

Defending Children's Rights:

The Legislative Priorities of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians

Authored by **Elizabeth Powley**

The Initiative for **Inclusive Security**

April 2008

THE INITIATIVE FOR INCLUSIVE SECURITY (including the Women Waging Peace Network), a program of Hunt Alternatives Fund, advocates for the full participation of all stakeholders, especially women, in peace processes.

THE RWANDA PROJECT is designed to demonstrate how women's leadership in a post-conflict country can be pivotal for the development and stabilization of society.

Rwanda Project

Manager

Elizabeth Powley

The Initiative for Inclusive Security

Director

Carla Koppell

Hunt Alternatives Fund

President

Ambassador Swanee Hunt

Executive Director

Sarah Gauger

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
About the Author	4
Key Findings	5
Introduction: Investments in Women Lead to Investments in Children	6
Research Methodology	7
Report Structure	7
Part One: Women in Rwanda’s Parliament	8
Progress of Women Parliamentarians	8
<i>Creation of the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians</i>	8
<i>2003 Constitution</i>	8
<i>2003 Parliamentary Elections</i>	10
<i>A Five-Year Plan and A Ten-Year Anniversary</i>	10
Part Two: Women Parliamentarians—Acting on Behalf of Rwanda’s Children	12
Women Parliamentarians Advance Child-Friendly Legislation	13
<i>Using Motherhood to Establish Authority</i>	14
<i>1999 Inheritance Law</i>	15
<i>2001 Children’s Rights Law</i>	15
<i>2006 Gender-Based Violence Bill</i>	16
<i>Additional Policy Priorities</i>	17
Conclusion	18
Appendix 1: Map of Rwanda	20
Appendix 2: Acronyms	21
Appendix 3: Bibliography	22
Endnotes	25

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions and assistance of the following individuals and institutions. Without their support this report would not have been possible: Camille Pampell Conaway, Raluca Eddon, Daniel de Torres, Elvis Gakuba, Jessica Gomez, Heather Hamilton, Swanee Hunt, Miki Jacevic, Carla Koppell, Ibrahim Murobafi, Abigail Myers, Michelle Page, Elizabeth Pearson, Paulette Song, Justine Uvuza, Peace Uwineza, Roxane Wilber, Hunt Alternatives Fund, the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians, and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

About the Author

Elizabeth Powley directed The Initiative for Inclusive Security's Rwanda Project from 2005 to 2007. She holds a master's degree from American University's School of International Service. She has been working on issues of gender and governance in Rwanda since 2001.

Key Findings

1. Inclusion of women in national legislatures has positive policy outcomes for children. Global analyses, and the Rwanda case in particular, indicate that female legislators are more likely than their male colleagues to prioritize children's rights and family health and welfare.
2. Female parliamentarians in Rwanda are seen by colleagues as the "natural" guardians of children's rights because of their experience as mothers. They have used this presumed moral authority to mobilize support for children's protection.
3. The larger the number of women in a legislature, the more likely it is that they will be effective in advocating for children. As their numbers have risen, reaching and surpassing critical mass, female parliamentarians in Rwanda have been increasingly assertive in their legislative agenda to protect children.
4. The Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (FFRP), a cross-party caucus, has been the vehicle through which women parliamentarians have advocated for legislation protecting children. Women's parliamentary caucuses are a valuable organizing tool, essential for increasing women's strength and effectiveness in legislatures.
5. As women's numbers in Rwanda's parliament have increased and the FFRP has matured, its ability to influence policy has increased.
6. Women parliamentarians have been vital in promoting children's interests in Rwanda. Their leadership is demonstrated by three pieces of legislation:
 - a. In 1999, they took the lead in advocating for legislation that established women and girls' rights to inheritance and succession.
 - b. In 2001, they helped pass the "Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child against Violence."
 - c. In 2006, they drafted and introduced a gender-based violence bill that places special emphasis on crimes against children.

Introduction: Investments in Women Lead to Investments in Children^a

Women were elected to nearly 50 percent of seats in Rwanda's lower house of parliament in 2003, vaulting Rwanda to the top of the world rankings of women's political representation.¹ The country presents a unique opportunity to examine legislative behavior in an institution that has nearly equal representation of men and women. Building on evidence from around the world and examining the Rwandan case in particular, this paper argues that when empowered and present in significant numbers, female legislators defend and protect vulnerable groups, especially children.

Theoreticians and practitioners have long argued that until they are present in numbers large enough to have a collective voice—until there is a “critical mass” of at least 30 percent—women's ability to make an impact in male-dominated institutions will be limited.² Advocates have pursued this target percentage in a variety of ways, such as endorsing it in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which states that women should occupy 30 percent of all decision-making positions.³

Commitments related to female political participation in Africa include the Outcome Document of the Twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (2000) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003). Yet despite these policy commitments, few countries in the world have achieved critical mass, and none surpass Rwanda's percentage of women in parliament.

Research demonstrates that, when economically empowered, women make decisions that positively affect chil-

dren and families. Studies also reveal that investments in women are far more likely to benefit children than the same investments in men.⁴ In its review of relevant data, the World Bank confirms that, “Additional resources and bargaining power in the hands of women have a greater impact on expenditure allocations toward the next generation—such as on education, health, and nutrition—than additional resources in the hands of men.”⁵

The country presents a unique opportunity to examine legislative behavior in an institution that has nearly equal representation of men and women.

Investments in women are far more likely to benefit children than the same investments in men.

For example, global evidence shows that when household income is controlled by women, it affects family health at a significantly greater level than if the same income is controlled by men. In fact, the impact of female income on child survival outcomes has been demonstrated to be up to 20 times larger than the effect of male income.⁶ A

study on the outcome of Grameen Bank micro lending to male and female borrowers in Bangladesh discovered that lending to women had significant effects on all six areas studied,^b including schooling of boys and girls, while lending to men produced an effect only on household expenditure.⁷

Similarly, data indicate that improvements in the education of mothers have long-term advantages for the education and health of children. The level of women's education can be a “better predictor of child health than even indicators such as the socioeconomic status of the family”⁸ and produces benefits for children across an impressive range of outcomes. Educated women are more likely

to use prenatal health care; give birth at full term; have a child with fewer learning disabilities; provide better health care for children; ensure better linguistic, social, physical, and intellectual development of children; provide greater school-readiness for children; enroll and keep children in school; and have smaller families.⁹ Authors of a 63-country study cited female education as the most important determinant in levels of child malnutrition, having more impact than even

^a A version of this report was submitted to UNICEF as a background paper titled, “The Impact of Women Legislators on Policy Outcomes Affecting Children and Families,” for the 2007 State of the World's Children report, Women and Children: The Double Dividend of Gender Equality. It can be found online at <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/>.

