



Women empowerment in Rwanda:
Agaseke project (Peace Basket project)

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Outline



- Rwanda Development framework
- Key governance reforms
- Political empowerment
- Impact in education
- Challenges to economic empowerment
- Agaseke project:
 - Basket weaving
 - Peace basket
 - Women weavers
 - Role of government and aid organizations
 - Role of overseas private sector
 - Economic impact
 - Social impact
 - Characteristics of the business model
- Conclusion

Development Framework 1: Vision 2020 (2000)



- ❑ Strengthening and maintaining good governance;
- ❑ Transforming the agricultural sector into a high value and high productivity sector;
- ❑ Development of human resources;
- ❑ Development of knowledge based service sector with emphasis on information, communication and technology;
- ❑ Reducing the risks and costs of doing business by creating an enabling environment and development of requisite infrastructures;
- ❑ Promoting the entrepreneurial class and regional integration.

Development Framework 2: PRSP (2002)



- ❑ Rural Development and agricultural transformation
- ❑ Economic Infrastructure
- ❑ Human development
- ❑ Good governance
- ❑ Private sector Development
- ❑ Institutional Capacity Building

Development Framework 3:

MDGs (2000)



- ❑ **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
- ❑ **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education**
- ❑ **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women**
- ❑ **Goal 4: Reduce child mortality**
- ❑ **Goal 5: Improve maternal health**
- ❑ **Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**
- ❑ **Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**
- ❑ **Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development**

Development framework 4:
 Economic development and poverty reduction
 strategy (EDPRS) (2008 – 2011): Six targets



	Targets	Current	Target EDPRS 2012
1.	Real GDP growth rate	6.3%	8%
2.	Fertility rate	6.1	2
3.	Population growth	2.9-3.3%	2%
4.	Poverty	56.9%	46%
5.	Extreme poverty	37.9%	24%
6.	Vision 2020 Sector/Umurenge	1	120

Key governance reforms 1: Creating able state



- ❑ Unity and reconciliation: “*national*” versus “*ethnic identity*”
- ❑ Power sharing culture
- ❑ Decentralization
- ❑ Reform and reinforcement of the Judiciary
- ❑ Administrative and economic good governance institutions
 - ❑ Ombudsman,
 - ❑ Auditor general office,
 - ❑ National Tender Board,
 - ❑ National police,
 - ❑ Press law,
 - ❑ National examination council,
 - ❑ professional boards such as Bar association, Medical council and various other regulatory boards, etc.

Key governance reforms 2: Post-genocide constitution (2003)



- Basic Principles:
 - fighting the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations;
 - eradication of ethnic, regional and other divisions and promotion of national unity;
 - equitable sharing of power;
 - 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 per cent of posts in decision making organs;
 - building a State committed to promoting social welfare and establishing appropriate mechanisms for ensuring social justice;
 - the constant quest for solutions through dialogue and consensus

- **The constitution provides therefore for at least 30% of women representatives not only in Parliament but in all other decision making bodies at all levels.**

- For the sake of national unity, sustainable social and political stability, the constitution ensures a power sharing mechanism by making sure that a political organization holding the majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies may not exceed 50 per cent of all the members of the Cabinet. Similarly the President of the Republic and the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies shall belong to different political organizations

