



Rwanda

POLICY SCORECARD



To what extent are Rwanda's national policies that focus on engaging men and boys gender-transformative?



MenEngage Alliance

working with men and boys for gender equality

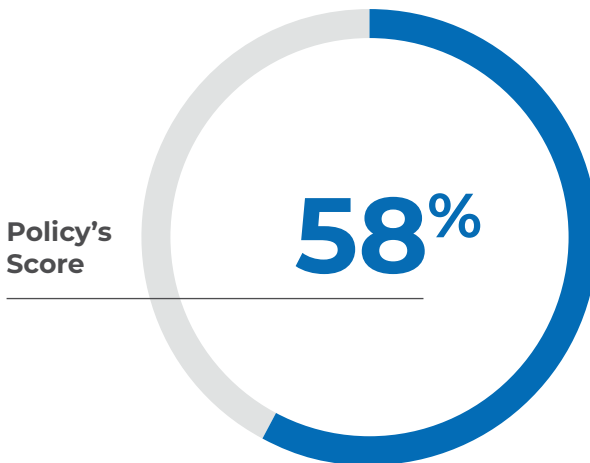
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A review of Rwanda's **National Policy**:

National Policy against Gender-Based Violence, 2011

At a glance

The inclusion of policy actions that disrupt harmful gender norms through sexuality education and challenge gender-based violence in the public and private sphere, along with the National Strategic Plan to Combat Gender-Based Violence 2011-2016, provide a solid framework for addressing gender-based violence. While encouraging, the policy unfortunately misses some important contours of gender-based violence. Moreover, despite calling for a range of stakeholders to support implementation efforts, key informants indicate that while collaboration exists, it is not defined. These issues are reflected in the policy's overall score of 58%.



This is part of a series of policy reviews developed in partnership between MenEngage Global Alliance and FemJust.

Find out more about the methodology used to review this policy – and how you can use it to hold law-makers and policy implementing institutions accountable from national to global levels – at menengage.org/advocacy.

The policy was reviewed independently against a methodological framework that assesses the policy against a range of criteria. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from interviews, document reviews, and survey responses.

Interviews and respondents included feminist, LGBTIQ and youth activists, and people from government and UN officials, and academia. Find out more about the methodology and detailed results for Rwanda and other countries assessed at menengage.org/advocacy.

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THIS IS A REVIEW
OF THE POLICY:

**National Policy against Gender-
Based Violence, 2011**

DATES OF THE
POLICY:

2011-2016

SCOPE:

National policy of Rwanda

POLICY
DEVELOPED BY:

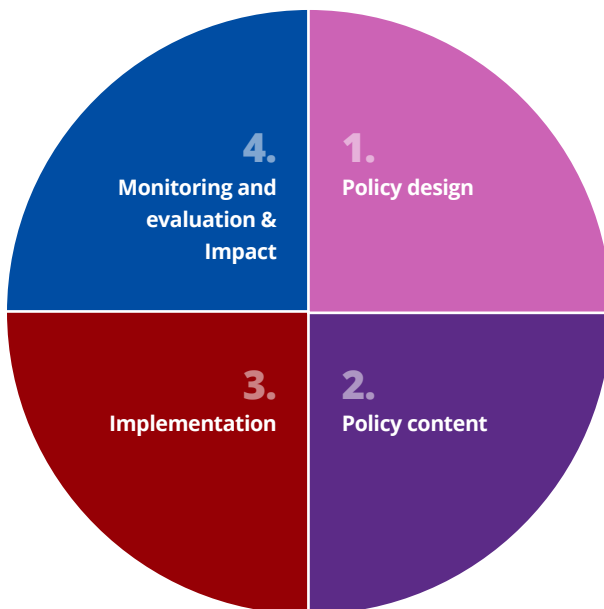
**The National Strategic Plan
for Fighting Against Gender-
based Violence 2011-2016 which
supplements the policy further**

How has this policy been analysed?

The policy was analysed based on its alignment to the following frameworks through all phases of the policy process:

- 1. Intersectional Feminist analysis**
- 2. Human rights-based approach**
- 3. The socio-ecological model**

The policy's approach towards engaging men and boys through a feminist policy process is assessed across four areas:



What makes a policy gender-transformative?

