in their own households or outside their own households (NISR, 2011).

Children aged 5-17 years engaged in economic activities are estimated at 324,659 representing 11.2% of children in that age group. Almost half of them (5.3%) work full time while the remaining (5.9%) combine going to school with work. Eastern Province is the most affected by child labor, since 15% of children aged 5-17 years are in employment. Western Province ranks second with 12.3%, followed by Southern Province with 10.7%. Kigali City is the Province with the smallest number of children in employment with a proportion of 6.7%. It is worthy of mention, however, that Kigali City is the province with the biggest number of girls in employment (Ministry of Public Service and Labor & NISR, 2008).

The same findings indicate that 14.8% of children aged 5-17 years are neither in employment nor attend school. The occupation distribution by sex shows that more boys than girls are unoccupied (15.9% for boys against 13.7% for girls), except in Kigali City where the proportion of unoccupied boys and girls is estimated at 12% and 15% respectively. Concerning Provinces, the Northern Province and the Eastern Province register the lowest number of unoccupied children, which is 12.5% and 11.5% respectively. On the contrary, the Southern Province and the Western Province regions see quite high proportions with 17.4% and 17% respectively. The vast majority of children carry out household chores (83.6%). The Northern Province and the Southern Province have high proportions (87.9% and 84.2% respectively). Children enrolled in school spend less time on household chores than those not attending school (13 hours against 20 hours per week). Agriculture sector employs the biggest number of children in employment with 79.3% while the Service Sector ranks second with 12.6% and the Industry Sector employs only 3.5% of those children. It should be noted that the Service Sector mostly consists of domestic services and trade.

The number of children in the household tasks reaches alarming proportions especially in the City of Kigali where 49.5% of children in employment carry out household chores. In addition, the proportion of girls employed in domestic activities is nearly twice as big as that of boys. Majority of children affected by child labor are engaged in non-paid family work (64%). They are mainly found in Southern Province where 77.9% of occupied children are engaged in nonpaid family work. In fact, approximately 70% of those children work in plantations and among them, those aged 10-15 years constitute the largest number with a proportion of 74%. The proportion of those who carry out domestic chores within their own family comes at second position. Children work an average of 24 hours per week for an economic activity. However, in the 16-17-year-old age group, children employed full-time spend on work an average of 37 hours per week while those combining work and school spend on it 11 hours per week (Ministry of Public Service and Labor & NISR, 2008).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Worldwide, one in every six children aged at 5-17 years is exploited by child labor and most of them are in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America (ILO, 2002). The main causes leading to child labor include but not limited to parental poverty and illiteracy and poor control of children, social and economic circumstances, lack of awareness on child labor, considering the children as the cheapest manpower and more loyal than adults, being orphans, etc. Child labor can be detrimental through the hindering of the acquisition of formal education, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and causing irreparable damage to health, reputation or other things that affect adult human capital, which could lead to lower wages in the adult labor market. Child labor lowers school attendance and achievement (Psacharopoulos, 1997; Spindel, 1985; Beegle, *et al.*, 2007).

Child labor affects not only the lifelong outcomes of the working child; it also affects the working child's siblings and other family members. More broadly, a high incidence of child labor has a cost for the economy as a whole by favoring unskilled labor over increased investment in human capital and slowing down the diffusion of technologies that require skilled workers. The expansion of international trade and enticement of foreign investments may also be affected as the export and import sectors are mainly composed of relatively skilled workers. While there are potential positives from child labor in terms of consumption support and on-the-job experience accumulation, most of the evidence reviewed highlights that working while young are costly for both the child and the child's country (Thévenon & Edmonds, 2019):

1. Child labor, particularly in hazardous jobs, creates health problems that have repercussions on physical and/or mental health status in adult life (among which are back problems, arthritis, reduced strength and stamina).
2. Although roughly two-thirds of laboring children are enrolled in school, a large body of evidence shows that working children are more likely to leave school early, before grade completion, and demonstrate less knowledge in tests. Countries with the highest child labor rates show lower school completion rates.
3. By leaving school early, young people give up competences that later allow them to enter jobs with a steeper wage growth trajectory.
4. Child laborers usually live in a family setting, and one child's activities impact siblings. Some child labor keeps siblings from working. For example, when work is prohibited for a child, the risk of another child in the family working is increased. However, there are cases where having a sibling attending school increases the probability that a child attends school. Identifying the circumstances in which the spill-over is positive or negative remains a work in progress.
5. Since most child labor is unskilled, its prevalence contributes to lower wages for unskilled workers. In addition, by increasing unskilled labor, it contributes to the adoption of production methods that are unfavorable to skill accumulation and to the diffusion of technological advancement which ultimately reduces the potential of economic growth.
6. Finally, far from creating a tradeable comparative advantage, child labor can damage not only a company's image but also that of a country, its foreign investment and trade if the power of

consumers adverse to child labor is strong enough to influence the demand for the goods in question.

The following categories of activities are considered as child labor activities:

- 1) Worst forms of child labor: all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, sexual exploitation, child illicit activities, and other hazardous work likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children;
- 2) Employment below the minimum age: any work that is carried out by a child below the minimum age specified for the kind of work performed, excluding permissible light work applicable to children aged 12 years and over; and
- 3) Hazardous unpaid household services: activities performed in the child's own household for long hours, or in an unhealthy environment, involving unsafe equipment or heavy loads, or in dangerous locations, and so on.

Econometric evidence points to some of the factors influencing household decisions to involve their children in work or school:

- 1) Education Level of household head: Holding income and other factors constant, children from households where the head has higher education are less likely to work exclusively, and are more likely to attend school unencumbered by work responsibilities, than children from households where the head has no education. The effect of an increase of parents' education levels on the reduction of child labor is positive.
- 2) Job status of household head: The occupation status of the household head is also relevant to decisions concerning children's time use. This is particular the case for households headed by persons enjoying wage employment relative to those headed by persons with only occasional employment. Controlling for other factors, children from the latter households are more likely to be in employment and almost less likely to be attending school relative to their peers from households headed by persons in wage employment.
- 3) Household capital: The level of household wealth appears to play an important role in decisions concerning children's work and schooling, even when controlling for exposure to shocks and other factors. Children from wealthier households are more likely to go to school and less likely to participate in employment. Some Children are growing in hazardous working environment with their parents when they accompany them to work due to lack of guardian. This factor can motivate them to imitate their parents and start to work in their low ages.
- 4) Living place: living location has influence to reducing child labor and raising school attendance. Children living in the Southern, Western and Eastern provinces are significantly more likely to be in employment exclusively than children in Kigali. Children in the Southern, Western and Northern provinces are significantly less likely than their peers in Kigali to attend school exclusively.
- 5) Lack of Parents: orphanhood affects children's involvement in school and child labor is therefore another area of particular policy interest. Children that have lost both parents are at greater risk of child labor and of being denied schooling. Double orphans are also more likely to be absent from both school and economic activity compared to non-orphans; this

raises the possibility that double orphans more than other children are kept at home, away from school and the workplace, to perform household chores.

