



SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

2021/2022



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVES

Dear Abahizi Rwanda Stakeholders,

2020 through 2021 saw the entire world hurled into an intensely turbulent period that exacerbated the strain on people and communities all over the world. The COVID-19 pandemic raged on affecting nearly every aspect of life as the majority of the world went into survival mode, frantic and confused. Collectively, people reeled from the loss, the social isolation, etc. While the pandemic may not be over, we hope that when it recedes in, we will have the mechanisms to resume pre-pandemic life or transition to a new 'normal'. Despite all the turmoil in the last 2 years, 2022 has been an upward-looking year for Abahizi's growth and success in governance, productivity, and social impact.

Our social enterprise approach is based on embracing all social enterprise principles creating economic and social good for all our stakeholders; our business, our employees, our community, and our clients. Being a registered Community Benefit Company (CBC) has been a priority and this agenda has been important to us because we are a company focused on impacting and making the foundations of the community stronger.

Abahizi Rwanda was officially registered as a CBC in May 2022 in order to be officially recognized as a social enterprise. Community Benefit Companies (CBCs) along with Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) companies are playing an increasingly central role in global business. Global standards are rapidly evolving and legislators and customers are paying close attention to corporate social responsibility, sustainability, and transparency and we acknowledge the imperative to act on this.

Abahizi Rwanda is also a certified B Corp company verified for meeting high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. As a B Corp company, we evaluate our impact across five areas; Governance, Workers, Environment, Community, and Customers. In July 2022, following the B Impact Assessment in alignment with the Social Development Goals (SDGs), Abahizi was nominated among the top 5% in the Best For the World 2022 Awards in the annual B LAB African 2022 Summit and received recognition in two impact areas; Community and Workers.

The foundation of Abahizi Rwanda's social impact program is primarily based on delivering Life Skills which include Leadership Training, Financial and Lingual Literacy, Health and Mental well-being, and Counseling. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic impacts and the recent economic downturn, all profoundly affecting each and every one of us, we understand the importance mental health plays in our employees' lives, and our efforts to preserve our employees' mental well-being have accelerated. Part of our step-up efforts in 2022 included providing onsite counseling sessions and general workshops to increase mental health awareness.

Our culture shapes the values that define and distinguish us and enables us to attract and retain exceptionally phenomenal people that are integral to our success as a business. They give us conviction that as we grow, despite the extent of the challenges we face, we will continue to create a positive impact for our employees and the communities we live and work in.

Finally, as proud members of the global B Corp community, we reaffirm our commitment to continue meeting the highest standards and maintain responsible business practices across our operations in order to balance profit and purpose. As we look ahead with hope and confidence, we send a big shout-out and note of gratitude to our customers, colleagues, and partners for your continued support. We hope you will enjoy reading the enclosed Social Impact report detailing what we have been up to over the last year.

Yours Faithfully,



DARIUS HABAMENSHI
MANAGING DIRECTOR



CAROLINE MAKARA
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

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INTRODUCTION

Abahizi Rwanda is an employee-owned social enterprise founded in 2013, located in Rulindo District in the Northern Province of Rwanda. Abahizi Rwanda was founded with the aim of empowering women in rural Rwanda through the provision of life-enhancing, long-term employment that improves the lives of families and strengthens local economies.

In 2014, Abahizi Rwanda partnered with Kate Spade New York to create a collection of handbags called "On Purpose," through an initiative that empowers women, girls, and their communities through responsible supply chain management.

Since 2016, Abahizi Rwanda has conducted annual surveys to uplift employees' voices and assess their social contribution to society. The survey was set to determine the extent to which Abahizi Rwanda's daily operations are aligned with its mission.

All Abahizi Rwanda employees were invited to participate in the annual surveys. For the quantitative component, the survey questionnaires are updated every year for relevance purposes.

In addition, qualitative tools were developed to collect in-depth information about lived experiences, emotions, and behaviors, as well as the meanings attached to the quantitative findings. In 2022, Abahizi partnered with ZV Consulting Ltd., a consulting firm registered with Rwanda Development Board who conducted this annual survey.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Every year, Abahizi Rwanda conducts a social impact survey of all employees to assess the progress of the social impact program which then informs the development of the social impact report for circulation to Abahizi's key stakeholders. The impact at Abahizi is measured based on the following key metrics;



WORKPLACE EMPOWERMENT

At Abahizi Rwanda, employee satisfaction is one of the main metrics used to assess workplace empowerment. Our employee satisfaction rate in 2022 was 91%, and it increased by 5% from the previous report.



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The key indicator of the effectiveness of our impact is providing our women with the tools they need to develop themselves and their communities. Currently, 26% of Abahizi Rwanda women have been successful in creating a second income. There was a significant increase of 16% compared to the results from the previous report.



ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Our employees are the heart of our business, therefore ensuring their economic development and sustainability is important to us as it is for them. The results from the report have shown that 86% of our employees have stable saving systems. There was a significant increase of 30% compared to the results from the previous report.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

As Abahizi Rwanda continues to work to empower its employees while benefiting the community, our artisans have created 124 jobs in the community.



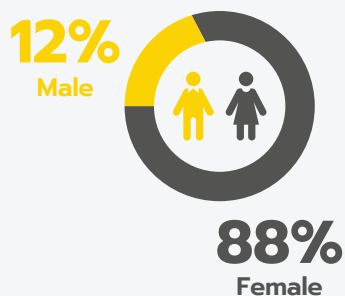
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the workforce of Abahizi Rwanda in terms of gender, age, marital status, and household Information.

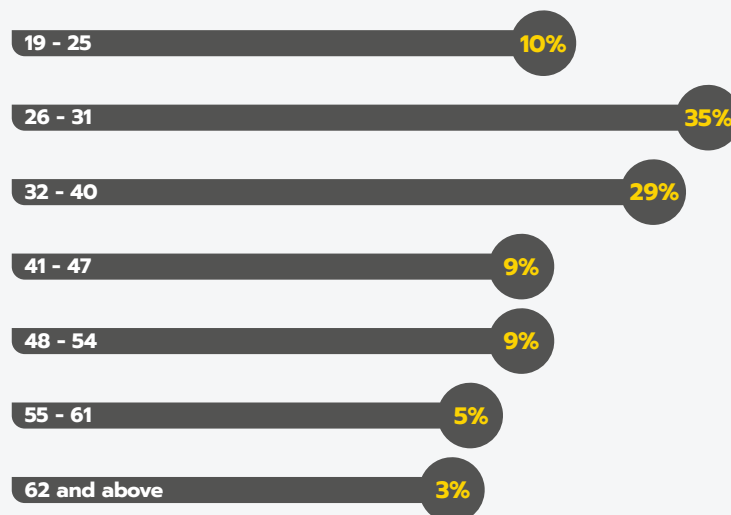
Even though all Abahizi Rwanda workforce were invited to participate in this survey, only 244 employees out of 263 were able to complete the survey successfully. This was due to the fact that some of them were on their annual leave and some had different reasons for not showing up at the workplace during the time of the data collection. Compared to 2021, the number of employees who participated in the 2022 survey declined by 3.94%. The number reduced from 254 in 2021 to 244 in 2022.

DEMOGRAPHICS

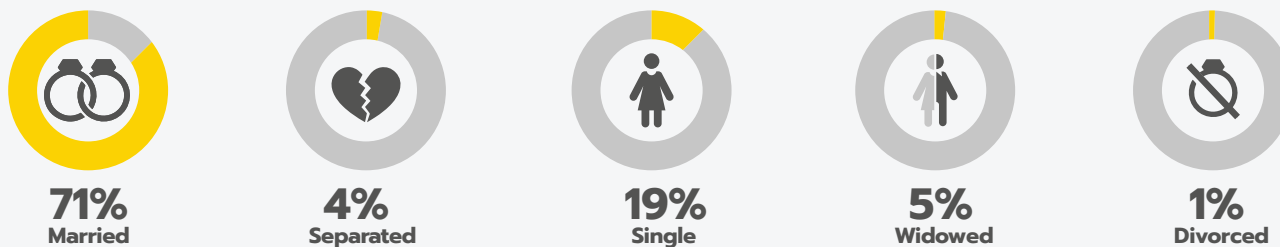
GENDER COMPOSITION



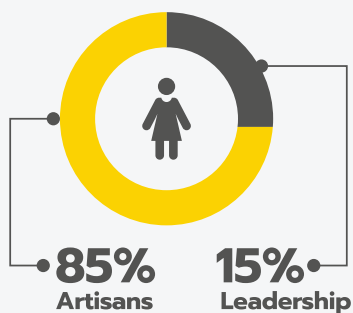
AGE DISTRIBUTION



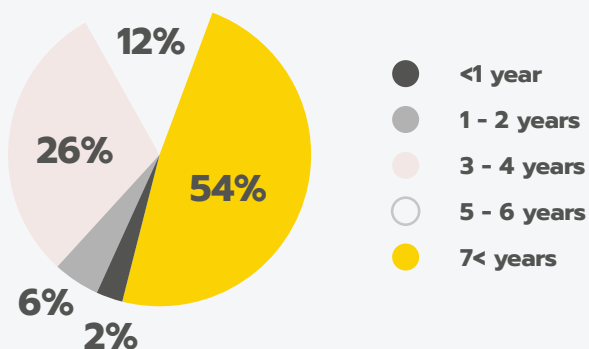
MARITAL STATUS



RESPONSIBILITIES



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



GENDER COMPOSITION OF ABAHIZI WORKFORCE

The gender composition of the Abahizi employees who participated in the 2022 annual survey comprises: 215 Women and 29 men which makes up 88.11% of the women workforce.

AGE OF ABAHIZI WORKFORCE

Abahizi Rwanda has a young workforce. Referring to the previous reports it is clear that since 2016, almost half of employees indicated being 31 years old or younger. Since 2019, the proportion of the workforce that aged 40 years and below accounts for more than 75% of the total workforce. With the current findings, there is no big change as 74% of the employees who participated in this survey are 40 years old or younger.

