

POWER **In** PEOPLE

Newsletter April - June 2022



Increasing livestock to Improve smallholder farmers' livelihoods

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ActionAid Rwanda

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Foreword

Dear Readers,

Welcome to ActionAid Rwanda's April-June 2022 Newsletter, we hope you will enjoy reading about the activities and projects that took place between the end of March and the beginning of May as it has been a busy and productive period for AAR.

This newsletter focuses on the activities aimed at empowering women small holder famers and stories of change showing how ActionAid's interventions are changing life in different interventions including improving agroecology and sustainable agriculture through provision of livestock and financial support.

ActionAid gets in solidarity with Rwandans as we commemorate the Genocide against Tutsi in 1994. ActionAid Rwanda supported 5 family members of former employees of Aide et Action that were killed during genocide against Tutsi with financial support, the event that was preceded by a visit to Kigali Memorial site in Gisozi and series of dialogues to raise awareness on genocide against Tutsi and the post genocide reconstruction.

All the Best!



Josephine Irene Uwamariya
Country Director

As Speak Out! Project that has been implemented by ActionAid Rwanda is phasing out, many initiatives to address Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Gender-Based Violence were recorded within these two months. ActionAid provided 360 male change agents with bicycles to support their effort in supporting families with conflicts through conflict management and carrying out awareness-raising activities. Through learning and sharing workshops to look at the project achievements, evaluation showed that 5600 Girls have gained skills on SRHR and confidence to report GBV Cases.

We take this opportunity to thank all our supporters, partners and stakeholders for their support and collaboration to make our work more impactful. We look forward to a continued collaboration to achieve social justice for all.

Empowerment

Water facilities provided by ActionAid promoted women's participation in income generating activities in Gisagara



By Theogene Uwiringiyimana

Nyiracumi Louise is a resident of Gisagara District, in Rwanda's Southern Province, and leader of TWITEZIMBERE, a women's group of 28 members which focuses on farming, breeding, and village savings and loans, and which has been supported by ActionAid since 2013.

Like other residents of Gisagara District, Louise had difficulties in accessing clean water, whether due to human waste and natural pollution, or due to water shortages caused by inadequate water storage facilities. This hindered her ability to carry out her daily tasks such as providing water for her cows and washing her clothes and, like many women, made her vulnerable to the effects of Unpaid Care Work, which prevent women like Louise from partaking in income-generating activities.

"At my age, it is obvious that I cannot climb hills from the valley where we fetch water, it required me to pay more than 500 Rwandan francs (0.5 US dollar) daily to get water from the retailers who have physical ability to reach wells" Stated Louise.

To help alleviate the effects of Unpaid Care Work as linked to lack of access to clean water, ActionAid Rwanda has supported women in Gisagara District and other Local Rights Programs by providing energy-saving cooking stoves and water tanks to tackle water storage problems. In 2016, ActionAid provided Nyiracumi Louise and other members of TWITEZIMBERE cooperative with water tanks of 3,000 litres each and connected five other

cooperative members to Rwanda Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC)'s broad water channel, which has allowed them to have water taps in their homes.

Since 2016, ActionAid has supported 161 women smallholder farmers with water tanks, 930 women have received energy-saving stoves, and 209 households are now connected to water fountains.

Through the facilities provided by ActionAid, Louise and fellow members of TWITEZIMBERE women's cooperative now have increased access to clean water, which has led to drastic improvements in their lives.

"Thanks to ActionAid's support of water tank, now I can survive the whole month even when it is not raining without buying water and my neighbors can as well draw water from here free of charge." Said Louise.



Nyiracumi Luoise who used to spend 500 Rwf per day on water now has home based water tank. (Photo: AAR)

Like Louise, other cooperative members now spend less time on water-related Unpaid Care Work and can attend to the activities of the women's cooperative. They bought a plot of land for agriculture for 500,000 Rwf, and the village's savings and loan association's share increased in value from 400 Rwf to 2000 Rwf per week.



Nyiracumi Luoise no suffer from getting water to feed her four cows (Photo: ActionAid Rwanda)

Louise's cows have doubled from two to four and she no longer struggles to find water for them. Additionally, now that she is able to provide water for her cows, the quantity of milk they produce has doubled from 5 liters to 10 liters per day. Increased access to clean water has also allowed Louise to invest the time and money she would usually spend fetching or buying water into starting her own business selling drinks in local communities.