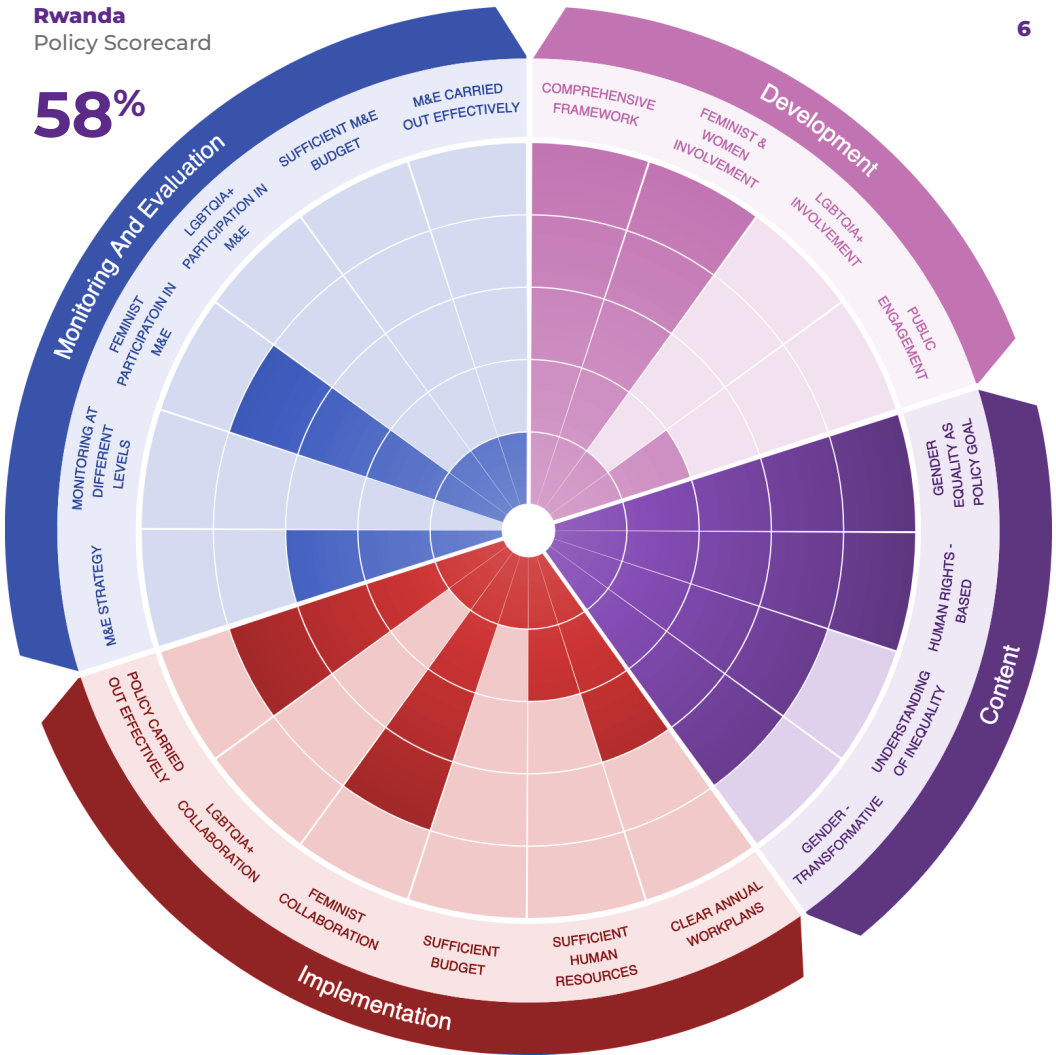
A gender-transformative policy aims to: dismantle harmful and oppressive social and gender norms, create new norms that affirm people of all gender identities and expressions, and redistribute gendered and other intersecting forms of power and privilege. It also puts into practice the human rights principles of participation, empowerment, accountability, transparency, and centering the most affected and the most marginalized, among others.