MARITAL STATUS, AND HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

According to previous reports, the majority of Abahizi Rwanda employees are either married or cohabiting with a partner. This trend has been maintained at over 60% since 2017 with an increase of 5% from 2020 to 2021. In 2022 the trend has increased to the level of 71%, for married employees. This shows a great impact of Abahizi on the social improvement of their employees in terms of taking household advanced responsibilities.

In 2022, the average household size, considering spouses and their biological children was 4 for married employees and 2 for single household employees.

DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYEES BY RESPONSIBILITIES

Abahizi's workforce composition predominately holds artisans' roles across the various departments, and consistently accounts for almost 85% of the workforce. In the same regard, leadership accounts for 15% only.

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YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AT ABAHIZI RWANDA

66% of the current workforce has been with the organization for over 5 years.





WORKPLACE EMPOWERMENT

Abahizi Rwanda is committed to its employees' development and offers ongoing life skills and technical training. For life skills training assessments, employees are asked to evaluate training needs for which post-training feedback is collected. For technical training, needs are identified through observations, various needs or requirements, and new employee onboarding or employee transitioning to new positions.

Various key indicators were taken into account during the 2022 annual survey to measure the success of this impact category, including employee satisfaction, and employee engagement in the organization's programs, such as life skills programs, employment benefits provided, employee voluntary turnover rate, employee self-perception, and anxiety.

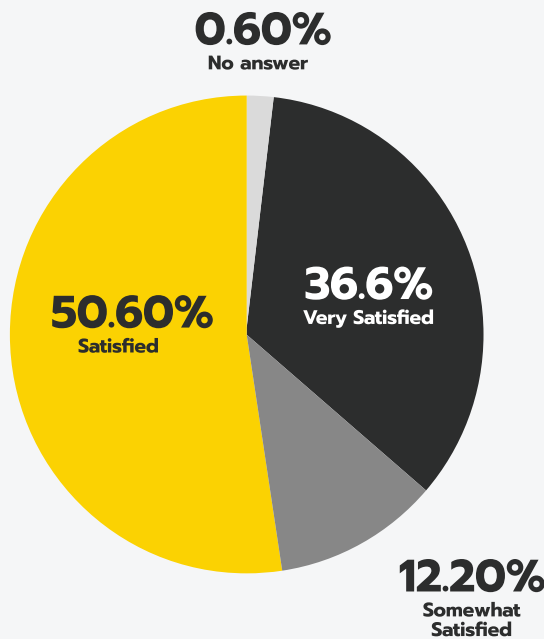
²Abahizi Rwanda Social impact manager

LIFESKILLS PROGRAM

The life skills program at Abahizi Rwanda is categorized into four; general health, finance, mental health, and leadership. During the fiscal year, 2021/2022 Abahizi Rwanda partnered with Acts of Gratitude (AOG) to deliver both Health and Finance training workshops, and further partnered with Resonate for leadership training workshops.

The general attendance for the life skills program was 232 representing 95.5%. Among those who attended the training, 99.4% reported being satisfied with the different topics that were covered in the program.

LIFESKILLS PROGRAM
SATISFACTION LEVEL



FINANCE MODULE

In 2022, The Finance Module focused on creating a social enterprise. The module constituted four topics namely; Understanding of a social enterprise, Investments, Enterprising Leadership Exploring mindsets, and Enterprising Leadership_Exploring Ideas-How. The attendance rate was 93%, and 82% of the participants reported to have been satisfied with the content that was delivered during the training.



HEALTH MODULE

In 2022, the Health Module covered four topics around; Reproductive Health, Prostate Cancer, Cervical Cancer, and Breast Cancer. The attendance rate was 97%, and 98% of the participants reported to have been satisfied with the content that was delivered during the training. Among the topics covered, cervical cancer was reported to be the most useful.



LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The Leadership module was covered through workshops in partnership with Resonate facilitated depending on the various roles and responsibilities of the individuals at Abahizi Rwanda. Some of the key topics delivered included; Step up and Lead, Conflict Resolution, Managing Up, and Goal Setting. Across the board, attendance was achieved at 96%. Satisfaction levels of the content delivered was rated 91%.



MENTAL HEALTH

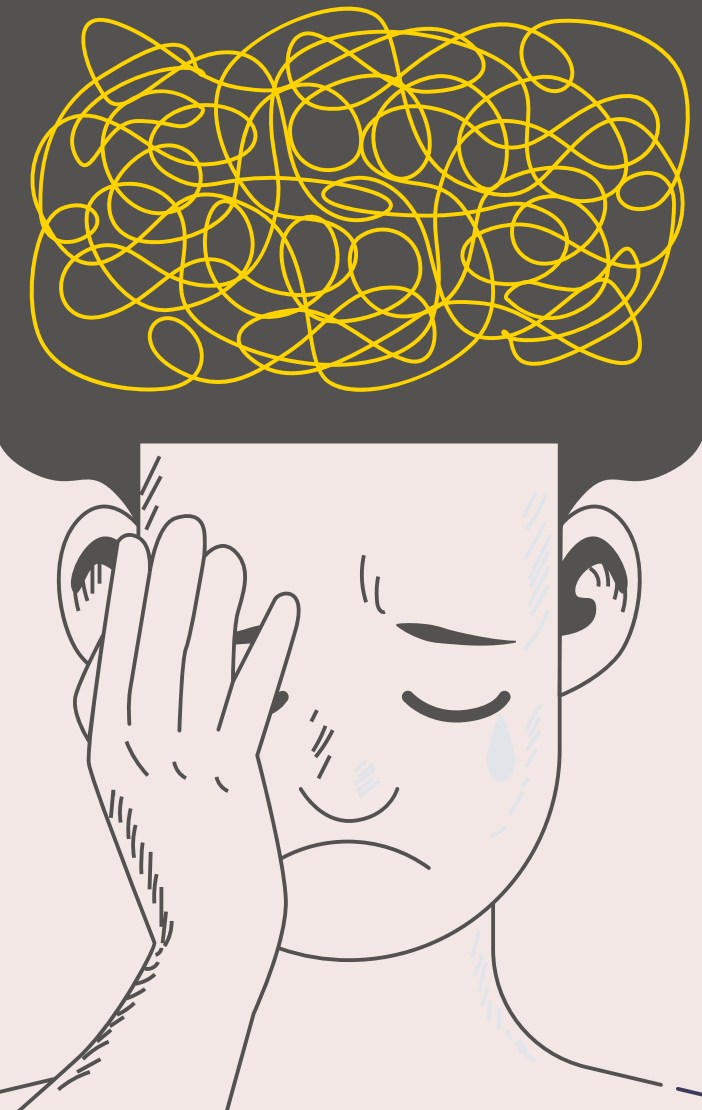
The mental health program is one of Abahizi’s most important components of the overall health module. The mental well-being of our employees is believed to be a key determinant of the overall factory productivity. Employees have access to a full-time counselor at the factory and in addition, are also offered quarterly mental health awareness workshops on various issues, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD).

74 out of 244 employees representing 30.3% indicated that they attended individual counseling sessions. The counseling sessions were rated as satisfactory by 93% of the participants. However, 3% of the individuals who attended individual counseling stated that they did not feel comfortable with the counselor, which made it difficult for them to open up and discuss personal issues

74% of the overall participants attended group counselling sessions. This highlighted a significant increase by 21% from the previous report

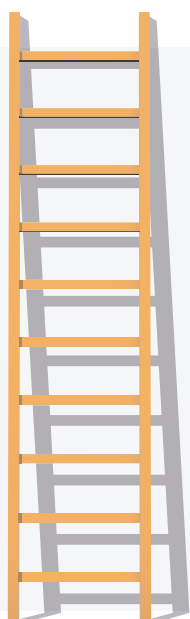
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was considered the most helpful topic for the group counseling sessions according to 58% of respondents. The rest suggested different topics such as managing depression, grief acceptance and living with others.

Some of the recommendations made in relation to these counseling sessions included increasing the number of monthly sessions and discussing a wider range of topics that apply to their everyday lives



EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Employee satisfaction was measured in two major categories: Workplace satisfaction and General Life satisfaction. The metrics were measured by referencing a 10-step ladder. Assuming that step 1 represented the bottom of the ladder, step 5 the middle of the ladder, and step 10 the top of the ladder, employees were asked to evaluate where they felt they could pin their satisfaction across the 2 areas.



Where would you place yourself on this ladder today? Put an X on the rung of the ladder where you would place yourself.

*Remember back to 5 years ago. Where would you be on the ladder? You can mark yourself higher, lower, or in the same place.

*Pretend you are now 5 years in the future. Where will you be on the ladder? You can mark yourself higher, lower or in the same place.

**For each question a different ladder was used. Respondents did not mark past present and future on same ladder.*

SATISFACTION AT THE WORKPLACE

The results indicated that 89% of the representative respondent's sample (steps 5-10 of the ladder) felt satisfied with their workplace. The chart below shows the results from the evaluation across 5 years.

