

act:onaid



YEARS OF IMPACT

TOGETHER FIGHTING POVERTY & INJUSTICE

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35

YEARS OF IMPACT

1982 - 2017

This booklet presents our journey, the stories of change from the communities as well as give a glimpse into our future in Rwanda. These achievements are attributed to the commitment and cooperation of all our partners, stakeholders, supporters and the Government of Rwanda.

CONTENTS

| | |
|----|---------------------------|
| ii | Foreword |
| 01 | Overview |
| 02 | About us |
| 04 | Our Areas of Intervention |
| 06 | Our Approach |
| 08 | Our Journey |
| 07 | Stories of Change |
| 12 | > Education |
| 26 | > Agriculture |
| 48 | > Women's Rights |
| 56 | > Women Empowerment |
| 64 | Policy Engagement |
| 70 | Stakeholder's Testimonies |
| 76 | Beyond 2017 |



“ Most of people in our East African region dependent on farming for their livelihoods, so there is a need to boost our agriculture by involving technology and research to create economic opportunities, reduce food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty in general, and generate faster growth as well. ”

Rt. Hon. Donatille Mukabalisa
Speaker of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies

Parliamentarian dialogue on Food and Nutrition Security, November 21-22, 2017

FOREWORD

35 years of impact

TOGETHER FIGHTING POVERTY & INJUSTICE

DEAR PARTNERS, it is a pleasure to present to you a collection of our 35 year journey and contribution to the development of Rwanda. ActionAid operations in Rwanda commenced in May 1982 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Rwanda. ActionAid intervened in the education sector, prioritizing Child sponsorship from Primary one to Primary six, training teachers in general education and constructing new classrooms.

During the same period, ActionAid supported children from unprivileged families to access scholastic materials, introduced school gardens and donated cows and small livestock animals to schools to improve nutrition of the children and trained teachers to improve the quality of education.

In 1994, ActionAid operations in Rwanda were disrupted due to the civil war which culminated into the Genocide against the Tutsi. ActionAid resumed operations in 1996 with the focus on emergency relief work.

In 1997 ActionAid became a fully-fledged Country Programme and opened Nyanza as the first Local Right Programme. Currently, ActionAid operates in seven Local Right Programs in five districts of

Nyaruguru, Musanze, Gisagara and Karongi in addition to Nyanza.

For the past 35 years in Rwanda, ActionAid has served the community to reduce poverty and injustice. Along with local and international partners, ActionAid has tackled poverty and injustice among women particularly smallholder farmers since they constitute over 70% of the labour force in Agriculture.



Our sincere gratitude and acknowledgement of the right holders (beneficiaries) and all the resilient people in the communities where ActionAid Rwanda operates can hardly be fully expressed, anyhow their enormous partnership is highly valued.

We have helped women to form associations and cooperatives to start small-scale income generating activities to fight poverty and restore their dignity and at the same time helped them to reduce unpaid care work which reduces their potential to achieve more.

ActionAid has contributed to the promotion of Early Childhood Development through people led advocacy and policy influence, modelling and support of establishment of Integrated Community Development and Learning Centres to support women and children.

Promotion of Rights in Schools has enhanced improved learning environment and access to adequate sanitation, reduction of absenteeism through safe rooms for girls and provision of skills through training for girls who drop out of school due to various reasons to enable them to start small income generating activities. We have also supported women living with HIV/AIDS to live a life of love and dignity for the past 35 years.

We have also promoted Peace, Unity and Reconciliation through a holistic model of collective engagement through social groups and cooperatives with a membership of mostly vulnerable women including victims of GBV, widows of genocide survivors, women whose husbands have

been accused of genocide perpetuation and the socially marginalized. This booklet, therefore, presents our journey, the stories of change from the communities as well as give a glimpse into our future work in Rwanda.

These achievements are attributed to the commitment and cooperation of all our partners, stakeholders, supporters and the Government of Rwanda. The political will of the Leadership of government

of Rwanda in the fight against poverty is very much appreciated too. Our sincere gratitude and acknowledgement of the right holders (beneficiaries) and all the resilient people in the communities where ActionAid Rwanda operates can hardly be fully expressed, anyhow, their enormous partnership is highly valued.

Without the invaluable commitment of our supporters from UK, Italy and Greece, the milestones reached wouldn't have been attained.

35,000

Direct
Beneficiaries

22,000

Women

13,000

Men



Isaac Nyarwaya
Board Chair



Josephine Irene Uwamariya
Country Director

Overview



ABOUT US

Our Vision

A country without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity



actionaid

Our Mission

We work with people living in poverty with a focus on women and girls to eradicate poverty and injustice

Our Values

Courage of Conviction

We are committed to be open, creative and constructive without fear in pursuit of making an impact on the causes of poverty.

Mutual Respect

We recognize the inherent value of each human being and the significance of diversity.

Equity and Justice

We work to ensure that all people irrespective of gender, ethnicity, location, political affiliations, social class, health status, religion and sexual orientation have fair and equal opportunity.

Humility

We acknowledge that we are part of a wider alliance against poverty and injustice.

Honesty and Transparency

We are committed to being accountable at all levels for the effectiveness of our actions, open in judgements and communications with others.

Solidarity with people living in poverty

In fight against poverty, we align ourselves with powerless, marginalised and excluded to empower them to be the drivers of change

Independence

Our approaches and actions are free from any religious, ethnic or political party affiliation



ActionAid Rwanda is an Associate member of ActionAid International Federation which works in over 45 countries, taking sides with the people living poverty, their communities and like-minded social movements to end poverty and injustice.

ActionAid signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Rwanda on 07 May, 1982 and began operations focusing on education and

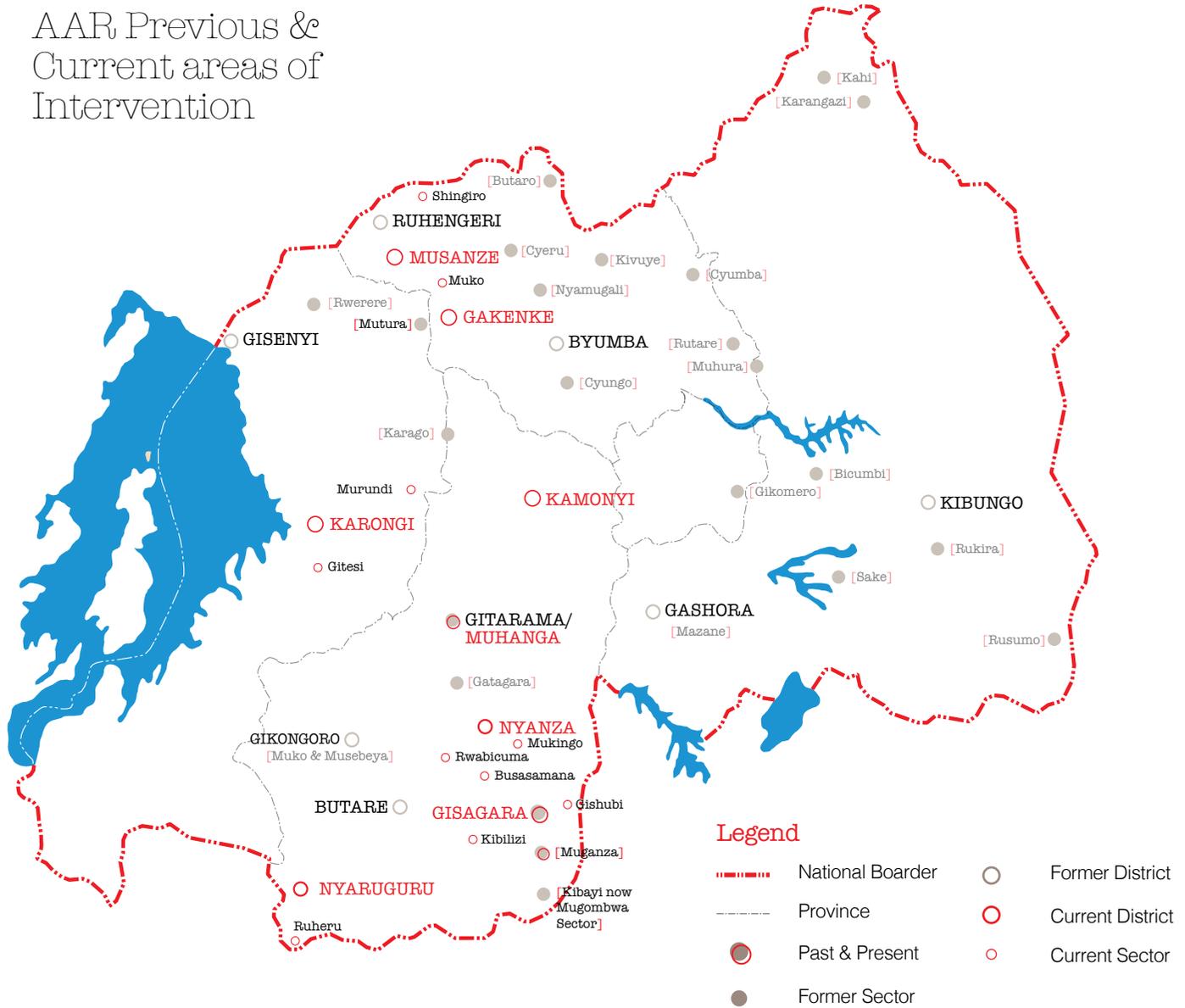
livelihoods for the sponsored children and their families using a child focus model. Programming focus included access to primary education, training of teachers on pedagogy, school infrastructure development, provision of scholastic materials, sensitized and trained teachers and students on sanitation and nutrition; introduced agricultural and livestock activities in schools and the community to improve nutrition of the pupils and their families.

What we do

AAR has implemented key strategic objectives according to our Country Strategic Plan 2013-2017.

- Promoting sustainable agriculture, livelihood alternatives and access to natural resources
- Promoting quality of public education for girls, boys, and youth as drivers of change
- Ensuring that women and girls can break the cycle of poverty and violence, build economic alternatives and claim control over their bodies

AAR Previous & Current areas of Intervention



AAR works through a decentralised structure where the Local Right Programs (LRPs) are principal units of operations. LRP are geographically focused, integrated programs with long-term programmatic interventions that work closely with communities and right holders to identify and resolve developmental and rights issues.