^b The six outcome variables were girls' schooling, boys' schooling, women's labor supply, men's labor supply, per capita total expenditures, and women's nonland assets.

such factors as per capita food availability.¹⁰ Women's education is, in fact, "estimated to be responsible for almost 43 percent of the total reduction in child malnutrition that took place from 1970 to 1995."¹¹

Given the evidence that investments in women result in improvements in the lives of children, it is reasonable to conclude that the inclusion of women in national legislatures would result in positive policy outcomes for children and families. In fact, scholars in the field of women and politics have documented that female legislators are more likely than male legislators to emphasize concerns related to children and families. For example, a 2000 survey of female members of parliament (MPs) around the world revealed that they prioritized areas such as human welfare, family health, and defense of weaker members of society.¹²

A study of legislators in Colombia, Costa Rica, and Argentina found that sex was a significant variable in determining how issues of women's equality, children, and families would be prioritized.¹³ Although both men and women legislators felt that children and families were important, the study revealed a 15 percent difference between men and women who believed that such issues were "very important." Seventy-nine percent of women placed children and family policies in the "high priority" or "very high priority" category compared with only 66 percent of men. The same study discovered that women were more likely to introduce bills dealing with children and family issues and that these bills accounted for a larger percentage of the total bills women initiated than they did for men. A similar pattern can be found in Honduras, where, although women were no more likely than men to initiate bills related to children and family, female legislators were much more likely to participate in debates on bills concerning these issues.¹⁴ Likewise, female parliamentarians in New Zealand proved much more likely to initiate discussion on childcare and parental leave than male parliamentarians.¹⁵

Female leadership in such debates increases as the numbers of women in parliament increase, supporting the hypothesis that these issues are particularly affected by a critical mass of female representatives. Sue

Thomas' 1991 study of state legislatures in the United States found that in legislatures with higher percentages of female legislators, women were more likely to give priority to issues of women, children, and family than they were in states where they had fewer fellow female legislators.¹⁶ Bearing in mind this data, what follows is an investigation of three pieces of legislation in Rwanda that aim to protect children. The role of women parliamentarians in promoting, and in one case drafting, the legislation are discussed.

Research Methodology

This paper investigates the impact of Rwandan female parliamentarians on legislation related to children's rights. It argues that women have set a child-friendly agenda in parliament and are leaders in child protection issues. The research is based on in-depth interviews with male and female parliamentarians, with practitioners in the field of child welfare, and with representatives of the international community in Rwanda. It also draws on analysis of legislation and policies related to children, content analysis of local newspapers, and participant-observation research by the author, who directed a three-year women's leadership project in the country. That project, which provided financial and technical support to female parliamentarians, allowed for significant access to parliament and its members but is also a potential source of bias when evaluating the impact of female parliamentarians.

Report Structure

This report is in two parts. The first part describes the role and progress of women in Rwanda's transitional parliament, constitution drafting process, and 2003 parliamentary elections in order to demonstrate their increasing influence. Part two outlines the steps female parliamentarians have taken to address the needs and rights of children through three pieces of legislation. The conclusion presents some of the challenges ahead, particularly with implementation of the legislation.

Part One: Women in Rwanda's Parliament

Rwandan women were fully enfranchised and granted the right to stand for election in 1961 when the country gained independence from Belgium. The first female parliamentarian began serving in 1965;¹⁷ however, before the civil war in the early 1990s and the genocide in 1994, Rwandan women never held more than 18 percent of seats in the country's parliament.¹⁸

During the post-genocide transitional period, from 1994 to 2003, the Transitional National Assembly was a unicameral body. Parliamentarians were appointed by their political parties according to proportions that had been determined by the Arusha Accord. The ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) consistently appointed women to nearly 50 percent of the seats that it controlled. Other political parties in the transitional government lagged behind in their appointment of women. Women therefore never constituted more than 25.7 percent of parliament during that period.¹⁹ It was the election of 2003 that saw women elected to nearly 50 percent of seats in the lower house.

Progress of Women Parliamentarians

Creation of the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians

In 1996, female parliamentarians formed the multiparty and multi-ethnic Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (FFRP). All female parliamentarians are members of this caucus, which is a model in cross-party cooperation. The FFRP works across party lines on issues of common importance to women. As Member of Parliament Connie Bwiza Sekamana explained, "When it comes to the Forum, we unite as women, irrespective of political parties. So we don't think of our parties; [we think of] the challenges that surround us as women."²⁰

In the words of Sekamana, members of the FFRP view their work as a contribution to "changing the concept and thinking of the Rwandese society" and combating the "mentality whereby ... to be a woman in our society meant to be a nobody."²¹ In the first years of its existence, the FFRP advocated on behalf of Rwandan women and built the capacity of its participants. In recent years, the FFRP has become increasingly focused on its legislative role and on constituent service. The caucus reviews existing laws and introduces amendments to discriminatory statutes, examines proposed laws for gender sensitivity, and conducts meetings and trainings with

women's groups to sensitize and advise the population about legal rights.

A hallmark of the FFRP's work has been its use of consultative processes—both internally and externally with constituents. This finding is in line with research showing that relationship building with constituencies is a strength of female legislators internationally.^c In particular, the FFRP frequently employs site visits to conduct research and inform its work. Member of Parliament Liberate Kayitesi gives an example: "Recently, we conducted some field tours and we went in different centers for vulnerable children and orphanages. The aim was to see with our eyes what those centers were doing and find out ways and means to support them in their work."²²

2003 Constitution

In 2000, nearing the end of its post-genocide transitional period, Rwanda established a 12-member Constitutional Commission and drafted a new constitution. Three members of the commission were women, including Judith Kanakuze, who was also the only representative of civil society. A long-time activist and leader of a non-governmental organization (NGO), Kanakuze played an important role as a "gender expert" within the Commission ranks and as a liaison to her primary constituency—the women's movement.²³

The Commission was charged with drafting the constitution and with taking the draft to the population in a series of consultations designed to solicit input and sensitize citizens to the document's significance and principle ideas.²⁴ As scholar Vivien Hart described, "In 2002, members of the Rwanda drafting commission and thousands of trained assistants fanned out to spend six months in the provinces, so that constitutional education and discussion could become an integral part of community life."²⁵ Though political elites controlled the content and process of the consultations with the largely illiterate population, it was—at least on the face of it—a participatory process that allowed for significant input by women and women's organizations.

The women's movement mobilized around the drafting of the constitution to ensure that equality became a

^c For a detailed discussion of the FFRP's consultative approach, see: Pearson, Elizabeth. "Demonstrating Legislative Leadership: The Introduction of Rwanda's Gender-Based Violence Bill," *The Initiative for Inclusive Security*, Hunt Alternatives Fund, forthcoming April 2008.



Judith Kanakuze (left) was a member of the 2003 Constitutional Commission before her election to Parliament.

Photo credit: Swanee Hunt

cornerstone of the new document. An umbrella organization, Collectifs Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe, and its member NGOs brought pressure to bear on the process and carefully coordinated efforts with female parliamentarians and the Ministry of Gender and Women in Development (MIGEPROFE). These organizations carried out a lobbying campaign and disseminated information about the draft constitution to women and women's organizations throughout the country, holding consultations, meetings, and trainings on the proposed provisions.

The document that emerged is remarkably progressive on gender issues. Kanakuze has called the new constitution a “major watershed” for women. Enshrining the ideal of equality, the constitution makes provisions to “eradicate” the historic “barriers that prevent women from participating in decisionmaking.”²⁶ It is important

to note, however, that although the constitution is progressive in terms of equal rights, gender equality, and women's representation, it is limited in other important ways. Specific concerns have been raised, for example, about restrictions on freedom of speech around ethnicity and about the seven-year presidential term.

Rwanda's new constitution was formally adopted in May 2003.²⁷ The preamble cites human rights instruments and conventions to which Rwanda is a signatory, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The constitution establishes a 30 percent quota for women's participation in the legislature, the other two

branches of government, and all “decision-making organs:”²⁸

- Title I, Chapter 2, Article 9 states that the representation of women is a fundamental principle and commits to building “a state governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least thirty percent of posts in decision-making organs;”
- Title IV, Chapter 2, Sub-section 2, Article 76 specifies reserved seats in the Chamber of Deputies, including 24 reserved seats for women; and
- Title IV, Chapter 3, Sub-section 3, Article 82 sets forth the quota of 30 percent women in the Senate and states that “the organs responsible for the nomination of Senators shall take into account national unity and equal representation of both sexes.”²⁹

The constitution solidified the country’s commitment to women’s participation in governance; it provided the women’s movement, and women parliamentarians in particular, with greater legitimacy and momentum going into the 2003 elections.