LEVEL OF WORK SATISFACTION

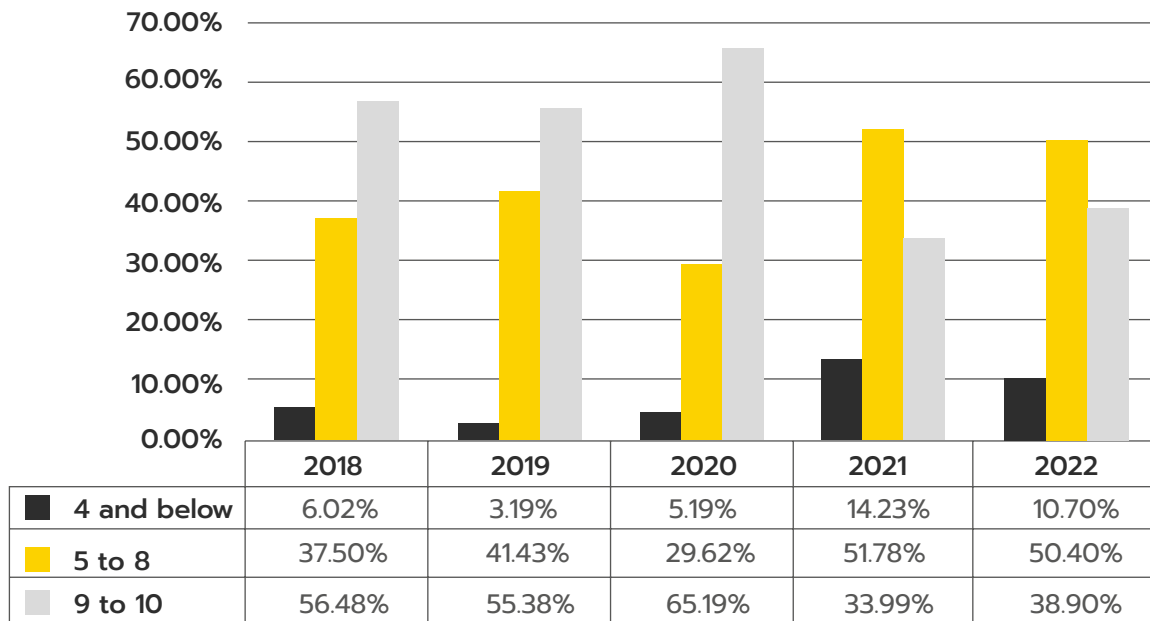


Figure 21: Level of work satisfaction

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

As above, general life satisfaction was measured against the ladder from level 1 to level 10.

On average, 92% of the respondents highlighted that they were generally satisfied with life rating a score of 5-10.

GENERAL LIFE SATISFACTION

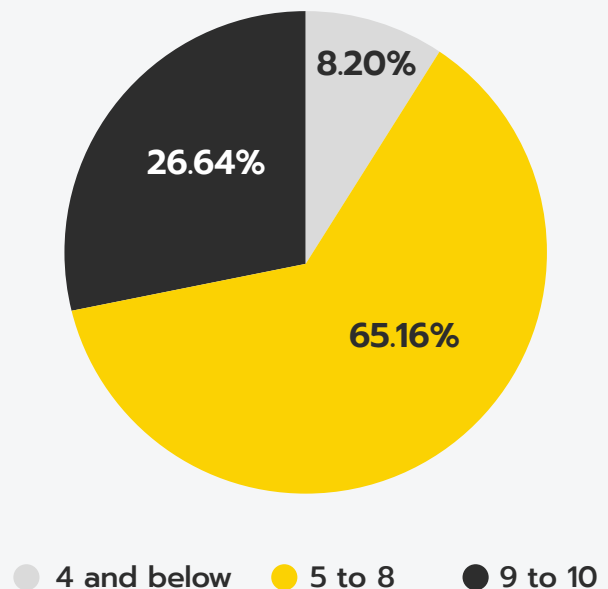


Figure 22: Level of satisfaction in life

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

During the qualitative assessment, all the employees indicated that they were happy that their salaries and overtime wages were paid in a timely manner. They were, therefore, able to plan for their income and expenses ahead of time.

In FY 2021/2022, the employee voluntary turnover rate was zero. However, a few employees (only 2 according to the information from the respondents) were officially dismissed due to misconduct at the workplace. Abahizi Rwanda has formal processes in place that gives second chances to those who misbehave to redeem themselves and be reintegrated into the company.

100% of the respondents indicated that they had signed their employment contracts with Abahizi Rwanda and were happy about it. However, a majority of them suggested that it would be more helpful if they signed open-ended contracts as opposed to 3-year periodic contracts since they couldn't obtain significant loans from financial institutions for huge projects.

EMPLOYEE SELF-PERCEPTION OF ANXIETY

To assess employee perception of their individual anxiety, an image of a female face appearing to be calm (represented by 1) and the one appearing intensely anxious (represented by 5) was used alone or combined. as shown in the image below:

During the annual survey, 53% of the respondents demonstrated that they felt mostly calm while 22% indicated that they felt anxious and stressed owing to future uncertainties regarding their employment which was constantly influenced by production delays and low salaries and wages hindering them from planning for their future. Although, we had challenges the of artisans who felt anxious this year decline by 7% compared to the results from the previous report.

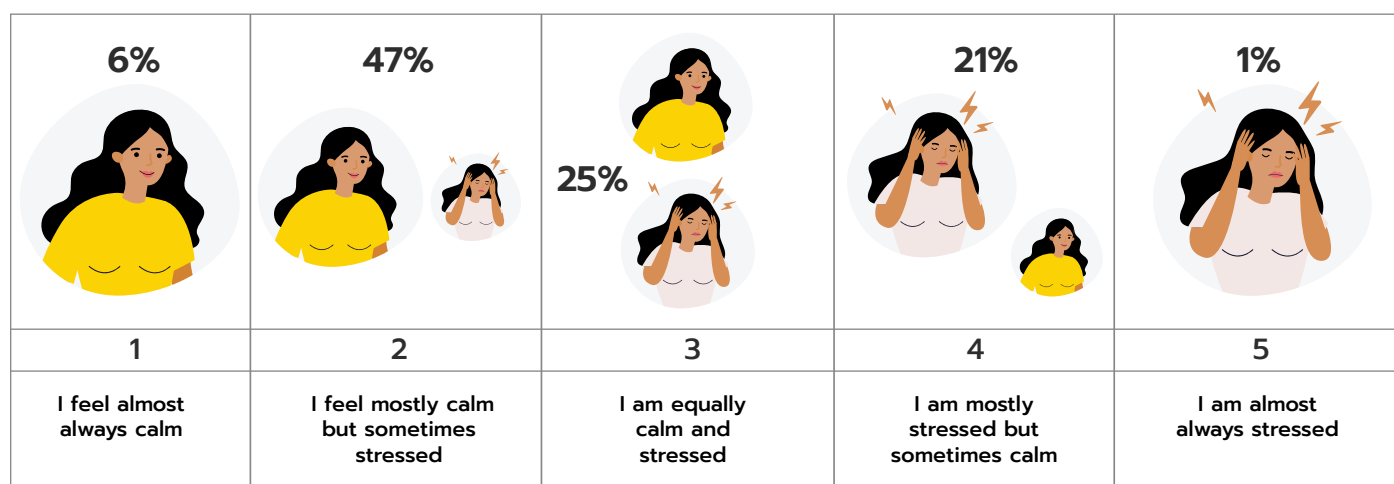


Figure 25: Power levels evaluation tool

EMPLOYEE SELF-PERCEPTION OF EMPOWERMENT

One of the methods used to assess the self-perception of the employees' empowerment was by simulating the life cycle of a lion from a newborn lion cub to the great and mighty old lion. The employees were asked to measure what they felt they were capable of from a power strength perspective in terms of self-empowerment. This was measured using a strength legend rating of 1 to 5, 1 being weak and 5 being full of strength.

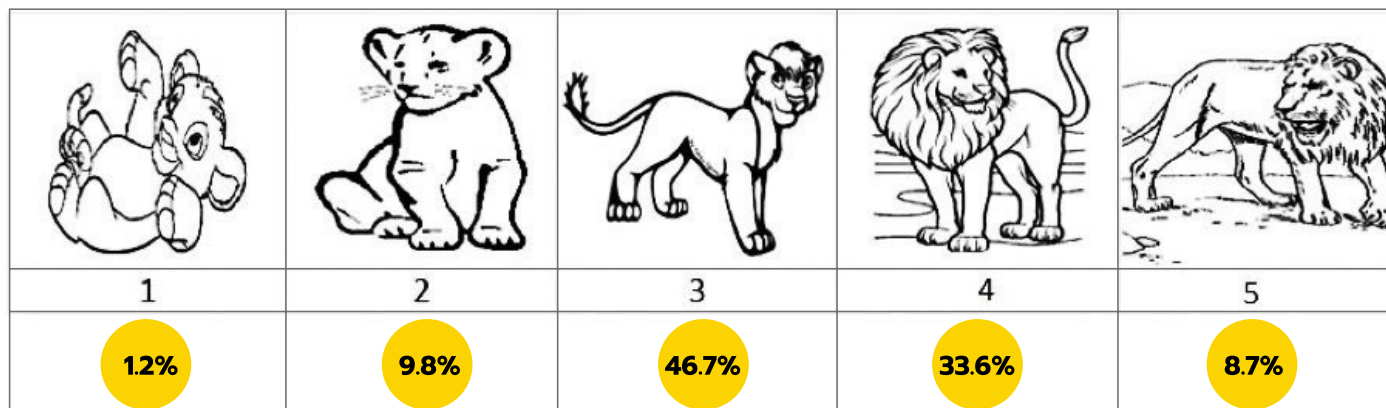


Figure 26: self-reflection of strength

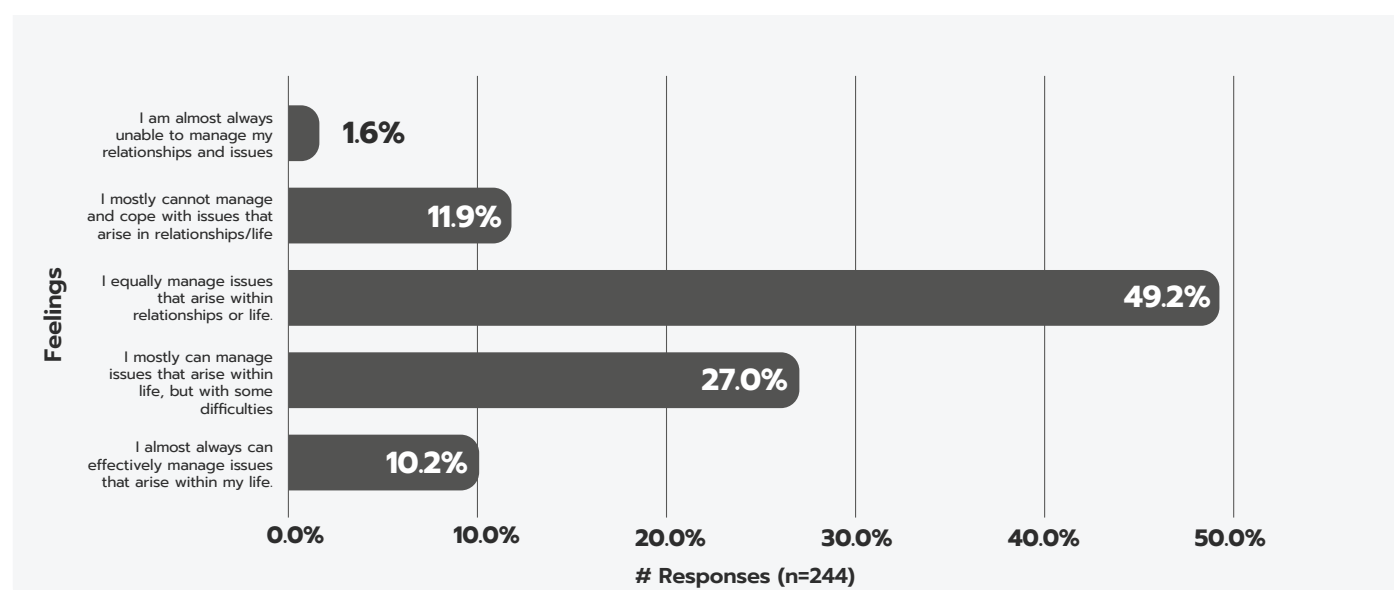
217 employees out of 244 representing 89% of the total respondents indicated that they felt self-empowered with a rating of 3-5. The level of self-empowerment among the employees increased by 14% compared to the results from the previous report.