- 6) Exposure to shocks: Collective shocks such as natural disasters are associated with a higher probability of children's employment and lower probability of school attendance. These results suggest that child labor forms an important part of a poor household's strategy for dealing with risk, making them less vulnerable to sudden losses of income arising from collective shocks.

In addition, during this period of COVID-19 pandemic, children are not going to schools but compelled to stay at home with unplanned schedules. Those living in vulnerable communities are even the most suffering from the far reaching economic and social impacts of the measures needed to contain the pandemic's effects. This situation distresses communities facing secondary effects of COVID-19 on children and families, and increases the number of street and unaccompanied children and their exposure to other exploitative treatments.

In response to child labor situation, the country needs to expand existing information and programs about child labor to the general public and increase awareness about the various policies and strategies with a focus of child protection; and enhance the child participation through the National Commission of Children (NCC); and a holistic approach to address systemic barriers by using media houses as strong and consistent channel of mass communication.

In this perspective, the rapid assessment was conducted to provide accurate perceptions from beneficiaries of REWU interventions and other stakeholders on how to curb with child labor and its causes. The rapid assessment proceeded with the identification of the most preferred media houses by students and their parents in Muhanga, Gicumbi, Gakenke and Rwamagana.

2. RAPID ASSESSMENT ON RWANDA CHILD LABOR AND ACCESS TO CHILD RIGHTS INFORMATION

Since January 2020, Rwanda Extractive Industries Workers Union (REWU) benefited from the support of World Vision for implementing the project entitled “It takes every Rwandan to end Child Exploitation Campaign”. REWU executed this mandate in collaboration with different levels of stakeholders involved in community mobilization (local leaders, employers, teachers and school managers, Children themselves, parents, young mentors and community members). The main objective was to contribute to the promotion of child rights, breaking the child labor chain with the aim of empowering children to reach their maximum potential of exploring opportunities in a safe social environment. The discussions around child labor are also channeled through media houses in place.

The rapid assessment work was conducted in Muhanga, Rwamagana, Gicumbi and Gakenke Districts where REWU implements the above-mentioned project, with the aim of determining the current status of “Community Child Labor” and access to child rights information through media. Accordingly, field visits were planned and conducted in July 2020 by REWU staff for data collection through:

- FGDs with representatives from working opportunities and community;
- Key informant interviews with school managers, program managers and staff working in different Sector from technical and governing institutions.
- Media channels involved in the project’s implementation

2.1. Objectives of the Rapid Assessment

2.1.1. Main objective

This rapid assessment aimed at measuring the extent of the community child labor and the access to child rights’ information through media in Muhanga, Rwamagana, Gicumbi and Gakenke Districts, Rwanda.

2.1.2. Specific objectives

- To identify working sectors with high number of child workforce;
- To measure the level of parent involvement in child labor situation;
- To find required solutions to promote child rights in respective communities;
- To assess the level of community perceptions towards child labor policies established by child right partners; and
- To identify influential media houses to share information on child rights.

3. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative information was collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders at both central and decentralized levels. Among criteria for participants selection, gender characteristics were highly considered in order to come out with balanced information about both categories of, males and females as informants.

The FGDs targeted primarily adolescents and youth in schools, including those who are on job in different working sectors. The second target group for FGDs comprised the parents of labored children, local leaders and community leaders, including religious leaders. This rapid assessment reached 89 children (46 girls and 43 boys) and 40 parents together with community leaders (25 women and 15 men).

Key informant interviews were organized for school representatives, stakeholders in children protection field, journalists and business opportunity leaders, to collect views and suggestions on the role of media houses in promoting child rights and child labor prevention. The survey interviews were carried out among 24 key informants including 8 females and 16 males from different institutions that intervene in fighting against child labor in Rwanda.

3.1.1. Methods and techniques

The required sampling techniques guided the selection of key informants of rapid assessment in the 4 concerned districts. Each district was represented by two sectors, each with its targeted 12-year basic education school. The methodology used consisted of qualitative study design that included Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted with representatives of schools and community figures. Those include students, their parents, teachers, heads of schools and other community members participating in the implementation of the child right policy. In total twelve (12) FGDs were conducted including four (4) with students, four (4) with parents and 4 with teachers' representatives, for the 4 districts.

According to the participation of informants in FGDs by district, 20 (9 girls and 11 boys) children participated in FGDs in Rwamagana and 22 children (12 girls and 10 boys) in Gakenke; 24 children (13 girls and 11 boys) in Gicumbi and 23 children (12 girls and 11 boys) in Muhanga. Key informant interviews with different stakeholders included decision makers from central level, districts and schools. Particularly for this category, in total 24 (8 women and 16 men) key informants were interviewed during the rapid assessment. Those comprise the representatives of Districts staff (4), Ministry of Education (1), National Commission for Children (1), MIGEPROF (1), Rwanda Broadcasting Media House (2), Business players (7) School Managers (4), and Sector Education Officers (4).

The informative data collected from those interviewees were analyzed and used to build different parts of this rapid assessment report.

Ethical consideration:

Regarding ethical considerations, the permission to conduct the study was solicited and obtained from the Rwanda's Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the Ministry of Education, and the National Commission for Children (Forero, *et al.*, 2013). Participants' consent for participation in interviews was sought before the process starting. Recruitment of participants was done verbally and by distributing consent form letters and referrals for other professionals, where the purpose of the study was briefly explained. A written informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews. Participation was voluntary and respondents were informed about their right to withdrawal at any moment during the interview. Interviews were held in privacy, and confidentiality was guaranteed for all participants. Thus, a quiet interview room was availed in order to ensure anonymity, privacy and confidentiality for participants and investigators. Data collected were kept safely (Palinkas,*et al.*, 2015). Potential participants were explained beforehand that the collected views would be solely for the purpose of the documentation for the report.

The interviewer moderated the focus group discussions and a note taker was appointed for each session. Participants in FGDs were generally limited to 8-15 male and female subjects. The convenient time and place for participants were identified with the help of District Focal Points working with REWU. Participants received explanations about the rapid assessment purpose, confidentiality throughout data collection, data management and during the report writing processes. Upon agreement of the participants through signing of the consent form for being part of the investigation, their names, age, and gender were recorded on participants' list.