2003 Parliamentary Elections

The constitutional guarantee of 30 percent women in parliament was exceeded in the 2003 elections. Women were elected 45.3 percent of parliamentarians. This number greatly exceeds the average of 17.5 percent women’s participation in national parliaments worldwide and the average of 17.9 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa.³⁰

In the lower house, or Chamber of Deputies, there are 80 members serving five-year terms, 53 of whom are directly elected to represent political parties in a proportional representation system. The other 27 seats are contested in the following manner: 24 members are elected by the National Women’s Council, two are elected by the National Youth Council, and one is elected by the Federation of the Associations of the Disabled.

The 24 seats reserved for women are contested in women-only elections—that is, only women can stand for

election and only women can vote. In addition to the 24 set-asides in the Chamber of Deputies, the 2003 elections saw an additional 15 women elected in openly-competed seats for a total of 39 out of 80, or 48.8 percent of seats in the lower house.

The upper house of the new bicameral legislature, the Senate, has 26 members serving eight-year terms. Some Senators are elected by local government representatives. Others are appointed by the president and other institutions such as the national university. Women hold nine of 26 seats (34.6 percent) in the Senate.³¹

The constitution solidified the country’s commitment to women’s participation in governance.

A Five-Year Plan and A Ten-Year Anniversary

In 2005, under the leadership of Judith Kanakuze,^d the FFRP adopted a five-year strategic plan to guide its activities through 2009 and achieve its goal of de-

veloping “policies, laws, programs, and practices [that ensure] equality between men and women and gender equity.”³² Based on an internal needs assessment and a lengthy, consultative drafting process, the strategic plan was developed to address four “axis” or priority areas: building the institutional and organizational capacity of the FFRP; enhancing gender equality within parliament; initiating gender-sensitive laws; and improving gender-based governmental oversight.³³ The plan has received significant international support from development partners such as the United National Development Programme (UNDP). As noted above, The Initiative for Inclusive Security provided financial and technical support for implementation of the strategic plan in 2006 and 2007.

The strategic plan is explicit about female parliamentarians’ roles in addressing children’s needs. Among its objectives, the plan commits the FFRP to “promoting the welfare of the Rwandan woman in general and the women and children survivors of the 1994 Genocide and massacres in particular,” developing “strategies to implement laws and recommendations enacted [with respect to] women and children,” and “prevent[ing] and eradicat[ing] violence against women and children.”³⁴

^d Kanakuze was elected to parliament in 2003 on the women’s ballot. In 2004, she assumed the presidency of the FFRP for a three-year term. In 2007, a new president, Deputy Speciose Mukandutiye, was elected to lead the FFRP.

FFRP Strategic Plan 2005—2009

Axis	Priority Areas
One	Building the “institutional and organizational capacity” of the FFRP
Two	Enhancing gender equality within the parliament’s “mission and structure”
Three	Initiating “gender-sensitive laws”
Four	Improving gender-based oversight of government “actions and budgets”

In February 2007, the FFRP hosted an international conference in Kigali on “Gender, Nation Building, and the Role of Parliaments.”^e Also an official celebration of the FFRP’s tenth anniversary, the conference was attended by female lawmakers from around the world and showcased Rwanda’s first-in-the-world status with regard to women’s representation. The conference highlighted Rwanda’s success in modeling a democratic transition in which gender-sensitive policies played a central role. Codified in a document entitled “The Kigali Declaration on Gender, Nation Building and the Role of Parliaments,” the conference proceedings include recommendations for governments, parliaments, women parliamentarians, the private sector, civil society, and multilateral organizations concerning “the cen-

trality of gender equity to social, economic, and political development.”³⁵ The attendance of two heads of state, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, provided high-level attention to the Rwandan female parliamentarians and their policy priorities. The conference, which demonstrated the convening power of the FFRP, illustrated the gains made by women since the genocide.

Analysis has shown that for female lawmakers to have a political impact, they must have strong links with civil society and the ability to create networks. A robust parliamentary caucus such as the FFRP is thus an “important step” toward women’s political effectiveness.³⁶ The next section of this paper demonstrates how female parliamentarians in Rwanda—as the strength of their caucus and their numbers have grown—have been increasingly able to influence policy outcomes for children.

^e At the time of writing, the conference’s Web site was still active at <http://www.rwandawomen-mp.org/Conf2007/>.

Part Two: Women Parliamentarians— Acting on Behalf of Rwanda’s Children

Rwanda is currently ranked 161 out of 177 countries on the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Index.³⁷ A poor country, it faced enormous development challenges even before its civil war and 1994 genocide. That crisis exacerbated the situation and created new problems, especially for children. More than half of Rwanda’s population is under the age of 18.³⁸ Given that the country now faces poverty and underdevelopment coupled with the aftermath of violent conflict, life is difficult and dangerous for the majority of children.

Millions of Rwandans were killed or displaced in 1994, leaving behind parentless and traumatized children.



*Rwanda, ranked 161 out of 177 countries on the UNDP Human Development Index, is a very difficult place to be a child.
Photo credit: Swanee Hunt*

Many orphans, and those children whose families cannot support them end up in Rwanda’s few urban centers as “street children,” where they are at risk of physical and sexual violence, forced prostitution, and exploitation.

A 1996 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) study found that 96 percent of Rwandan children had witnessed the 1994 massacres and 80 percent had lost at least one family member; hundreds of thousands were orphaned.³⁹ Since the genocide, many more have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

Many orphaned children are heads of households struggling to care for younger siblings and foster other orphans. There are an estimated 101,000 children heading 42,000 households in

Rwanda, one of the largest proportions in the world of children raising other children.⁴⁰ Many orphans, and those children whose families cannot support them because of acute poverty, end up in Rwanda’s few urban centers as “street children,” where they are at risk of physical and sexual violence, forced prostitution, and exploitation.

In a 2003 report, Human Rights Watch asserted that too little is being done for the most vulnerable in Rwandan society:

Perhaps the most devastating legacy of the genocide and war is the sheer number of children left on their own, and the government’s failure to protect them from abuse and exploitation. On Rwanda’s green hills, up to 400,000 children—10 percent of Rwandan children—struggle to survive without one or both parents. Children who were orphaned in the genocide or in war, children orphaned by AIDS, and children whose parents are in prison on charges of genocide, alike, are in desperate need of protection ... Government officials have done little to protect these children’s rights, instead trusting that extended families will care for them. But traditional societal networks have been severely eroded by poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and, not least, the consequences of the genocide and war.⁴¹

This critique of government officials notwithstanding, an examination of parliamentary activity reveals that the women consistently have prioritized children and advanced child-friendly legislation. Their efforts cor-

roborate research from around the world demonstrating that “when children are marginalized in the post-conflict environment, women are most often the actors that address their needs.”⁴²

Women Parliamentarians Advance Child-Friendly Legislation

The parliament of Rwanda’s capacity to draft and introduce legislation is limited. The executive branch initiates the vast majority of bills, which move from the cabinet to parliament. An early analysis of parliament asserted that the body was forced into a “largely reactive mode” in the first six-month period after the 2003 elections and the constituting of the new, bicameral body.⁴³ The causes were the sheer number of bills necessary to bring existing legislation in line with the new constitution, a sense of “urgency” on the part of the executive branch, and also the fact that the parliament “relinquished some of its Constitutional authority in the face of pressure from the executive branch.”⁴⁴

The reactionary behavior continues. As one male parliamentarian interviewed for this study explained, “For the past two years, we were busy with all these laws [from the executive] just falling on our heads ... We were in reaction mode, we were not pro-active ... The critics are right, so far there has only been one law initiated in the lower chamber [of parliament] ... We are always dealing with laws that are popping in from the executive.”⁴⁵ In fact, only one substantive piece of legislation since 2003 has been drafted and introduced by legislators. Significantly, that piece of legislation was developed by the FFRP.