EMPLOYEE EMOTIONAL AND SELF-ESTEEM PERCEPTION

The main goal of this section was to evaluate how the Abahizi Rwanda supported its employees towards emotional self-perception and self-esteem improvement.

The employees were assessed on how effectively they coped with and/or managed their relationships or issues arising within their lives. 37% of the total respondents indicated that they almost always successfully managed to tackle issues arising and managed their relationships with minimal to no difficulties. Figure 28: Self-perception of emotions.

SELF-PERCEPTION OF EMOTIONS



Emotional and self-esteem perception was then re-assessed using a different data set of questions aligned with the visual demonstration of scalable walls that represented levels of confidence in overcoming challenges of different magnitudes categorized from 1 to 5, (1 being not confident at all and 5 being fully confident).

Respondents were asked to imagine that the red wall was a life challenge they were facing and highlight the image that best represented how big a challenge they felt mostly confident they could get over if they worked hard.

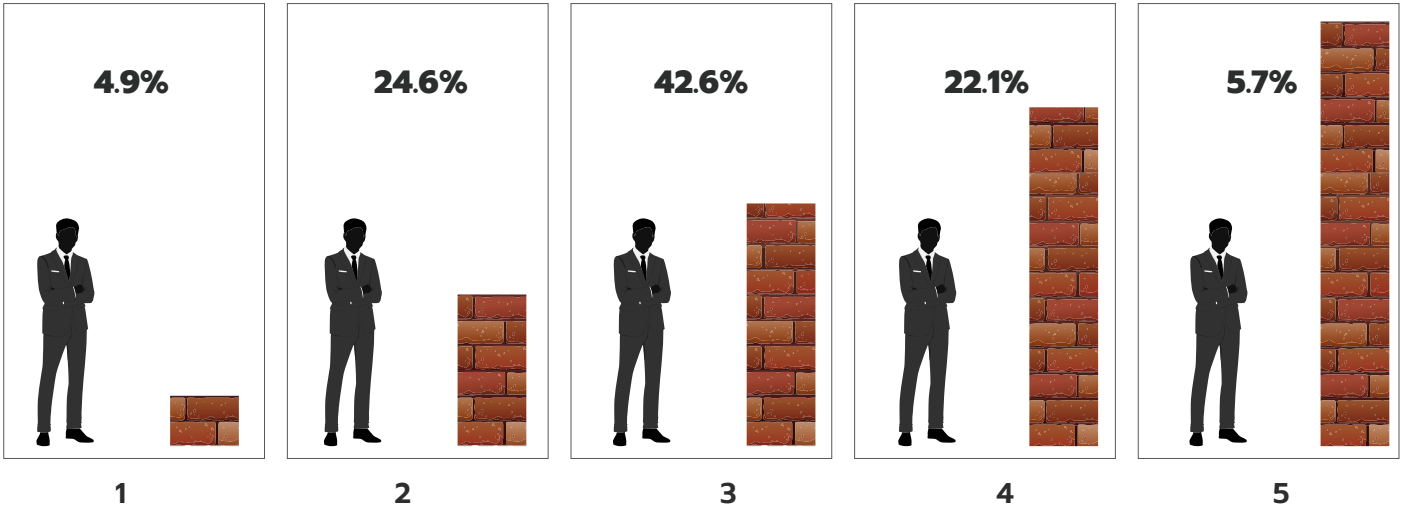
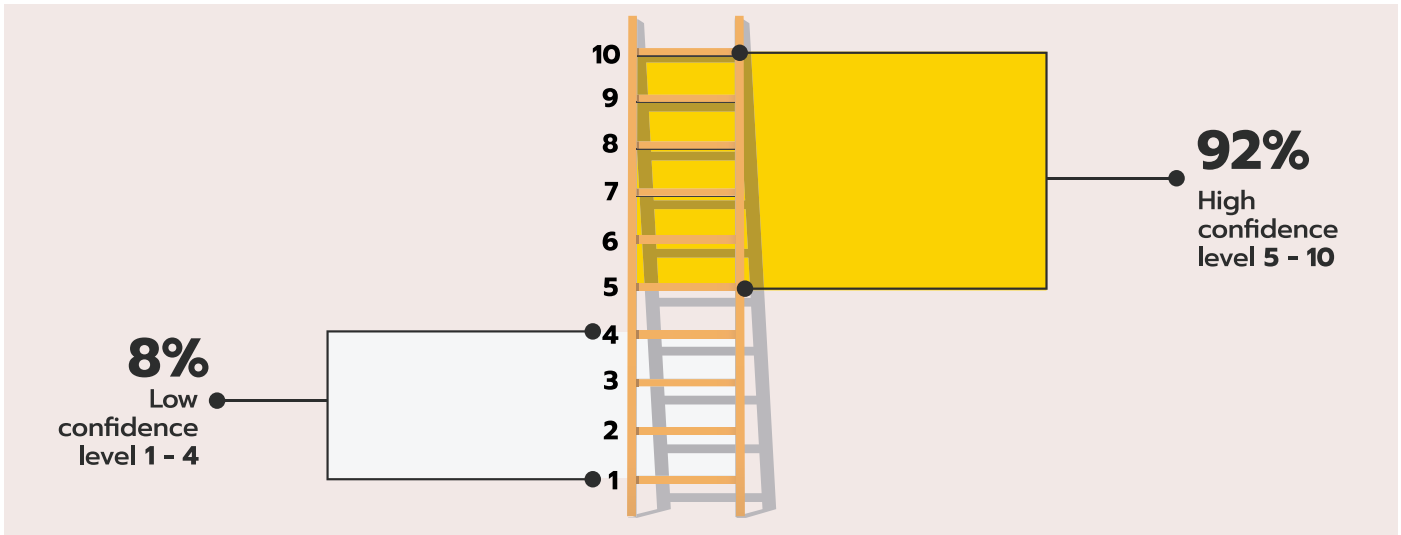


Figure 29: Overcoming Challenge evaluation tool

As shown in the figure above, 70.5% of the respondents fell within the 3-5 rating indicating that they felt quite confident in tackling obstacles and challenges they faced in their daily lives. 29.5% of the remaining respondents felt uncertain about their ability to overcome challenges further explaining that COVID-19 had unexpectedly affected and changed their lives and they had realized they could not predict what the future held and how confident they would be in the face of the unpredicted circumstances. The overall confidence level only increased by 1% compared to the results from the previous report.

Both self-confidence and self-esteem are often demonstrated by the way a person considers and perceives themselves in relation to their community. In this instance, the 10-step ladder was used to represent how Abahizi employees perceived themselves within the community they lived and worked in.

Assuming that step 1 represents the bottom of the ladder, step 5 is the middle of the ladder and step 10 is the top of the ladder, the results show that 92% of the representative respondents’ sample (steps 5-10 of the ladder) perceive that they have a good sense of confidence and are in good standing within their community.





WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

In this section, we evaluated the women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

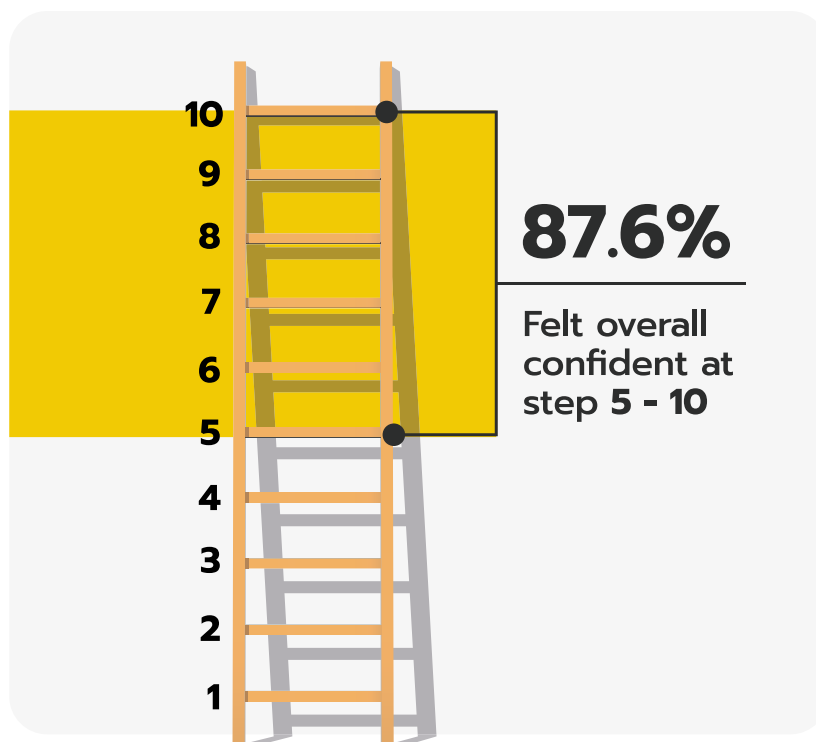
As we identified in the previous section, Abahizi Rwanda's workforce comprises 88% women and 12% men. At the leadership level, women hold 65% of the leadership positions.