It appropriately conceptualizes and analyzes the problem in focus - for example, gender inequality or gender-based violence or adverse sexual and reproductive health outcomes. **This includes identifying the power imbalances created by gender norms and stereotypes, and how these intersect with other forms of oppression.** It does not perpetuate existing gender norms and stereotypes in its framing, assumptions or strategies.

It recognizes the leadership of feminist and queer movements and meaningfully engages them at all stages of the policy process, from design to implementation to evaluation. At its heart, a gender-transformative policy is **accountable to all those who have been historically oppressed by patriarchal norms**, discrimination and violence, including girls, women, trans, non-binary and queer people.

When a gender-transformative policy engages men and boys, it does so in service of the mission of achieving a gender just society, social and political institutions, and policy framework. **Specific strategies call on and enable them to recognize and dismantle patriarchal power and privilege utilizing an intersectional feminist approach.** Strategies to engage men and boys do not operate in a silo, rather form part of a comprehensive strategic framework to achieve gender transformation and equality.

58%



This chart shows how strong the policy is in terms of intersectional feminist thinking and practice, across 20 scoring criteria. The criteria are grouped into four areas, offering a quick visual guide to how well the policy was developed, implemented and monitored, as well as the strength of its content. The scores reflect a thorough assessment of evidence and interviews, against a standardised scoring framework.

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Highlights

- ▲ Women's rights organizations were actively involved in the development of the policy, including in two consultations, as key informants during data collection, and in external validation exercises.
- ▲ The policy is part of a comprehensive gender equality framework that draws on international and regional level agreements, and is in line with other national policies.
- ▲ The inclusion of sexuality education as a strategy offers an important opportunity to challenge harmful norms and behaviors that underlie gender inequality and gender-based violence.



Lowlights

- ▼ LGBTQI activists and organizations are invisible in the design and implementation of the policy. Similarly, sex workers, who are deeply impacted by gender-based violence were excluded from the policy process.
- ▼ A lack of resources to build sufficient capacity and expertise among government officers as well as limited resources for policy implementation - particularly at the district and local levels - undercut the policy's aspirations.



From GBV being understood primarily as a “women’s issue” to the present day conceptualization of men as allies and beneficiaries, awareness-raising among men has come to define the framing of male involvement, as has an acknowledgement that GBV cannot be effectively eliminated if men and boys are not recruited in the effort.

The policy underscores that gender-based violence “serves - by intention or effect - to perpetuate male power and control.” Harmful masculinities are clearly identified as a major contributor and entrenched gender roles are understood to be a primary obstacle in prevention efforts.



**“I think it is good
bas[ed] on [our]
experience. We have
been involved in
the drafting of the
new GBV Policy by
Migreprof this year;
And all our inputs
have been taken into
consideration.”**

FEMINIST ACTIVIST

In what landscape did the policy emerge?

The government and many CSOs in Rwanda have embraced the need to involve men and boys in promoting gender equality and combating GBV. National discourse reflects a strong political will to engage men and boys through relevant policies, and increasingly, in communities throughout the country, men and boys are seen to have an important role in curbing GBV.

From GBV being understood primarily as a “women’s issue” to the present day conceptualization of men as allies and beneficiaries, awareness-raising among men has come to define the framing of male involvement, as has an acknowledgement that GBV cannot be effectively eliminated if men and boys are not recruited in the effort. This has taken on various forms in the country. For example, anti-GBV clubs which promote attitudinal change have sprung up in schools and universities, as have community-based structures (such as *Inshuti z’Umuryango*/ Friends of the Family volunteers, and *Umugoroba w’ababyeyi*/ Parents’ Evening forum) which bring people together to raise awareness and support efforts to eradicate GBV. The Rwanda Men’s Resource Centre - a national level CSO devoted entirely to promoting positive masculinity - has also been established and has emerged as an important voice on engaging men and boys in the country.

The inclusion of men and boys in work that has primarily been led by women’s rights and feminist activists in the country, however, has not been entirely smooth. A hot button issue, tensions exist between women’s rights organizations that have embraced the engagement of men and boys within their own programming and feminist groups that are wary of a potential shift in focus. Current discourse between women’s rights groups and feminist activists focuses not on whether men and boys should be engaged but rather on **how** to involve men and boys while preventing mission creep and continuing to center those who experience GBV.