Parliament’s limitations can be explained by the dominance of the executive branch, restrictions on parliament’s real powers, and limited resources. In 2003, parliament’s budget amounted to only 0.762 percent of the government’s total operating budget.⁴⁶ Parliamentarians do not have individual support staff, and many members of the Chamber of Deputies, which has the constitutional mandate to initiate legislation, do not have the expertise to draft laws.

Despite these constraints, female parliamentarians have demonstrated legislative leadership and, in particular, have advanced the rights of children. During the transitional period following the 1994 genocide, a MIGEPROFE-led commission reviewed existing laws and noted provisions that discriminated against women.⁴⁷ Identifying these instances of discrimination made it possible to then amend the laws in parliament. For example, laws on nationality and citizenship were not gender equitable in that children born to a Rwandan man and a foreign woman were automatically Rwandan citizens, while children born to a Rwandan woman and a foreign man had to wait until age 18 to apply for citizenship.⁴⁸ Female legislators in the transitional parliament helped lead the effort to address these discriminatory statutes.

Also during the review process, women pointed out regulations that listed children on the father’s identity card but not the mother’s, which created difficulty if the father died or abandoned the family and the mother wanted to access social services for her children or claim insurance benefits.⁴⁹ If a man had more than one wife, these record-keeping practices meant that it was impossible to distinguish which children belonged to which wife, putting the burden on women of proving relationships with their own children. Again, this law was amended by the transitional parliament, under pressure from female representatives and civil society advocates.

Emboldened by their strong numbers since their election in 2003, Rwanda’s women MPs have set an ambitious agenda of legislative action. In particular, they have worked to revise discriminatory laws and pushed for the inclusion of a gender perspective in new laws. Furthermore, the 2006 introduction of legislation against gender-based violence, which includes provisions to protect children, means that women parliamentarians have drafted one of Rwanda’s only laws to originate in parliament rather than in the executive branch (discussed below). Women’s leadership on the three pieces of legislation described below demonstrates their effectiveness despite the constraints of their environment.

Female parliamentarians have demonstrated legislative leadership and, in particular, have advanced the rights of children.

Highlights of Women’s Leadership for Children

- 1996** Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (Forum des Femmes Rwandaises Parlementaires or FFRP) formed
- 1999** “Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities, and Successions” adopted
- 2001** “Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child against Violence” adopted
- 2003** Rwandan constitution ratified, mandating that 30 percent of all decision-making posts be occupied by women
- 2003** National elections result in 48.8 percent female representation in the lower house of Rwanda’s parliament
- 2005** FFRP five-year strategic plan developed and adopted
- 2006** “Draft Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender Based Violence” introduced into Chamber of Deputies
- 2007** International conference and celebration of FFRP’s tenth anniversary held

Using Motherhood to Establish Authority

Female parliamentarians have used rhetoric that capitalizes on a traditional sphere of women’s power to advance their goals. They have appealed to culturally accepted roles such as motherhood to establish their authority within an institution that only recently opened its doors to them. In interviews for this paper, female lawmakers from a variety of backgrounds—former teachers, doctors, businesswomen—claimed that their experience as mothers was their biggest motivation for sponsoring children’s rights legislation and for entering politics. As Member of Parliament Speciose Mukan-dutiye explained:

In normal family life, you will find that [women’s] first priority is children. When one of my children is sick, I am suffering too. So when we are fighting for women’s rights, we are fighting also indirectly for children’s rights. When we are fighting for equality, it is not for us, but we are doing it for that little girl. There were things that we couldn’t have, just because we were girls, so now we don’t want that to happen to our children, our girls.⁵⁰

“When we are fighting for equality, it is not for us, but we are doing it for that little girl. There were things that we couldn’t have, just because we were girls, so now we don’t want that to happen to our children, our girls.”

Male and female parliamentarians cite women’s experience as mothers as central to their motivations, and their performance as parliamentarians. As Member of Parliament Thacienne Dusabeyezu put it, “We are mothers ... and mothers are characterized by tenderness, love, care towards their children.” She further argued that women in parliament act according to this “nature” and as a result, “the more women that are in the parliament, the better it is for children.”⁵¹

One of her male colleagues posited that motherhood prepared female parliamentarians to better understand, analyze, and act on the problems of children. Member of Parliament Nathan-

iel Mugenzi, who serves on the Social Welfare Committee said,

I would like to see women involved at all levels of decision-making, not only in parliament ... so that the problems related to education [could be addressed]. Women understand children’s issues better than men. In our society, men tend to be providers for their families, but women are more attached to their children and more sensitive to their problems.⁵²

Rwandan interviewees for this paper—male and female, parliamentarian and practitioner—argued that women have a “natural” tendency to care for children, and that this is an asset for legislators. The conflating of women’s experience with mothers’ experience is understandable in this country, where so few women are childless.^f As alien (or even regressive) as this “essentializing” of women’s experience may be to many Western feminists, it is an authentic voice in Rwanda. For Rwandans such a viewpoint is non-threatening, based in the reality of most women’s experiences, imbued with moral authority, and successful as an argument for women seeking decision-making positions and to influence on policy.

1999 Inheritance Law

Female parliamentarians in the transitional government were at the forefront of a campaign to establish women and girls’ rights to inheritance and succession in 1999. The “Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities, and Successions,”⁵³ commonly referred to as the “inheritance law,” was a major achievement; it is consistently referred to as one of the most important post-genocide advances for women and girls in Rwanda.

Prohibiting discrimination between male and female children when land is partitioned and passed on to descendants, the law established the right of women and girls to inherit land for the first time. Article 43 of Title II, Chapter I on “Donations” states that “all children, without distinction between boys and girls ... have a right to the partition made by their ascendants.” Article 50 of Title II, Chapter II on “Successions” similarly provides for “all legitimate children ... without any discrimination between male and female children.”⁵⁴

Patricie Hajabakiga, currently minister of state in the Ministry of Lands, Human Resettlement, and Environmental Protection, was an MP in 1999 during the debate on inheritance. She described efforts of female parliamentarians to lobby their male counterparts:

We had a long, long sensitization campaign ... This was a very big debate. We were asking [male parliamentarians], “Ok, fine, you think only men can inherit, not girls. But as a man, you have a

mother who might lose the property from your father because [your uncles] will take everything away from your mother. Would you like that?” Then we said, “You are a man ... You have children, you have a daughter who owns property with her husband. Would you like to see that daughter of yours, [if] her husband dies, everything is taken away.” When you personalize things, they tend to understand. When [the issues] remain just in the abstract ... women and men become two distinct [groups of] people, but the moment you personalize it, they do understand.⁵⁵

The success of female legislators advocating for women’s inheritance rights, while working in concert with MIGEPROFE and women’s civil society organizations, cannot be overstated. Particularly in light of the genocide, which destroyed and scattered families, the right to inherit land was crucial—not just as a matter of rights but because it had an impact on food production and security, the environment, settlement patterns, and the livelihoods of families and children left behind. Female MPs sought to further institutionalize these advances by ensuring that the land reform process, and in particular the 2005 land law, guaranteed the equal rights of men and women to land.⁵⁶

2001 Children’s Rights Law

In 2001, women MPs helped guarantee passage of the “Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child against Violence.” This law defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 and lays out their rights and responsibilities.⁵⁷ It criminalizes murder, rape, the use of children for “dehumanizing acts” and prostitution, exploitation, neglect and abandonment, and forced or premature (before the age of 21) marriage.