65%
Women in
Leadership

WOMEN SELF-PERCEPTION IN DECISION MAKING

Referencing the 10-step ladder used in a different section of this report, we noticed that 87.6% of the total number of women represented in the survey ranked between 5 -10 and indicated that they felt confident with making decisions at the personal, family, and community levels.



The decision making ability was measured in 3 different areas such as;



PERSONAL LEVEL



FAMILY LEVEL



COMMUNITY LEVEL

The table below shows the results related to the areas highlighted above n=215.

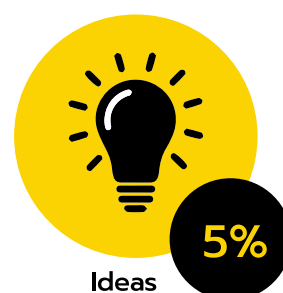
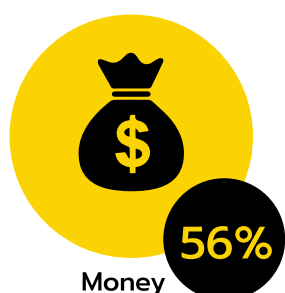
	PERSONAL	FAMILY LEVEL				COMMUNITY
Level of decision making	Personal Healthcare	Bearing another child	Major household purchases	Family Planning	Children Education	Position on community issues
Mostly you	73%	27%	31%	33%	28%	30%
Mostly your parents	1%	0%	3%	0%	0%	4%
Mostly your spouse/ partner	1%	2%	3%	1%	3%	15%
Jointly with your parents	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	4%
Jointly with your spouse/ partner	24%	65%	59%	57%	59%	47%
Other	0%	0%	1%	10%	9%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2: Level of ownership in decision making

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Different areas were taken into account while assessing the level of participation of women in community projects.

- **Respondents' confidence in playing big roles in the community** - 96.7% of women employees agreed that they were confident enough. 3.3% remaining mainly stated that the people who play a big role in the community are those who are rich. So, for them, they have a long way to go to get to that level.
- **Effects of COVID-19 in terms of contributing to the community** - 79% of women employees have been negatively impacted by the pandemic in terms of their contribution towards the community. This includes financial means because of fear of economic prediction.
- **Relationship between the community and the local authority** - 84.2% of the women employees at Abahizi Rwanda said that their community have good relationship with the local authorities at the level of 3/5 and above.

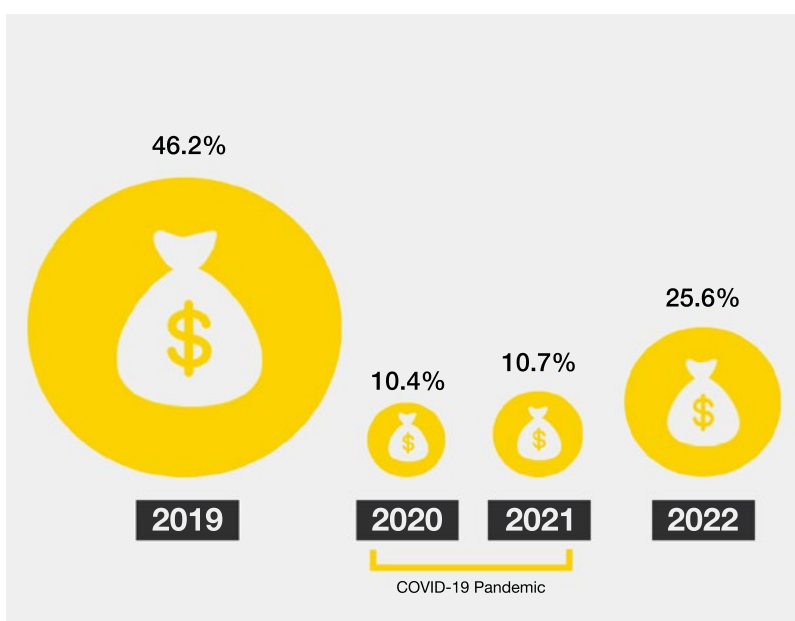


WOMEN OWNING BUSINESSES

Emphasis was placed on the businesses owned by women employees of Abahizi Rwanda as well as how those businesses were monitored. Other types of secondary income beyond owning a business have been taken into consideration as well.

26% of the women employees at Abahizi Rwanda indicated that they own a business. The remaining 74% expressed that they were struggling to own businesses because their monthly salaries, which is their primary income, could not sustain the acquisition of a secondary business. This mainly results from the current global change in the cost of living caused by the pandemic and wars.

ARTISANS WITH A SECOND INCOME





ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

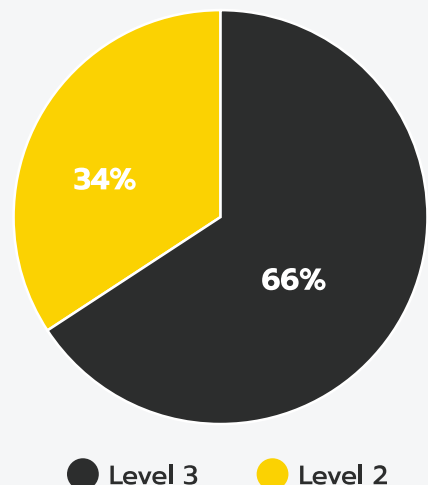
This section evaluates women's promotion of financial inclusion and eradication of poverty.

Under economic empowerment, we assessed the role a woman plays in her family and within the community from a financial decision-making perspective as well as poverty eradication.

In general, Rwanda's workforce is categorized in 3 main ubudehe categories; levels 1, 2, and 3. Ubudehe levels are the social stratification categories set by the government of Rwanda for better classification of the population based on their socio-economic status. Level 1 is for the people with no income generation activity or assets owned, and Level 3 is the top, for the people with good economic standing in the community. Abahizi Rwanda's workforce falls within levels 2 and 3.

Level 2 is predominant with 66%, followed by level 3 with 34%. This indicates the great economic empowerment of Abahizi Rwanda towards its employees.

**ABAHIZI WORKFORCE
UBUDEHE DISTRIBUTION**



EMPLOYMENT IN THE COMMUNITY

86% of the respondents highlighted that they were uncertain about the employment opportunities in their community which explained the reason why a majority of Abahizi employees stay at Abahizi despite some of them raising concerns about low wages due to lack of options. It was also very evident that there was a worrying trend among women specifically on their chances of getting employment opportunities within the Masoro community.