AAR currently operates in seven LRPs in five districts: Nyanza, Nyaruguru, Musanze, Gisagara and Karongi. AA also works in other districts with the same program focus but through special projects. Since April 2016, AAR - EU funded project - SCAB, has extended its operations to three other districts that include Gakenke, Muhanga and Kamonyi.

AAR started operating in Nyanza District in 1997. In the period from 1997-2002, AAR worked in three sectors of Busasamana, Rwabicuma and Mukingo. The main focus was provision of shelter, water, health and rehabilitation of genocide survivors.

During this period, our approach was pure community development in Development Areas (DAs) and from 2003 to 2015, AAR adopted Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) with programs in six cells of the above three sectors.

Promotion of quality education with focus on improved school infrastructure, child play facilities, mobilising and organising women cooperatives, networks and social movements to advocate for women's rights, fighting gender-

based violence and promoting peace and reconciliation.

Women economic empowerment through income generating activities were also focused on with the aim of reducing dependency on their male counterparts. Promotion of climate resilience and sustainable agriculture enabled women smallholder farmers to be more self reliant and food secure.

We also focused on establishment of good relationship with communities and the local government in identifying the underlying causes of poverty, harmful cultural practises, organising and training cooperatives in governance, business management and projects design; and sustainable agricultural practices.

Geographical scope expanded to other districts with almost similar issues. These include: Ruheru since 2006 in Nyaruguru district. The sector suffered from food insecurity and AAR responded to this emergency by supplying food and agricultural inputs.

In Shingiro and Muko Sectors in Musanze District, AAR started operations in 2006 and 2011 respectively; supporting Community Based Organisations (CBOs) especially for women. Interventions involved capacity building and financial support to the CBO's and Women Cooperatives.

In Gisagara district, AAR started operations in 2007 in the three sectors of Kibilizi, Muganza and Gishubi while in 2007 and 2009 respectively, we expanded to Murundi and Gitesi sectors in Karongi district.

OUR APPROACH

Human Rights Based Approach

We incorporate the Human Rights Based Programs Approach (HRBA) in all of our operations. HRBA is made up of three pillars which include Empowerment, Advocacy (campaigns) and Solidarity.



Empowerment

We empower right holders through capacity building such as trainings on various topics including Gender Based Violence (GBV), Income Generating Activities (IGAs), Cooperative Management, Business Plan development, school management and leadership, awareness raising on unpaid care work and self-reliance groups creation.

Advocacy and Campaigns

This is done through engagement with policy decision makers at local, national, regional and international levels.

Solidarity

Through building networks of rural women farmers and building of coalitions at different levels to enable effective lobby and advocacy for policy change.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Isaac Nyarwaya
Board Chair



Francoise Kayitare Tengera
Vice Chair



Richard Musuhuke
Treasurer



Josephine Irene Uwamariya
Secretary



Jeanne Kagwiza
Member



Charity Wibabara
Member



Gatete Nyiringabo Ruhumuliza
Member



Sylvia Muteteli
Member



Mediatrice Nyirabahinyuza
Member



Edouard Musonera
Member

OUR JOURNEY & ASPIRATION

1996 - 2000

Giving People Choices

Relief & Emergency

- ✓ Access to Clean Water
- ✓ Education
(Infrastructure development and school materials)
- ✓ Shelter & Livelihoods
- ✓ Peace + Reconciliation
- ✓ Focus on supporting widows and orphans in Nyanza District

1982 - 1995

Community Development

- ✓ Rural Development
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Child focused activities

1972

AAUK founded by Cecil Jackson Cole

1982

Signed MoU between ActionAid & Government of Rwanda

2006 - 2011

Right to End Poverty

Development

- ✓ Education & Early Childhood Development Centers
- ✓ Food rights & Livelihoods
- ✓ Women rights & Fight against GBV
- ✓ Emergency + Human Security
(Disaster preparedness, Reduction & Response)
- ✓ Governance & Citizen Participation in decision making

2001 - 2005

Fighting Poverty Together

Reconstruction

- ✓ Shelter & Livelihoods
- ✓ HIV/AIDS
- ✓ Governance & ICT
- ✓ Women's rights & Gender Equality
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Peace building + Reconciliation

2003 - 2005

Great Lakes Initiative (GLI)

2003

Internationalised AAUK to AAI

2005

Launch of Child sponsorship

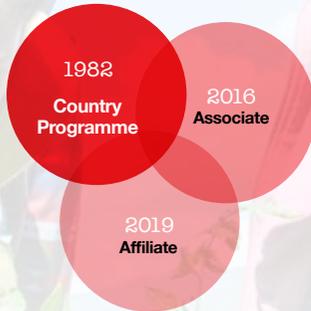
2016

MDP Association

A networked Federation Governance structure



General Assembly & National Board



2016: Governance and Organisational Review & Capacity Building

2012 - 2016

People's Action to End Poverty

Development based on Rights & Dignity

- ✓ Education (ECD & Primary)
- ✓ Climate Resilience Sustainable Agriculture & Livelihoods
- ✓ Women Economic Empowerment

2020 - 2021

Strengthening affiliate

Affiliation and Final Handover to AAR

- ✓ Strengthening Governance & Management systems
- ✓ Building Capacity of Assembly members
- ✓ 2020 Application for Asset Transfer and MoU with AAUK
- ✓ 2021 International Board Approval of Asset transfer Plan
- ✓ 2021 Engagement with GoR and Partners on AAIR transition Process
- ✓ CSP 2 Midterm Review & 3 Year Operational Planning

Jan - June: Engagement with GoR and Partners on transition Process

July- Dec: International Review of Asset Handover Plan Implementation Processes and Systems

2014

Country Focused Networked Federation

AAR Affiliate in transition for assets ownership including Personnel, Program and Partnership commitments

2017 - 2018

Strengthening Associate

Transition, Organisational Effectiveness & Governance support to Associate /Affiliate

- ✓ 2017 Transition Planning and key consultations on key processes including Transfer of Assets & Liabilities, AAIR Registration Renewal

2023 - 2028

Strengthening affiliate for desired state

AAR Growth and Deepened Impact

2022

Strengthening affiliate autonomy / independence

Final Handover of Assets and Liabilities from AAI / UK to AAR

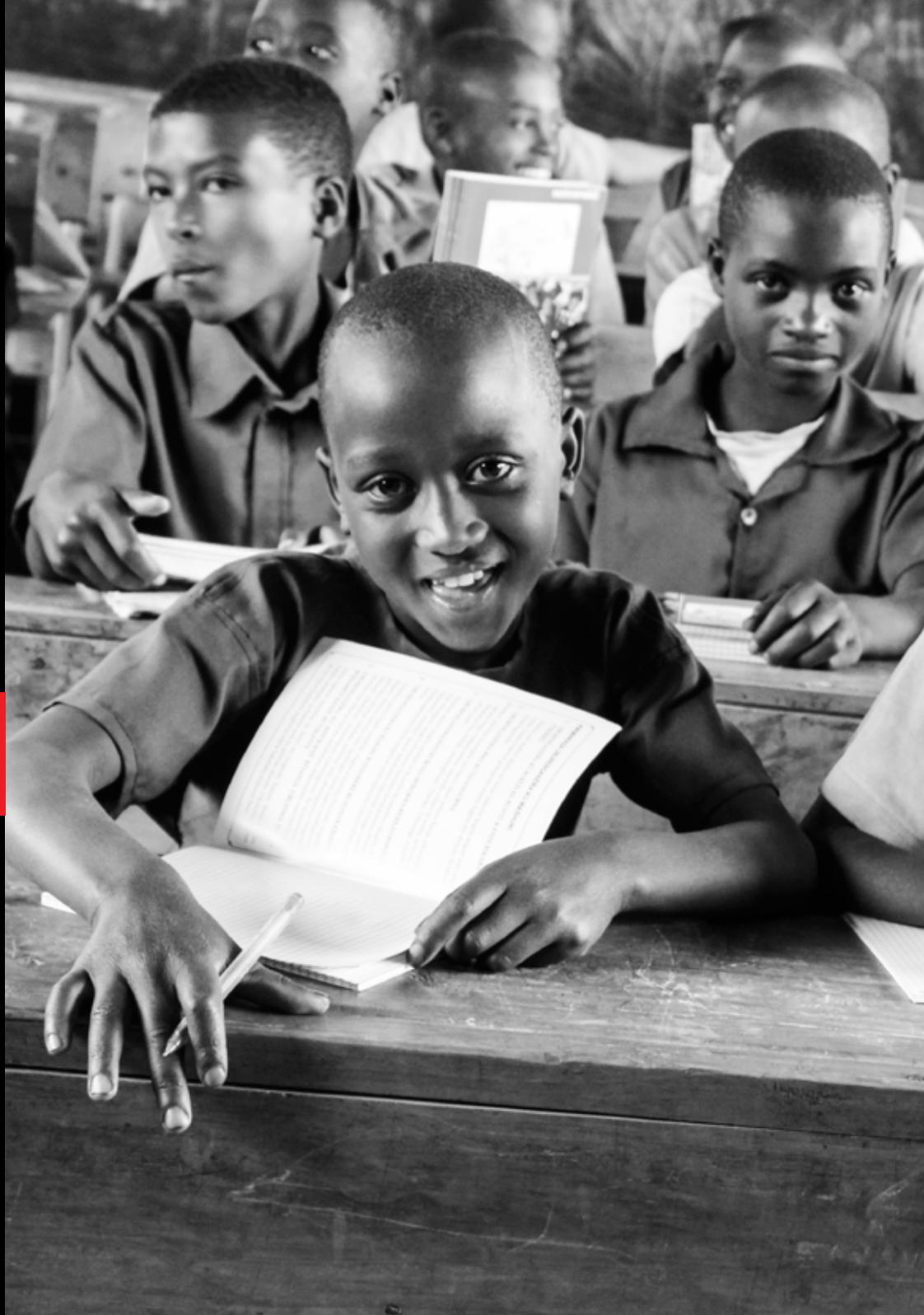


Stories of Change





Education





Enabling thousands of children to access quality education

HAVING SCHOLASTIC materials such as books might seem like something every child would have easy access too, but that's not the case. Having books to carry to school is so significant that some children have dropped out of school simply because their parents couldn't afford to buy them scholastic materials such as books due to poverty.