Women Political empowerment

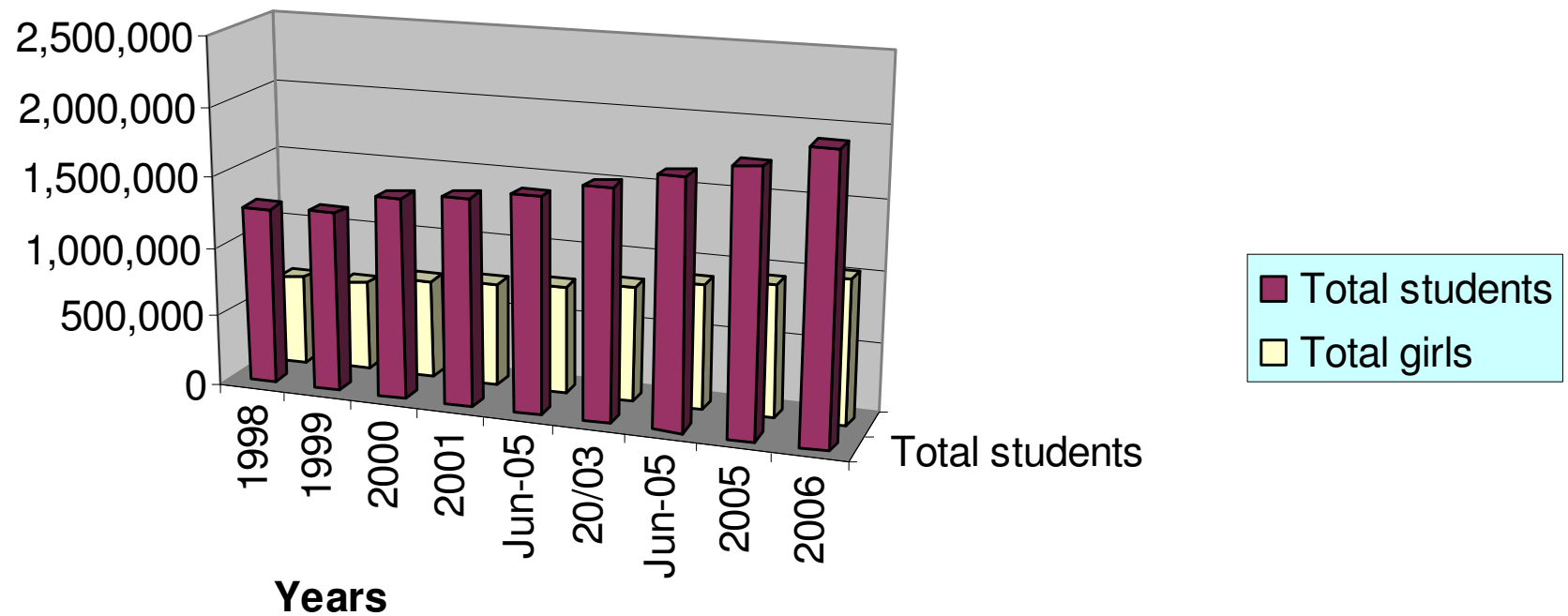


- ❑ Elected women councils at all the administrative levels for advocacy role (2000): classification of rape as a category 1 genocide crime, women inheritance law, 30% women quota in decision making bodies, access to bank loans.
- ❑ Unprecedented representation of women at all levels: 49% in lower chamber of parliament, 30% in senate, 36% in cabinet, 43% in districts councils (local government), 41% in Supreme Court, 44% of judges