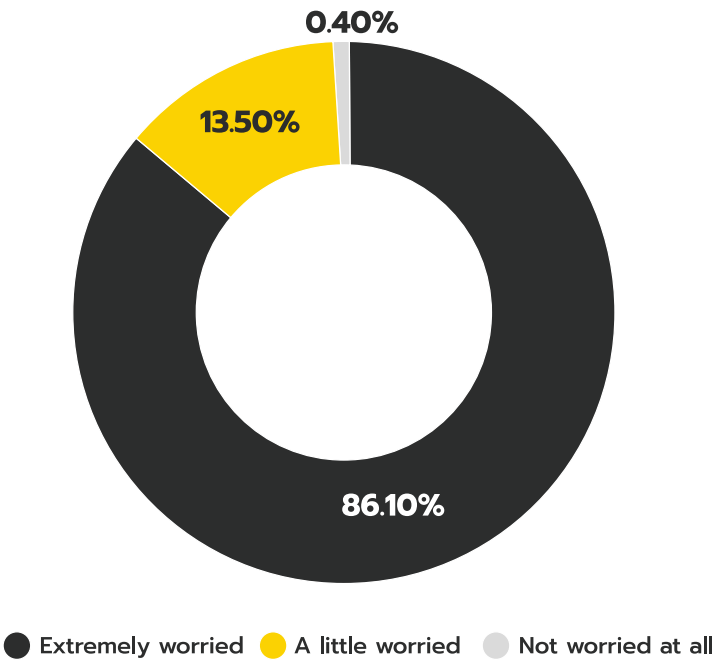


Figure 40: Level of worries of employment in General

EMPLOYEES WITH PASSIVE INCOME VS. ACTIVE INCOME

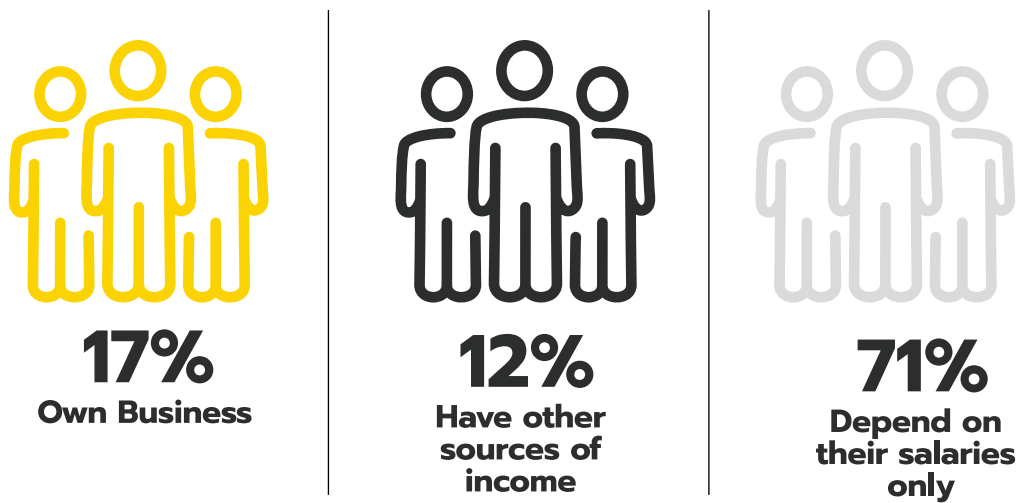
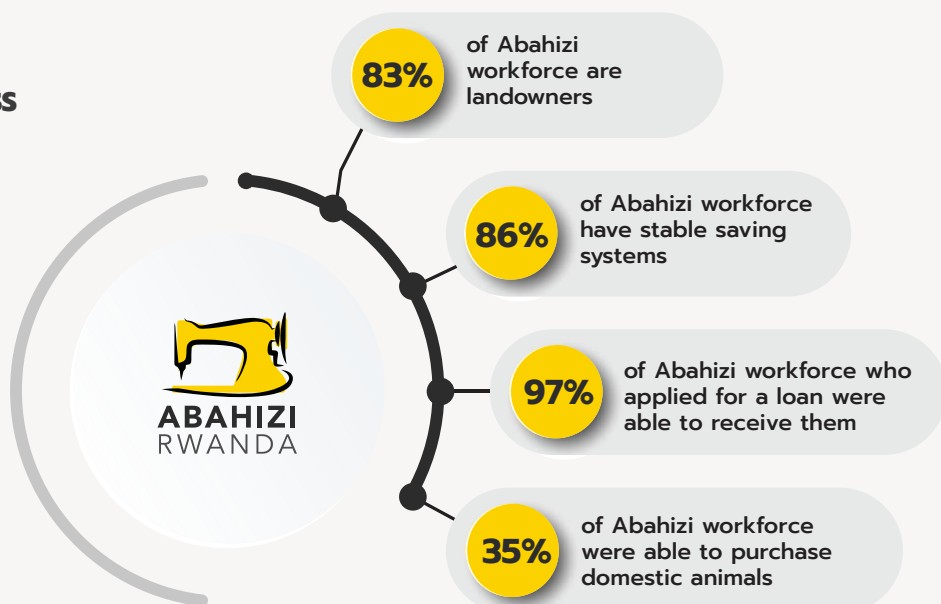


Figure 42: Employees with Source of Income

The results indicated that 29% of Abahizi employees receive passive income through different sources of which 17% earned secondary income through ownership of businesses, and 12% had other sources of income. Employees sighted hurdles in obtaining loans as the main constraint for not having multiple streams of income, while others reported their daily financial responsibilities were hindering the initiative to have a different source of income.

FINANCIAL SECURITY AND ACCESS TO FINANCIAL PRODUCTS

The below section evaluates financial security and safety as well as financial independence that is described through the ownership of property, investments and the ability to save.



LAND OWNERSHIP AND DOMESTIC ANIMAL OWNERSHIP

A total of 83% of the 244 employees who participated in the survey are landowners, and 19% of these employees bought land during the fiscal year 2021-2022.

Apart from land purchases, the respondents also indicated having acquired domestic animals such as cows, goats, sheep, rabbits, chickens, and pigs during the year, which improved their financial security. For instance, 34.8% of the total respondents or their direct families bought domestic animals, and 88.2% of them contributed to the purchase through financial means to acquire these farm animals.

SAVINGS

The results from the report have shown that 86% of Abahizi employees have stable saving systems. There was a significant increase of 30% compared to the results from the previous report.

Figure 43 shows which medium employees prefer to save through:

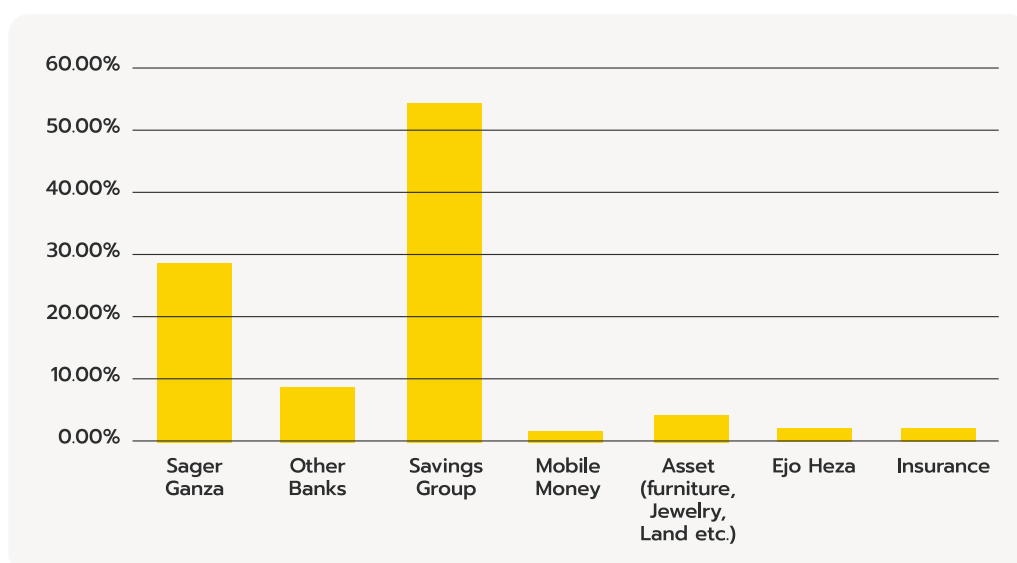


Figure 43: Saving Methods (place of saving)

RESPONDENTS REASONS FOR NOT SAVING

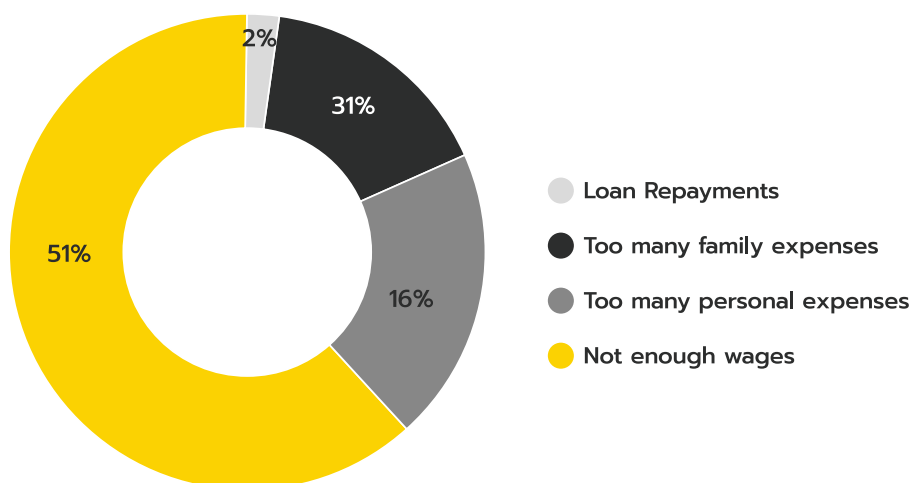


Figure 44: Reasons for not saving

LOANS

A loan application is one of the financial products that Abahizi Rwanda employees are eligible to benefit from. Different systems have been put in place to facilitate loan application and issuance in various financial institutions including Sager Ganza. Most of the employees who accessed loan facilities did so from Sager Ganza Microfinance.

In 2022, only 76 (31%) of the employees applied for loans in this year to deal with personal matters. The good news is that 74 of the applicants representing 97% were successful, and the remaining 2 were still under consideration by the time of the survey.

PREFERRED INSTITUTION ACCESSIBILITY TO LOAN FACILITIES

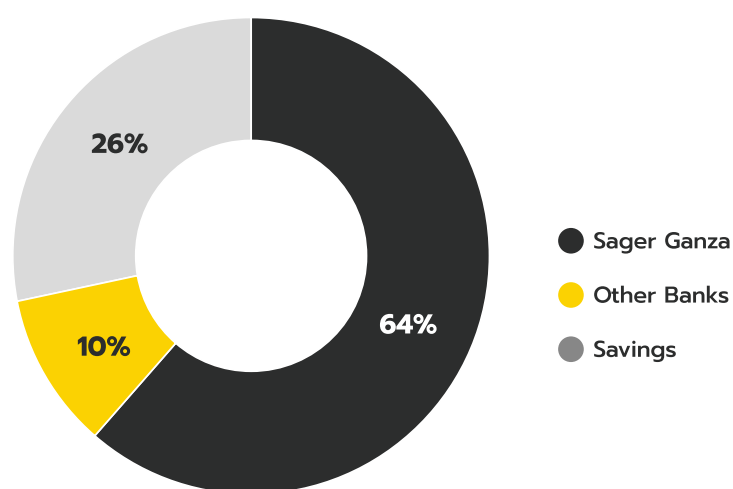


Figure 46: Loan provider

This shows how important Sager Ganza is towards Abahizi workforce in terms of facilitation and participate in their economic growth.

Apart from the loan application, 89 employees out of 244 which marks 36.5%, took pay advance from Sager Ganza or other financial institution in which they are getting their monthly salary.

This shows how Abahizi Workforce is benefiting from the financial products that are in place to help them to scale their economic growth to a higher level.



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This part is focusing on evaluating the level of increase in social viability through enhancing the self-reliance of families and communities. Different areas have been considered to assess the level of community participation.

NUMBER OF INDIRECT JOBS CREATED

96 Abahizi Rwanda employees have managed to employ 124 people in their personal lives either through the creation of a personal business or a different source of income and through child nurturing and home management.



96

Abahizi Rwanda employees personal businesses.



124 People Employed

PARTICIPATION IN ISOOKO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (FOR EMPLOYEES RESIDING IN MASORO)

124 out of 158 employees, representing 78.5% of the employees residing in the Masoro Sector participated in the activities from Isooko Community Development (ICD).

The infographics shows the rate of participation in the activities from ICD in different categories.