As for data saturation, we have collected enough data to achieve our research purpose. The sampling process was guided by "necessary similarities and contrasts required by the emerging theory" (Dey, 1999), and we "combined sampling, data collection and data analysis, rather than treating them as separate stages in a linear process" (Bryman, 2012). In the course of interviews, new data tended to be redundant of information already collected. Then, we began to hear the same comments again repetitively a sign that led to a conclusion that data saturation was reached at a satisfactory pick. It was then time to stop collecting information and started analyzing what has already been collected (Francis, *et al.*, 2010; Guest, *et al.*, 2003; Grady, 1998).

3.1.2. Data analysis and interpretation

The collected information was explored in order to identify information that was relevant for this rapid assessment. The data freshly collected from FGDs and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were added to complement the existing data. All field notes were considered as records from the beneficiaries and stakeholders. Gender and other socio-demographic characteristics were analyzed and presented in the report of the rapid assessment. Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs notes were organized into themes with ATLAS software using a thematic content analysis approach.

Data were reviewed by REWU staff to identify key findings in relation to specific deliverables.

Important quotes were selected to illustrate the key findings as participant voice and translated from Kinyarwanda to English in order to be incorporated in the report. Quantitative information from the rapid assessment was analyzed and other reports available at REWU were also considered in different identified themes and were integrated in the Rapid Assessment Report.

4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Characteristics of Participants

4.1.1. Characteristics of participants in FGDS

In total, twelve (12) FGDs were conducted in 8 Sectors visited in Rwamagana District (Nzige and Rubona), Gakenke District (Rusasa and Rushashi), Muhanga District (Muhanga and Shyogwe) and Gicumbi District (Bukure and Shangasha).

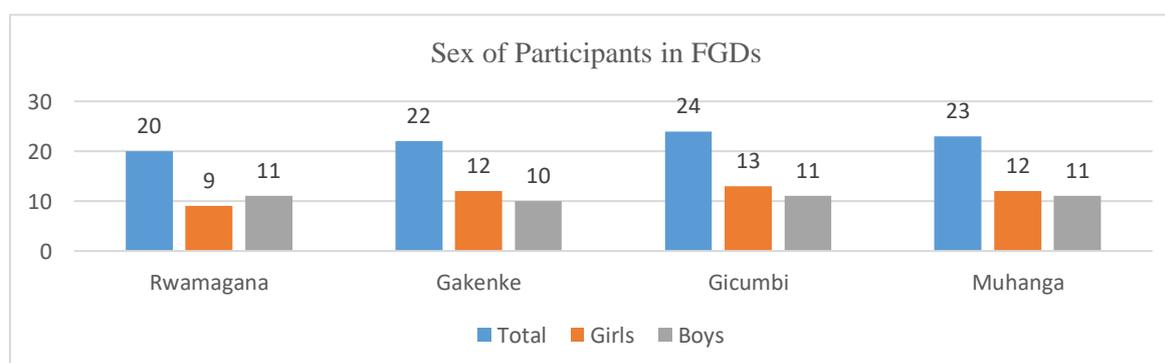
In total, 143 participants among them 79 children and 40 parents and community leaders were reached through FGDs. Table 2 shows detailed information on participant with disaggregation place, purpose/reason, kind of information collected from participants among children and community members.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants in FGDs (in numbers)

District	Sector	Children				Parents and Community Leaders			
		Age range	Male	Female	Total	Age range	Male	Female	Total
Rwamagana	Nzige	9-16	4	6	10				
	Rubona	9-17	5	5	10	29-53	6	4	10
Gakenke	Rusasa	10	5	5	10	27-46	6	6	12
	Rushashi	8-17	6	6	12				
Gicumbi	Bukure	8-16	7	6	13				
	Shangasha	11	6	5	11	29-58	4	5	9
Muhanga	Muhanga	12-17	6	5	11				
	Shyogwe	11-16	7	6	13	27-53	5	4	9
Total			46	44	90		21	19	40

Sex of children in FGDs

Figure 1: Sex of children who participated in FGDs (Percentages)

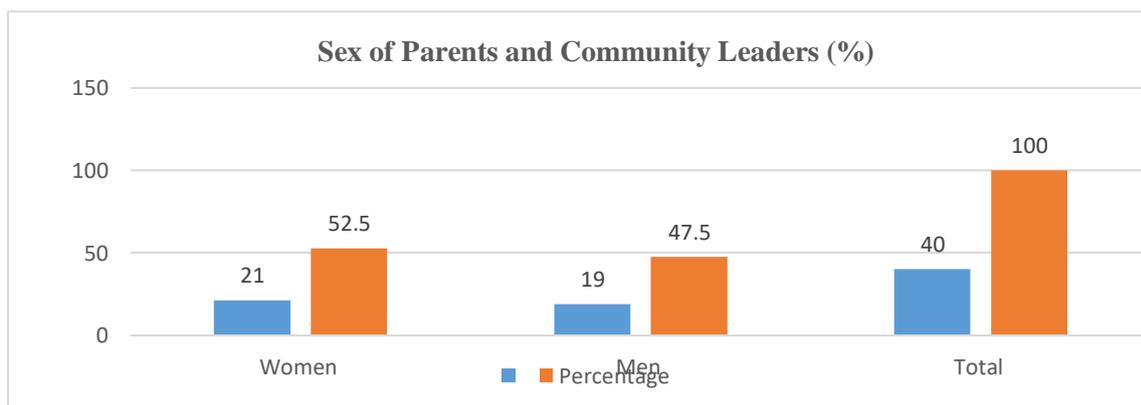


Among 89 children reached in four Districts, 46 girls (52%) and 43 boys (42%) participated in FGDs from 4 schools including: GS Bugoba in Rwamagana District and GS Kabuga in Gakenke District, GS Shyogwe in Muhanga District and GS Bukure in Gicumbi District.

The female sex was dominantly represented among children in Gicumbi and Gakenke District, where girls were more motivated and active to participate during the FGD sessions while in Muhanga and Rwamagana boys were more available and active than girls.

Sex of parents and community members

Figure 2: Sex of parents and community members who participated in FGDs (%)



Besides, among 40 parents and community leaders who participated in FGDs, 21(52.5%) were dominantly women comparing with 19 were men (47.5%) from four administrative sectors including: Rubona (Rwamagana District), Rusasa (Gakenke District), Shangasha (Gicumbi District) and Shyogwe (Muhanga District).

Among This category of informants includes 15 parents of contacted children, 6 religious' leaders from the selected sectors, 2 teachers from the selected schools, 6 community leaders (2 women and 4 men). Women were highly represented in both categories probably because they were more available than men, and were not involved in high level positions, which assumingly justifies why the female attendance in FGDs was higher than the male one.

