

# Partner Profile: Hekima



Photos courtesy of Hekima Microfinance



In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, an estimated seventy-six percent of adult women and eighty-three percent of low-income adults lack access to formal financial services.<sup>1</sup>

**Hekima Microfinance (Hekima)**, which derives its name from the Swahili word for wisdom, is a microfinance institution and a partner in Global Partnerships' Women-Centered Finance with Education initiative.<sup>2</sup>

## WHO IS SERVED:

Hekima currently serves over 10,000 clients, with a focus on disadvantaged female microentrepreneurs. Eighty percent of their clients are female<sup>3</sup> and the majority live in urban and peri-urban areas, though many previously had rural homes and were displaced in

part by the conflict and economic insecurity prevalent in many areas of Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## WHAT IS DELIVERED:

Hekima offers group and individual loans and educational services designed to meet the needs of female microentrepreneurs. Before receiving their first loan from Hekima, group borrowers receive training on basic financial literacy, including Hekima's financial products, how to successfully participate in and manage a loan group, the importance of savings, and budget management. If groups choose to renew their loans with Hekima, they receive a refresher training before the new loan cycle begins.

## WHY IT IS IMPACTFUL:

Access to loans and financial education enables Hekima's clients to invest in income-generating activities and make more informed decisions, resulting in improved economic resilience and food security for their households. These opportunities could be particularly impactful in the context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where an estimated ninety-two percent of the population lives on less than \$3.20 per person, per day,<sup>4</sup> and over five million people are internally displaced due to conflict and environmental disasters.<sup>5</sup> Hekima regularly surveys their clients' needs and satisfaction levels, and insights from these surveys help inform continuous improvement in their products and services.

1. "The Global Findex Database," The World Bank, 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/globalfindex>.
2. Hekima was a current borrower of Global Partnerships Social Investment Fund 6.0, LLC, as of March 31, 2023.
3. Data as of March 31, 2023, as reported by Hekima.
4. "Poverty and Inequality Platform – DRC Country Profile," The World Bank, 2012, <https://pip.worldbank.org/country-profiles/COD>.
5. "Country Profile, DRC," Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2022, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/democratic-republic-of-the-congo#overview>.