Children aren't motivated to go to school yet they won't have anywhere to write or any other scholastic materials they need, hence opting to drop out. This leads to early pregnancies and marriages when they drop out of school and other associated challenges such as unemployment.

ActionAid International Rwanda has continuously supported children at Kanunga Primary school through giving out scholastic materials such as books, holds sensitization meetings for parents, emphasizing to them the importance of educating their children.

Yvonne Niyogisubizo, 9, a pupil at Kanunga Primary school was one of the lucky children to have benefited from the books given books by ActionAid Rwanda.

“ I am so happy that I have been given books. I didn't have enough books to write in at school but now I do. I will now study happily and write my entire class work...

...the picture on the book is beautiful too and I can see a child I know who I saw when we were going to receive chicken given to us by ActionAid. I wish I could have enough books to share with my little brother too. ”

Niyogisubizo narrates

Yvonne adds that if she can have access to books and all other scholastic materials she needs throughout school, she has no fear of ever dropping out of school since the government also provides free education.

ActionAid Rwanda also supports with construction of new classrooms which has reduced the journeys children would make to other schools far away from their vicinities.

Classrooms constructed

ActionAid Rwanda has so far constructed 5,320 classrooms in five districts including Nyanza, Gisagara, Nyaruguru, Musanze and Karongi districts. Six new classrooms were built at Remera Primary School and were equipped with 886 desks, increasing enrolment from 894 to 1450 pupils. Another 10 classrooms at Gahotora Primary School which had been blown away by wind were reconstructed and 600 children who had left the school returned increasing the number of pupils from 728 to about 1328 of which more than 50 percent are girls. The schools were also equipped with water harvesting tanks.

Before construction of Remera Primary School, Annette Umurerwa, 13, would walk 6 kilometres to get to the nearest Ruhuru Primary School. The journey was tiresome

Pupils hold placards claiming their right to education

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



and it would affect her performance in class.

Sometimes she would miss school when she was feeling sick and tired. She now doesn't have to walk the same distance since Remera Primary School is near her home. She says her performance has improved. Currently in Primary 5, Umurerwa attained the second position in a class of 52 pupils in the end of term of exams.

 **5,320** classrooms constructed

 **239,400** students enrolled

 **↑ 50%** of the students enrolled are girls



Children pose for a group photo in front of their classroom

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

AAR contributed to improved quality education

ONE OF ActionAid Rwanda's (AAR) strategic objectives is to improve the quality of public education for girls and boys equally and support children and youth to become drivers of change in their communities.

AAR has been improving the quality of public education in Rwanda for the last 35 years through building schools, through building schools, Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDs), Promoting Rights in Schools through establishing Girls Rooms, initiating Girls' camps and many other education related activities.

Groupe Scholaire Cyapa, Burera District is one of the schools that was built by Aide de Action (before transitioning to ActionAid) over 25 years ago. The school that has both primary and secondary sections has greatly contributed to improving education in Burera district.

Emmanuel Hitayezu, the Assistant Director of the school, who is also a former student of this school, says that so many people in that area attained education in Groupe Scholaire, Cyapa.



Children at Kanunga Primary school, Karongi showing off books given by ActionAid

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

“I was once a student in this school and now I came back to teach here. Today I am the Assistant Director here and I am very grateful that Aide et Action empowered me and thousands of others in the area of education in this community”

HITAYEZU SAID

Hitayezu stated that the school had over one thousand students around the year 1996 as they weren't many schools in that area then. He wished that ActionAid would

continue to support education in their community stating that things have changed since then.

Centre Scholaire, Kabyaza & Centre Scholaire Ruhanga are some of the schools built by Aide de Action in Burera district. Both schools were built in 1996. The organization built over Nine Classrooms, pit latrines and Office for the Head Teacher in Centre Scholaire, Kabyaza. The school has over 800 students which each classroom accommodating at least 90 students.

Low quality public education and limited pathways for skills development are some of the issues Rwanda youth grapple with. ActionAid Rwanda currently supports over 40 schools in 5

districts to improve the quality of public education for boys and girls equally and support children and youth to become drivers of change in their communities.

102 play grounds constructed

306 separate washrooms for boys and girls built

3 Youth Centers have been built to support them

Girls no longer have to miss school during that time of the month

IT MIGHT sound bizarre but it's actually a reality in some of the rural areas. Some teenage girls miss school whenever they are having their monthly menstrual periods. Wondering why? They can't afford sanitary towels so instead they opt to stay at home during that time of their periods and return to school after that time of the month is done.



Umutoniwase shows off the sanitary towels in the girls room at Kibaga Primary school

PHOTO:ACTIONAID



According to Bernadine Mukarukundo, a teacher at Kibaga Primary School, Nyanza, it was such a big challenge and a reality, as teenage girls, most of who come from poverty-stricken families would miss school because they had no access to pads.

"This was such a huge burden and it would negatively affect the grades of these girls. Missing some classes will leave them behind as there is a lot they would miss and it wouldn't be easy to catch up," said the teacher.

15-year old Josiane Umutoniwase, a Primary Six student at Kibaga Primary School noted that it was such a big challenge for some of the girls in her school who had no access to pads.

"If one stained their uniforms at school because they didn't have pads, the other students would laugh at her so hard and make fun of her as well. This makes one feel ashamed and lowers their self-esteem," she noted.

According to Josiane, such humiliation was common and would make the girls hate coming to school.

“We were so excited when we got a girls’ room. Now we have access to free and comfortable pads. We have rooms where we can go rest when having cramps and need to take a nap. The rooms have towels, soaps and Vaseline if one needs to take a birth during their monthly periods. We not only feel safer, more comfortable and cleaner during this period, we also don’t have to miss school any more during that time of the month.”

JOSIANE NARRATES

And then came the Girl's rooms

After seeing that this was a big problem affecting the girls, Actionaid International, Rwanda (AAIR) came to their rescue and built them a Girls' Room. AAIR has so far constructed over 50 girl's rooms in rural schools, in five districts across Rwanda, where the girls can't afford sanitary towels.

Josiane said the establishment of the Girls' Room overjoyed many of the girls who experience the menstrual cycle.

She hoped that AAIR would continue to provide the sanitary towels to her school and others so the girls can feel safer and

enjoy school. She also noted that this would stop of the other piece if clothes that some girls would use, as these aren't clean enough sometimes and one isn't assured of full protection and they can fall out or someone can still get stained.

Kibaga Primary School is among the many schools in Nyanza district that AAIR provide for a Girls' room. This school has 497 girls.

According to statistics from the World Bank, at least 20 percent of school girls in the country, mainly rural areas, miss school up to 50 days per year, because they cannot afford buying sanitary pads.

“The development of our people and our country heavily relies on the education of its people. Without vigilantly investing in the education sector signifies that all other sectors cannot reach their full potential.”

JEANNETTE KAGAME

First Lady of the Republic of Rwanda, 2017

“ Empowering women is not a favour; it's a responsibility. Promoting the Rwandan woman is developing the whole nation. ”

H. E. Paul Kagame

President of the Republic of Rwanda

<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/211155/>

“ To educate girls is to reduce poverty. ”

Koffi Anan

Former UN Secretary General

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2003/sgsm8662.doc.htm>

ECDs: Enhancing Early Childhood Development and empowering parents

THERE TINY little faces were exuding joy as they sang and danced along with the teacher. The excitement of being at the Early Childhood Development Center (ECD) was written all over their faces. They played, sang and learned what their teacher was instructing them with so much enthusiasm. This was at the newly constructed Murundi ECD in Karongi district. They all seemed thrilled to be spending their time at the ECD.

Murundi ECD is one of the 12 ECDs for children constructed by ActionAid International Rwanda in 5 districts across Rwanda. It was set up to help enhance literacy skills and children's social, physical and emotional development, as well as to allow parents to enter the workforce, engaging in other economic empowerment activities. This ECD is one of only two of such centers in the whole of Karongi district. It serves 120 children which is also beyond its capacity, thus highlighting how crucial it is to have this ECD in Murundi sector. The children are aged between 3 – 6 years.



▲ Children having a fun time singing at Rwabicuma ECD. PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Community Speaks Out on the Role of ECDs

Obed Twagirumukiza, a parent to one of the children at this center expressed his appreciation for having at his center within Murundi sector. "My wife and I can now peacefully go to work in our garden and shop, confident that our child isn't only safe but also happy at the new ECD."

“Our daughter has only been at this center for just a few days but she seems so happy. She has learnt new songs and made new friends. We are very comfortable leaving her at the ECD as it's a safe environment for her.”

OBED NARRATES

He further noted that they see an enormous difference in their daughter's life, Aishaella Mugisha, ever since she joined the ECD.

The 3 year old Aishaella of late, wakes up her mother early at dawn to take her to the ECD because she certainly enjoys her time there.

The new Murundi ECD is laying a firm and good foundation for the children in Murundi sector, according to Jean Baptiste Tuyisabe, the Director of this ECD. He said that the ECD provides basic knowledge and education to the children.

He explained, "This is one of the best investments in Murundi sector as it gives us hope that the future of these children and the nation is bright. The ECD will help groom these children and equip them with knowledge and life skills."

According to the Murundi ECD Director, there are many parents who were still pleading to have their children admitted at the center; however, it wasn't possible since the number of children they have now is already beyond the suitable number.

Vedaste Kuzabaganwa, the Executive Secretary of Murundi sector hailed ActionAid International, Rwanda and the donor for putting up such a major facility within this area. He said that it will benefit children, parents and other people within that community.