Education level of parents and community leaders

Figure 3: Education level of parents and community leaders (%)

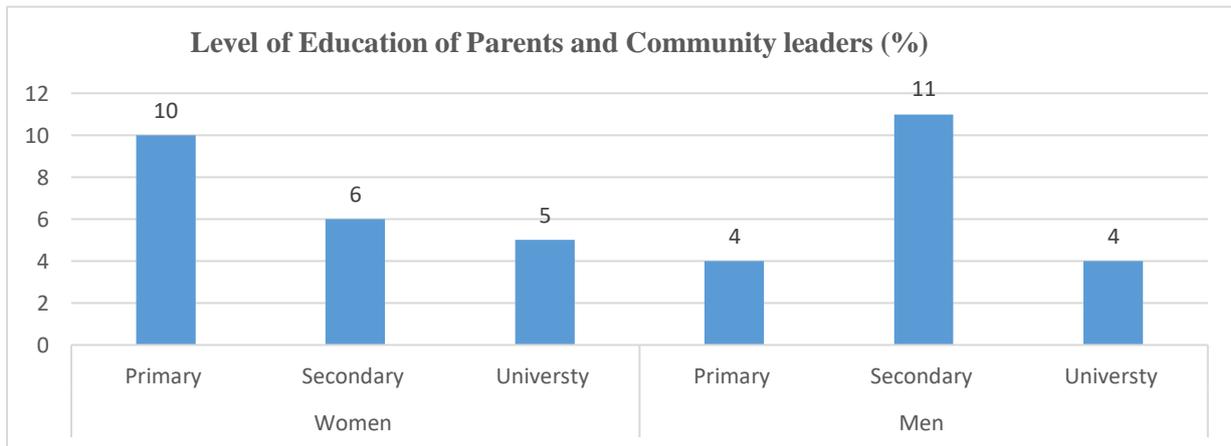


Figure 3 shows that in all districts, male and female parents had at least the primary education level which evidenced that educated parents were more likely to send their children to school. In general, female parents were less educated mostly with basic education level (primary and secondary). Despite the high number of females in FGDs, 79% of men had at least the secondary education level, compared with 52% of women with the same level. Female community leaders were more likely educated than most of other female parents, because those leaders were representing local government officials or civil society organizations.

In most cases for all districts, it was also assumed that women were majority represented in FGDs of parents and community leaders perhaps because men were busy running income generating activities while women stayed at home for domestic tasks and responsibilities. These may sensitively have an impact on the capability to be exposed to opportunities for accessing the accurate needed information for both men and women.

Specifically, the population of Gicumbi and Gakenke districts living in the remotest rural area, complained for the lack of electricity in their households and the inaccessibility to a range of communication tools, precisely those channels of information that function with electricity. It was also found out that the parents and community leaders were more educated in semi-urban districts than in rural districts, with more opportunities in town in terms of access financial facilities, information, communication and technology.

4.1.2. Characteristics of key informants

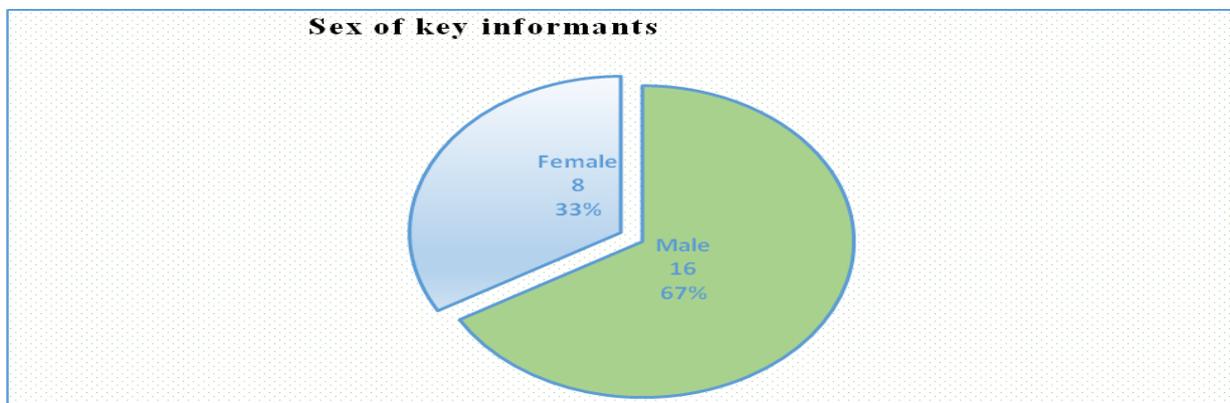
Interviews were conducted with 24 key informants selected from different working institutions of business opportunities, public and non-governmental institutions that reinforce child protection policies. They provided information on how child rights were repositioned in the national agenda and how the community received information from different sources.

Public and private media houses were also involved in evaluating the level of knowledge about child rights and prevention of child labor and how they can contribute to increase awareness and disseminate accurate information on child rights and prevention of child labor among the populations.

Gender characteristics of key informants

Out of 24 key informants, 8 were females representing 33% and 16 males representing 67%. The figure 6 hereafter portrays the picture of gender and social considerations as male and female.

Figure 4: Gender characteristics of key informants

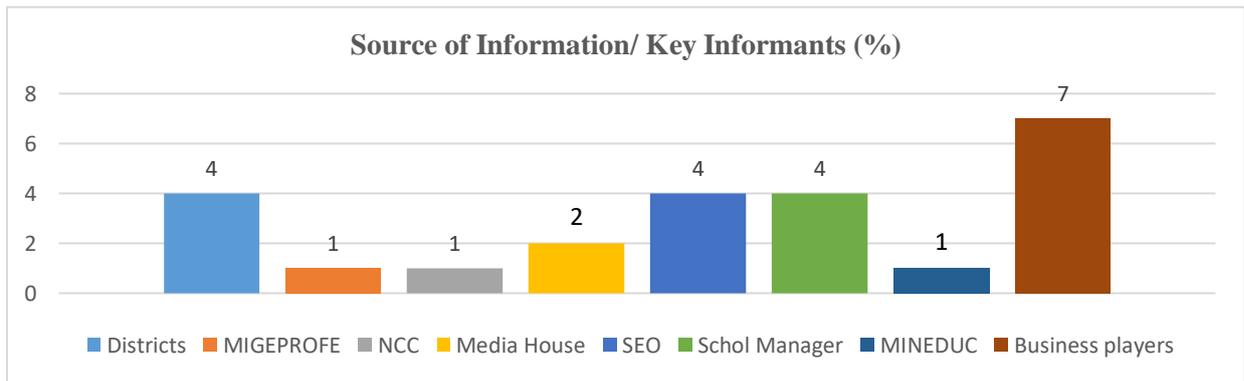


Among 24 participants as key informants from public and private institutions inform the community about the SRH. The disproportion between central and decentralized level in terms of women participation in decision making needs a vigorous and continuous mobilization for behavior change. At the level of decision-making men is more represented in different programs at both government and civil society sides. This situation may have a negative impact on the planning process of the programs aimed to promote women empowerment through different sectors of life.

