



IN BRIEF

# FINAL EVALUATION OF THE ‘TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO RECOGNIZE, REDUCE, AND REDISTRIBUTE UNPAID CARE WORK IN WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING (3R PROGRAMME)’.

Photo: UN Women Rwanda: The head of the cooperative in Ngera sector exposing problems that they face due to the lack of ECD services

## Programme description

To **address the inequities in unpaid care work**, UN Women developed the programme: ‘Transformative approaches to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work in women’s economic empowerment programming’ (‘3R Programme’).

Funded by the Government of Canada, through Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and with a global budget of USD 3.9 million the programme was implemented in Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa between April 2021 and April 2023.

## Evaluation overview

The independent evaluation aimed to assess programme results and how and why they were achieved to inform decisions such as whether to continue the intervention, to improve it, to scale it up or replicate it elsewhere.

## Key achievements

- The 3R Programme successfully integrated a stand-alone care component into existing UN Women programmes on climate-resilient agriculture and rural women’s economic empowerment in the three target countries.

- The Programme filled a critical gap in alleviating structural barriers to women’s full and equal participation in the economies of Rwanda and Senegal by recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work through developing a holistic package of transformative solutions, such as childcare services and time- and labour-saving equipment, including water pumps and tanks, environmentally friendly stoves and food warmers, and tri-motorcycles to transport production.
- Across the three countries, sustainable impact on women’s empowerment in communities was achieved through the programme’s components that combined generation of local evidence and knowledge on unpaid care work, advocacy and policy work at the national and local level.

- In Senegal, the 3R Programme succeeded in integrating the dimension of unpaid care work in six Local Development Plans, marking a landmark in dismantling structural gender inequalities that prevent women and girls from realizing their economic rights and empowerment.
- Though programme implementation largely failed in South Africa, its design clearly mapped out and actively involved participation of programme participants, implementing partners (IPs) and Government partners.

## Conclusions

### RELEVANCE

- The 3R Programme has specifically responded to the need for more programmatic interventions on recognizing, reducing and redistributing (3Rs) women's unpaid care and domestic work, as well as overall time poverty. The programme design responded to the aspirations of the three programme countries to achieve inclusive economic growth and nationalized SDGs by creating a more enabling environment for women's economic participation.

### SUSTAINABILITY

- Across the three programme countries, the choice of partners and entities involved in programme implementation stands out as a key enabler of sustainability.
- Programme design and implementation was solidly anchored in the ownership and strong involvement of programme participants starting from its planning phase throughout all programme stages, to ensure that their perspectives, needs, and concerns were considered.
- The capacity-building component, including policy dialogues and awareness raising initiatives on women's disproportionate share of unpaid care work, represented a hallmark of the 3R Programme's contribution to sustainability across the three countries,

targeting the government, local authorities, implementing partners and civil society organizations by effectively challenging discriminatory social norms.

### EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

- The implementation of the 3R Programme was cost-effective and presented a good value for money in Rwanda and Senegal.
- The programme design and implementation clearly integrated key entry points and strategic partnerships to promote women's economic empowerment at the policy, institutional and grassroots levels.
- Guided by the principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB), the programme targeted the neediest women and emphasized the needs of the most vulnerable women, which was evident in the allocation of the budget to promote their employability and the inclusion of women-led cooperatives into the market.

### GENDER, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

- The 3R programme strongly invested in the participation and promoted the involvement of programme participants at all stages—especially those in danger of being left behind.
- Programme participants were directly involved in the definition of operational activities on the ground.
- The strong use of research elements through context and needs assessment allowed the generation of valuable information to explain the various dimensions of unpaid care work, with the aim of finding relevant solutions that would directly respond to the needs of women in vulnerable situations.
- The methodology adopted in this process across the three countries consisted of diverse groups of women, including those with low levels of formal education and literacy, ensuring their voices would also be part of the discourse on unpaid care work and shaping the nature of the 3R programme.

## Lessons learned

The evaluation identified the following lessons with significance beyond the program:

- 1 It is important to ensure the full involvement of programme participants in the design, implementation and monitoring of the programme.
- 2 There is a need for evidence-based gender, human rights and disability inclusion in the programme.
- 3 The development of partnerships for solutions for gender-based inequality and for the empowerment of women is fundamental.
- 4 It is important to provide adequate time to implement capacity development and behaviour change activities.
- 5 Ensure involvement of the private sector to promote women's economic empowerment and building their resilience at the grassroots level.
- 6 Mobilizing women, including the most vulnerable women, at the community level, including through self-help groups, and providing them with space, boosts their social skills for leadership, communication, negotiation, teamwork, decision making and others that are critical for becoming employable and running a successful business.
- 7 Across the three countries, the evaluation team observed Early Childhood Development Centres, cooperatives and community capacity development activities being effectively led by women.

## Recommendations

- 1 Put continued and deepened emphasis on getting [data/evidence in filling the knowledge gaps](#) and strengthening capacities and dialogue around the 3Rs.
- 2 [Create a 5R framework of unpaid care work](#) (Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute unpaid care work and Reward, and Represent paid care work).
- 3 [Train more women](#) on access to markets and means of production, deconstruction of social norms and stereotypes related to participation of women in male dominated occupations, HeForShe approaches, as well as other barriers to women's economic participation
- 4 [Explore potential partnerships with private sector entities](#) in direct programme implementation at the national level and raising funds for future interventions