The law defined child rape as “any sexual relations with a child” and outlined sentencing requirements. The definition of child rape was a significant step forward, one that offered protection to both girls and boys. At the time, Rwanda did not even have a legal definition of adult rape, which meant that the mere definition of the crime in this instance was momentous. That provision has been lauded internally and externally, as a major achievement.

Development of the 2001 law was the result of a joint government and NGO campaign against sexual violence, with “primary focus on sexual abuse of children.”⁵⁸

^f The average fertility rate was 6.0 children per woman in 2007. Source: “Human Development Index.” *Human Development Report 2007/2008—Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a divided world*. New York: United Nations Development Program, 2007.



School girls prepare to participate in a march and demonstration against child abuse, August 2005. Photo credit: Elizabeth Powley

Such close cooperation between women in the executive, the legislature, and civil society is a familiar strategy in Rwanda. The “three-pronged approach” to coordinated advocacy has been a hallmark of women’s leadership.⁵⁹ Using this strategy, women parliamentarians were responsible for “pushing” this law and ensuring that it “passed quickly” through parliament, according to a former Ministry of Gender official.⁶⁰

2006 Gender-Based Violence Bill^g

The FFRP made a notable contribution to the strength of parliament as a whole with the introduction of landmark legislation to combat gender-based violence (GBV) in August 2006. The bill passed to committee on August 3, 2006—one day after its introduction. It passed out of committee and was accepted by the Chamber of Deputies in late 2007, and at the time of writing awaits a vote in the Senate.

Drafting and introducing this bill, which includes provisions for children, remains the most significant instance of women’s legislative leadership. As noted, this law is one of the first introduced into parliament by legislators rather than by the executive branch of the government. Parliament had previously introduced internal regulations, but the GBV bill was the first parliament-initiated law that dealt with issues facing the larger population.⁶¹

The draft is a contribution in terms of protection against gender-based violence and is also a strong example of bill-initiation behavior. As a representative of the international community explained, the parliament needs to increase its capacity to introduce legislation if it wants to be more than “a rubber stamp.” Introduction of the GBV legislation “by female parliamentarians” is a “good model for parliament.”⁶²

The “Draft Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender Based Violence” is a wide-ranging

^g For more information, see: Pearson, Elizabeth. “Demonstrating Legislative Leadership: The Introduction of Rwanda’s Gender-Based Violence Bill,” *The Initiative for Inclusive Security*, Hunt Alternatives Fund, forthcoming April 2008.

piece of legislation that touches on many aspects of gender-based violence as well as other gender equity issues. It is based on extensive research in Rwanda, consultations that the FFRP conducted with grassroots women about the types of violence they and their children face, and statutes from other African countries. The bill defines gender-based violence as “any act that results in or is likely to result in a negative consequence to an individual due to his or her physical, sexual, or psychological^h nature.”⁶³ Addressing the current situation of violence against women as well as crimes committed during the genocide, the draft identifies various types of gender-based violence perpetrated against women and children and, in rare cases, men. It highlights polygamy as a cause of violence and, for the first time under Rwandan law, provides a legal definition of the rape of an adult woman and prescribes punishment.

Special emphasis is given in the bill to crimes against children. The preamble cites CEDAW and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In accordance with the 2001 Children’s Rights Law, it defines a child as anyone less than 18 years of age and defines child abuse as a “sexual act committed against a child based on his or her weakness in decision-making.”⁶⁴ Penalties are more severe if the abuse is perpetrated by “his or her educator, relative, a representative of a religious denomination, a security officer, a medical staff member, a teacher, a trainee, an employer and any other persons who make use of their profession or authority they have over the child.”⁶⁵ The bill also criminalizes forced marriage and child abandonment.

In part because this was the first bill that the FFRP drafted, and because male co-sponsorship was essential, the FFRP took care to present gender-based violence as a “community matter” rather than as a “women’s issue.” Female parliamentarians and their counterparts in civil society developed ways of discussing gender-based violence to attract male support. The draft bill used inclusive language and highlighted issues of direct concern to men, such as crimes against young boys.ⁱ The genuine

commitment to all children, not just to girls, and the strategic use of non-threatening language worked in the bill’s favor. In fact, during the Chamber of Deputies floor debate in August 2006, the first male parliamentarian to speak in favor of the bill raised the issue of child abuse, demonstrating the bill’s clear intention to protect children.⁶⁶

Additional Policy Priorities

Female legislators continue to advocate for children’s rights and use the authority of their offices to improve the lives of children. The following are among the persistent concerns most frequently raised by women parliamentarians with regard to children and families:⁶⁷

- Caring for vulnerable children, including orphans, those infected with HIV/AIDS, and those who are heading households;
- Reducing the birth rate;
- Protecting young girls from predatory older men, sometimes called “sugar daddies,” who exploit them;
- Finding permanent housing and help for homeless “street children”;
- Increasing the funding for child and maternal health and putting a stop to the refusal of hospitals to release new mothers and their babies who cannot afford to pay for the delivery;
- Fighting polygamy and its adverse effects on the children of unofficial wives;
- Reforming the law on prostitution so that it punishes “customers,” not solely the prostitutes;
- Changing a decree so that children under the age of 18 and their families are compensated when the child is in an accident, as adult victims are; and
- Creating legal provisions for the recognition of “illegitimate” children born of non-formal unions.

As a caucus, the FFRP and individual women parliamentarians have brought these issues to the fore, introduced them into debate, and will continue to shape the legislative agenda to include children’s rights.

^h The English draft refers to “physiological [sic] nature.” It has been replaced here with “psychological nature” by the author of this study based on her translation of the French draft, which uses the word “psychologiques.”

ⁱ For additional discussion of women’s efforts to work with male colleagues on the GBV bill, see: Powley, Elizabeth and Elizabeth Pearson. “Gender is Society’: Inclusive Lawmaking in Rwanda’s Parliament.” *Engaging Men in ‘Women’s Issues’: Inclusive Approaches to Gender and Development—Critical Half 5*, 1 (Winter 2007).

Conclusion

Critics of female leadership in Rwanda have pointed out that the ruling RPF in fact constricts women's new-found power. Scholar Timothy Longman, for instance, asserts that though the participation of women is "not entirely without meaning" and that "the larger number of women in parliament today may make it even easier" to advance their policy priorities, this can only happen "when it is consistent with the agenda of the RPF leadership."⁶⁸

Despite these constraints, or perhaps in part because the protection of children is consistent with the RPF leadership's vision,^j women in parliament have emerged as strong advocates. Given the political environment in which they are working, their record in advancing children's rights is notable. A 2005 study comparing the policy interests of male and female parliamentarians in Rwanda found that women and men both felt that women's priorities were more likely to include "education, health, children, basic needs, and social matters."⁶⁹ When asked to reflect on their own priorities, 63 percent of women parliamentarians responded that it was "very important" to promote the interests of "young citizens," while only 47 percent of male parliamentarians gave children the same priority.⁷⁰ As their representation in parliament has increased, and the utility of the FFRP as a political caucus has been proven, their advocacy on behalf of children has become more proactive and they have enacted legislation that reflects these stated priorities. With three specific pieces of legislation, women parliamentarians have laid the groundwork for improving the lives of children in Rwanda.

Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of female parliamentarians' efforts for children and families will be measured by improvements in the lives of ordinary Rwandans. While women have had important legislative successes, their presence has yet to transform society. There is an enormous gap between legislation and implementation in Rwanda. Persistent poverty and a low literacy rate, traditional cultural attitudes about the position of women, and ignorance about the rights of children, among other challenges, hinder the implementation of legislation backed by female lawmakers.

^j The US Department of State's annual human rights report of 2006, though it highlights significant problems in terms of the protection of children and street children in particular, does recognize that the government "was committed to children's rights and welfare, and it took efforts to improve education and health care to children." The report can be found at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/81364.htm>.

For example, though the inheritance law was passed more than eight years ago, many rural women have not gained access to land ownership. An estimated 60 percent of women enter into non-formal partnerships and, without a legal marriage, have no claim on their husband's land for themselves or their children.⁷¹ Even among those that are married, some don't know what they are entitled to. Others are blocked by male relatives or prevailing cultural norms, and still others do not have the resources to pursue their rights in court or with the local authorities. As a former MIGEPROFE official explains, "Some women are unaware of their rights, or are hobbled by the mentality that accuses them of destroying the culture when they try to access their rights. And many just don't have the resources to take up their cases."⁷²

Practitioners feel the gap between legislation to protect children and implementation acutely. The director of an orphanage in Rwanda's capital city conceded that there were some laws that "women parliamentarians played a big role in adopting. Like the law protecting children and women, the inheritance law and others." But he also expressed a need for more contact with elected representatives:

We want to work with [parliamentarians] closely. We would like them [women parliamentarians] to be mothers to all Rwandan children while initiating laws and voting on laws. We would like to be meeting them now and then. We are the ones working with children, and I believe we can be helpful to them in the responsibility as members of parliament. It is unfair when they decide on policies without consultations with practitioners. Last year we had a short visit of some members of parliament. We would like to see more visits from them.⁷³

The director of a center for street children in Kigali echoed the concerns of the orphanage director:

Since we have a good number of women in parliament, I can't really state that children's lives improved. Of course there are some new laws that protect children were adopted, but in the field we haven't seen anything tangible. We have to make a clear difference between having a law and putting it in action. Laws are there, but still people [need] to abide by them.⁷⁴

There also are basic challenges with communication and information between legislators and the population. For example, when interviewed, the director of this center for street children did not know that the Parliament had recently established an ad hoc committee to address the problem of street children, despite his daily work on this issue.

The frustrations of these practitioners are real, and it is still too early to see the impact of women's legislative campaigns throughout the country. Rwanda is still one of the most difficult places in the world to be a child. In Senator Wellars Gasamagera's analysis, however, his colleagues are already having an effect on parliament and its agenda:

The diversity of [having both men and women in parliament] adds value to the quality of the process. [If one were to] attend our Plenary Sessions, [one] would find women are out-performing men. We are just there speaking about our ideas, but women are fighting and sticking to their points ... Women are very determined, and it is really an added value.

"When it comes to children," he continued, "of course women are [more] keen than us [men]. And when it comes to advocacy, we better send a woman, because I might talk about abstract things but they will express it in a more practical way."⁷⁵

The challenge ahead is to transform not only the parliament and the legislative record, but also the greater society. As the pioneer generation of women leaders, today's female parliament members are impatient for progress. Improving the lives of Rwandan children, though, will require a concerted effort—by all actors—to fund, support, educate, and monitor implementation of the child protection laws championed by women parliamentarians.

Appendix 1: Map of Rwanda



Appendix 2: Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
FFRP	Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians (Forum des Femmes Rwandaises Parlementaires)
GBV	Gender-based violence
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
MIGEPROFE	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion in the Office of the Prime Minister (formerly Ministry of Gender and Women in Development)
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organization
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Appendix 3: Bibliography

- “About Our Commission.” Kigali: Rwanda Republic Legal and Constitutional Commission, n.d. Available from: <http://www.cjcr.gov.rw/eng/index.htm>.
- At Freedom's Frontiers—A Democracy and Governance Strategic Framework*. Washington: United States Agency for International Development, 2005. Available from: http://www.usaid.gov/policy/0512_democracy_framework.pdf. 3.
- Beijing Platform for Action*. Beijing: United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995. Available from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm>.
- Bintou, Keita. Qtd. in “Rwanda Has the Largest Number of Orphans—UNICEF.” *The New Times*. 5 July 2005. Available from: http://www.rwandagateway.org/article.php?id_article=718.
- Bochel, Catherine and Jacqui Briggs. “Do Women Make a Difference?” *Politics* 20, 2 (2000): 63–8.
- “Capacity Building.” *Gender in Development*. New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2000. Available from: http://www.sdn.undp.org/gender/capacity/gm_intro.html.
- Conaway, Camille Pampell and Kelly Fish. “Children’s Security.” *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*. Washington and London: Hunt Alternatives Fund and International Alert, 2004. Available from: http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/25_childrens_security.pdf.
- The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda* (Special Law No. 42/2003). Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 2003. Available from: http://www.cjcr.gov.rw/eng/constitution_eng.doc.
- A Decade of Measuring the Quality of Governance—Governance Matters 2007—Worldwide Governance Indicators, 1996–2006—Annual Indicators and Underlying Data*. Washington: The World Bank, 2007. Available from: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/pdf/booklet_decade_of_measuring_governance.pdf.
- Draft Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender Based Violence*. Unpublished. Kigali: Parliament of Rwanda, 2006.
- Determining the Use and Management of Land in Rwanda* (Organic Law No. 08/2005). Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 2005.
- Eagly, Alice and Linda Carli. “The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence.” *The Leadership Quarterly* 14 (2003): 807–34.
- Forum of Women Parliamentarians Strategic Plan 2005—2009*. Kigali: Forum of Women Parliamentarians, n.d. cover page.
- Grey, Sandra. “Does Size Matter?: Critical Mass and New Zealand’s Women MPs.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 55 (2002): 19–29.
- Hart, Vivien. “Democratic Constitution Making,” *Special Report No. 107*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2003. Available from: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr107.html>.
- “Human Development Index.” *Human Development Report 2007/2008—Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World*. New York: United Nations Development Program, 2007. Available from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>
- Kanakuze, Judith. “Quotas in Practice: The Challenge of Implementation and Enforcement in Rwanda,” *A Paper Presented at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)/Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)/Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum Conference on the Implementation of Quotas: African Experiences, Pretoria, South Africa, 11–12 November 2003*. Available from: http://www.quotaproject.org/CS/CS_Rwanda_Kanakuze_2004.pdf.
- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. “Some of Effects of Proportion on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, 5 (March 1977): 965–90.
- Kigali Declaration on Gender, Nation Building and the Role of Parliament*. Unpublished. Kigali: Rwanda, 23 February 2007.
- “Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities, and Successions.” *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda*. 15 November 1999.
- “Law on Rights and Protection of the Child Against Violence.” *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda*. 1 December 2001.
- Longman, Timothy. “Rwanda: Achieving Equality or Serving an Authoritarian State?” *Women in African Parliaments*. Eds. Gretchen Bauer and Hannah Evelyn Britton. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006.
- Lovenduski, Joni. “Women and Politics: Minority Representation or Critical Mass?” *Parliamentary Affairs* 54 (2001): 743–758.
- Mason, Andrew D. and Elizabeth M. King. *Engendering Development through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. Washington: The World Bank, 2001. Available from: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:20186672~menuPK:565936~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:336868,00.html>.

