

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

OUR WORK IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE DRC

MILITIAS AND THE MILITARY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) ROUTINELY USE RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AS WEAPONS TO TERRORIZE AND SUBJUGATE COMMUNITIES.

Aside from the serious physical injuries and possibility of HIV/AIDS resulting from this violence, women who have been raped are often forced by husbands or family members to leave their homes and villages. The high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence in the country is both a driver and a consequence of the country's serious displacement crisis.

Women bear a disproportionate burden of the violence, displacement, and poverty that occurs in DRC. Many are widowed and are forced into begging or prostitution to support their families. Women's rights are rarely acknowledged or protected, and they are often denied access to healthcare, property, education, and information needed to improve their lives. The government has ratified various international and regional conventions for the protection of women's rights, and has passed several national strategies aimed at reducing sexual violence against women, increasing women's political participation, and achieving gender parity. However, these laws are inconsistently enforced and implemented, and have not affected discriminatory perspectives and customs that prevent women from exercising their rights.

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL IN THE DRC

JOB SKILLS ALONE ARE NOT ENOUGH TO EMPOWER WOMEN: THEY MUST KNOW THEIR RIGHTS, BE ABLE TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT THEM, AND HAVE RESOURCES TO HELP THEM MAKE DECISIONS BEFORE THEY CAN USE VOCATIONAL SKILLS TO CREATE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC STABILITY IN THEIR LIVES.

Women for Women International first opened its doors in the DRC in 2004, and since then has trained 80,707 women. The country office headquarters is located in Bukavu, with satellite offices in Goma and Uvira, and work is concentrated in North and South Kivu provinces. In 2014, an estimated 20,658 women will be served in our program.

STRONGER
WOMEN,
STRONGER
NATIONS

OUR MISSION

In countries affected by conflict and war, Women for Women International supports the most marginalized women to earn and save money, improve health and well-being, influence decisions in their home and community, and connect to networks for support. By utilizing skills, knowledge, and resources, she is able to create sustainable change for herself, her family, and community.

WHAT WE DO: OUR PROGRAM

WOMEN FOR WOMEN INTERNATIONAL'S 12-MONTH TRAINING PROGRAM PROVIDES POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AND SOCIALLY EXCLUDED WOMEN IN COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE WITH THE VOCATIONAL SKILLS, HEALTH INFORMATION, AND RIGHTS EDUCATION THEY NEED TO OVERCOME POVERTY, MAKE HEALTHY DECISIONS, AND BUILD LOCAL NETWORKS TO ADVOCATE FOR THEIR RIGHTS.

When women are able to sustain an income, be well, make decisions, and have social networks to support them, they develop the confidence they need to transform their lives, families, and communities. Our program promotes women's social and economic empowerment as the key to building more peaceful and stable societies.

Program participants are assigned to a group of 25 women who meet bi-weekly to engage in learning together. They receive life skills training, including lessons in health awareness, decision-making, negotiation, and civic participation. Women also learn business and vocational skills and gain access to income-generating activities that enable them to move towards economic self-sufficiency.

All of the trainings are led by local trainers and tailored to local contexts and markets. Prior to vocational training, numeracy training covering fundamental arithmetic skills is offered to participants identified as innumerate.

Every month during the training program, each participant receives a small cash transfer as a condition of participating in the program. Participants are free to use these funds however they wish. Many use them to purchase medicine, food, clothing, or transportation, to pay tuition fees for children, or to invest in starting a small business. Women for Women International also encourages participants to save a portion of their monthly training stipend.

DRC

COUNTRY OFFICE

STARTED: 2004

HEADQUARTERS: Bukavu

ADDITIONAL OFFICES:

Goma and Uvira

PROGRAMS IN: North and South

Kivu provinces

AVERAGE

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

AVERAGE DAILY INCOME: \$0.53

CHILDREN IN CARE: 5

ILLITERATE: 65 percent

ATTENDED PRIMARY SCHOOL:

33 percent

AGE: 25-50 years

VOCATIONAL

SKILLS & TRAINING

Agribusiness • Basket-making

• Beauty Care • Bread-making •

Restaurant and Catering •

Small Business • Soap-making

• Tailoring

BUILDING ALLIES: MEN'S ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT REQUIRES WIDESPREAD SOCIAL CHANGE THAT INVOLVES BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. OUR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS OFTEN NEED THE SUPPORT OF MALE RELATIVES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM, USE THEIR NEW KNOWLEDGE, SHARE IN DECISION-MAKING, AND MAKE CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES. IF MEN ARE NOT EDUCATED AND ENCOURAGED TO RESPECT WOMEN'S RIGHTS, WOMEN CAN EASILY FAIL IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO MAKE THESE CHANGES.

