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LAND FOR WOMEN MODEL AT A GLANCE

- **30 women and a donation of 2 hectares of farmland**
- **A loan for seeds, fertilisers and farm setup**
- **64 days training on business, climate-smart farming, nutrition and women's empowerment**
- **5 years of partnership with LOWF**
- **Graduation from poverty as empowered landowners running a successful agribusiness**



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO - GILES DULEY

Since its inception in 2020, Land for Women has been a transformative force in the lives of everyone involved. We know that it is the combination of land ownership and agricultural training which is key to dismantling the barriers to empowerment faced by vulnerable women in Rwanda.

That is why I am so pleased we have been able to welcome two new cooperatives to the programme in 2022/23 - Abunzumumwe in Gasabo District and Abatingingwa in Rwamagana District - who have already begun attending training while we identify and purchase suitable sites for them.

This year, Imboni Gikomero and Icyizere Ruhanga cooperatives have once again demonstrated the impact of our climate-smart farming model in their cultivation of Rwanda's dry season; and their hard work led to a 41% increase in average earnings. Working in collaboration with our team and the women of Imboni, Icyizere embraced a new crop strategy for 22/23 and subsequently celebrated the largest harvest of any season on the programme so far. The impact of this is not limited solely to the women themselves: as well as completely eradicating malnutrition and stunting amongst their children, we are proud that our Land for Women cooperatives have also opted to support their wider communities by sharing seeds, farming skills and, this year, 650kg of donated produce to destitute families in the community.

Our training programme continues to develop a wide breadth of knowledge which has led 33 entrepreneurial cooperative members to develop their own side businesses: in 22/23, training modules included business and finance, climate-smart farming, and gender and empowerment education. These, and many other successful indicators, are explored in more depth below.

The journey of Land for Women is a testament to collaboration, community and sustainability, and it is made possible by the support of RGB, Gasabo District officials, MIGEPROF and the Rwandan Land Management and Use Authority, as well as the local community and our overseas funding partners. As ever, I also want to express my gratitude to every single one of the now 122 cooperative members who are the architects of this programme's success - and who always offer a warm welcome and a wonderful home-cooked meal from their produce when I am fortunate enough to visit their farms.

I am already looking forward to returning in 2023/24: to seeing the women of Abunzumumwe and Abatingingwa cultivating their own land; hearing about the progress of our existing farms on their journey to wholly organic farming practices; and meeting our fifth and sixth cooperatives.

Giles Duley
CEO of Legacy of War Foundation

I. Land Ownership for Agricultural Investment and Income Generation

During this second year of partnership on the LFW programme, the Imboni and Icyizere cooperatives shifted from working as novice farmers to operating as competent market actors, with new levels of confidence to plan ahead and make bold investments for the future. Backed by the security of land ownership, our cooperative members acted with a strong sense of conviction knowing they are guaranteed to reap the benefits of their investments, a privilege not open to Rwandan farmers working on rented land.



Water tanks being delivered to Imboni farm

During 22/23 our Imboni and Icyizere cooperative Members invested in:

- paying for their own seeds and fertilisers (previously funded through LFW loans).
- improved seeds which are climate resilient, yielding premium quality produce in greater amounts.
- higher value crops, such as passionfruit and tamarillo, which offer greater financial return and options for post-harvest processing.
- a flock of 50 goats at Imboni farm.
- 5 cows across the two farms, as well as purpose-built cow sheds (funded through LFW loans).

During 22/23 LWF provided:

- a rainwater harvesting system for irrigation at Imboni.
- protective boots and gloves for Imboni.
- bamboo structures to support the passion fruit vines at both farms.

New Cooperative Groups

During 22/23 we welcomed two new cooperative groups into the LFW community. **Abunzumumwe**, which means "United", is a group of 34 women in Gasabo District who are amongst the lowest socioeconomic groups in society and come from families experiencing conflict and domestic violence. **Abatingingwa**, meaning "We're on it!", is a group of 30 women in Rwamagana District who have been farming unused plots of land up for sale. Having to move each time the land is sold



The leaders of the Abatingingwa Cooperative, pictured with David, LFW's Agronomist

keeps them trapped in a cycle of low productivity and minimum profit. Both groups demonstrate tremendous resilience and determination to reach their goals whatever the circumstances, making them highly suitable partners for our LFW programme. We are very excited to begin our partnership with Abunzumumwe and Abatingingwa and we are in the process of locating plots of farmland for purchase where the groups can be permanently based.