How was the policy design process carried out?

The National Policy against Gender-Based Violence of 2011 describes a widely consultative development process. A technical committee, led by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), convened multiple ministries, including the Ministries of Health, Justice, Local Government, as well as other government stakeholders such as the Rwandan Defense Force, the National Police, the National Commission to Fight HIV/AIDS, the National Women's Council, and the Gender Monitoring Office in the policy design process. Consultants were engaged to draft the policy and facilitate civil society participation in two wide consultations held between October-November 2010 and January-February 2011.

Local CSOs, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), the private sector, and development partners were also involved in and contributed to the national policy's development. Women's groups, including Profemmes Twese Hamwe, an umbrella organization of 54 women's rights organizations that work in different thematic areas (i.e. GBV, faith, gender equality, etc.) and the Rwandan CSO Platform - a key national actor with regards to broad representation - both participated as key informants during data collection and in external validation exercises.

There are questions, however, about the diversity of organizations consulted. Although feminist activists participated, it is unclear whether feminist organizations did, and it is unlikely that any group representing the rights of LGBTQI people or people with disabilities participated. There were also gaps in capturing the input of some organizations focused on engaging men and boys, indicating, according to key informants, that the consultation process was more of a formality, rather than a meaningful attempt to collect substantive feedback.

Policy strategic areas:

- **STRATEGIC AREA 1A:**
Foster a prevention focused environment where GBV is not tolerated in society.
- **STRATEGIC AREA 2B:**
Improve accountability and eliminate impunity for GBV.



How are masculinities addressed in the content of the policy?

The national policy recognizes GBV as multidimensional, influenced by several factors, and intersecting across all aspects of people's lives. The policy underscores that GBV "serves - by intention or effect - to perpetuate male power and control." Harmful masculinities are clearly identified as a major contributor and entrenched gender roles are understood to be a primary obstacle in prevention efforts. Men and boys, the policy contends, are often excluded from the conversation around GBV, even though they are also affected, rather than considered partners in the response. As such, all people have a role to play in challenging the social attitudes that fuel GBV.

The policy aligns with the country's other national policies and strategies, including the National Gender Policy (2009-2012), the National Decentralization Policy, the National Population Policy, the Reproductive Health and Rights Strategy, Vision 2020, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, the current Seven Year Government Programme (2010-2017), and the National Action Plan (2009-2012) on UNSC Resolution 1325. The policy is further aligned with international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals.

The policy established three main strategic areas and identifies their primary constraints and proposals for actions to be taken. Two strategic areas are relevant to the work of engaging men and boys:



STRATEGIC AREA 1A: Foster a prevention focused environment where GBV is not tolerated in society.

Constraint: Low understanding of the concept of gender, entrenched ideas of gender roles and negative social attitudes create an environment that fosters GBV.

Policy actions:

- Promote gender equality and GBV prevention in educational institutions
- Strengthen sensitization to promote understanding of gender and positive social norms and attitudes within the community
- Actively engage men and boys in the fight against GBV
- Provide appropriate sensitization for parents and guardians and actively engage them in creating a GBV hostile family environment.
- Educate people, especially the youth on reproductive health, specifically on sexuality and biological changes”



STRATEGIC AREA 2B: Improve accountability and eliminate impunity for GBV.

Constraint: Ignorance of the law, fear or embarrassment of coming forward and anxiety about the consequences of prosecution on the family impacts on the reporting of GBV cases.

Policy actions:

- Provide support to communities to promote understanding of gender and positive social norms and attitudes.

Constraint: The current system of dealing with offenders does not address underlying causes or prevent re-offending.

Policy actions:

- Develop innovative measures for holding perpetrators accountable.
- Provide rehabilitative programmes for offenders.”