"The ECD is empowering the children, parents and other community members. The cognitive development of young children is developed, parents can now engage in social economic empowerment initiatives and other members of this community have

“This is one of the best investments in Murundi sector as it gives us hope that the future of these children and the nation is bright... as this will help groom them and equip them with knowledge and life skills.”

JEAN BAPTISTE TUYISABE

gotten employed at this ECD. This is a milestone achievement that we are proud of in this area," explained the Executive Secretary.

Early Childhood Development Centers offers play-based learning for the children, parenting support and community-based nutrition as well, thus strengthening the capacity of families and empowering them economically.

The center also has a vegetable garden and also grows cassava. This will enable the children to have a balanced meal at school.

The community members hope that more ECD's as this one could be built to give chance to more children. Other ECDs constructed by ActionAid Rwanda include Rwabicuma ECD in Nyanza district, that accommodates over 100 children.



grape



I like to eat grapes.

horse



The horse is running fast.



Girls holding shorts they just made using the skills they learned from the vocational school

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Equipping girls with technical and vocational skills

CLAIRE NYIRANSHUMBUSHO is an 18 year old girl living with her parents in Rugote Village, Wamusebeya Cell, Ruheru sector in Nyaruguru District, Southern Province. She is a member of Urumuri Rwiterambere Cooperative that started in 2013 and has 31 members.

Members of the cooperative including Nyiranshumbusho received training in tailoring supported by ActionAid Rwanda.

The support also included 15 sewing machines. The aim was to enable them to gain skills which would help them to start generating income to meet their needs.

Nyiranshumbusho says that before the training, she would stay home all day since her family didn't have the means to send her back to school. She is grateful for the support as she is now able to sew clothes for both men and women in different designs.

Nyiranshumbusho said: "When I dropped out of school, I used to stay at home and it was challenging. I lacked vision for my future but after this training, I have skills which have started earning me money."

The jubilant Nyiranshumbusho says that she earns Rwf3, 000 daily from sewing clothes for various customers in her community.

A child at one of the ECDs supported by ActionAid, excited because of his new book with lots of pictures

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



◀
Girls and Boys from vulnerable families demonstrate their skills in construction using start-up construction tools provided by ActionAid.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

▼
Ibyizabirimbere cooperative members receiving vocation training in culinary skills at TVET Notre Dame de la bonne Esperance, Gisagara

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



▶
A girl applies skills gained from vocational training with support from ActionAid.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



“ There was a time when South Korea was at the same level as the African countries. Today, they are 100 times more advanced... They don't ignore jobs. What puts them a class apart is the skills they acquired from vocational and technical schools... With our history, everything must change, but it all starts with the mindset. Shunning of vocational education is a mindset challenge that must be done away with. ”

H. E. Paul Kagame
President of the Republic of Rwanda

<http://wda.gov.rw/en/content/vocational-training-way-forward—kagame>, 27 Nov, 2012

Agriculture



Farmers supported to combat hunger and malnutrition

KABAGEMA CALLIXTE, 41, a resident of Gitita village, Ruheru Sector, Nyaruguru district is the Chairperson of Ruheru Agricultural cooperative. The cooperative has 3,660 members (2,440 women and 1,220 men). It grows Maize, Cassava and Beans for sale. It also sells agricultural inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and a variety of improved seeds to farmers in the area.

The cooperative benefited from ActionAid Rwanda financial support. It received US\$12,142 to buy agricultural inputs such as improved seeds, pesticides and fertilizers which it sells to members and other farmers at a very low price of less than US\$1 per kilogram to enable the cooperative buy more inputs and assist other members.

ActionAid Rwanda also trained 241 women and men members of the cooperative in improved farming skills in order to train others so that they improve their farming activities to increase production. Kabagema said that with support from

ActionAid Rwanda, the cooperative has increased crop production, increased its income and its members have the means to feed their families and meet other basic needs like health insurance, school fees and scholastic materials for their children.

The cooperative used to produce only 9 tonnes of Irish Potatoes but with support from ActionAid Rwanda, it is now producing over 25 tonnes per hectare per season. Its maize produce doubled to 30 tonnes per hectare per season while its wheat produce increased from 9 tonnes per hectare to 30 tonnes in just one season.

The cooperative employs 100 women in its farming activities and it has assisted over 20,000 farmers to get agricultural inputs.

▼
AAR Country Director signing a petition for increased investment in agriculture

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Muko sector, Musanze District - PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Growing mushrooms to boost income

Twisungane Iwacu Mpanga, a cooperative of 30 members(28 women and 2 men is found in Mpanga Cell, Mukingo Sector, Nyanza District in the Southern Province.

Before, some of its members were living below the poverty line of one dollar per day and could not afford health insurance in addition to meeting the demand for scholastic materials for their children. These families depended solely on their small agricultural land for income which was never sufficient to meet all their basic needs.

The cooperative received financial support from ActionAid Rwanda worth Rwf 5million which it used to set up mushroom growing and trading business. The Chairperson of the Cooperative Jeanette Kanzayire, 55, says that the financial support was crucial as it helped the cooperative to construct a house in which mushrooms are grown and bought other materials that were needed to run the

business. Following the support, they started growing mushrooms which they soon started selling to the members of their community as well as to the surrounding communities. Kanzayire says that the cooperative sells 20 kilograms of mushrooms at Rwf1500/kg which earns it Rwf30, 000 every week.

The cooperative uses some of the money it makes to continue supporting the business and uses some to solve the urgent problems of its members. For instance, Kanzayire says that in 2016, the cooperative bought health insurance for all of its members and their families totalling 120 persons thus spending Rwf360, 000.

The members of the cooperative also get a personal discount on their mushroom produce at Rwf1000/kg which is Rwf500 less compared to the price offered by the non-members.

“ I am delighted that my family was able to get health insurance just because I am a member of this cooperative. We are very grateful for the support from ActionAid and we are committed to continue improving our lives. ”

KANZAYIRE CONCLUDES



Mukasine explains how mushroom growing has transformed her life

PHOTO: ACTIONAID





Growing Vegetables for Prosperity, Better Health



Charlotte Uwayezu in her vegetable garden in Gisagara LRP

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Charlotte Uwayezu, 53, had removed tomatoes and green pepper from the list of vegetables she would cook for her family. Vegetables were expensive and she could not grow them due to bad soils and shortage of water in her area during the dry season.

Uwayezu is a resident of Kibilizi Sector, Ruturo Cell in Agatongati Village of Gisagara District in Southern Province. She shares the exact same story with many other women in her area that had resorted to cooking Dodo, the leafy

green vegetable which grows in the wilderness.

However, the intervention of ActionAid Rwanda through GOAC Project in Kibilizi and Muganza Sectors has helped improve the situation. ActionAid Rwanda has built 19 community water harvesting tanks (9 in Kibilizi and 10 in Muganza) to help the communities harvest and store rainwater.

The tanks have been set up at different households and they

600 Women smallholder farmers in Kibilizi Sector

120 Women smallholder farmers have been supported to engage in vegetable farming

collect and store water from house rooftops whenever it rains. At the same time, ActionAid Rwanda helped to set up 40 model vegetable gardens in which women smallholder farmers grow different varieties of vegetables such as tomatoes, green pepper, carrots, onions and others.

The water collected by the tanks is vital for irrigating the vegetable gardens during the dry season

As a result, 600 women smallholder farmers in Kibilizi Sector and 120 women smallholder farmers in Muganza Sector have been



supported to engage in vegetable farming. These women, including Uwayezu, are now able to get vegetables for their families and spare some to sell in the market in order to raise money for other basic needs.

The vegetable gardens, according to Uwayezu, were built using bricks, cement, sand and soil to allow water to penetrate easily and they can stay longer while providing sufficient yield for more than 10 years. This model of vegetable gardens, explains.



Small holder farmers attend to their cabbage garden that has improved their health and wealth

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

“ Because of the support from ActionAid Rwanda, women smallholder farmers grow and sell most varieties of vegetables to our communities and this has increased the number of community members that eat vegetables. Our families are healthy in the end and we are thankful to ActionAid Rwanda for the support. ”

UWAYEZU

Uwayezu, is new in Gisagara District and has won the admiration of many people including the local authorities in this area through GOAC Project, families of women like Uwayezu are able to eat different varieties of vegetables such as tomatoes, green pepper, carrots, onions and others while over 100 of women smallholder farmers earn an income from vegetables.

Transforming Women's lives through cooperatives

ActionAid supports over 40 cooperatives in Murundi and Gitesi sectors in Karongi District, Western Province. These cooperatives have 2,717 women members who have all continuously gained skills in different income generating activities that have helped sustain their livelihoods. Some of these activities include farming, making handicrafts such as baskets, and jewellery among others.

Emelance Uwiragiye is one of the women benefiting from these cooperatives. She says that she used to be so poverty-stricken that she couldn't even afford to buy milk for her baby. To get milk, she had to work for a lady who was a member of a cooperative. When Uwiragiye started working for this lady, she began to notice benefits of joining cooperatives with other women; she later decided to join one of the cooperatives in her area.

After joining, Uwiragiye and other women were trained in making hand-crafts and baking donuts. She says that joining the cooperative has helped her in many aspects including boosting her self-esteem, teaching her new skills and she is now making money.



◀ Women in their cooperative meet for a discussion in Gisagara

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

"The cooperative helped me in different aspects of life. For instance I am no longer shy. I even give speeches very confidently in cooperative meetings and I have been equipped with skills that help me to generate income. My husband is no longer the only breadwinner at home," Uwiragiye explained.

Besides being able to contribute to the basic needs for her family, she used some of her savings to contribute to the construction of their house, and she makes contribution to the school fees for their child.

▶ Women in a cooperative in Musanze district collecting their weekly savings

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



actionaid

Improving livelihoods in communities through farming

There was such a low agricultural production slump in Gitesi sector, Karongi District in the Western Province that led to malnutrition, hunger and poverty. Subsequently ActionAid Rwanda helped in the sensitisation of people in the community about new farming methods in order to improve agriculture productivity and make it sustainable.

Because bananas are the main food crop grown in Gitesi, ActionAid Rwanda continued to support Gitesi community with trainings and financial support to improve banana farming and agriculture in general so that the community would stop producing low quality bananas.

