

BÈKSKE EMPOWERMENT REPORT

2024



Strong coffee | Strong women

Bèkske

Rwandan Empowerment Coffee



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INTRODUCTION

As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994, the *Bèkske Empowerment Program* stands as a beacon of resilience and progress for 75 women who are survivors of genocidal sexual violence in Rwanda. In March 2024, a questionnaire was conducted.

Launched in 2019 by the social enterprise Bèkske: Rwandan Empowerment Coffee, this initiative is not just about coffee; it's about transforming lives and rewriting narratives.

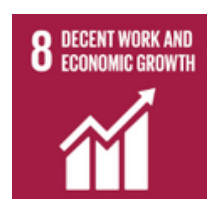
This report marks the second assessment of the empowerment progress to assess the growth of these strong women. Building upon the foundation laid by the inaugural report in 2023, this iteration showcases notable improvements while also highlighting areas for continued growth and development.

The program goes beyond mere training; it's an empowerment journey. Through tailored programs, these women are equipped with skills in coffee production and sustainable business management, embodying the essence of social entrepreneurship. There is a need to empower marginalised communities and invest in women as entrepreneurs, making Bèkske, a UN-recognised social impact company, ever more crucial.

Bèkske coffee isn't just about profits; it's about purpose. These women earn four times more than average coffee producers, not just boosting their economic standing but also their self-worth and societal integration. This initiative aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, targeting poverty eradication, health, education, gender equality, economic growth, and sustainable consumption.

By measuring key aspects such as demographics, economic resources, education, and community impact, we're not just quantifying change but also amplifying voices long silenced. Our partnership with Solace Ministries ensures the integrity and depth of this assessment, reflecting our commitment to transparency and accountability.

Join us in the journey of these remarkable women and the transformative power of coffee, community, and empowerment. Enjoy the insights and discoveries within this report as we pave the way for a more inclusive and prosperous future together.



STRONG WOMEN SAY

"I get strength from the conversations and the presence of the other women while working"



Neria Mukaneza

"Growing coffee, along with fellow survivors, brings me much joy! I am delighted to know that the coffee is sold in the Netherlands. That strengthens me in my work"



Lea Mukarwego

"The coffee gives us a perspective of a future we can look forward to"



Adria Nyiramagumeri

DEMOGRAPHICS & HOUSEHOLD

Demographics encompass essential information such as the names, ages, and communities of the 75 women entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, household details offer insights into their immediate social circles and the number of individuals they are responsible for caring for. The total number of children has increased compared to 2023, because of new births and children moving households.

COMMUNITIES

The women live in the southern part of Rwanda in the communities of:

- Kabagali
- Rusatira
- Ntongwe
- Nyanza
- Muyira
- Mugina

The average age of these women is 62.



The average number of members of the same household is 4.

The average number of financially dependent household members is 4.



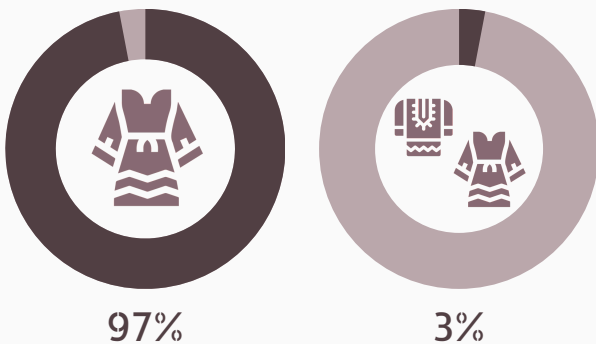
The average number of underage household members is 2.

BASIC NEEDS

Basic needs refer to the essential resources necessary for maintaining physical health and overall well-being, serving as the initial stage of empowerment. These needs typically include consumer goods like sufficient clothing, access to electricity, and owning a mobile phone. Compared to 2023, a higher number of women now can afford two meals daily.

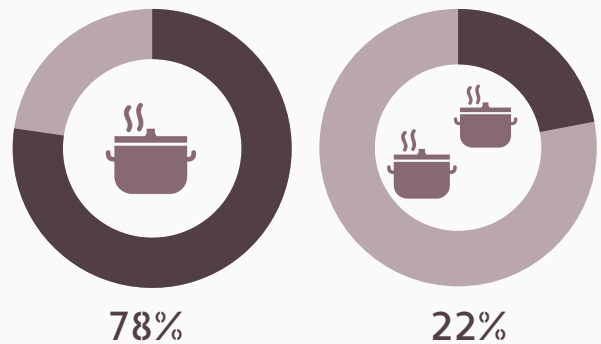
CLOTHING

The number of sets of clothing (one or two):



FOOD

The number of meals the women eat per day (one or two):



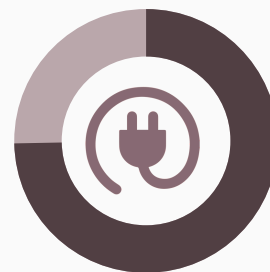
HEALTH

58.7% of the women can cover their basic medical needs.