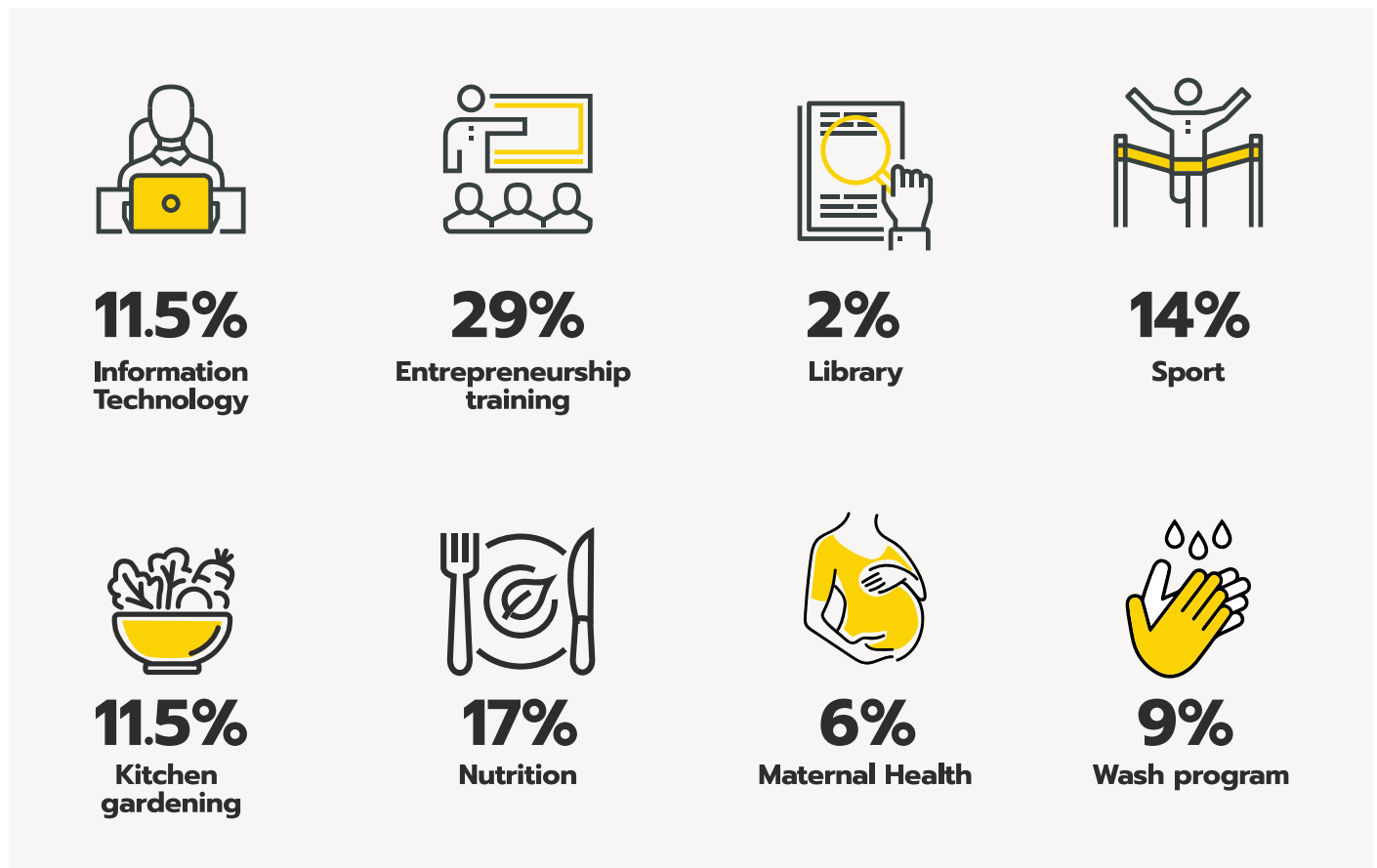


Figure 47: Participation in Community Learning and Sport Center - Masoro residing employees

122/124 of the employees who participated in the learning center activities highlighted that those activities were impactful in their lives and impactful to the community in general.

TRANSFORMATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



JEANNETTE MUKATUYISENGE
27 years old, Married

"My happiness is when I share my knowledge with my colleagues at work and we all get things done".

Her Story: Jeannette Mukatuyisenge, Sample Department: Sewing

Jeannette works in our sample department as a sewing machine operator. Jeannette got her sewing skills from her friend. She was hired at Abahizi Rwanda as a sewing machine operator and as her skills kept improving she was promoted to the sample department. She enjoys working on samples, and once the client approves them, she loves coaching the rest of the artisans in the production department.

Apart from that, she likes the life skills program offered at Abahizi Rwanda. ***"Due to the financial module, I learned how to best allocate my salary according to my needs and I have been able to buy my personal sewing machine which is giving me additional income"***. With her salary, Jeaneatte is now independent to cover all her needs, and sometimes she pays the annual medical insurance for her neighbors in the community. Jeanette's dream is to create a sewing workshop. Jeannette has been working with Abahizi Rwanda for 9 years.



CHRISTINE MUKASINE
35 years old, Married, 5 Children

"My happiness is when I am sharing what I learned from the life skills program with my family"

Her Story: Christine Mukasine, Production Department: Assembly

Christine was very excited and happy when she heard that she got a full contract at Abahizi Rwanda. ***"This is another chance to make my dream come true!"*** she told herself. Christine enjoys being with others at work and she never felt lonely which used to affect her mental health before joining Abahizi Rwanda. Christine's favorite program at Abahizi Rwanda is life skills training because she acquires knowledge that she shares with her kids and husband. ***"My husband trusts me when it comes to budgeting in our home because he knows that I have been trained about it"***.

Christine's dream after joining Abahizi Rwanda was to save money and help her husband in renewing their house. She is proud and happy that she was able to do it. Now, she is working towards building a foundation and future for her children through savings and creating other side businesses. Christine has been working with Abahizi Rwanda for 4 years.

CONCLUSION

This report has extensively highlighted the role of Abahizi Rwanda in terms of empowering its employees in different areas.

WORKFORCE EMPOWERMENT

Despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Abahizi Rwanda managed to keep the satisfaction of its employees at a high level. The company focused on empowering the workforce through different programs including life skills programs.

The company continued to maintain its employees' welfare by ensuring employee benefits such as salaries were paid on time.

All regular employees signed employment contracts with Abahizi Rwanda. This increased the trust of its employees. However, some employees suggested open-ended contracts to assure them of employment security and assist them in obtaining debt facilities.

Measures have been put in place to ensure employees get the necessary support for what is needed to perform better their work, in terms of a safe environment and as well as technical professional empowerment through different trainings where needed.

Employees suggested that it would be beneficial to them if Abahizi Rwanda could set up a canteen serving tea and snacks every morning so that employees were not spending too much time in the morning going out to look for breakfast.

The employees who resided far from the workplace suggested that the company provides housing allowances or salary increases to enable them to curb transportation challenges as well as fatigue from walking long distances.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Abahizi Rwanda is committed to empowering the women they work with through different sectors of their lives. Women at Abahizi Rwanda have been promoted to different leadership roles which boosted their confidence level both at work and in their homes. Furthermore, different pieces of training and opportunities given to women Abahizi women have improved their long-term life planning and decision-making capabilities. Despite everything that has been accomplished, Abahizi Rwanda remains dedicated to increasing the employment opportunities for women in Masoro community, whether directly or indirectly, as the study demonstrates that this metric is still at a low percentage.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Abahizi Rwanda has improved the wellbeing of its workforce in terms of providing finance training sessions in different areas such as entrepreneurship, saving, and many more. Even though the workforce has been empowered in this way, there is a need of practical improvement of the workforce participation in economic activities such as owning a business or a kind of second source of income outside of regular work.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Abahizi workforce has managed to participate in different community activities or those in which the community is benefiting from. For instance, the employees that managed to create business have managed to employ a good number of people. Some employees have participated in the development of their community by using their resources (money, ideas, time) to participate in community projects.



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APPENDICES

APPROACH

The 2022 annual survey has the same approach as for the 2021 annual survey in terms of measuring different dimensions of power.¹⁰⁹ This approach has been adopted to serve the purpose of aligning the Abahizi Rwanda's mission to provide high quality products to the global fashion industry with a social commitment to empower their employees and transform its community.

Referring to "A review of approaches and methods to measure economic empowerment of women and girls", power has four dimensions: power within, power to, power over and power with as explained below:

1. **Power within:** this dimension refers to the knowledge and capabilities that individuals have to make changes in their lives. In relation to what Abahizi Rwanda does, measurements of this dimension have informed the extent to which the employees are empowered by the training programs organized by Abahizi Rwanda.
2. **Power to:** with the consideration that power is also exercised beyond individuals, this dimension recognized that decision-making power within the household, community, and local economy are indications of empowerment.
3. **Power over:** this has focused on the access to and control over assets. These assets are financial, physical, and knowledge-based assets. At this level, the survey has considered the workload that women have, including their home responsibilities and how this impacts the empowerment they receive from Abahizi Rwanda.
4. **Power with:** by definition, this dimension of power refers to the ability to organize with others to enhance economic activity and rights. This dimension helped to understand the Abahizi Rwanda's employees' participation in the community and how they are empowered and have a voice economically among others.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology included a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis framed around the four dimensions of power as illustrated in the section above. The proposed methodology had three important milestones: inception phase and data collection, analysis and report writing as well as survey limitations.

INCEPTION

This phase was all about the signature of the contractual agreement and the approval of the methodology note for both parties.

UPDATING AND PROGRAMMING OF THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

For this 2022 annual survey, the last year survey questionnaire has been reviewed and digitalized.

Covid-19 effects: As the questions were designed in 2021, the 2022 survey was adjusted to capture the changes caused by Covid-19. In this regard, the survey has considered the implication of this pandemic on the training delivery and skills acquisition for Abahizi employees during the pandemic. It is in that case, the questions were made to get information about the continuation of training during the pandemic, the measures taken to cope with the pandemic as well as the attitude towards the training delivery during the pandemic. In the same line, questions have been added to capture the effects of Covid-19 on the application of skills acquired from training.

Furthermore, the 2022 survey captured the impact of Covid-19 on the expected changes for employees. At this stage, the survey captured how this pandemic affected individual's four power dimensions. This has specifically looked at the effects of Covid-19 on the employees' decision making at both household and community levels, its effects on access and controlling assets and its effects on acquiring skills as well as influencing and organizing with others to enhance economic activities and rights.