Source of key informants

Among 24 respondents, 2 were journalists working in media houses, 4 districts, 4 Schools, 1 National Council, 2 Ministries, 4 from schools located in 4 districts, 2 from ministries intervening in child protection program, INCC and 7 business players.

Figure 5: Key informant source of information



Key institutions were highly represented among key informant interviews, while women (8 out of 24) were lesser represented (33%). Male informants were more likely educated than females, which makes a sounding disproportion of gender equity in decision-making among crosscutting programs that influence the fighting against child labor.

Type of working opportunities available in the community that include children in their activities

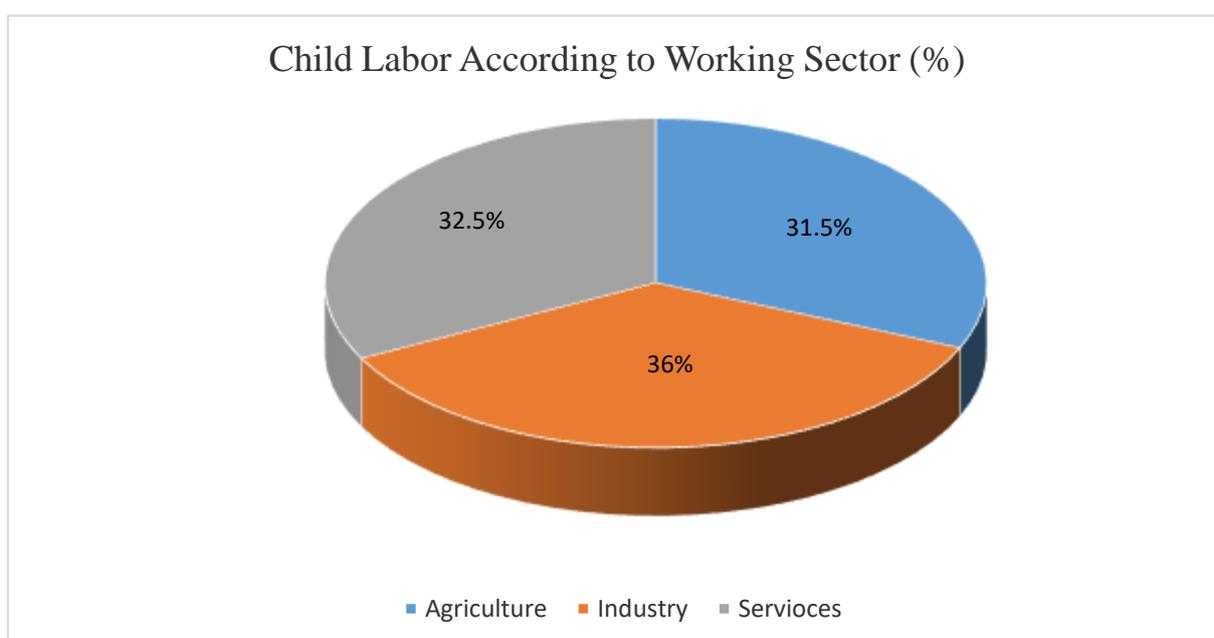
During the rapid assessment, participants provided information on different working opportunities that attract children to experiencing early exposure to work environment. While there is a considerable number of labored children, even many others are not directly working still face insecure and hazardous conditions.

Table 2: Sectors and activities identified according to interviewed children

Sector	Activity	Agree (%)
Agriculture	Sugarcane and rice production	4
	Banana production	3
	Tea production	5
	Harvesting beans, coffee, manioc, Pineapples Potatoes	4
	Herding cattle and caring for pigs Cheeps, goats, Chicken,	6
	Transporting goods to the market	6
Industry	Construction	4
	Producing charcoal	5
	Fetching water and laying bricks	7
	Making Bricks	8
	Mining	8
Services	Domestic work	5
	Collecting scrap metal	6
	Carrying heavy loads,	5
	Pottering	7
	Vending	3
	Begging	3

Across the occupation categories, 89% contacted children replied that they have experienced child labor condition at least once. The following chart shows the number of children who confirmed that they had experienced the child labor per sector.

Figure 6: Child Labor Situation per Main Occupation



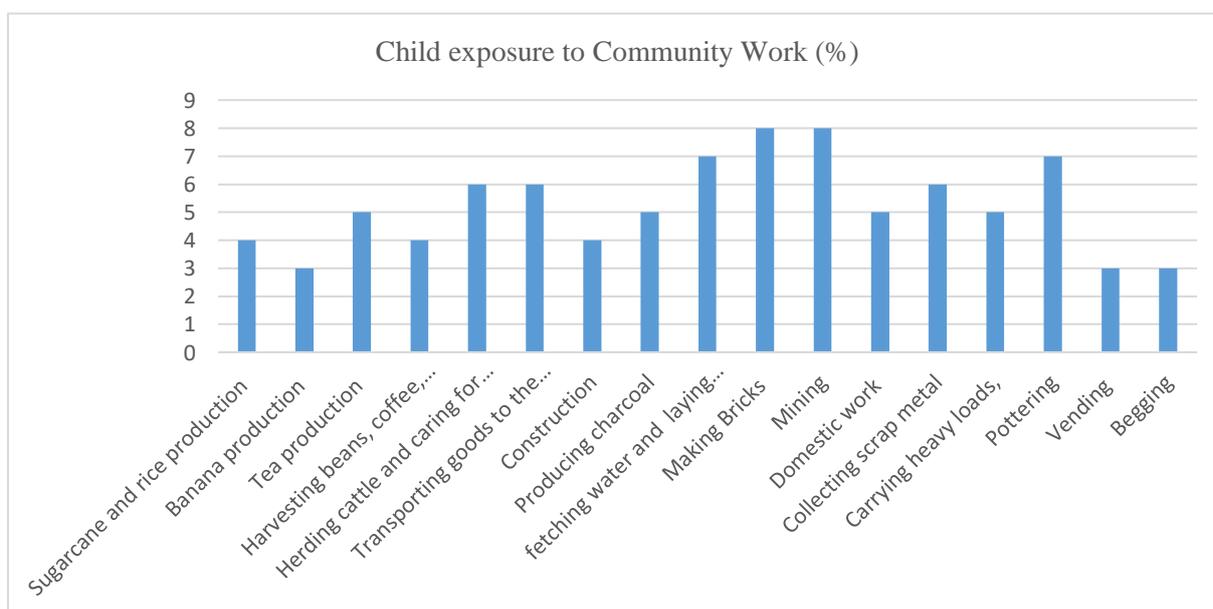
The most frequented working sectors by children include generally: industry (36%), domestic services (32.5%) and agriculture (31.5%). This assertion is supported by several past studies (Government of Rwanda, 2008; ILO, 2011; and World Bank, 2011).