Through the support of ActionAid Rwanda, Gitesi community formed groups and put to use the skills they learned through the various



Paskazia Uzamutuma, a member of Terimbere women group explaining the process of banana planting

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

trainings. They were able to buy land, improved seeds and organic manure and started concentrating heavily on growing and taking care of banana plantations and the results were positive and quick.

Gitesi Sector currently produces the best banana quality in Karongi

District. Each banana bunch weighs around 70 kilograms compared to 15 kilograms or less before the support of ActionAid Rwanda.

This has made Gitesi Community the role model in banana farming in Karongi District and this is having a positive impact on the efforts to reduce hunger, malnutrition and poverty in the area.

2,790

Tonnes of Improved Seeds supplied to farmers

17,240

Tonnes of Fertilisers supplied to farmers

Supporting cooperatives to increase Potato Productivity



► Some of Imbereheza cooperative members weeding from their Irish potato plantation

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Ancille Nyirankurikiyamana, is a 33 year old mother of 5 children, and a member of the Imbereheza cooperative in Ruheru Sector, Nyaruguru a District in Southern Province .

She says that before the support of ActionAid Rwanda, their cooperative of women smallholder farmers was finding it difficult to increase production due to the use of traditional seeds and traditional farming practices.

ActionAid Rwanda supported Imbereheza cooperative created in 2013 to increase Irish Potato produce from 500 kilograms to over 3.5 tons which has greatly increased the cooperative's earnings from Rwf125, 000 to Rwf 875,000 per season. She says that production increased after the cooperative members received training on sustainable agriculture supported by ActionAid Rwanda and received improved Irish potato seeds.

Going forward, the cooperative plans to expand into animal husbandry starting with rearing pigs and goats. This is expected to increase its earnings but also generate organic manure for their plantation

“ Until 2015, we were still struggling to raise our production which had reached 500kg per season. The support from ActionAid Rwanda was timely as it came when we were brainstorming on how to attain higher production. ”

NYIRANKURIKIYAMANA

8,745

women small holder farmers trained on climate resilience and sustainable agriculture

2,008

men smallholder farmers trained on climate resilience and sustainable agriculture



Boosting farming productivity through rain-water harvesting



◀ Mukakibibi excited to fetch clean water from her water tank.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



“ This journey took around three hours and this was the time that I should have been spending in farming activities to improve production to earn money. As a result, our household income was very low. ”

SANDRINE

◀ One of the women who have been supported by ActionAid to have access to clean water

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Sandrine, 27, lives in Gisagara district with her 13 year old son. She recalls the days she used to walk 5 kilometres every day to fetch dirty swamp water for washing and cooking. She would then walk to another community to fetch drinking water.

All that changed when ActionAid Rwanda supported the construction of 19 water harvesting tanks in

Gisagara District. Together, they collect and store 5,000 litres of rainwater which is shared by 700 families for home consumption and irrigation of their small-scale vegetable gardens.

“I am so happy that we now have clean water to drink and irrigate our vegetables and I have enough time to work,” she adds



Women in Karongi gather to receive water harvesting tanks from ActionAid.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



For most of her life, 51 year old widow Thamar Mukakibibi and her seven children had to endure extremely cold morning walks to the well to fetch water. They would wake up at 5am and walk a long distance to the well to fetch water. This was an inconvenience to them because the children had to go to school when they returned from the well, and Mukakibibi had to go to the garden as well.

All that changed when the cooperative she is a member of called Tubibe Amahoro Association through the Women's Rights to Sustainable Livelihoods Project funded by ActionAid Rwanda

supported 45 women right holders in Murundi and Gitesi sectors, Karongi district, Western Province with water harvesting tanks each. This was aimed at lessening their burden of collecting water usually from long distances which was reducing their time for other activities like farming and forcing their children to go to school late. Mukakibibi was among the women that received a water harvesting tank.

She says that the situation has changed after the water harvesting tank was installed at her house.

“ My children don't have to be late for school because of having to first go to the well. I am also able to get enough time to go to the garden and run other errands. Life is much better and easier now. ”

MUKAKIBIBI



Sandrine and her son now have access to clean water

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Women paving their way to Prosperity



◀
Uwamahoro poses for a photo with some of the donuts made by the bakery belonging to Abunzubumwe cooperative.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

The Abunzubumwe cooperative in Muko Sector Musanze District in Northern Province began in 2010 with 30 women members. The Cooperative is engaged in small-scale farming activities such as growing Irish Potatoes and Maize.

However, with the support of ActionAid Rwanda, the cooperative diversified into bread-making because land is a scarce resource in Muko Sector.

The cooperative received a start-up capital of Rwf 1,100,000 to start a bread bakery and ActionAid Rwanda hired a consultant to train its members in the bread-making skills.

The treasurer of the Cooperative, Dative Uwamahoro, says that they make an average of 200 loaves of bread per day and it earns them Rwf5,000 to Rwf 6,000 every day, making their average monthly income around Rwf 200,000. Comparing bread business and their farming activities, Uwamahoro says that the bakery is more profitable.

She said: "We would wait for 3 months to get money in our farming activities but with the bakery, money comes every day and this is changing our lives. We are very grateful for the start-up capital and expertise we received from ActionAid."

▄▄ The cooperative received a start-up capital of Rwf 1,100,000 to start a bread bakery and ActionAid Rwanda hired a consultant to train its members in the bread-making skills. ▄▄

SANDRINE

Strengthening Women Economic Power



▶ Smallholder farmers receiving seeds for planting from ActionAid.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

19 smallholder women farmers of the Abongeramusaruro cooperative engaged in pineapple farming in Murundi Sector, Karongi District in Western Province have been economically empowered following support from ActionAid Rwanda. The farmers were given support of different farming paraphernalia including six watering machines, 80 watering cans, a pig for each member, and training in sustainable farming.

Esperance Mukashyaka, one of the members of the Abongeramusaruro cooperative said that the cooperative which started in 2012 is now well positioned to help

members practice sustainable agriculture in order to improve their lives. "With farming, we are able to buy anything of our choice contrary to when we used to depend on our husbands for everything," Mukashyaka said, adding, "We hope to be entirely self-reliant at some time in the near future."

Abongeramusaruro Cooperative started in 2012 to fight poverty and malnutrition among the members' children. Members started contributing Rwf400 each and which they later used to rent a piece of land and they started pineapple farming. Since then, they are growing stronger.



“ The cooperative received a start-up capital of Rwf 1,100,000 to start a bread bakery and ActionAid Rwanda hired a consultant to train its members in the bread-making skills. ”

SANDRINE

▲ Hillaria, a small holder farmer in Musanze ,ready to grind maize for flour at the maize milling machine in Muko sector.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Saving schemes unlocking potential to tackle poverty



Members of Twitezimbere Cooperative meeting to collect their weekly savings

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

After taking part in a training supported by ActionAid Rwanda on efficient resource utilization and saving, thirty-three year old Marcelline Uzamumukunda mobilized 29 other women smallholder farmers in Muko Sector, Musanze District in Northern Province to start a saving scheme in which they would save Rwf300 per week each. The idea was to save money that would help them start an income generating activity.

Together, they formed Twitezimbere Sangano Cooperative and with ActionAid Rwanda support, they trained the members of the cooperative in resource utilization and saving. With weekly individual savings of Rwf300, the cooperative has made remarkable progress. It has invested in agriculture and animal husbandry where it has 60 pigs, 23 goats and it is growing Irish Potatoes and Maize on 2 hectares of land.

The proceeds from their collective investment and individual savings are kept in an account at their local Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO). At the end of 2015, the cooperative had Rwf2 million to share the following year, the cooperative was eyeing Rwf 3million.

Uzamukunda says that before the training, saving had not crossed her mind and she would spend whatever amount she would make. Many of the women in her area were in the same situation. However, their mindset has changed following the training and after forming the cooperative.

“ Some people were making fun of us when we started and some members were also skeptical of the future. Now we are the popular women in the community and more people are requesting to join the cooperative now that they can see it is on the move to something bigger. ”

UZAMUKUNDA





Women small holder farmers working in the Irish potato plantation in Muko sector

PHOTO: ACTIONAID





Women farmers working in their garden

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



▲
Women small
holder farmers
in Muko sector
harvesting
tomatoes

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

▼
Women farmers
showcasing some
of their agricultural
products at the
International
Women's Day

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Women's Rights



Training women to fight for their rights

ACTIONAID RWANDA supported a one-week training for 20 women in Shingiro, Musanze District in Northern Province. The basis of this training was to educate them on laws regarding polygamy and other marriage based rights to women rights holders. The main goal of this training was to fully educate the women on these laws that guarantee their rights in order for them to sensitise other women.

Following the training, Clementine Uwamahoro, a representative of National Women Council at the sector level has been going door-to-door sensitizing fellow women on polygamy and its dangers. She said: "When we completed the training, I embarked on sensitizing fellow women about laws especially the law on gender based violence and polygamy which is a common practice in our area although the law prohibits it." She says that about 1,320 women and men have been sensitized.

Those sensitized promised to observe laws in order to reduce occurrence of gender based crimes in the area.



ActionAid has organised similar trainings on women rights in Karongi, Gisagara, Nyaruguru and Nyanza.

▲ Women in Nyanza district, hold placards claiming their land rights.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

14,091 women mobilized and empowered to know their rights

1,560 women activists

9,734 women trained on rights, human laws, international conventions and children



Biogas, a timely and cost effective cooking alternative



TEN FAMILIES in Rwabicuma sector, Nyanza District in Southern Province built 10 Biogas systems for domestic cooking with ActionAid Rwanda support in an effort to reduce the time women in these families spend collecting firewood.

The support followed the request by women smallholder farmers to help them build biogas systems at their households. Each family needed to raise Rwf100, 000 as a contribution to the cost of building the system while the balance would be contributed by the government.

ActionAid Rwanda also gave cows to the families in order to get cow dung for biogas digesters.

Mukasharangabo Asinatha, 56, was among the women that received the support. She says that ever

since she started cooking on biogas, she has more time to do chores and her kitchen is now free of smoke and soot. She is also able to light her house using biogas during the night.