The National Strategic Plan for Fighting Against Gender-based Violence 2011-2016 which supplements the policy further elaborates on these key strategic areas. Notably, it prescribes education campaigns on gender roles and masculinities, sensitization on positive gender values for religious and local leaders, capacitation of community-based organizations, and media, while also establishing and strengthening “men and boys” discussion forums in schools and universities. These, combined with the inclusion of policy actions that disrupt harmful gender norms through sexuality education and challenge GBV in the public and private sphere provide a strong framework to address GBV. Moreover, the policy focuses on a wide range of constituents; perpetrators of GBV, services providers, young people, government institutions, the private sector, media, the judiciary and law enforcement are all targeted for policy interventions. While encouraging, the policy unfortunately neglects some important contours of GBV. For example, there is no discussion of gender-based discriminations at the intersection of other oppressions, nor does it target specific populations of men who are at higher risk of being perpetrators (e.g. men who have previously experienced violence), or addressing those targeted by violence because of their sexual or gender identities.

As a cross-cutting issue, the government uses gender-responsive budgeting and encourages ministries to consider gender across all sector policies, programmes, strategic plans, and action plans. GBV on the other hand is not mainstreamed and is integrated only in sectors considered relevant, such as education or health.

There are obstacles to understanding the budget allocation for GBV; however, key informants indicate that it is likely to be deeply inadequate. A critical challenge in understanding funding levels for GBV interventions rest with how monies are distributed: the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning provide sectors with a global budget and it is up to the sector to determine how much to allocate to gender-related issues such as GBV (if in fact it was identified as a key issue within that sector’s strategy). In turn, the sector’s gender budgeting statement outlines the key issues to be addressed, the proposed interventions, and proposed budgets. However, when

disclosed, actual expenditure for gender-related activities such as GBV is limited. To paraphrase a key informant: “How can a policy be transformative if the very poor on the ground do not participate, and only a few select CSOs are supported?” Beyond this, the lack of specific budget for engaging men and boys suggests that any funds earmarked for it reduces the overall availability of funding for work carried out by women’s rights and anti-GBV organizations.

Similarly, GBV sits within the MIGEPROF, which is itself underfunded and receives a far smaller proportion of the national budget than do sectors such as agriculture, education, or infrastructure; this has prompted the Ministry to mobilize resources from external partners (i.e. UN Women, UN Children’s Fund - UNICEF, or Plan International) to minimize shortfalls but even this is inadequate.



How well has the policy been implemented?

Rwanda's administrative architecture and inadequate resources for GBV stymie implementation efforts. The chain of implementation spans from the level of the MIGEPROF to, in subsequent order, provincial, district, sector, cell, and village levels, and within this chain, problems arise. Planners at the district level are responsible to combine and streamline sectoral priorities as determined at the provincial level. Unfortunately, because districts have their own action plans, which are distinct from provincial action plans, interventions addressing GBV at times fail to make their way into sector action plans or receive negligible funds (e.g. \$1,000 US dollars).

The policy calls upon a number of stakeholders to support implementation efforts, including national and local government institutions, the judiciary and law enforcement, the National Commission on Human Rights, the National Youth Council, the Ombudsman, National Institute for Statistics, educational institutions, CSOs, community- and faith-based organizations, media, the private sector, INGOs, and development partners. Despite this robust list of stakeholders, key informants indicated that while collaboration exists, it is not defined. For example, the Ministry will likely collaborate with INGOs (e.g. CARE International) if approached, with resources in hand, rather than the Ministry intentionally developing a scope of work around collaboration with CSOs. Moreover, the Ministry will typically only collaborate with registered organizations, which by and large excludes groups working on the rights of LGBTQI people and sex worker's rights organizations, segments of society deeply affected by GBV, yet thus far entirely invisible in the design, substance, or implementation of the policy.



Has the policy been monitored & evaluated?

The Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) is an essential part of Rwanda's gender machinery and plays a leading role in monitoring and evaluation efforts. Per the policy, the GMO "has the responsibility of carrying out the evaluation of compliance with gender indicators at national level, on a permanent basis. It has a specific responsibility for addressing GBV. Overall it serves as a "watch dog" on all aspects of gender monitoring at the national level. GMO will be responsible for designing formats for the reporting of GBV cases and for defining the indicators on which to base assessments concerning GBV. In addition, the GMO processes, analyses and disseminates relevant and reliable national data on GBV."