4.1.3. Children frequency in community activities

Based on provided information from contacted children, children from each district are involved in different working sectors. In Rwamagana District, most of respondents confirmed to be involved in service (43%) and agriculture (38%) sectors.

In Gicumbi District, children were found actively working mainly in industry (48%) and agriculture (36%), and this situation was similar to that of Gakenke District (35%) and (34%) respectively. Muhanga presents a slight difference in terms of child labor situation per working sector where 34% represents the industry sector, 33% the service segment and 33% the agriculture domain.

Figure 7: Children work involvement in Gicumbi, Rwamagana, Gakenke and Muhanga



According to contacted children in four districts, child labor situation appears in different forms depending on the type of activities and working sector. Bricks making and mining are on the top, while pottering and water fetching when making bricks and construction activities are on the second position.

Girls do not have the same access as their brothers and this is due to the cultural norms where a girl is always with her mother in chicken to prepare food for the household members. In addition, most of child labor related job markets offer hard manual works that require physical strengths, which makes it more attractive to boys than girls. However, families headed by women do not have a difference between boys and girls in terms of exposure to early working condition.

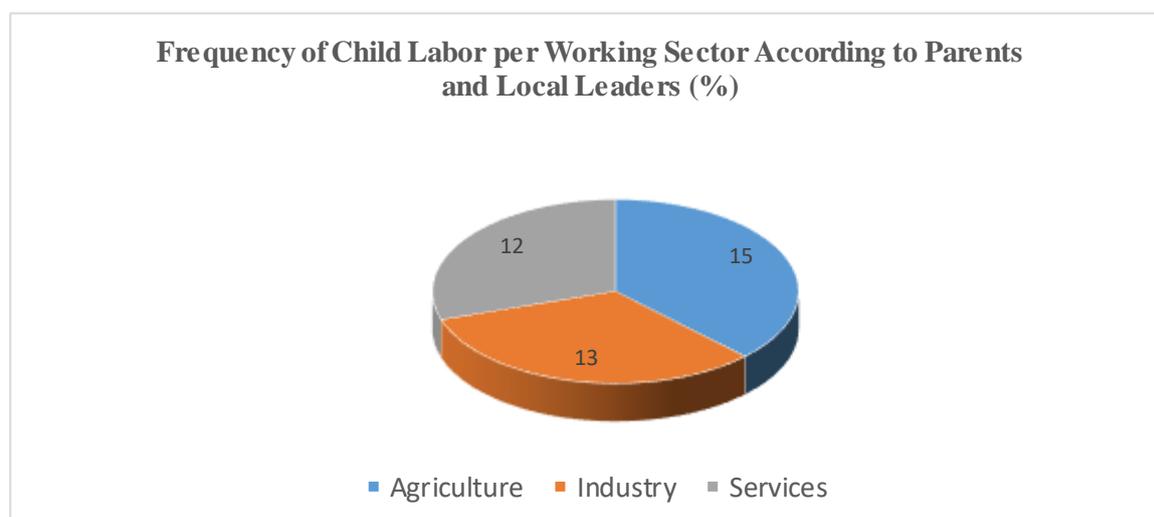
4.1.4. Children’s occupations according to parents and community leaders

In general, the most two highlighted sectors by parents and community leaders involving children in their daily activities include agriculture and industry. This assertion was totally matching with the one reported by the interviewed children according to whom these sectors are frequently attended for earning their wages.

Table 3: Sectors of activities identified by parents

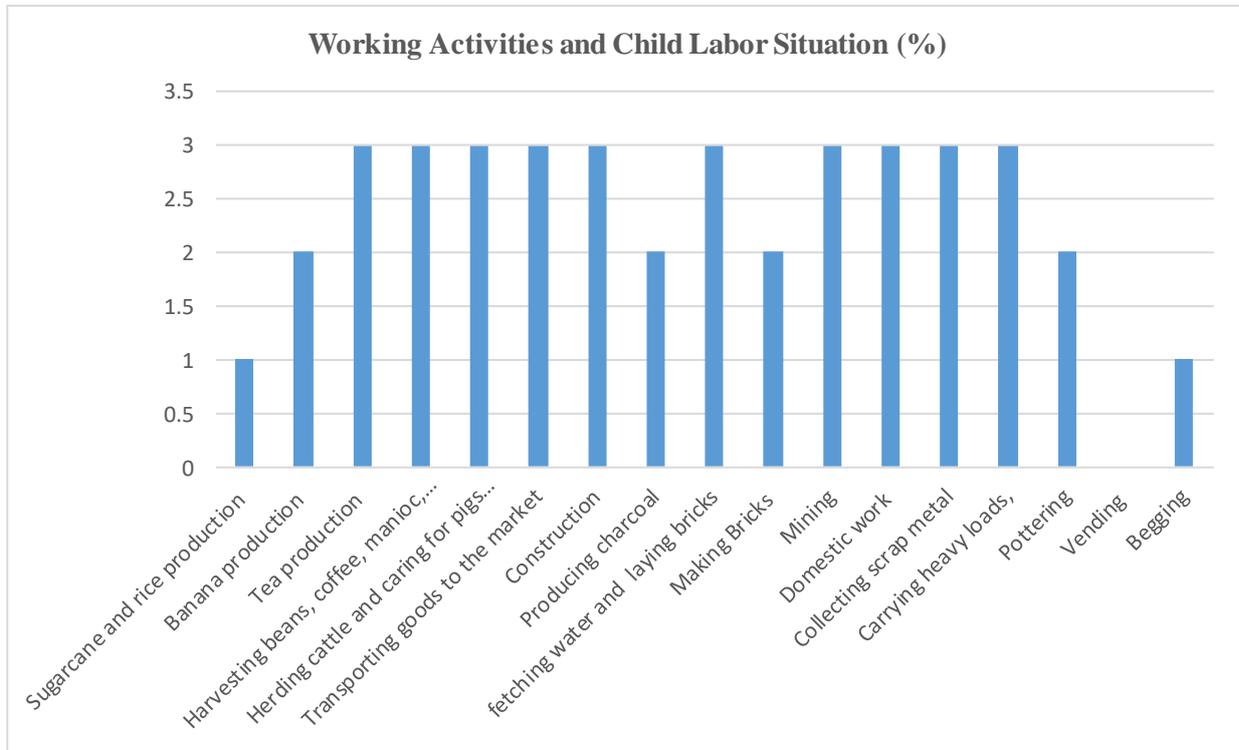
Sector	Activity	Agree (%)
Agriculture	Sugarcane and rice production	1
	Banana production	2
	Tea production	3
	Harvesting beans, coffee, manioc, Pineapples Potatoes	3
	Herding cattle and caring for pigs Cheeps, goats, Chicken,	3
	Transporting goods to the market	3
Industry	Construction	3
	Producing charcoal	2
	Fetching water and laying bricks	3
	Making Bricks	2
	Mining	3
Services	Domestic work	3
	Collecting scrap metal	3
	Carrying heavy loads,	3
	Pottering	2
	Vending	0
	Begging	1

Figure 8: Occupations versus degree of child labor



Parents and community leaders in all districts provided information on how children are involved in working sector activities. Contrary to the contacted children, parents and community leaders in all districts confirmed that on one hand children are mostly interested in agriculture whereby on the other hand both services and industry present almost the same level of attraction to children.