▲
Mukasharangabo ready to prepare a meal for her self using her biogas

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

“ With biogas, I cook in a clean environment with no smoke and within a short time the food is ready. My husband is also able to check on the food if it is ready because of the clean kitchen. We are really happy for the support. ”

UWAYEZU

Biogas reducing workload for women and girls



▶ Kantetere Anic no longer has to collect fire wood for cooking as she now has biogas

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

WOMEN AND CHILDREN in Murundi and Gitesi Sectors in Karongi District, Western Province no longer have to spend many hours collecting firewood after biogas digesters were installed at their homes to support them in cooking.

Through Power Project which is supported by ActionAid Rwanda, many families in the two sectors have started using biogas technology in their houses. Through Power project implemented through the Tubibe Amahoro Association alongside two other partner

organisations, a biogas digester is built at a household and it uses cow dung to generate gas needed for cooking. May Mukandekezi, a 58 year old widowed mother of three, was among the women who benefited from the Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women (FLOW) II Project. A biogas digester was built at her home and has helped her save time she would spend collecting firewood.

Narrating her burden before biogas, she said: "Collecting firewood was tiresome and sometimes I would not even find it and I would be forced to send children to try and this would mean walking long distances."

When a biogas digester was built at her home, it relieved her of the firewood burden.

“ I felt relieved. Many women here felt the same because Biogas has reduced the workload for women and children and it has reduced the time and energy we would spend collecting firewood. Now we can use that time to engage in more productive work. ”

MUKANDEKEZI

Fighting Gender Based violence in schools



◀ Youths cheering on at a girls camp after a learning session on how to prevent and fight violence.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

TEN YEAR OLD Nsengiyaremye Samuel is in Primary four at Ecole Primaire Gahotora. He is one of the leaders of an Anti Gender Based Violence (GBV) school club that ActionAid Rwanda supports in Ruheru community.

Recently, Nsengiyaremye participated in a sensitization event held at his school. After the event, he felt satisfied with the knowledge he had gained on fighting GBV.

ActionAid Rwanda in collaboration with Ruheru Community has been fighting GBV in schools.

Ruheru Sector, Nyaruguru District in Southern Province is one of the sectors which have reported the highest cases of GBV in the country. ActionAid Rwanda intervenes in schools to strengthen Anti-GBV Clubs to tame violence against children and girls.

This is done by strengthening existing clubs and creating new ones. Club members are trained on how to fight GBV and in turn help to sensitize their schoolmates.

“ I gained a lot of knowledge on the fight against gender based violence. As a member of anti-gender based violence club at my school, I will be the first to lead others in the fight against gender based violence. ”

NSENGIYAREMYE

👉 Men who abuse their wives should be brought to justice in the strictest form. Why would anyone tolerate violence against women? It should never be tolerated. 🗨️

H. E. Paul Kagame

President of the Republic of Rwanda

<http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/211155/>

From a victim of violence to living a life of triumph



NYIRAMBANGUTSE, 54, was living a miserable life until 2009 when she joined a group of other women who were engaged in farming and animal husbandry. Her husband used to subject her to domestic violence and he abandoned her with their six children for another woman.

“My life was a sad tale. I was a sad lonely woman and a victim of violence. My husband always mistreated me and reached a point of abandoning me with our children which caused more harm,” says Nyirambangutse, adding that because of the challenging

situation she was living in, she lost 30 kilograms of her body weight.

However, when she joined the group of other women, her situation slowly started to change. First, she gained self-esteem and she started making some money but this was just the beginning. In the

same year she joined the group, ActionAid Rwanda started empowering the group's members including her.

They were trained in sustainable agriculture and livestock farming. They were also sensitized on domestic violence. She used the knowledge she had acquired to take her case to court and she won back her land which her husband had given to another wife.

Nyirambangutse later received a sheep from ActionAid which produced and helped her to buy a cow. Today, she says she lives a life of triumph. “I live with confidence and I can take good care of my children.

I can afford all the basic household items such as soap, salt and sugar. I have land and my children go to school. When I think of the future, I usually bust in a smile of triumph.

“ ActionAid Rwanda started empowering the group's members including Athanasie. They were trained in sustainable agriculture and livestock farming. They were also sensitized on domestic violence. ”

NSENGIYAREMYE

Giving victims of gender based violence a new life

▶
Imaculee now sews trousers, shirts and blouses a skill she acquired through learning sessions through ActionAid capacity building

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



IMACULEE NYIRAMPORE, a resident of Nyanza District, Southern Province, was subject to Gender Based Violence (GBV) for 10 years by her former husband, a few months after their wedding. Her husband would beat her endlessly. When she ran away in an effort to stay safe, she realized that she was pregnant and she returned. To her surprise, her husband, a former soldier, had married another woman. She stayed in the abusive marriage until she decided to free herself in 1996.

“Any slight provocation, even a joke could start war. My hope was miserably melting into despair,” Nyirampore talks of her suffering.

In 2007, Nyirampore and other women in Nyanza District with support from Actionid Rwanda collectively started a bee-keeping project.

In further support, ActionAid Rwanda also trained these women on human rights, children’s rights and women’s rights, legal provisions that defend abused

Currently, Nyirampore has two cows — one of which was given to her by ActionAid. She was able to buy four goats and this has enabled her children to go to school. On average, she earns Rwf 100,000 monthly besides her other savings.

women, business management skills and saving among others.

For Nyirampore, the choice was tailoring. She bought a sewing machine and started sewing trousers, shirts and blouses, kitenge clothes in different styles, school uniforms for secondary school students and embroidery.

Currently, Nyirampore has two cows — one of which was given to her by ActionAid. She was able to buy four goats and this has enabled her children to go to school. On average, she earns Rwf 100,000 monthly besides her other savings.

In 2010, she managed to officially divorce her abusive husband and secured half of their land which was valued at about Rwf 5million. Her plans in the future include continue educating her children, investing in a bee-keeping and training fellow women on empowerment.



Women
Empowerment

Fighting poverty through art

JYAMBERE POTTERY Cooperative is among cooperatives that have been supported by ActionAid Rwanda in Murundi Sector, Karongi District in Western Province. The cooperative was given US\$ 1000 to invest in its pottery business and received skills development training to improve the livelihood of its 50 members (28 women and 22 men) who were below the poverty line of one dollar a day. The financial support will be returned to another Cooperative after one year.

Jyambere Pottery Cooperative makes various products made of clay such as house flower pots, clay cups, cooking pots and clay plates. They are sold in the neighbouring markets and the cooperative has already started selling some in Kigali. Marie Mukantwari, 43, a widow with four children living in Cyaratsi village of Murundi sector is a member of the cooperative.

She says the members have saved US\$3,000 out of their business activities which is kept in the cooperative's bank account. They are planning to buy two cows, increase raw materials for pottery and construct a permanent office for the cooperative.

Adrien Munyeshuri, 53, is another member of the cooperative. He said: "Our business is now expanding from 50 products a day to more than 500 various products which are sold to Kigali and other towns in the country at US\$20 a flower pot and others at not less than US\$5."

With incomes from the cooperative, members are able to meet basic needs such as food for their families, medical insurance and cater for the needs of their school going children. Members are also able to use part of the income to improve their individual farming activities while others buy domestic animals such as goats and cows.

The cooperative was funded to improve the livelihood of over 50 members



One of ActionAid Rwanda's rightholders overjoyed after receiving a cow from ActionAid

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Facilitating communities with clean water; reducing unpaid care work and improving health

▶
Dusabimana fetching clean water to use at home, from her water tank

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Liberatha Dusabimana, 54, reminisces about the painful days when she would walk five kilometres to fetch a jerry can of dirty swamp water for washing and cooking. To avoid any return trips, she would go with her son bearing two 10 litre jerry cans which they would lug home and make do with for three days.

For drinking water, she would head far away to another community which had tap water. Fetching water had become her permanent occupation yet she also had to

ensure her family got other basic needs.

However, Dusabimana, like other women smallholder farmers in Kibilizi Sector, Gisagara District in Southern Province, no longer have to walk long distances to get water. With support from ActionAid Rwanda, 2,100 women smallholder farmers in this area have been supported to access clean water near them. Water harvesting tanks have been installed at households in Kibilizi Sector in order to harvest

and store rain water which is used for domestic purposes and to irrigate small scale vegetable gardens. Dusabimana was among the women that received water tanks from ActionAid Rwanda.

A 5,000 litre water tank is installed on her house and whenever there is rain, the tank collects and stores water of which she shares with other 35 families in her neighbourhood. She says that the tanks have not only helped her get clean water but also the yield of her vegetable garden has increased due to the consistent irrigation.

Dusabimana expresses her gratitude for the support: "Getting water in our community required walking long distances and it was dirty water which we could not drink. With these tanks, we now have clean water and we are using the same water to irrigate vegetable gardens. We are grateful for the support."

2,100

Farmers in have been supported to access clean water near them

Availing tapped water to families

ActionAid Rwanda supported a water project that saw 700 families including 80 headed by women get tap water in Kamina Village, Murundi Sector in Karongi District.

The 6-kilometer water pipe project includes 12 water taps which came as a relief to the Kamina Community that had longed for piped water for so long. Members of the community especially

women and children would walk two kilometres to fetch water.

Women were losing valuable hours every day while searching for water while children would reach school late because of looking for water in the morning. The community was also at risk of several diseases like typhoid because of using dirty swap water.