ELECTRICITY

74.7% of the women have electricity.



MOBILE PHONE

80% of the women have a mobile phone.

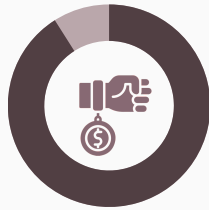


ECONOMIC RESOURCES

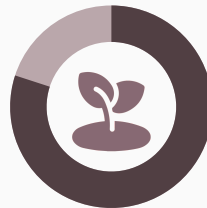
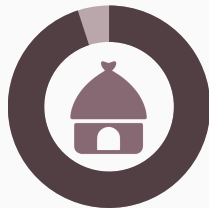
Economic resources are considered necessary for a sustainable living and opportunities for building savings and investment. Is the income generated from the coffee production sufficient to cover the women's expenses?

MONEY

'The income of coffee is enough to sustain a living'

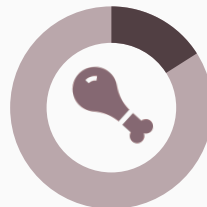


POSSESSIONS



GOODS

Milk and meat have an important economic, social, and cultural value. Compared to 2023, more women can afford these products.



EDUCATION

Education is considered a vital aspect of empowerment and helps to secure greater control over life. For instance, it helps the women gain knowledge on crop management and finance and decide how to spend their income over the year, which contributes to empowerment. The 75 women in our program are relatively older and receive training on such issues from our partner organisation Solace Ministries. Below is more information on the women's reading and writing skills and how their children are doing in school. Compared to 2023, there is an increase in the ability to write and read. This showcases the women's willingness to learn.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION



One woman is currently following education (in addition to the training). She follows vocational training.

Reading skills from none to partial to full reading skills.



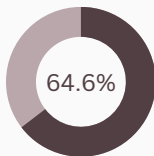
Writing skills from none to partial to full writing skills.



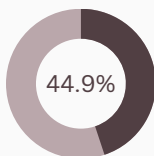
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

There are 127 underaged children in the households of the 75 women. The percentages indicate the number of children attending or have completed primary, secondary or higher education.

Primary Education

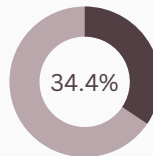


Attending

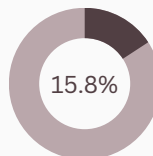


Completed

Secondary education

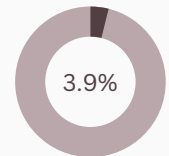


Attending

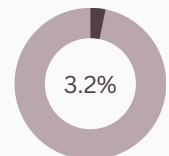


Completed

Higher education



Attending



Completed

COMMUNITY

The past two questionnaires have shown a strong feeling of connectedness among the women in their communities. Being part of the Solace project bonds them.

'If I need help, there are people in my community that I can rely on.'



'I feel part of the community I live in.'



'I am equal to other members in my community.'



'Solace Ministries is an important part of my life.'



MINDSET

How do the women feel about the entire process? Are they optimistic for a better future since they started with Bèkske?

'Life is better than yesterday, and life will be better tomorrow than today.'



EMPOWERMENT MEASURED

The strides made by the Bèkske Empowerment Program in empowering 75 women coffee entrepreneurs in Rwanda are unmistakable. The program's primary goal of fostering financial and personal independence among these women is showing promising results. Comparing the current report to the 2023 assessment, we see graduate improvements in economic stability, evidenced by increased ability to afford two meals a day and land ownership among participants.

However, challenges persist as a notable portion of these women still struggle to afford necessities like clothing, milk, and meat. On a positive note, more than half have access to healthcare, mobile phones, electricity, housing, and banking services. External factors such as harvest issues (in Kabagali) influenced the progress as well. While progress in literacy and education remains incremental, there's an upward trajectory in economic empowerment and community integration. The strong sense of community among these entrepreneurs, with 90% feeling part of and supported by their communities, is a testament to their resilience and shared aspirations.

Looking ahead to 2025, Bèkske: Rwandan Empowerment Coffee aims to build upon these successes and address persistent challenges. A goal for next year thus includes further enhancement of financial independence through increased sales and continued training. In this way, we could empower these women to meet more daily needs independently. We hope to address the common needs of the women such as the repairment of housing, investments for cows, and better sanitation.

Despite the enduring challenges stemming from historical trauma, these women's resilient spirit and determination, coupled with ongoing support from Bèkske, give confidence that they will continue to grow.