In 2005, the DRC became one of the five countries where Women for Women International has piloted a program to engage men as allies in women's empowerment by improving men's knowledge about some of the health, social, and economic issues that can negatively affect the situation of women. Since male religious, political, military, and community leaders have tremendous influence over the attitudes, thinking, and behavior of other men in the DRC, Women for Women International has focused on educating these leaders about the value of women's social and economic engagement and rights. By targeting these leaders for training, Women for Women International leverages their moral influence as well as the institutional positions that give them the access and ability to educate many more men in the community.

Providing men with the knowledge and resources necessary to promote behavior change in their lives and in the lives of their peers is an integral part of the men's engagement program. We aim to illustrate how better communication between men and women, and men's support for women's advancement improves the overall prosperity of families and communities.

Since 2005, Women for Women International has trained over 3,000 men in the DRC. Monitoring and evaluation data shows that at enrollment 56 percent of men reported having discussed women's rights and the need to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with another man. This number increased to 97 percent at the conclusion of the program.

BUILDING ALLIES

CONFRONTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

97 percent of men say they have discussed women's rights and the need to prevent sexual and gender-based violence with another man, compared to 56 percent before the program.

MEN'S ENGAGEMENT
STARTED:
2005

TOTAL MALE GRADUATES OF
WFWI'S MEN'S ENGAGEMENT
PROGRAM:
Over 3,000

OUR IMPACT

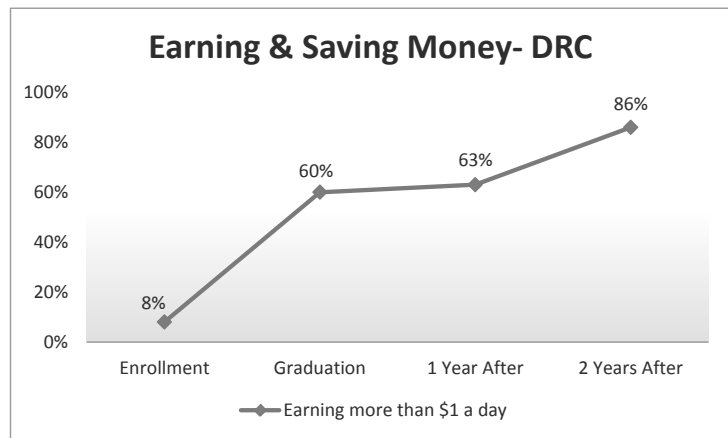
OUR PROGRAM IS FOCUSED ON HELPING WOMEN ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING FOUR KEY OUTCOMES:

1 WOMEN EARN AND SAVE MONEY

When women earn an income, they reinvest a much higher portion in their families and communities, compared to men.

In the DRC, women demonstrate the ability to increase their daily income even two years after graduating from our program, earning an average of \$1.87 per day two years after graduation, compared to \$0.53 at enrollment.

(See footnote 1)

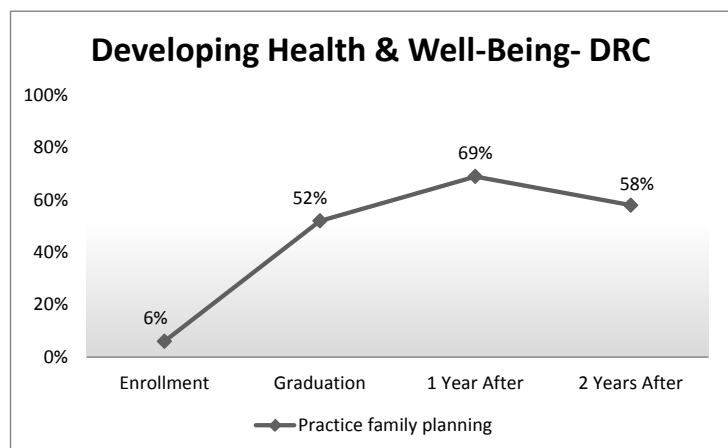


2 WOMEN DEVELOP HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Access to affordable and accessible healthcare – as well as training in disease prevention – significantly reduces preventable deaths.

Women continue to apply improved knowledge about how to protect their health and well-being after graduating from our program. 6 percent of women report practicing family planning at enrollment, compared to 58 percent two years after graduation.