Elementary Education



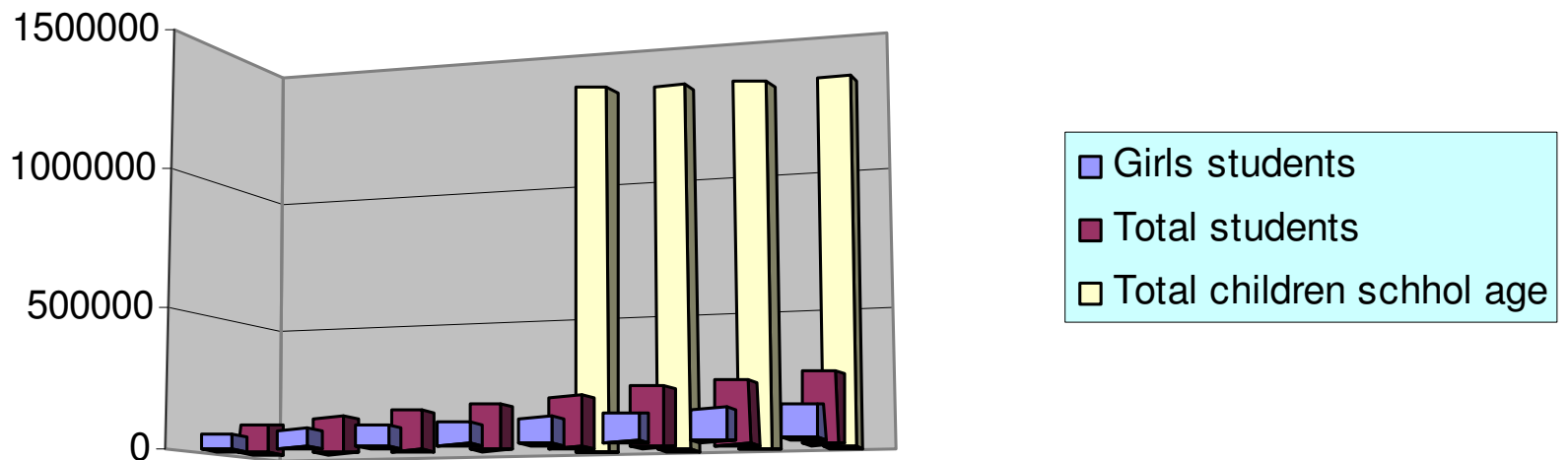
Evolution Primary education



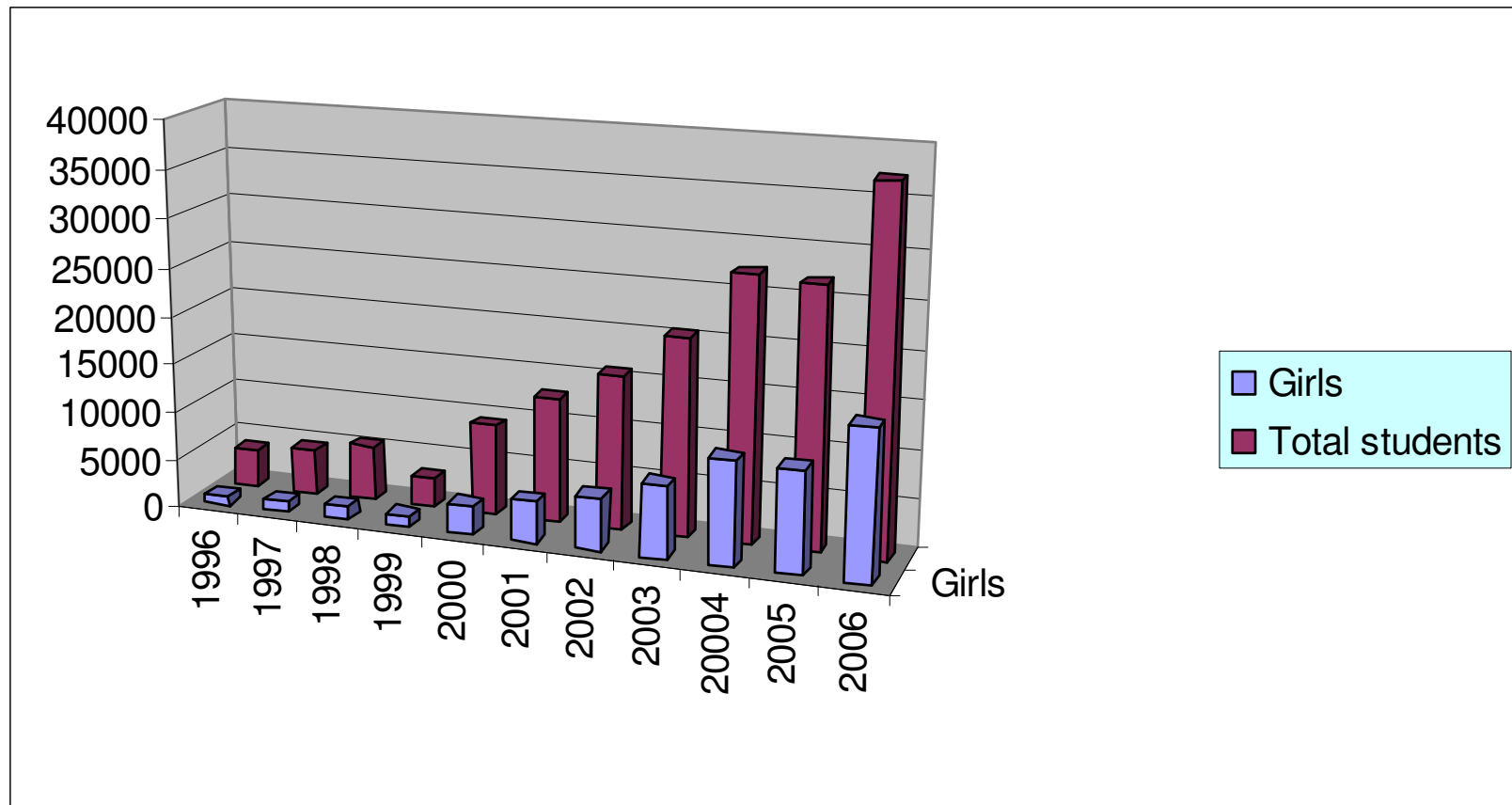
Secondary education



Evolution secondary education



Higher education in Rwanda



Challenge of economic empowerment



- ❑ 60.2% of households under poverty line are female headed (*2005/2006 integrated household living conditions survey, NISR*)
- ❑ 86.3% women (71.2% men) are engaged as laborers and other unskilled workers
- ❑ Only 14.8% of women earn cash income
- ❑ Women work more: domestic work load is 3 times more
- ❑ It is generally agreed that 80% of agricultural share of GDP is contributed by women

Basket weaving

- ❑ Basket weaving has been Rwanda's greatest craft, and a critical community activity, for hundreds of years.
- ❑ Traditionally teenagers girls are taught the art of weaving before getting married. Until today the activity involves several hundred thousand of women in rural areas
- ❑ Now these baskets are a surprise hit at a major department store in the United States (Macy's)



Peace basket



March 10, 2008

- The name has become a trademark
- The peace baskets were named so because of the environment in which they are woven; in communities around the country, women whose husbands were killed during the genocide sit with the women whose husbands killed them — and they weave baskets together. They do this, as the story goes, because one day they all got tired of crying and decided to take control of their lives, their futures. They chose peace and reconciliation. They chose sisterhood.
- Launched first by women association with the support of the UNIFEM (United Nations Fund for Women), these associations have turned into small export-oriented enterprises.
- Following the success of the venture, the government has committed a country-wide support program

Women weavers

- ❑ Each basket in the collection is inspired by a traditional Rwandan design and entirely handmade by weavers using a centuries-old technique.
- ❑ Organized in cooperatives throughout the country
- ❑ Handicraft centers in all 31 districts in Rwanda: sales to the public, training for quality assurance,
- ❑ Exports through women trading companies



Role of government and aid organizations

- ❑ Infrastructure development: district handicraft centers