- “Measuring the Quality of Governance” *The World Bank*. 14 July 2003. Available from: http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/pubs/govmatters3_other.html.
- Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. “Women as Political Leaders Worldwide: Cultural Barriers and Opportunities.” *Women and Elective Office: Past, Present, and Future, 2nd Edition*. Eds. Sue Thomas and Clyde Wilcox. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Pearson, Elizabeth. “Demonstrating Legislative Leadership: The Introduction of Rwanda’s Gender-Based Violence Bill,” *The Initiative for Inclusive Security*, Hunt Alternatives Fund, forthcoming April 2008.
- Pitt, Mark and Shahidur Khandker. “The Impact of Group-Based Credit Programs on Poor Households in Bangladesh: Does the Gender of Participants Matter?” *The Journal of Political Economy* 106, 5 (1998): 958–996. Available from: <http://ideas.repec.org/a/ucp/jpolec/v106y1998i5p958-996.html>.
- Politics: Women’s Insight*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000. Available from: http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/womeninsight_en.pdf.
- Powley, Elizabeth. *Rwanda: The Impact of Women Legislators on Policy Outcomes Affecting Children and Families—The State of the World’s Children 2007 Background Paper*. New York: United Nations Children’s Fund, 2006. Available from: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/powley.pdf>.
- . *Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda’s Transition*. Washington: Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2003. Available from: http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/10_strengthening_governance_the_role_of_women_in_rwanda_s_transition.pdf.
- Powley, Elizabeth and Elizabeth Pearson. “Gender is Society’: Inclusive Lawmaking in Rwanda’s Parliament.” *Engaging Men in Women’s Issues: Inclusive Approaches to Gender and Development—Critical Half* 5, 1 (Winter 2007): 15–19. Available from: <http://www.womenforwomen.org/documents/CriticalHalf.pdf>.
- Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children—Report of the Expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Graca Machel, Submitted Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 48/157 (A/51/306)*. New York: United Nations, 1996. Available from: <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/themachelreport117.html>.
- Promoting Democracy Through Reform*. New York: United Nations Development Programme, n.d. Available from: <http://www.undp.org/governance/index.html>.
- Reyntjens, Filip. “Rwanda Ten Years On: From Genocide to Dictatorship.” *African Affairs* 103: 84.
- Rosener, Judy. “Ways Women Lead.” *Harvard Business Review* (November–December 1990): 119–25.
- Ross, Karen. “Women’s Place in ‘Male’ Space: Gender and Effect in Parliamentary Contexts.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 55 (2002): 189–201.
- Rwanda: Facts and Figures*. New York: United Nations Children’s Fund, n.d. Available from: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/23867_20292.html.
- Rwanda Government Stats*. Australia: Nationmaster.com, n.d. Available from: <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/rw-rwanda/gov-government>.
- Rwanda Lasting Wounds: Consequences of Genocide and War for Rwanda’s Children*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003. Available from: <http://hrw.org/reports/2003/rwanda0403/index.htm#TopOfPage>.
- “Rwanda Leads World Ranking of Women in Parliament.” *Inter-Parliamentary Union Press Release No. 176*, 22 October 2003. Available from: <http://www.ipu.org/press-e/gen176.htm>.
- Rwanda Parliament Support Project Final Report*. Burlington, VT: ARD, Inc., 2005. Available from: http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PDACG166.pdf. 3.
- Sawer, Marian, Manon Tremblay, and Linda Trimble, Eds. *Representing Women in Parliament: A Comparative Study*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Schwartz, Helle. *Women’s Representation in the Rwandan Parliament—An Analysis of Variations in the Representation of Women’s Interests Caused by Gender and Quota*. Gothenberg, Sweden: Gothenburg University, 2005.
- Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie. “Still Supermadres? Gender and the Policy Priorities of Latin American Legislators.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50, 3 (July 2006).
- Smith, Lisa and Lawrence Haddad. *Explaining Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries: A Cross-Country Analysis*. Washington: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2000. Available from: <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/abstract/abstr111.htm>.
- State of the World’s Mothers 2005: The Power and Promise of Girls’ Education*. Westport, CT: Save the Children, 2005. Available from: <http://www.savethechildren.org/campaigns/state-of-the-worlds-mothers-report/2005/>.
- Struggling to Survive: Barriers to Justice for Rape Victims in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 2004.
- Taylor-Robinson, Michelle M., and Roseanna Michelle Heath. “Do Women Legislators Have Different Policy Priorities than their Male Colleagues? A Critical Cast Test.” *Women & Politics* 24, 4 (2003): 77–101.
- Teach a Child, Transform a Nation*. Washington: Basic Education Coalition, 2004. Available from: http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/teach_a_child_as_printed.pdf.

- Thomas, Duncan. "Intrahousehold Resource Allocation: An Inferential Approach." *The Journal of Human Resources* 25, 4 (1990): 635–664.
- Thomas, Sue. "The Impact of Women on State Legislative Policies." *Journal of Politics* 53, 4 (November 1991): 958–76.
- Tripp, Aili Mari. "Why So Slow? The Challenge of Gendering Comparative Politics." *Politics and Gender*, 2 (2): 249–263.
- US Department of State, "Rwanda," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2006*, Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Released March 6, 2007. Available from: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/81364.htm>.
- Uwineza, Peace. *Sustaining Women's Gains in Rwanda: The Influence of Indigenous Culture and Post-Genocide Politics*. Washington: Hunt Alternatives Fund, forthcoming 2008.
- Women in National Parliaments: Situation as of 31 July 2007*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2007. Available from: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.
- Women in Parliaments: 1945–1995. World Statistical Survey*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1995.
- Women Taking a Lead: Progress Toward Empowerment and Gender Equity in Rwanda*. Washington: Women for Women International, 2004. Available from: <http://www.peace-women.org/resources/Rwanda/WWLead2004.pdf>.
- "Women Parliamentarians Making a Difference in Politics: Worldwide Experiences and Practices," UNIFEM. Available from: http://afghanistan.unifem.org/docs/pub/07/Toolkit2_EN.pdf.
- Women's Political Participation and Good Governance: 21st Century Challenges*. New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2000. Available from: <http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/Gender-Pub-21stcentury.pdf>.