Figure 9: Attracting activities for children willing to earn money according to parents and community leaders



5. Causes of child labor by participants

During the rapid assessment, participants including students, parents and community leaders came up with very constructive contribution of statements. Students confirmed that they seek work because of the poverty faced by their parents who are unable to care for the basic needs of their children. They also argued that, at early age when children start their school education, they may meet with requests from their neighboring families in terms of domestic work for which they rewarded with food, fruits, coins to buy sweets, breads, etc. Some families motivate their children to look for work in order to support insufficient family income, for example children may get employed for supplying water to the neighboring construction sites. Similarly, as parents lack money for school education requirements, children spend their days working for some money, hoping to financially support their parents.

Students and parents all confirmed that poor control of children play a major role in child labor situation in Rwanda. During free time like holidays especially in the period of COVID-19

lockdown where all schools are closed, parents do not get enough time to follow up their children. Over working hours most of parents leave their families for job or other income related opportunities. In such a case, children are exposed to any kind of exploitative activity that can push them from home without notice of their parents.

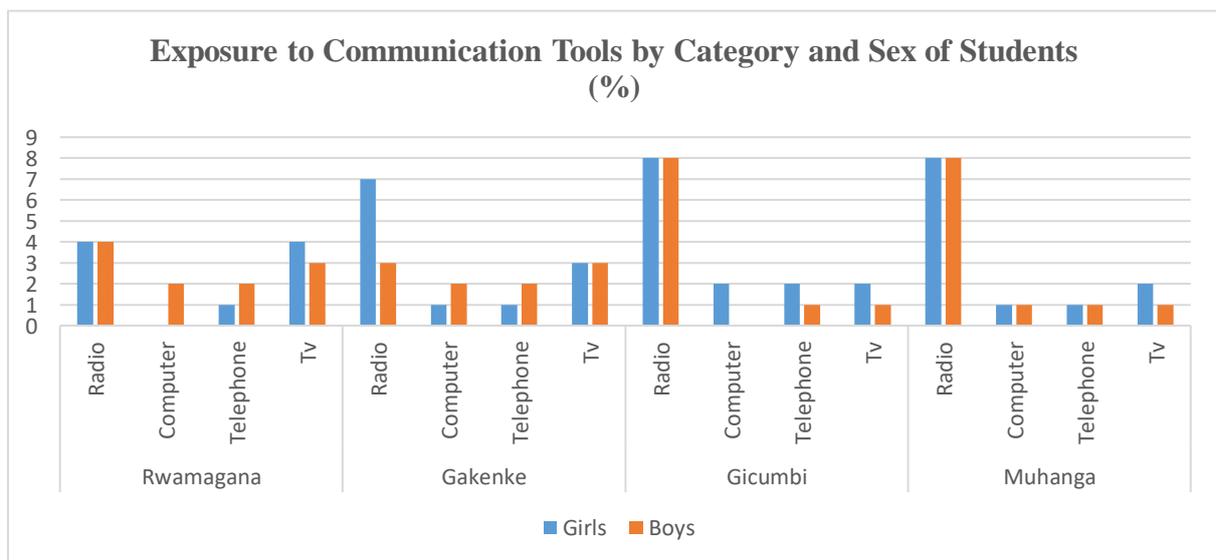
Key informants noted also that some of business players and entrepreneurs lack the awareness on the reality of child labor and its related consequences. They really commit mistakes due to lack of information on child protection policy and unscrupulously engage them in their institutional activities. Other entrepreneurs consider children as a source of cheapest workforce than adult persons. and also, because children are so rapid and flexible, thus they can accomplish their task in shorter period more than adults. Orphanhood is another factor leading to child labor; children with no parents/guardians are more exposed to child labor in order to survive or supporting their young siblings.

6. Communication tools used by the community to access the media in place

During the rapid assessment, participants provided information on the different tools when they want to seek information or key messages from media on child labor. The most used in general is the radio receiver while TV screen and computers are used by some wealthy families. Sometimes phone messages can be received too.

6.1. Availability of communication tools among contacted children

Figure 10: Access to communication tools among children in Muhanga, Rwamagana, Gakenke and Gicumbi Districts

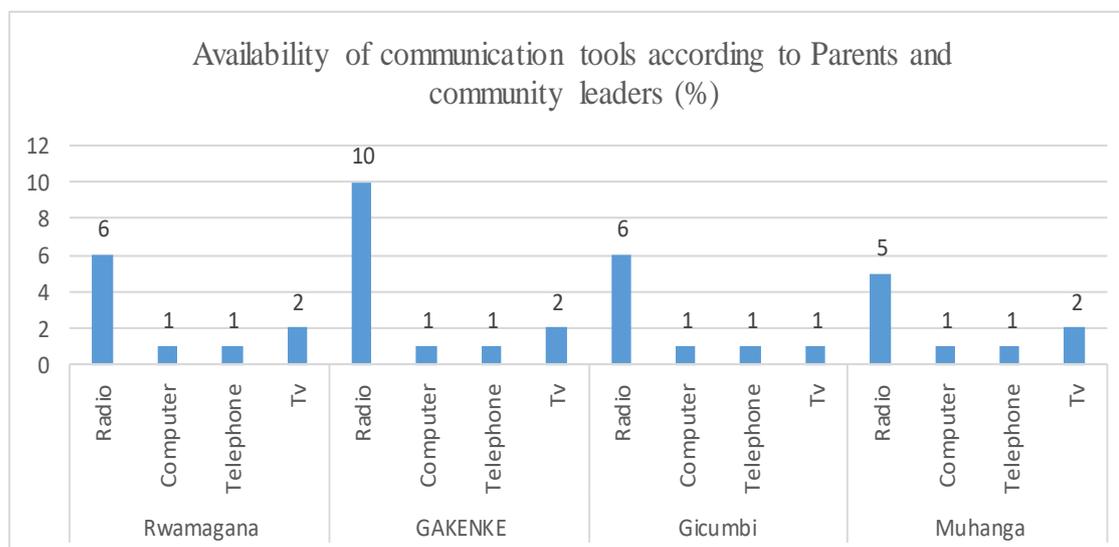


In all districts, communication tools and handsets were available. Both girls and boys had approximately the same access to communication tools, which is a good indicator of children’s equal treatment. There was no significant difference between boys and girls to telephone possession as good indicator of technology availability in rural regions.