The leaders of the Abunzumumwe Cooperative group

2. Poverty Reduction

Stability of life

Poverty for the rural poor can be characterised by an uncertain lifestyle buffeted by external shocks and fluctuations in family earnings, impacting all of a person's basic needs. For the Imboni and Icyizere women this year, average earnings are up 41% on the previous year, and life improvements that took hold in year 1 remained consistent. All children of cooperative members remained in school; and, thanks to LFW's climate resilient farm systems, households maintained stable food security and incomes even during drought shocks. Stability was maintained during the dry season, June-August, a time when thousands of small holder farmers go hungry because they are unable to irrigate their crops. This baseline stability demonstrates significant progress in our fight to eliminate poverty for rural women in Rwanda and means that LFW farmers and their families no longer live in constant fear for the future. As voiced by the Permanent Secretary of Rwanda's Ministry for Gender and Family Promotion when visiting LFW farmers this year:

"The local government wants to support vulnerable families, stunted children, and families that cannot afford health insurance, but your families are no longer among these groups. The strong family that Rwanda wants to have is a reflection of you!"

Education

A critical cause of poverty for women in Rwanda, especially in rural areas, is a lack of access to education and vocational training opportunities. This year we are proud to have equipped 122 women with an extensive knowledge base which they have drawn upon to move into lucrative parts of the value chain and maximise business development opportunities.

We Delivered 21 Days of Training in 22/23:		
Cooperative	# of days	Topics covered
Icyizere and Imboni	2	Business, financial management
	5	Gender equality, empowerment, health, nutrition
	1	Farm visit to learn about cultivating passionfruit direct from growers
	2	Health, nutrition, cookery demonstrations for the community
	5	On-farm agronomy support covering all aspects of climate-smart farming
Abunzumumwe	2	Seasonal Planning, Business and Finance
	2	Climate-smart farming
Abatingingwa	2	Seasonal Planning, Business and Finance



Training sessions on gender, women's empowerment and health and nutrition

Icyzere – Challenging the Subsistence Mindset

The Icyzere women have faced some difficulties embracing the mindset of the commercial farmer. Changes in leadership, a tiring walk to their farm, and a high ratio of genocide survivors with health issues, put constraints on their capacities and ambition. In season A they opted to grow maize, a low-risk crop requiring cheaper inputs and limited crop care, yet income per m² is relatively low. In Season B they proposed sorghum, a traditional subsistence crop signifying inefficient land use and a dive straight back to poverty. Conversations with our agronomist and leaders of the Imboni cooperative helped Icyzere embrace a more financially lucrative plan focused on commercially viable green beans and passion fruit. As a result, Icyzere went on to achieve the largest harvest of any LFW season so far, which massively boosted their confidence as business actors. As a result of this, Icyzere made a meaningful shift from subsistence to commercial farming: celebrating the returns that can be made with purposeful land maximisation through investing in higher value crops and being willing to take risks.

Imboni – Aiming High

Because Imboni farm is located in the heart of their community, the women frequently pop in to check produce and socialise together, contributing to the huge sense of pride they take in their agribusiness. In navigating the market, Imboni capitalised on their reputation for high quality produce, selling green beans at double the price they achieved last year. They expanded production by onboarding 8 neighbours with land: providing seeds and training in climate-smart farming. Backed by the stamp of quality produce associated with Imboni, the neighbours received a higher price for crops than they could achieve independently and Imboni increased their output by 4,500kg.



Imboni Cooperative members tending to their green bean seedlings

Since government provision for training rural farmers is overstretched, by providing this training Imboni is assisting government aims, creating business opportunities for smallholder farmers who would otherwise be unable to tap into the commercial markets, and contributing to the broader economic development of the wider community.

3. Increased Agricultural Productivity



LFW Cooperative member tending to seedlings

Through employing climate-smart techniques at our farms, LFW farmers maximised land use for agricultural production, and did not incur crop losses as a result of climate shocks. Overall productivity for the year remains to be seen as harvests from seasons B and C are ongoing, however productivity indications on specific crops are impressive.

Potatoes: Both farms have been growing a variety of potatoes with optimum production ranging between 10-15 tonnes per hectare. During season A of 21/22, Icyzere harvested potatoes at 53% of maximum production capacity, and in season B of 22/23 they harvested at a rate of 125% of maximum production. For Imboni, in Season A of 21/22 they

harvested at a rate of 54% of maximum production and in Season A of 22/23 they harvested the same variety at a rate of 104% of maximum production.

Green beans: Imboni produced a variety of green beans for which optimum production is 12-15 tonnes per hectare. During Season A, Imboni produced at a rate of 87% of maximum yields, and in season B at 100%. Icyizere grew a variety of green beans capable of yielding up to 25 tonnes per hectare, producing at a rate of 100% maximum capacity in season B.