To date, the GMO cites among its achievements assessments for public, private, and CSOs on the quality of services provided for survivors as well as the evaluation of existing mechanisms for the prevention and response to GBV (including evaluations of mechanisms for addressing GBV in schools, and the hospitality industry); monitoring of Isange One Stop Centers; and GBV hearing sessions at the community level.

Unfortunately, a lack of capacity at the level of planners and budget officers spanning the central to the local levels prevents accurate and rigorous monitoring and evaluation, and even more problematically, it appears that monitoring only takes place at the national level. Repeatedly, key informants cited a lack of resources for capacity-strengthening or implementation at the Ministry as a challenge. As a result planning tools such as data collection tools, analysis frameworks, and indicators are inadequate and unable to meaningfully monitor change, and thus the impact of the policy.

Key informants were also not aware of any significant evaluation of the nearly decade-old policy having taken place, though they highlighted that some evaluative questions were included in the country's demographic

health survey. Other valuable work by civil society actors, such as a 2010 study on masculinity and GBV¹ have been conducted, however, there is an urgent need to improve capacities and resourcing for monitoring and evaluation at all administrative levels by the government if GBV is ever to be effectively addressed.

1. [Masculinity and Gender Based Violence in Rwanda: Experience and Perceptions of Men and Women](#). Henny Slegh and Augustin Kimonyo. Rwanda MenEngage Network, Rwanda's Men Resource Centre. 2010.

A closer look at the other case studies

As part of this initiative, we carried out a review of other national policies, including:

Costa Rica	Política nacional para la atención y la prevención de la violencia contra las mujeres de todas las edades Costa Rica 2017-2032 (National Policy for the Attention and Prevention of Violence against Women)
Czech Republic	Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic for 2014 – 2020
Indonesia	Government Regulation Number 61 of 2014 on Reproductive Health
Mexico	Estrategía Nacional para la Prevención del Embarazo en Adolescentes (National Strategy for the Prevention of Teen Pregnancy)
Rwanda	National Policy against Gender-Based Violence, 2011
Sri Lanka	Policy Framework and National Plan of Action to address Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) in Sri Lanka 2016-2020
Trinidad and Tobago	National Policy on Gender and Development: A Green Paper, 2018
Turkey	National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women (2016-2020)

Cross-Cutting Themes Across All Score Cards

Some key themes surface from the country scorecards:

Almost universally, **gender inequality** is not fully understood, particularly how patriarchal norms lead to social control of sexuality, sexual behavior, bodies and gender identities, and how this results in oppression and violence against not only women but also queer and trans men, intersex and nonbinary people.

Oftentimes there is a disconnect between a policy's stated intentions and the **implementation** on the ground, which may be poor, or even nonexistent. There is even an instance where a robust policy has been adopted but the government through its actions is actively undermining gender equality and the rights of women and LGBTQI people.

LGBTQI groups and organizations are largely absent from the processes of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies focused on gender equality, gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health.

Across the board, **human and financial resources** are insufficient for the effective implementation of the policies assessed. Often national budgets lack the systems and/or the transparency required in order to track the funds allocated towards the implementation of specific policies.

Nearly all the policies include **gender-transformative strategies** to engage men and boys, with a focus on changing the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of men and boys; challenging oppressive social norms and stereotypes; adoption of gender-transformative programs and policies by social institutions; and strengthening the legal and policy framework in favor of gender equality.

A large majority of the policies have adequate accountability mechanisms in the form of **monitoring and evaluation** strategies; however, these are not followed through with sufficient funds or action. Moreover, indicators intended to monitor progress are often quantitative and focused on outputs or outcomes, rather than processes or impact.

Would you like to carry out this methodological analysis for a national - regional - global policy?

The Policy Analysis Toolkit serves as tools which aim to support the efforts of MenEngage Alliance's members and other advocates to advance gender-transformative policies and programs.

The Policy Analysis Toolkit, as an accompaniment resource to the policy case studies and score cards, can further be utilized and adapted to analyze other national, regional and global policies.

The process and resources to replicate these efforts can be accessed at menengage.org/advocacy.

