

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



**WOMEN FOR WATER AND CLIMATE
COOPERATION NETWORK
(WWCCN)**

About WWCCN

Women for Water and Climate Change Network (WWCCN) has been created to empower, advocate and promote women's leadership for environmental conservation, sustainable water management and climate resilience actions. WWCCN has a well-structured Governance and staffing setup.

WWCCN is a non-profit making organization created with the aim of empowering women in the water and climate sectors by promoting gender equality and sustainable resource management. To achieve this noble goal, WWCCN offers skill-building workshops, run awareness campaigns, and create networks for women leaders. Collaborating with various partners, WWCCN focuses on gender-inclusive climate action and advocate for investments that prioritize gender equality.

WWCCN aims to become a lead world organization to showcase the role women in environmental conservation, sustainable water management and building climate resilience.



Vision

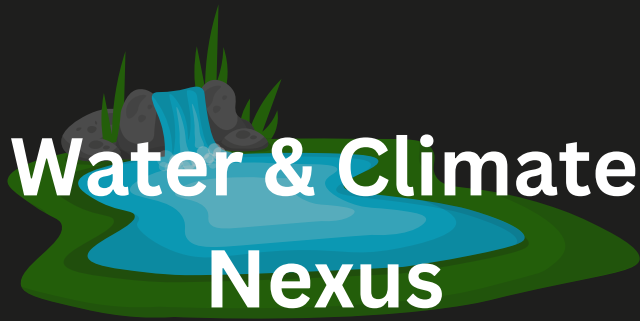
Becoming a worldwide organization that promotes inclusive and integrated policy and decision making processes related to environmental protection, sustainable natural resources management and climate resilience.



Mission

To empower women and youth to play their catalytic role in promoting national and transboundary water and natural resources management through climate resilience and socio-economic transformation agenda at all levels.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Water & Climate Nexus

We raise awareness about the importance of protecting and preserving the environment for present and future generations. Our efforts focus on the need for sustainable water management, including the preservation of rivers and valleys, to ensure a reliable water supply, support hydropower production, and enable irrigation. Additionally, we work to enhance community resilience to the impacts of climate change while promoting their active participation in biodiversity conservation, subsequently contributing to broader ecosystem protection.



Sustainable Resource Management

We engage with policymakers to advocate for sustainable practices and policies in the natural resources sector, particularly in the management of minerals. Our focus is on ensuring that the benefits from these resources are distributed equitably between women and men.



We tackle the unique challenges that women face due to climate change by promoting gender-inclusive climate action. We advocate for investments that prioritize gender equality, recognizing that gender inequality is a root cause of poverty, which is further exacerbated by climate change. Women, often responsible for sustaining their families, face additional pressures in adverse conditions like droughts, threatening their prospects for a better life. This dual burden of climate change and gender inequality presents a significant barrier to progress.



Advocacy & Inclusion

We advocate for the recognition of climate-induced vulnerabilities within communities, aiming to influence policy at various levels. A key focus of our work is increasing women's representation at decision-making tables. It is crucial for women to participate in high-level forums where they can voice their concerns. We seek to expand the number of women participating in national and international gender-climate dialogues and conferences, ensuring that women's perspectives are integral to policy development.

OUR VALUES

1. Integrity: We are dedicated to ethical practices, transparency, and fairness, whether addressing local communities or global partners. We uphold the rights of all individuals, and protect the confidentiality of sensitive information.

2. Accountability: We are accountable to the communities we serve. We take responsibility for ensuring that our initiatives in water and climate cooperation do not harm the planet, by setting clear objectives and using resources efficiently. We listen to women's voices, and creating solutions that benefit both people and ecosystems.

3. Independence and Impartiality: WWCCN remains independent and impartial, committed to advocating for the common good. We ensure that our personal interests and external pressures do not compromise our ethical principles. By prioritizing the needs of the environment and vulnerable communities, especially women, we ensure that our initiatives are inclusive and just.

4. Professional Commitment: We strive for excellence in all aspects of our work, from grassroots initiatives to global collaborations. Our teams stays at the forefront of environmental science and advocacy, using our expertise to uplift communities and create sustainable solutions. We are open to new ideas, committed to continuous learning, and loyal to the mission of building a more resilient and just world for all.

I. INTRODUCTION

This annual report provides a comprehensive overview of initiatives undertaken by the Women for Water and Climate Cooperation Network (WWCCN) to address critical social and environmental challenges in Rwanda. Our efforts focused on promoting eco-friendly activities, including clean energy solutions, addressing social and environmental concerns in the mining sector, fostering dialogue on gender and climate change, and combating sexual abuse. This report reflects our unwavering commitment to improving community welfare and promoting sustainable development in Rwanda.