Some of Imboni's green bean harvest

4. Nutrition, Food Security and Health

Progress towards good health and nutrition continued during 22/23. LFW farmers supplemented their family diet with produce taken home from the household gardens at the farms. At Icyizere, each woman took home 90kg of produce from the household garden, and at Imboni it was 134kg. Increased incomes have elevated the women's purchasing power to supplement their families' diet with a range of food types as required. Previously, 6 women across the two cooperatives could not pay for their own health insurance, 5 women did not have a kitchen garden in their home, and 7 women would often or sometimes go without a meal. Now, all the women pay for their own health insurance, all the women bar 1 have a kitchen garden at home, and only 2 women occasionally go without a meal.

LFW HOUSEHOLD GARDEN PRODUCE FOR HOME CONSUMPTION 2022/23:				
	ICYIZERE - 33 members		IMBONI - 25 members	
	CROP	AMOUNT (kg)	CROP	AMOUNT (kg)
SEASON A	Beans	524	Beans	630
	Sweet Potatoes	240	Bananas	750
	Egg plants	301	Carrots	150
SEASON B	Beans	500	Beans	493
	Onions	320	Bananas	600
	Carrots	190	Onions	150
			Eggplants	270
SEASON C	Cassava	900	Bananas	300
TOTAL		2,975		3,343
TOTAL PER WOMAN		90		134

Community Nutrition

As much as possible, LFW farms aim to reach out to benefit the entire community. During Genocide Memorial Week, LFW farmers visited families of 4 women who suffered horrific gender-based violence during the genocide against the Tutsi, leaving them unable to work due to ill health. Each family received generous supplies of rice, maize flour, cooking oil, beans and washing products for their store cupboards. LFW farmers also donated 650kg of produce to 70 community members suffering from poverty and malnutrition.



Delivering food supplies during Genocide Memorial Week

Eradicating Child Malnutrition

In year 1, only 18 women across the two cooperatives could include dairy products in their diet, of which 4 women obtained milk from their own cow. Now, 37 women include dairy produce in their diet, 14 of which get dairy from their own cow. Imboni farm's livestock produces 12 litres of milk daily. This enables every child in the cooperative to receive milk, helping to tackle child malnutrition in the community. During 21/22, 29 children across Icyizere and Imboni farms were either at risk of malnutrition, or at risk of death from malnutrition. Now all children are well nourished and in good health.

Stunting and malnutrition are serious problems in Rwanda. As such, we regard the full eradication of malnutrition amongst the children of Icyizere and Imboni cooperatives to be a remarkable achievement and a huge cause for celebration.

Nutrition Training

In order to harness the health benefits of food and facilitate preparation of balanced and nutritious meals, nutritional literacy is essential. This year we ran training on Health, Nutrition and Food Security with Imboni and Icyizere. Topics included: understanding the importance of a balanced diet, nutrition for maternal breastfeeding, foetal and infant health, obesity, anaemia and HIV. The training also looked at the importance of maintaining a kitchen garden in the women's homes for cultivating further produce. In addition, we ran a two day 'Training of Trainers' module, where the women looked at how to become role models for fighting malnutrition in their communities by gaining new food preparation skills to be shared through cookery demonstrations.



Nutrition training session

5. Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment

Decision-making

LFW farmers remained at the heart of strategic and financial decision-making throughout 22/23, taking ownership at all stages of the supply chain. Imboni and Icyizere cooperatives paid for their own inputs, lined up all farm clients independently, utilising their bargaining power and reputation to achieve high level market prices. Taking a targeted business-savvy approach, they planted moderate quantities of new crops in order to test risks and experiment with post-harvest processing to determine which crops offer the best longer term business prospect.

The LFW Movement

We believe that collective effort can accelerate the unfolding of empowerment. Women across our cooperatives inspired and supported each other this year. Decisions to synchronise crop plans across Imboni and Icyizere enabled the cooperatives to sell produce together in bulk for higher prices.



Olive Mutetamfura (centre in blue), founding member of Icyizere Cooperative, welcomes the Abunzumwe women into the LFW community

When members from Icyizere and Imboni delivered training to our new LFW cooperative groups, the women of Abunzumumwe said it was a dream come true to be taught by Imboni whom they have long admired as their role model.

When Icyizere was at risk of retreating to subsistence crops, the Imboni women were instrumental in encouraging them to get back on track with commercial farming.

Sideline Businesses

Capital from the cooperatives enabled many women to act on personal entrepreneurial goals. 33 women set up sideline businesses, ranging from independently leasing land for food production and shops selling food and household products, to managing telecom airtime and money transfers. Branching out into independent business ventures, however big or small, shows that LFW farmers are assured in their own sense of agency; LFW farms have become a springboard for growth in other areas of the women's lives.