- ❑ Regulatory framework: laws and patent
- ❑ Micro-credit access
- ❑ Capacity building: quality assurance, standards
- ❑ Facilitation for linkages with overseas markets
- ❑ Organizations that were involved at the beginning: UNIFEM, USAID



Role of overseas private sector



- ❑ Now the support to the basket project is focused on trade, not aid. It gives power to the women to shape their own future.
- ❑ Overseas retailers offer a window to the marketplace on the basis of transparent transaction
- ❑ In the case of the US, the business takes advantage of the AGOA
- ❑ Through the interaction with the local trading companies and women weavers, they establish trust and quality production along the value chain

Social impact

- ❑ The annual income of US \$ 1,200 is far more than the country US \$ 300 per capita GDP.
- ❑ All women have now a bank account in the local community bank
- ❑ All women weavers pay their contribution to the local mutual health insurance (covers the primary health care + ceasrian section)
- ❑ It caters for the family basic needs
- ❑ In Rwanda, this project is a forum in which women genocide survivors and wives of perpetrators sit together, plan together and produce together on a sustainable basis



Characteristics of the peace basket business model



- ❑ Identification of a marketable product overseas involving large number of rural producers (basket, coffee, tea, other handicrafts, jatropha curcas, etc.)
- ❑ Support by government or aid organizations for quality production, management and linkages with overseas importers and retailers, access to micro-credit, etc.
- ❑ Target group such as women that is efficient and assures distribution of profits in the community
- ❑ When applied systematically, it has to the potential to impact the GDP growth
- ❑ Similar projects: OVOP (Japanese One Village, One Product); Fair Trade, etc.

Conclusion

- ❑ Combined government top-down action and civil society support can operate dramatic shift in women empowerment
- ❑ The *AGASEKE project* is an other evidence of the role of investment in women for the attainment of MDGs
- ❑ Trade development and involvement of trading companies from developed countries have a significant impact on poverty reduction and MDGs