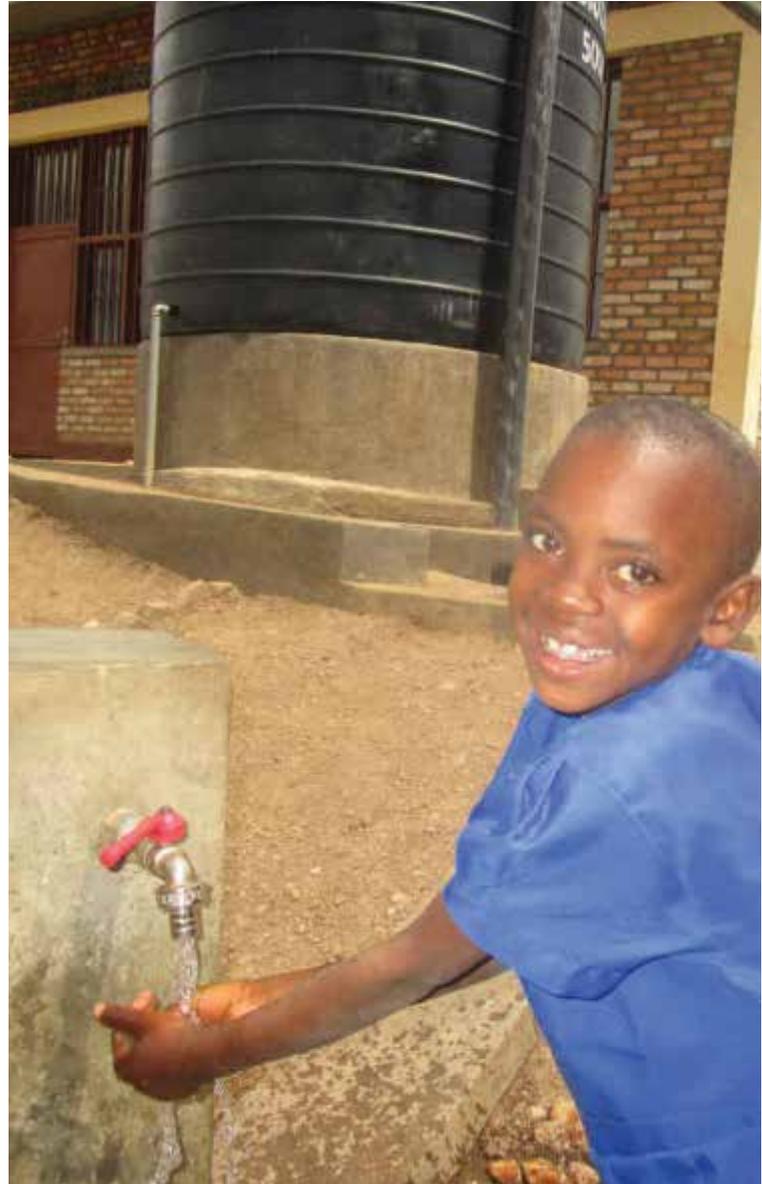
700

families including 80 headed by women access tap water in Kamina Village, Murundi Sector in Karongi District.



A child from Kamina community washes her hands with clean water after using the latrine

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Women dabble in cosmetics production to boost income alternatives



▲
Members of Twigeheza Hazaza Cooperative training on how to make soap to boost their incomes.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

In 2014, ActionAid Rwanda empowered all 26 members of Twigeheza Hazaza Cooperative in Gitesi Sector, Karongi District

in Western Province in cosmetics production. The training imparted them with vital skills on how to make soap and body oil from

locally available raw materials. ActionAid also gave them a machine which has the capacity of producing 1,000 bars of soap every day.

Seraphina Uwizera, a 34 year old mother of three children, was among those who were trained. She says that following the training, she makes soap and body oils which are sold in Karongi to earn her a living. Because of the income she gets from her business, she is able to meet the needs of her children. Together with her children, they have medical insurance, the children go to school and she has goats which she bought from her income.

Before the training, Uwizera says that she lived in extreme poverty where she could not afford the basic needs in addition to paying school fees for her children.

The training imparted them with vital skills on how to make soap and body oil from locally available raw materials. ActionAid also gave them a machine which has the capacity of producing 1,000 bars of soap every day

Women reaping big from the savings culture



◀ Women in Ruheru sector gather to celebrate their hard work after purchasing solar panels, gas cookers and beddings from their savings.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

A group of 20 rural women farmers in Ruheru sector, Nyaruguru district in Western Rwanda are reaping benefits from the culture of saving they embraced after receiving training that equipped them with knowledge on how to save money to improve their living conditions.

The women leaders of 20 different groups in Ruheru Sector managed to save as much as Rwf 1,238,000 in their local Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) in just one year using the knowledge they acquired during the training provided by ActionAid International

Rwanda (AAIR) and its partner organization, Faith Victory Association (FVA) through Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women (FLOW) II Project.

The training focused on equipping them with essential knowledge on how to save money as groups, and use the savings to start income generating activities to support themselves and their families.

Ahishakiye says: "I used to engage in farming in order to get food and sometimes I would work for others to get some little money to

afford other basic needs. However, following the training on savings, I am very proud that I am going to support my family from the income that I make. My husband is also happy to see that I could save much and contribute to our getting our needs."

In addition to solar panels, two women brought clean water to their homes using their savings while others bought mattresses for their families. Ruheru being one of the poorest sectors in Western Rwanda, it also lacks access to electricity and 0.5 % of its



After saving money together, women in Ruheru sector buy necessities they never dreamt they would afford such as solar panels.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

population has access on water.

Among AAR and FVA right holders (beneficiaries), none of them had access to clean safe water or electricity in 2016.

They would walk long distances in search of water which was also not clean. Lack of electricity hinders the development of Ruheru and affects the performance of students.

Through FLOW II project, the women were also given cash subsidies to support their agricultural activities and were given facilitation fee during the training which was also part of the savings.

The 20 women leaders now have set a target to ensure that all members of their groups have access to water and cooking gas, buy cows and get fertilizers to improve their farming productivity in order to increase their incomes.

The FLOW II project is implemented by AAIR in partnership with FVA, Duhozanye and Tubibe Amahoro in Nyaruguru, Nyanza, Gisagara, Karongi and Musanze districts.

345

Cooperatives supported in mobilization, capacity building and financially

1907

Women headed households received shelter



Policy Engagement

Women farmers participating in the public dialogue on the role of CSOs in promoting sustainable agriculture and citizen participatory budgeting.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Public dialogues, a platform for citizen participation in policy formulation

SEVERAL PUBLIC dialogues have been organized to discuss pertinent issues affecting society with the support of ActionAid Rwanda.

A recent one is the national public dialogue on "The Role of CSOs in promoting sustainable agriculture and citizen participatory Budgeting" that was organized by CLADHO in collaboration with ActionAid Rwanda with support and funding of the European Union.

During the dialogue, participants from various institutions including civil society, government and the community at large shared their views on what role Civil Society Organizations can play to promote sustainable agriculture and citizen participatory budgeting.

The Minister of State at Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources in Rwanda, Fulgence Nsengiyumva, lauded projects including SCAB, a European Union funded project, for the community scorecard initiative which gives a

voice to rural farmers to provide constructive feedback to national institutions which gives them the opportunity to adjust their programs to better suit farmer's needs.

Kayisharaza, one of the representatives from Community Based Organizations (CBOs) requested government intervention in teaching citizen participatory budgeting, adding that there should be wide dissemination of information related to the national budget, so as to educate the public and involve them.

Honorable Fulgence Nsengiyumva, appreciated the feedback that was given by the Civil society and other participants who attended the public dialogue, thus emphasizing collaborating with all stakeholders as they too have a role to play in promoting sustainable agriculture.

ActionAid Rwanda believes in citizen participation and engaging community to share their ideas regarding policies made, through public dialogues.



ActionAid International MoU signing with the African Union



ACTIONAID INTERNATIONAL (AAI) signed an MoU with the African Union Commission (AUC) Department of Political Affairs on the implementation of the Africa Governance Architecture, with special focus & attention on the ratification, domestication and implementation of the charter.

The MoU was signed on July 14, 2017, at the AU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by

ActionAid International Africa representative, Jemal Ahmed and Her Excellency, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Minata Samate Cessouma. Josephine Uwamariya, ActionAid Rwanda Country Director, who was among the participants during this engagement stated;

“This is a very big milestone for ActionAid and an opportunity for continued engagements

with the African Union, on achieving the aspiration of Agenda 2063.”

AAI Representative, Mr Jemal Ahmed on the occasion, noted that ActionAid's delegation team has been inspired by the AU Commission Chairperson's profound commitment to advance democratization, governance, women's rights, and gender equality, domestic resource mobilization and working with the CSOs.

▲
Member of the African Union and AAI, Africa representatives signing a MoU.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

Chris Kinyanjui, former ActionAid CEO Visit to Rwanda

CHRIS KINYANJUI, who was the ActionAid International CEO in year 2013 to 2014, visited ActionAid Rwanda in 2017. During his visit, Kinyanjui joined the ActionAid

Rwanda (AAR) Board Members during a retreat. He supported with the capacity building of the Board members and the Senior Management Team.

Kinyanjui together with the AAR Board Members visited Busasamana sector in Nyanza district, one of the Local Right Programmes. He applauded the work done by AAR in the Local Right Programs while visiting right holders who were empowered and are now practicing sustainable agriculture, which has improved their livelihoods.

Kinyanjui visited right holders who have banana plantations and now also have biogas. During his visit, Board Members and Senior Management's Capacity was built.



Former AAI CEO (in stripped shirt) during a community visit in Nyanza LRP with AAR Board Members and Staff.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



High Level ActionAid International Board Meeting in Rwanda

IN A BID to continue supporting Action Aid Rwanda (AAR) governance functional structures and the new National Board, the International Board decided to have its 2017 meeting in Rwanda.

Following a short span turnaround of the AAR program from a frail program to a strong and progressive member of the Federation, the International Board appreciated AAR as

a learning model of best practices, exemplary home grown solutions of the National context to which other Country Programs can learn from.

It is from this background that the international Board held their meeting in Rwanda in December 2017; mainly to strategize, review and engage the Actionaid Rwanda's National Board that is new. The International Board members

provided leadership support and guidance to the staff of ActionAid Rwanda, prospective board members and partners.

International Board members also visited ActionAid Rwanda's operational areas /communities here referred to as Local Rights Program (LRPs) namely: Musanze in the Northern Province.

The community visit was held for experiential learning through interaction with right holders/ communities especially women groups and children. The team, which included Adriano Campolina, the ActionAid Rwanda Chief Executive Officer also joined the community in Musanze to celebrate the International Rural Women's Day.