Digital Banking

In societies like Rwanda where men traditionally control financial decisions, access to banking helps women to take greater control of their finances. On entering a competition with Access Bank Rwanda (ABR), Imboni won an award of RWF 300,000 and opened a new account with ABR as a result. While most cooperatives bank locally with Village Savings Schemes, the ABR account enabled Imboni to move to digital banking, facilitating ease of business with clients, lifting their reputation as market actors.

Livestock Assets

Access to productive assets enables women to make decisions over, and benefit from, resources that affect their status in the household and community. Livestock such as cows and goats are significant for farming communities, offering nutrition from milk produce, income through sale of milk, and manure to fertilize crops. Furthermore, livestock rearing can multiply assets and livestock can be sold to meet urgent financial needs. Utilising LFW profits, 43 women across the two cooperatives acquired livestock assets, 17 of these are cows, which are considered to be a symbol of wealth and social status in Rwanda.

Training on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment

Raising women's consciousness is a critical part of affecting a change of values and motivation. In our 5-day training, Icyizere and Imboni studied decision-making regarding ownership of assets, focusing on land rights, conflict management, women's development in the agricultural value chain, and working with male partners to support economic activities for the benefit of the family and the community. The training, which resonated deeply with the women, has become a catalyst for meaningful change, as demonstrated through their achievements both at the farms and in their personal lives this year. ***"The training helped me to understand gender equality. It helped me change my mindset regarding how I was considering my daughters. I was thinking they do have less value than boys. Now I treat them differently."*** – Ingabire Assumpta, LFW farmer



Imboni Cooperative member leading training session for Abunzumumwe women



Feeding an Imboni Cooperative cow

6. Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Land Use

During this year, LFW farmers continued to expand climate-smart farming techniques implemented at the farms:

- **Intercropping** - passionfruit and potatoes were cultivated simultaneously side by side to optimise land use, for natural fertilisation as well as natural pest and disease control.
- **Trenching** - pathways divert excessive rainwater flow away from crops to reduce the risk of soil erosion; trenches break the slope of the land to lock water in, maintaining moisture in the soil.
- **Mulching** - this year both farms became self-sufficient in mulch production: an organic layer applied to soil to suppress weeds and lock moisture in.
- **Rainwater Harvesting** - at Imboni farm, gutters on the new cattle sheds, combined with gutters on roofs of farm buildings, collect 15,000 litres of water per season, enabling full irrigation of crops at the farm.
- **Livestock and Compost** - Imboni now has 4 cows (their land came with one resident cow) and Icyizere has 2 cows, enabling the women to be self-sufficient in organic compost production.



The Cooperative cows produce milk and compost

Spotlight on Soil Fertility



Cooperative member sowing seeds

Large areas of Rwandan soil are degraded due to unsustainable land use practices, demographic pressure, and soil erosion. Nurturing soil health is therefore a critical LFW endeavour. Early samples from Icyizere and Imboni showed the soil to be highly acidic, mineral and nutrient deficient, with depleted levels of organic matter. Our farms aim to be fully organic and chemical free, yet depleted soil cannot sustain organic produce, or provide the quality and quantity of crops needed to run a successful agribusiness. Since it can take years for improvements in soil fertility to set in, we begin by using conventional fertilisers, but gradually build organic matter into the soil and reduce fertiliser dependency over time. To tackle acidity, the women have been applying lime to the soil. For macronutrients they have been applying NPK fertiliser, compost has been applied for organic matter, and crop rotation has increased biodiversity of nutrients in the soil. Samples taken this year show improvements of medium to high levels of organic matter in the soil and adequate levels of nitrogen. We have been able to cut chemical fertiliser use by 50% and aim to reduce this to 25% by the end of year 3 and to 0% by the end of year 4.

Land For Women Success Story



"My name is Jacqueline. The genocide against the Tutsi happened when I was 29 years old. My husband decided to hide me and some neighbours who were being hunted, but he was killed because he refused to hand us over to the militia. I managed to escape with our baby son, and I thank God that my son survived. After the genocide, my husband's family disowned us because they said it was my fault that their son was killed. Since then we have not had secure accommodation. I joined the Land for Women cooperative because I was known to be one of the poorest women in this area. In the two years since I joined, so many things have changed, but the biggest change in my

life is having a place where I can sleep comfortably. In March 2023 when I received income from season A, I started building a house. The cooperative gave me a loan of 150,000 Rwf and I have already paid half of it back using my shares from Season B. The house I built is made out of 17 iron sheets and we have two bedrooms. It is not big but it is a start. This is the greatest dream of my life so far. I never imagined that a cooperative could help anyone get a house. The problem of food is also solved now and I believe I will be able to expand our house every year."

Report signed on behalf of the board by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Giles Duley', written over a light blue background.

Giles Duley
CEO of Legacy of War Foundation
23rd October 2023

