



## **Project Update for Together Women Rise**

**January 2025**

### **Male Engagement Program Evaluation**

**Background:** This project evaluated the incorporation of male engagement programming into two projects: Hand in Hand's program in Tanzania and Women for Women International (WfWI) in Rwanda.

#### **Recent Progress:**

- The qualitative data collection for the WfWI evaluation in Rwanda was completed in summer 2024, and the analysis was completed in October 2024.
- A final report on the Rwanda program was submitted to WfWI in November.
  - The findings showed that the male engagement program (MEP) supported some attitude changes in the direction of gender equity, though some of the changes were not sustained to endline. The MEP did not have a significant impact, however, on women's economic empowerment.
- The team has written a final research brief summarizing our work over the past nine years and outlining lessons and recommendations for future male engagement programs. After many iterations, the "final" version was submitted to the main donor in December, and we are awaiting their feedback so we can finalize the brief.
  - The paper focuses on the components of the two programs most directly linked to women's livelihoods.
  - We drew from the literature to explain why the outcomes were ambivalent, and offer a set of recommendations for researchers, programmers and donors based on these lessons learned. There are a few key observations:
    - The studies confirm growing consensus in the field that intervening only at the individual and interpersonal levels is necessary but insufficient to create sustained impact. Interventions must take into account the systemic nature of gender inequity, and address issues at the community level, within social institutions, and at policy level.
    - We also observed that there were important weaknesses in the core WEE programs that likely affected programmatic outcomes in terms of women's economic empowerment.

- There were issues with the design of the trainings that made it difficult for women to participate (e.g., distance needed to travel, some of the provided equipment was faulty).
- The skills provided did not align with the local conditions, markets or women's preferences. A key recommendation is the need to adapt signature graduation programs to local context.

## **Behind the Scenes Project: Supporting Female Creatives in Africa**

**Background:** With funding from the Mastercard Foundation, this project is unlocking the immense potential of Africa's creative sector by addressing systemic barriers that hinder the full participation of female creatives. The 3-year study will provide evidence and insights to drive policy and industry reforms, fostering inclusion and empowerment for young female creatives.

### **Project Updates:**

- Between January and April 2024, the ***Behind the Scenes*** project was formally launched in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda. Key stakeholders in government, creative industries (artists and policy actors), non-governmental organizations, and research institutions participated in the launch. The project launched across the seven countries elicited enthusiasm and provided opportunities to share the project roadmap and co-create the research agenda. Performances by artists in some countries showcased the industry's valuable and rich talent and raised anticipation for the project research outcomes.
- One hundred youth researchers (79 female and 21 male) from seven African countries are engaged in the project. These youth researchers are supporting the project while also benefiting from multiple activities to strengthen their skills and competencies. They have participated in training sessions on research ethics, systematic reviews, reference management, research tool development, data collection, and safeguarding. Future training sessions on public presentation, Gender 101, manuscript development, and policy engagement are planned. As efforts to research, understand, and confront uneven gender norms in Africa expand, and the opportunities and prospects for programming, advocacy, and change grow, these skills and competencies will be beneficial to the BtS youth researchers.
- We have started data collection in five countries (Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Ethiopia). Delays in two countries (Ghana and Senegal) are due to delays in Institutional Review Board approval.
- Produced first research product (currently being finalized; near-final draft attached).
- Produced first evidence-based video (draft available here: [Google Drive Link.](#))

- Project Newsletter developed and widely distributed. (We will include Rise team on distribution list).
- Project is currently conducting a scoping review to understand the state of research and evidence on women creatives in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The review covers three major questions: 1) In which creative industry sub-sectors and roles do women in SSA participate? 2) What challenges do they face? And 3), how do they negotiate or cope with these challenges?