Finally, the 2022 survey has explored the effects of Covid-19 on the 4 areas of Abahizi Social Impact. It has surveyed whether the pandemic has affected the processes that lead to expected social change. In the same regard, the survey comprehended how

the pandemic affected employees in experiencing the expected social change as Abahizi employees. Furthermore, the survey captured the information on mitigation measures taken by Abahizi and employees to cope with the pandemic challenges.

Personal information: The survey was updated to capture necessary information for drawing the profiles of qualitative respondents. It has also captured information that facilitated the analysis and provided a clear image on how the respondent is and supported to understand the findings. The captured information for each qualitative respondent include marital status, household headship and years of experience with Abahizi.

UPDATING QUALITATIVE TOOLS AND RESPONDENTS

The tools were updated to be used while conducting qualitative interactions with Abahizi Rwanda employees, staff, employees' leaders as well as local leaders in the community. In total, 5 group have been formed containing 5 people each for the semi-structured group interviews were conducted.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS (IDIS)

Similar to the previous year, the 2022 annual survey involved IDIs with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on the themes of the assessment. The themes that were covered by the IDI guide included:

- Knowledge, attitude and practices around the received life skills training
- Capabilities to make economic decisions individually, in their household and in the community.
- Access to and control over physical, financial and knowledge-based assets.
- Ability and challenges to participate and network with others and participate in economic activities.
- Community participation

To explore the Covid-19 effects, the IDI guide was updated, for the effects that were considered throughout the exploration of the above-mentioned themes.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

For the 2022 survey, "One-to-One" interviews with people who have enough information on the social impact as expected by Abahizi Rwanda, were conducted. These included, as in the 2021 annual

survey, the managers of Abahizi, the leaders among the employees. However, it was not possible to get the community leaders due to the fact that they were very busy with their administrative duties.

Key Interview Informants within the managers' group allowed the documentation of the intended social impact. Managers informed the surveyors about the challenges faced as well as practices to recommend.

Department	Respondent	Male	Female
Leaders from the staff	Operation coordinator		1
	Counselor		1
	RM Senior coordinator		1
	VC3		2
	Production manager		1
	Social Impact		1
Leaders among the employees	Team leader	1	1
	Group leader	1	1
	Cleaning		1
	Sample and Dev	1	
	Assembling		1
	Preparation	1	1
	Sample maker	1	
	Quality Control		1
	Sample maker	1	
	Cutting	1	1
	TPM	1	
	Machine operator	1	1
Total		9	16

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

The survey questionnaire was administered to 244 employees of Abahizi Rwanda. The quantitative interviews of 45-60 minutes took place at Abahizi Rwanda factory. Employees who were not available during the week of data collection were not interviewed.

The qualitative interactions were held with selected artisans and as elaborated in the section above.

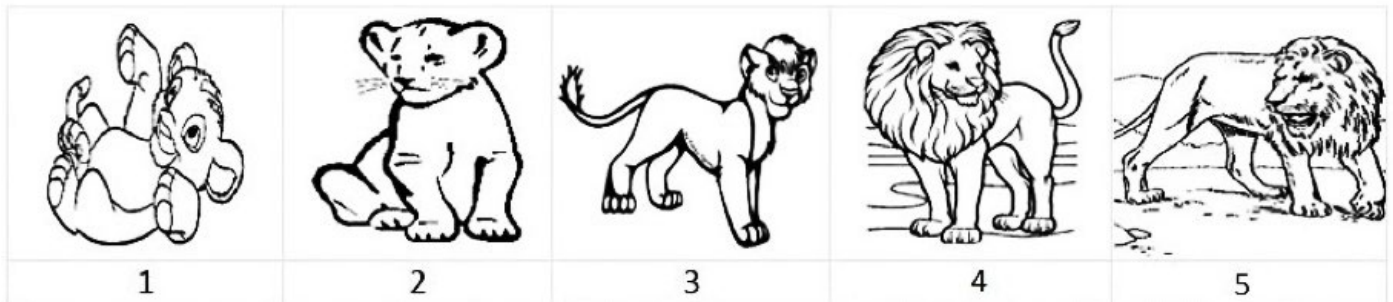
Abahizi Rwanda provided space and care was taken to ensure that participants had privacy. The employees provided consent to participate in the survey and the consultants signed a confidentiality clause to protect employee information.

Upon completion of data collection, the analysis took place and the findings are reported as per the themes that have emerged in the different dimensions assessed. This report presents the findings.

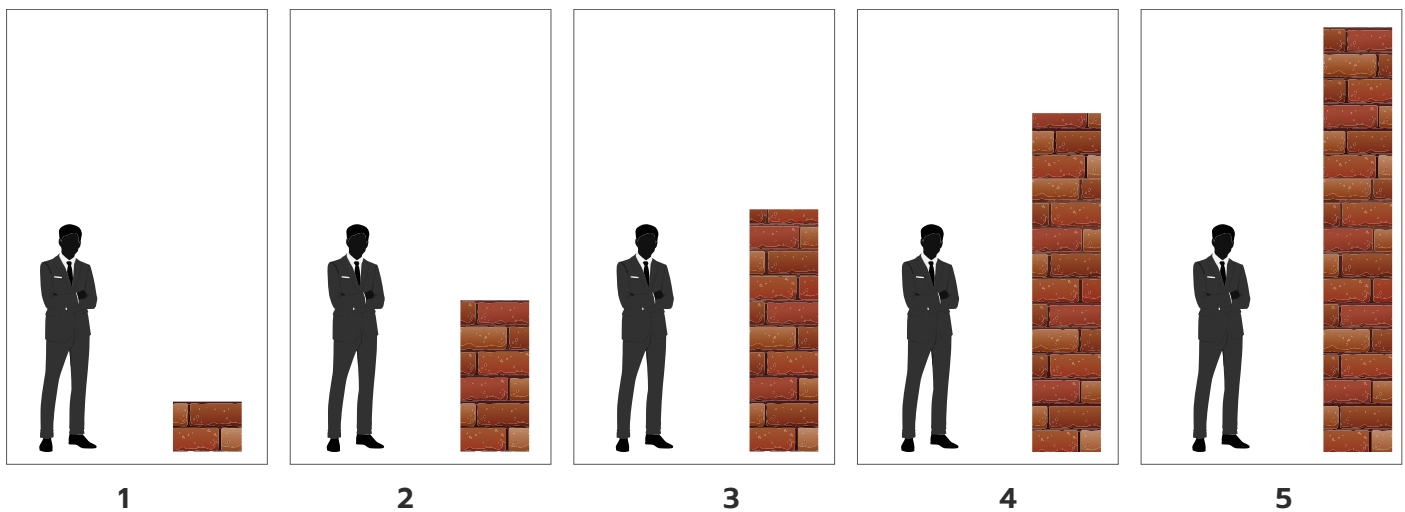
Furthermore, as part of the 2022 annual survey, different deliverables are provided alongside the reports. These include, for the quantitative component, the questionnaire codebook indicating all the survey questions (with their response options and associated codes) in both English and Kinyarwanda, the 2022 dataset. For the qualitative component, the transcribed notes of interviews in English as well as the guides indicating the questions for qualitative interviews are provided too.

GRAPHICS USED DURING THE SURVEY

To measure respondents' perceptions of power:

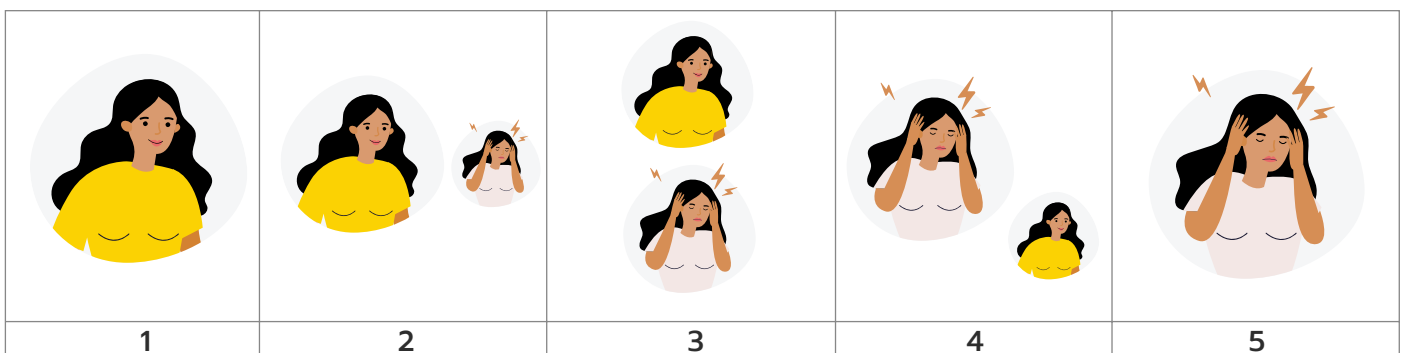


To measure respondents' confidence:



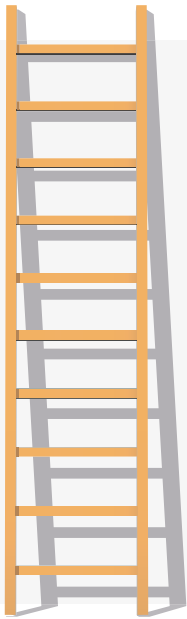
Imagine that the red wall is a life challenge you are facing. How big a life challenge can you get over? Please circle the picture that best represents how large a challenge you feel mostly sure you can get over if you work hard.

To measure respondents' anxiety:



Think about how you are most of the time. Do you feel calm or do you feel anxious and stress? If you feel almost always calm circle the **first picture**. If you feel mostly calm but some stress, circle number **2**. If you are equally calm and stressed circle number **3**. If you are mostly stressed but sometimes calm circle number **4**. If you feel almost always stressed circle number **5**.

To Measure respondents' outlook on life, decision making and confidence levels



Where would you place yourself on this ladder today? Put an X on the rung of the ladder where you would place yourself.

*Remember back to 5 years ago. Where would you be on the ladder? You can mark yourself higher, lower, or in the same place.

*Pretend you are now 5 years in the future. Where will you be on the ladder? You can mark yourself higher, lower or in the same place.

**For each question a different ladder was used. Respondents did not mark past present and future on same ladder.*