1. Addressing Barriers to Free Children from Sexual Abuse

1.1 Domestic Violence

WWCCN recognizes that women's unpaid care work, particularly related to fuel collection and cooking, increases their exposure to various forms of abuse. To address these challenges, we reached numerous households in Nyarugenge District, raising awareness about sexual violence risks. By fostering open discussions within families, we provided essential information on reporting abuse and empowered women and children to make informed choices. These conversations also aimed to prevent unwanted pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

Importantly, WWCCN actively engaged men in these dialogues to promote shared responsibility in tackling sexual violence, recognizing the importance of fostering positive masculinity within families and communities.

1.2 Clean Cooking

Despite urbanization, many households in Kigali and beyond continue to rely on inefficient and polluting fuels such as firewood and charcoal. These fuels contribute significantly to carbon emissions and disproportionately burden women and girls with health and economic challenges.



WWCCN initiated clean cooking interventions in the Nyamirambo sector, targeting women survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi. These women, who faced economic hardships and ongoing challenges for their children, received gas cookers to reduce their dependency on traditional fuels. This initiative achieved the following:

- Reducing household's exposure to harmful pollutants.
- Reducing health risks associated with indoor air pollution.
- Alleviated financial strain and time spent collecting firewood,
- Allocating women with more time for productive activities.

These efforts also contributed to climate mitigation by lowering carbon emissions and fostering environmental sustainability in Rwanda.



2. Engaging Multi-Stakeholders in Social and Environmental Concerns in the Mining and Quarry Sector

WWCCN conducted an extensive evaluation of mining and quarrying operations in Ngororero District, uncovering critical environmental and social challenges as follows:

- Misconceptions, negative stereotypes, and cultural values around the ability of women and their involvement in Artisanal and Small Mining (ASM). Women may be forbidden from working underground, in certain roles, and at night. These hamper efforts to increase the number of women in mining.
- The environmental impacts of mining such as water pollution and deforestation disproportionately affect women as they are often the ones responsible for washing and collecting water as well as firewood.
- Increased school and higher education dropout rates as children and youth see their elders and peers working in mines and perceive education to be a waste of time. Young women may be attracted to sex work in mining camps to provide a source of income. This also increases health risks and exposure to gender-based violence.
- Conversely, as women earn a greater income and are empowered through mining, some male partners and relatives may feel able to spend their income on entertainment, instead of on the household.

As part of ensuring the wellbeing of communities especially engaged in mineral production, WWCCN conducted a training workshop for 25 women working for Ruli Mining Trade Ltd in Mburabuturo, site A on human rights, environmental conservation, economic development, and sanitation. Additionally, produced a policy brief and engaged policy makers to discuss the findings on environmental and social challenges and their effects on the community and ecosystem in Ngororero District.

As way forward, WWCCN recommends providing necessary knowledge, skills, capacity, support, and resources to effectively translate existing gender equality related laws and regulations into practice. This includes developing and implementing a range of cross-cutting policy options that are tailored to the different market players and the functions that women play in the sector.



a) Government and policy making: build capacity of relevant government agencies to oversee, monitor, and report on effective implementation of gender mainstreaming policies, guidelines, strategies and recommendations. This includes collecting and publishing data on the participation and role of women in mining.

i. Consider the educational policies, programs, careers advice, and scholarships to encourage and facilitate women to become involved in the science, technology, engineering, and math subjects from an early age, and promote positive role models of women in mining to school, college, and university students.



b) Civil Society, NGOs, and business membership organizations: Engage and sensitize NGOs, business membership and advocacy organizations to better understand ASM and how to establish a gender-sensitive physical and social environment. Support these organizations with seeking investment and donor support for capacity building training and programs.

c) Private mining companies and mine site owner-operators: Provide guidelines and assist companies to develop corporate (site-level) policies for gender mainstreaming, improved labor conditions, retention of women workers, provision of women only sanitation facilities, child care support, and training and career development into more secure, technical and better paid roles.

d) Individuals (women and men): Provide capacity building to women on mineral governance and gender equality laws and policies, as well as practical and technical training in mining, processing and more advanced technical skills. Sensitize men on the issues facing women in mining so that misconceptions and negative stereotypes can be addressed, and so that men can also support and advocate for change.

3. National Workshop on Gender and Climate Change

This year, WWCCN convened Rwanda's first-ever national workshop on gender and climate change, providing a platform to discuss the interconnectedness of gender and climate issues. The workshop brought together 100 key state and non-state stakeholders to share insights, propose solutions, and build a cross-sectoral network to address these challenges.





Key Achievements

- **Advocating for Women's Representation:** The workshop focused on addressing the underrepresentation of women in climate policy. By amplifying women's voices, WWCCN facilitated their inclusion in high-level dialogues to ensure gender-responsive and inclusive climate policies.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue:** The workshop fostered a robust exchange of ideas, strengthening networks among policymakers, practitioners, activists, and researchers. By facilitating these connections, WWCCN laid the groundwork for unified action on gender and climate issues.



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