▼
AAI Board Members interacting with AAR Staff at ActionAid Rwanda Head Offices.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID





▲
AAI CEO, AAI Board Members and AAR Staff visiting to Muko LRP in Musanze District during International Rural Women's Day.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



Stakeholder's Testimonies



FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS



Francois Ndayisaba
Mayor - Karongi District

ActionAid Rwanda is very transparent, honest and has a very good working relationship with Karongi district. For all the time I have known ActionAid, it has enhanced livelihoods and changed many lives in Karongi, specifically in Gitesi and Murundi sectors. It is a member of the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) of Karongi district and it is one of the very best performers in this district.

It has greatly improved the area of education in Karongi district by building Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDs) and has supported some schools through building classrooms and providing them with equipment. It has empowered women in Karongi to know their rights and it always implements whatever it plans to do. We truly appreciate the work they do here and in other districts.



Solange Umutesi
Vice Mayor, Social Affairs - Nyanza District

We appreciate the good collaboration, effective communication and transparency we have with ActionAid and we really appreciate their contribution towards achieving the district performance contracts on an annual basis.

Because of ActionAid, we have seen good impact on empowering women and children. ActionAid introduced pre-schools in Nyanza through Early Childhood Development Centers. Because of its impact on our communities, ActionAid commands a huge trust and respect from our communities



Marie Clare Uwamariya
Vice Mayor, Social Affairs - Musanze District

I am very grateful to ActionAid for their presence in Musanze district. By empowering and supporting women in various areas, it has contributed greatly to their development. Women now know their rights, have critical skills and they are now capable of dealing with unpaid care work because of the support of ActionAid.

With support of ActionAid, Musanze communities have rainwater harvesting tanks, cows and biogas which enables them to do clean cooking.



Nelson Muhayimana
**Director of Planning, MME -
 Nyaruguru District**

It is now 10 years since ActionAid started working in Nyaruguru and has always worked with us to put our pledges to the society into reality. Through ActionAid, Nyaruguru district has attained agricultural transformation, improved farming methodology, improved seeds, and the advent of factories. ActionAid has also supported women in Nyaruguru to start and operate milling businesses which are thriving. This was achieved through different capacity building initiatives.

ActionAid has also supported us to improve education in Ruheru with two Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDs) in Yanza and Zirambe to reduce Unpaid Care Work for the mothers and to acquire quality education for the children.



Honorable Anitha Mutesi
**President of the Rwanda Women
 Parliamentary Forum (FFRP)**

The Rwanda women parliamentary forum (FFRP) thanks ActionAid Rwanda for contributions to the successful and impact of community outreach. We have noticed the general happiness of the local communities especially among beneficiaries (right holders) because of the interventions made by ActionAid in Kibilizi sector which illustrates the value of economic empowerment and community based pro-poor approaches in accelerating positive social transformation.

The Rwanda women parliamentary forum will support the existing partnership with ActionAid Rwanda in order to continue advancing and sustaining Gender equality gains. We thank you very much for your invaluable partnership



Gasengayire Clemance
**Vice Mayor, Social Affairs -
 Gisagara District**

ActionAid has empowered women in Gisagara to realize their potential. There are many women who can now get loans from SACCOS and are now engaging in income generating activities - all through the capacity building and knowledge given by ActionAid.

In the field of education, before ActionAid's intervention, the number of school dropouts and absenteeism was very high. ActionAid has tackled this issue and in 2016, there was no single case of school dropout. In partnership with the district, ActionAid has provided biogas to the communities and supported the construction of Early Childhood Development Centers to allow mothers to focus their energy and time on productive work.

ActionAid Rwanda's community rootedness impacting lives



ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) has been working in Gisagara district since 2007. With operations in Kibilizi, Muganza and Gishubi Sectors, AAR focuses on improving education and eradicating poverty

The Vice Mayor in charge of Social Affairs at Gisagara District

Mrs. Clemence Gasengayire says AAR is one of the most recognised partner of change in the district.



Mrs. Gasengayire says that education sector in Gisagara district has made significant steps following the intervention of AAR.

Before AAR started working in Gisagara, 75% of children would drop out of school during or after completion of primary school but in 2017, the district had no

single pupil dropping out of school, according to the Vice Mayor. This achievement was a result of AAR's support in construction of new classrooms across schools and introduction of Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs) which made learning quite attractive to the young people in Gisagara.

▲
Women small holder farmers having a chat during one of their daily morning farming practises.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



▲
Some of the women in Gisagara district literally celebrating their empowerment.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID



▶
Pupils attending class in one of the schools supported by ActionAid in Gisagara district.

PHOTO: ACTIONAID

“We could never have done this without the considerable support of ActionAid Rwanda which is helping us to fulfil the pledges we make to our people.”

UWAYEZU

Mrs. Gasengayire said: “We could never have done this without the considerable support of ActionAid Rwanda which is helping us to fulfil the pledges we make to our people.”

In addition to Education, AAR also supports smallholder women farmers in Gisagara with trainings on women's rights and financial

management. AAR also supports several agricultural cooperatives and some of the cooperatives have even acquired a maize processing factory.

Before AAR's intervention, women in Gisagara felt less cared for, according to the Vice Mayor. However, she says that with AAR intervening, they feel empowered.

“The women in Gisagara love ActionAid Rwanda because it has transformed their lives as well as their mindsets. They are happier, they have an entrepreneurial mindset and their lives have changed for the better. In fact, every time they pray, they add ActionAid Rwanda to their prayers because its presence has been more caring than even their family members,” Gasengayire said.

She congratulates AAR for its 35years of operation in Rwanda and wishes for it to continue to be a friend of Gisagara for a long time to come.

Special thanks to AAR former Leadership



Bizuwork Ketete
1997 - 2000



Salifu M M Sledge
2000 - 2003



John Abuya
2003 - 2006



Therese Karugwiza
2006 - 2010

ACTIONAID RWANDA BEYOND 2017

ActionAid International Rwanda (AAIR) has a new ten-year second Country Strategy Paper (CSP II 2018-2028) which shall guide the work of the Country Programme over the next ten years starting from 2018.

While developing the CSP II 2018-2028, AAIR took into consideration its development work and experience for over three decades in Rwanda, detailed reviews of the valuable lessons learnt, recommendations from stakeholders' consultations and on a wide-range analysis of the most current information on Rwanda development agenda and strategies including the Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS1&2).

As an Associate Member of ActionAid Global Federation, this strategy is also aligned to the international strategy 'Action for Global Justice' (AGJ), as contribution to achievement of the Federation's aspirations at the same time informed by the local context.

Strategic Priorities

The framework for the CSP II 2018-2028 directly responds to the continued challenges faced by people living in poverty and exclusion in Rwanda.

The priorities were identified through analysis of stakeholder feedback, review of our ongoing country strategic position, relevant key national priorities, and alignment to ActionAid International (AAI) global strategic objectives.

We recognize that overcoming the structural causes of poverty and injustice will require long term commitments, global collective action, and the ability to adapt to rapidly changing contexts.

Over the next 10 years, AAIR seeks to increase its impact through

empowering a larger number of vulnerable persons and increasing the size and scope of operations, while at the same time promoting sustainable change through advocacy initiatives.

The goal of the CSP II 2018-2028 is to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by shifting power, redistribution of resources, strengthening the resilience of communities and enforcing rights of people living in poverty and exclusion.

To achieve this overarching goal, the CSP II 2018-2028 has two key programmatic priorities that address the critical issues of the Rwanda context while aligning to the ActionAid Federation's global priorities.

In alignment to the global strategy and national priorities, AAIR will continue promoting social cohesion through established structures and home grown initiatives. AAIR will ensure coherence in the implementation of this strategy based on two key priorities with the six specific focus issues:



In addition to the two priorities and given the fact that Rwanda is at low risk in terms of shocks and disasters, AAIR will address issues of Humanitarian and Emergencies under Priority 1 while specific interventions around public services are covered under priority 2. Specific focus interventions include:

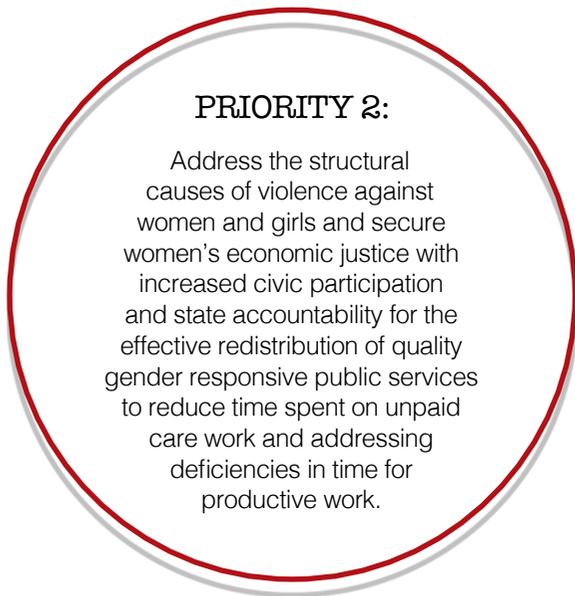
- Provide capacity building areas of prevention and response to GBV to women and girls in case of external crisis and disasters

- Solicit and provide immediate basic needs support to victims of conflicts, shocks and disasters

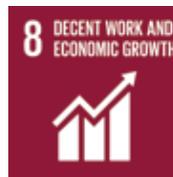
AAIR will also channel its interventions related to Education through the work on gender responsive public services advocacy; efforts will be specifically geared towards advocacy on financing for Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs), supporting PTCs to effectively lead accountability, governance

and resource mobilization around public schools and we will continue to work with girls and their clubs in order to promote rights in schools with a special focus on safer environment for the girl's education and performance.

AAIR will also support girls who drop out of school to have life skills for resilience



SPECIFIC FOCUS ISSUES



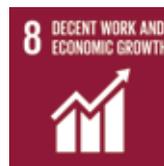
Recognition, Redistribution and Reduction of Unpaid Care Work for women's economic justice



Women and girls' participation in leadership and decision making positions and policy influence

Address the structural causes of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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