(See footnote 1)



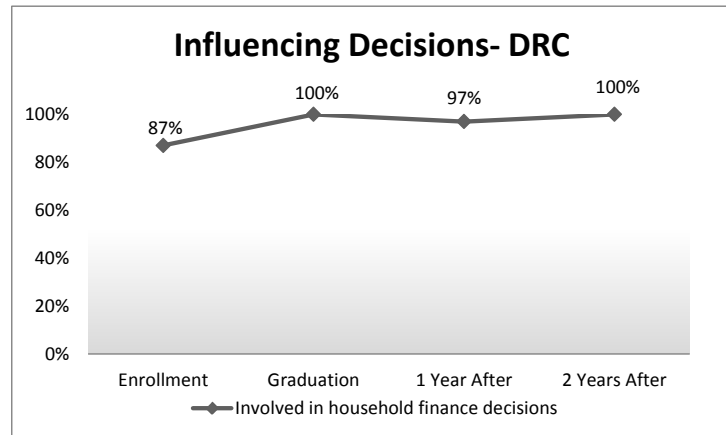
3

WOMEN INFLUENCE DECISIONS IN THE HOME AND COMMUNITY

Studies show that women exercise greater decision-making power within their families when they are educated, earn a stable income, and have access to resources such as land and credit.

Women become increasingly involved in making the decisions that affect their lives. 87 percent of women reported being involved in household financial decisions at enrollment, compared to 100 percent two years after graduation.

(See footnote 1)



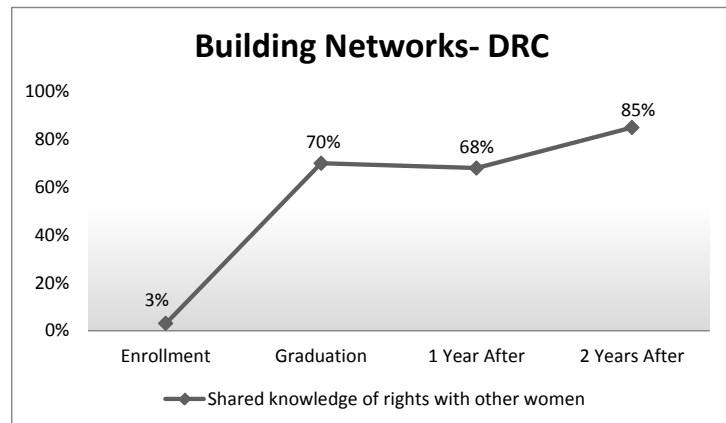
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WOMEN CREATE AND CONNECT TO NETWORKS FOR SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY

As program participants, women learn the importance of working together. By working in groups, they also benefit from a support system and social networks.

Women share what they learn about their rights with other women in their communities. 85 percent of women report educating another woman on her rights at graduation, one and two years after graduation, compared to 3 percent at enrollment. Educating a woman yields dividends not only for herself, but for others in her community.

(See footnote 1)



FACTS ABOUT WOMEN IN THE DRC

Only 17 percent of Congolese women who are married or in a union between the ages of 15 and 49 use some form of contraception.²

The DRC has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, with 730 female deaths for every 100,000 live births.³

The average woman in the DRC will give birth to six children in her lifetime.⁴

Only 57 percent of women over the age of 15 in DRC can read and write one of the national languages.⁵

According to the UN's Gender Inequality Index, the DRC is ranked 144 out of 208 countries, with 68.1 percent of national achievement lost as a result of gender inequality.⁶

76 percent of women in DRC believe a husband beating his wife is a justifiable action.⁷

LEARN MORE

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Data represents women who graduated from our program in the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 2010 and 2011.

² "Contraceptive Prevalence (% of women ages 15-49)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.CONU.ZS>.

³ "Maternal Mortality Ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT>

⁴ "Fertility Rate, Total (births per woman)." The World Bank. Accessed 4 June 2014. <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>

⁵ "Democratic Republic of Congo: People and Society." CIA World Factbook. Accessed 3 June 2014. <https://www.cia.gov/>

[library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cg.html).

⁶ "Table 4: 2012 Gender Inequality Index." United Nations Development Programme. Accessed 6 June 2014. <https://data.undp.org/dataset/Table-4-Gender-Inequality-Index/pq34-nwq7>.

⁷ "The State of the World's Children 2014." United Nations Children's Fund. Accessed 4 June 2014. http://www.unicef.org/sowc2014/numbers/documents/english/SOWC2014_In%20Numbers_28%20Jan.pdf.