Endnotes

- 1 “Rwanda Leads World Ranking of Women in Parliament.” *Inter-Parliamentary Union Press Release No. 176*, 22 October 2003. Available from: <http://www.ipu.org/press-e/gen176.htm>.
- 2 Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. “Some Effects of Proportion on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women.” *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, 5 (March 1977): 965–90.
- 3 *Beijing Platform for Action*. Beijing: United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995. Available from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm>. Para. 182.
- 4 Mason, Andrew D. and Elizabeth M. King. *Engendering Development through Gender Equality in Rights, Resources, and Voice*. Washington: The World Bank, 2001. Available from: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:20186672~menuPK:565936~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:336868,00.html>.
- 5 Mason and King, 159.
- 6 Thomas, Duncan. “Intrahousehold Resource Allocation: An Inferential Approach.” *The Journal of Human Resources* 25, 4 (1990): 635–664.
- 7 Pitt, Mark and Shahidur Khandker. “The Impact of Group-Based Credit Programs on Poor Households in Bangladesh: Does the Gender of Participants Matter?” *The Journal of Political Economy* 106, 5 (1998): 958–996. Available from: <http://ideas.repec.org/a/ucp/jpolec/v106y1998i5p958-996.html>.
- 8 *Teach a Child, Transform a Nation*. Washington: Basic Education Coalition, 2004. Available from: http://www.aed.org/ToolsandPublications/upload/teach_a_child_as_printed.pdf.
- 9 *State of the World’s Mothers 2005: The Power and Promise of Girls’ Education*. Westport, CT: Save the Children, 2005. Available from: <http://www.savethechildren.org/campaigns/state-of-the-worlds-mothers-report/2005/>.
- 10 Smith, Lisa and Lawrence Haddad. *Explaining Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries: A Cross-Country Analysis*. Washington: International Food Policy Research Institute, 2000. Available from: <http://www.ifpri.org/pubs/abstract/abstr111.htm>.
- 11 Smith and Haddad, xii.
- 12 *Politics: Women’s Insight*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2000. Available from: http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/womeninsight_en.pdf. 32.
- 13 Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie. “Still Supermadres? Gender and the Policy Priorities of Latin American Legislators.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50, 3 (July 2006).
- 14 Taylor-Robinson, Michelle M., and Roseanna Michelle Heath. “Do Women Legislators have Different Policy Priorities than their Male Colleagues? A Critical Cast Test.” *Women & Politics* 24, 4 (2003): 77–101.
- 15 Grey, Sandra. “Does Size Matter?: Critical Mass and New Zealand’s Women MPs.” *Parliamentary Affairs* 55 (2002): 19–29.
- 16 Thomas, Sue. “The Impact of Women on State Legislative Policies.” *Journal of Politics* 53, 4 (November 1991): 958–76.
- 17 *Rwanda Government Stats*. Australia: Nationmaster.com, n.d. Available from: <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/rw-rwanda/gov-government>.
- 18 *Women in Parliaments: 1945–1995. World Statistical Survey*. Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1995.
- 19 Powley, Elizabeth. *Strengthening Governance: The Role of Women in Rwanda’s Transition*. Washington: Hunt Alternatives Fund, 2003. Available from: http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/10_strengthening_governance_the_role_of_women_in_rwanda_s_transition.pdf.
- 20 Connie Bwiza Sekamana, personal interview, 10 July 2002.
- 21 Bwiza Sekamana.
- 22 Liberate Kayitesi, personal interview, spring 2006.
- 23 Judith Kanakuze, personal interview, July 2003.
- 24 “About Our Commission.” Kigali: Rwanda Republic Legal and Constitutional Commission, n.d. Available from: <http://www.cjcr.gov.rw/eng/index.htm>.
- 25 Hart, Vivien. “Democratic Constitution Making,” *Special Report No. 107*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2003. Available from: <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr107.html>.
- 26 Kanakuze, Judith. “Quotas in Practice: The Challenge of Implementation and Enforcement in Rwanda,” *A Paper Presented at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA)/Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)/Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum Conference on the Implementation of Quotas: African Experiences, Pretoria, South Africa, 11–12 November 2003*. Available from: http://www.quotaproject.org/CS/CS_Rwanda_Kanakuze_2004.pdf.
- 27 *The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda* (Special Law No. 42/2003). Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 2003. Available from: http://www.cjcr.gov.rw/eng/constitution_eng.doc.
- 28 *The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda* (Special Law No. 42/2003).

- 29 *The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda* (Special Law No. 42/2003).
- 30 *Women in National Parliaments: Situation as of 31 July 2007*.
- 31 *Women in National Parliaments: Situation as of 31 July 2007*.
- 32 *Forum of Women Parliamentarians Strategic Plan 2005–2009*. Kigali: Forum of Women Parliamentarians, n.d. cover page.
- 33 *Forum of Women Parliamentarians Strategic Plan 2005–2009*. iv.
- 34 *Forum of Women Parliamentarians Strategic Plan 2005–2009*. Kigali: Forum of Women Parliamentarians.
- 35 *Kigali Declaration on Gender, Nation Building and the Role of Parliament*. Unpublished. Kigali: Rwanda, 23 February 2007.
- 36 “Women Parliamentarians Making a Difference in Politics: Worldwide Experiences and Practices,” UNIFEM, 6–7.
- 37 “Human Development Index.” *Human Development Report 2007/2008—Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a divided world*. New York: United Nations Development Program, 2007. Available from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>.
- 38 *Rwanda: Facts and Figures*. New York: United Nations Children’s Fund, n.d. Available from: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/23867_20292.html.
- 39 *Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children: Impact of Armed Conflict on Children—Report of the Expert of the Secretary-General, Ms. Graca Machel, Submitted Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 48/157 (A/51/306)*. New York: United Nations, 1996. Available from: <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/themachelreport117.html>. 10.
- 40 *Rwanda: Facts and Figures*.
- 41 *Rwanda Lasting Wounds: Consequences of Genocide and War for Rwanda’s Children*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003. Available from: <http://hrw.org/reports/2003/rwanda0403/index.htm#TopOfPage>.
- 42 Conaway, Camille Pampell and Kelly Fish. “Children’s Security.” *Inclusive Security, Sustainable Peace: A Toolkit for Advocacy and Action*. Washington and London: Hunt Alternatives Fund and International Alert, 2004. Available from: http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/25_childrens_security.pdf. 59.
- 43 *Rwanda Parliament Support Project Final Report*. Burlington, VT: ARD, Inc., 2005. Available from : http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/PDACG166.pdf. 3.
- 44 *Rwanda Parliament Support Project Final Report*. 3.
- 45 Name withheld (male senator), personal interview, spring 2006.
- 46 *Rwanda Parliament Support Project Final Report*. 28.
- 47 Rose Mukantabana, personal interview, 26 July 2006.
- 48 Rose Mukantabana.
- 49 Rose Mukantabana.
- 50 Speciose Mukandutiye, personal interview, spring 2006.
- 51 Thacienne Dusabeyezu, personal interview, spring 2006.
- 52 Nathaniel Mugenzi, personal interview, spring 2006.
- 53 “Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities, and Successions.” *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda*. 15 November 1999.
- 54 “Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities, and Successions.”
- 55 Patricie Hajabakiga, personal interview, 28 June 2002.
- 56 *Determining the Use and Management of Land in Rwanda* (Organic Law No. 08/2005). Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 2005; *Law to Supplement Book One of the Civil Code and to Institute Part Five Regarding Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities and Successions* (Law No. 22/00). Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 1999.
- 57 “Law on Rights and Protection of the Child Against Violence.” *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda*. 1 December 2001.
- 58 *Struggling to Survive: Barriers to Justice for Rape Victims in Rwanda*, Human Rights Watch.
- 59 Powley, Strengthening Governance, 2003, page 28–29.
- 60 Justine Uvuza, personal interview, August 2006.
- 61 Marie Mukantabana, personal interview, 12 September 2006.
- 62 Name withheld (representative of UNDP) email to the author, 19 May 2006.
- 63 *Draft Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender Based Violence*. Unpublished. Kigali: Parliament of Rwanda, 2006.
- 64 *Draft Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender Based Violence*.
- 65 *Draft Law on Prevention, Protection and Punishment of Any Gender Based Violence*.
- 66 Author’s observation of debate, August 2006. Notes on file with author.

- 67 This list is based on interviews by the author with dozens of women parliamentarians between June 2005 and January 2007.
- 68 Longman, Timothy. "Rwanda: Achieving Equality or Serving an Authoritarian State?" *Women in African Parliaments*. Eds. Gretchen Bauer and Hannah Evelyn Britton. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006.
- 69 Schwartz, Helle. *Women's Representation in the Rwandan Parliament—An Analysis of Variations in the Representation of Women's Interests Caused by Gender and Quota*. Gothenburg, Sweden: Gothenburg University, 2005. 35.
- 70 Schwartz, 2005, page 43.
- 71 Justine Uvuza, personal interview, June 2006.
- 72 Justine Uvuza, personal interview, August 2006.
- 73 Orphanage director, personal interview, spring 2006 (translated from French by Elvis Gakuba).
- 74 Street Children's Center director, personal interview, spring 2006, (translated from Kinyarwanda by Elvis Gakuba).
- 75 Wellars Gasamagera, personal interview, May 2006.