Availability of communication tools among parents and community leaders

Figure 11: Availability of communication tools among parents and community leaders

Two most used communication tools by parents in all districts were radio and television sets (85%). Nevertheless, few families had TV sets, but computers were generally scarce.



6.2. Use of communication tools by students, parents and community leaders

During the rapid assessment, the key informants including students, parents and community leaders were convergent on the following statements:

- Almost all children confirmed that they have access to radio, TV and phones at home after school. They recognized their close cooperation with parents, sisters and brothers for the use of phones and other handsets owned by their parents. They said that parents provide gifts to their children including phones in case of good performance at school.
- Children and parents of Muhanga and Rwamagana have access to all communication handsets, mostly radio, phones, TV and sometimes computers and newspapers.
- Both girls and boys have the same exposure and access to communication tools but girls have a limitation to follow them because after school they are busy with household's tasks.

7. ROLE OF PRIVATE, TRADE UNIONS AND GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION IN CHILD RIGHT AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

The rapid assessment collected views and other information on how private, trade union and government institutions contribute to improve access to child labor prevention information. The role of these institutions was discussed with participants including students, parents and community leaders and KIs. It was time to collect advices on how to improve information accessibility dissemination of accurate information and community education on child rights and child services.

From FGDs and interviews, the participants requested to provide knowledge and skills on Child labor prevention using media houses in place with emphasis on laws, rights, programs implemented by the government and civil society organizations. Active participation in child protection will contribute to create broader societal support and institutional accountabilities to child right programming, laws and policies that promote and protect the human rights child in relation to their needs. *“No media no information, no information, no improvement”* said a female journalist on a private radio station. Considering the rapid assessment findings from views of participants, stakeholders in child protection and right play a big role as follows:

- National advisory committee on Child Labor: representatives from MIFOTRA, the Ministry of Youth, the Ministry of Education, MIGEPROF, the Ministry of Local Government (MINILOC), the Ministry of Sports and Culture, RNP, the National Human Rights Commission, the ILO, UNICEF, the Private Sector Federation, meet on quarterly basis. They discuss on governmental efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, review child labor laws, advocate for the inclusion of child labor policies in national development plans, oversee the implementation of child labor interventions, and conduct field visits to assess the prevalence of child labor and to raise awareness of child lab.
- National Commission for Children (NCC): Overseen by MIGEPROF and supported by a board of directors and an advisory council of 14 institutions monitor, promote, and advocate for children’s rights; develop action plans to protect children from abuse and exploitation.
- Local Committees: Monitor incidents of child labor nationwide through 149 local committees. In the case of the Child Labor Committees, implement policies developed by the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor in 30 districts and coordinate district labor inspectors, police, and social services officers in conducting inspections, enforcing labor laws, and providing social services to child labor victims.
- Trade union: Advocate, trains and shares information to other institutions in order to fight against worst form of child labor because trade union is based and represented in the companies where children works.

8. STRATEGIES TO ELIMINATE EXPLOITATIVE CHILD LABOR

Child labor and its associated problems cannot be considered in isolation. They must be addressed by holistic interventions that focus on the cross-cutting dimensions of child labor, and that articulate a common vision of success.

8.1. Empower families in poverty in order to improve their socioeconomic conditions

Governments and partners should “act together to empower children, their families and communities to end poverty”. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. In particular, the Convention recognizes the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Poverty hurts children’s development and, in turn, leads to lower income and health in adulthood. When child poverty is recognized as a denial of children’s human rights then people in positions of responsibility and power are legally bound to promote, protect and fulfill children’s rights. Above all, it is imperative to recognize and address the specific discriminations experienced by the girl child (United Nations, 2019).

8.2. Provide free education for all children in poverty:

Although Rwanda has introduced free education as part of government policy to improve school enrolment in general and the attendance of deprived children in particular; there is a strong effect of the sibling position of the child in the household and its relation to the household head. Substantial numbers of orphans in Rwanda do not profit from the free education policy and part of the children leave before completing school, in particular girls. Free education is only one step towards a more equitable distribution of educational opportunities (Nkurunziza, *et al.*, 2012). The role of education in preventing and combating child labor has been recognized worldwide. Education provides children with an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty and to gain important social, personal and cognitive skills.

8.3. Free school meals for all children in poverty

They should be available to children from the lowest income families. Eating a school meal helps children to stay healthy and improves behavior and learning. Getting free school meals often means children can also get help with school clothing allowances, school trips, music lessons and access to leisure centers.

8.4. Deliver vocational training to youths:

In order for young people to experience a smoother transition to jobs, countries should strengthen the vocational part of their school-based education and bring existing vocational education and training systems closer to the current needs of the labor market. (Foundation, Vol. 9, Nos. 1–2 (2013) and al.), vocational education provided in the framework of secondary schooling (vocational schools or vocational tracks) has to be modernized and complemented with phases of practical work experience, for example, via internships or spending the final year with an employer. Employers need to be consulted regarding the

design of vocational schooling curricula, which requires a systematic coordination with networks or associations of employers. Furthermore, transition to further education, including tertiary education, should be facilitated in order to avoid a negative perception of vocational education as a dead-end option. Finally, in some countries reducing vocational education fees can help increase enrollment.

8.5. Sensitize the Community:

Inciting community action to mitigate rates of rural child labor decreases the chances that children will fall victim to the worst, most exploitative forms of labor. Of course, this rural-based approach will not work for the many children born and raised in urban areas who also fall victim to the worst forms of child labor. Nevertheless, this strategy will help ensure that rural children, who comprise the vast majority of all children exploited by harmful labor, will be less likely to drop out of school, to be enticed to leave their communities in search of better employment in urban areas, to fall victim to trafficking networks, or to become involved in gangs, organized crime and other illicit activities.

In addition, women can significantly contribute to reducing rates of child labor in their homes and in their communities. Women who are empowered and keenly aware of the dangers associated with child labor have proven vital to reducing child labor and keeping their children in school. Conversely, women can also fuel child labor when they are unaware of its potential dangers and do not understand the mitigating power of education; this is illustrated by their implicit or explicit approval of children dropping out of school to pursue fulltime employment. A comprehensive analysis of how women help mitigate or exacerbate rates of child labor is urgently needed.

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