Louise is the leader of women's saving and credit cooperative in her community (Photo: AAR)

Karongi: AAR supports women with 40 cows for sustainable agriculture and alternative livelihoods



Uwiragiye Jackline, one of recipients of the cow expressed her gratitude and vowed to properly take care for it (Photo: AAR)

As part of the Girinka (have a cow) program, a pro-poor program that was emerged in 2006 to help poor families improving their welfare through provision of cow, ActionAid Rwanda supported 40 vulnerable members of women's cooperatives in Karongi District. In Gitesi Sector the women received 20 cows in gestation and in Murundi Sector they were provided with 20 cows in gestation as well as medicine for the cows to keep them in good health. Through this activity, ActionAid Rwanda aims to increase the women's income from sustainable agriculture and to secure alternative livelihoods.

One of the recipients of the cows is Uwiragiye Jackline who expressed her gratitude and vowed to properly take care of it. "We hear stories that some recipients have failed to manage the cows given to them through the program and this

saddens me. These cows need to be treasured and loved and that's the only secret to benefit from them."

Mukarutesi Vestine, Mayor of Karongi District, expressed appreciation for ActionAid Rwanda's contribution by improving the well-being of the district's inhabitants and accelerating the development of the district.

She further called on the recipients of the cows to take good care of them in order for the cows to be more productive and useful to them.

"The family that owns cow do not suffer stunting because their children have milk to consume. They have enough manure to fertilise their land thus increasing production from their agriculture. You can as well sell their

offsprings to get money for taking care other home affairs. Some previous recipients could even built house from cows given during Girinka Program.” Said Mayor Vestine.

In this fiscal year, Karongi District has pledged to provide 550 poor families with cows, and this pledge has been achieved hundred percent. Among these 550 cows include donations from local partners and 40 cows provided by ActionAid Rwanda in two sectors of Gitesi and Murundi where it operates.



AAR supported vulnerable women with forty cows in Murundi and Gitesi Sector (Photo:AAR)

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Disability awareness training sheds light on mentors, club facilitators' knowledge on caring PWDs

By Theogene Uwiringiyimana

Through speak Out! Project that is implemented by ActionAid Rwanda with partners, ActionAid trained 45 participants from Women’s Rights Organisations, mentors and club facilitators that are supporting right holders of the project on disability awareness. The training aims at equipping them with skills on violence against women and girls (VAWG) programming for people with disabilities (PWDs).

Speak Out! is a four-year project funded by People’s Postcode Lottery that addresses Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights and Gender-Based Violence in Rwanda targeting girls and women’s rights organizations. Speak Out! project aims at increasing girls’ confidence and knowledge of their rights, ability to claim their rights, take control over their bodies and make their own decisions. The project targets 5600 young schoolgirls between 9-18 years of which 4% are girls with disabilities and 14 Women Rights Organizations.

Grace Nishimwe is Speak Out mentor who works with young children in their clubs. After the training, Grace commended the training for shedding light on her knowledge and perceptions towards persons with disability.

“As members of community, we have different understandings towards disability. From this training, I learned that disability is not inability. Furthermore, it was an opportunity to learn some terminologies that are meant to comfort disabled people as they often get hurt by our activities and expressions that we have done unwillingly.” Said Grace.

Murema Jean Baptiste, Legal and Advocacy Coordinator at National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda (NUDOR) who also facilitated the training, urged participants to pay attention to the language they use when talking to people with disabilities.



Participants in the training on disability awareness organized by ActionAid Rwanda (Photo: AAR)



Murema Jean Baptiste, Legal and Advocacy Coordinator at National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda (NUDOR) facilitated the training (Photo: AAR)

“We often hurt people with disabilities thinking it is normal. For instance, there is time when you start by saying **“you see this thing”**, Imagine starting with this statement while there is someone with sight impairment, it means that you have already excluded him/her in your activities. Paying attention to our expressions towards people with disabilities is one thing, but also we need to facilitate them in a way that does not humiliate them nor exclude them in the community.” Said Jean Baptiste.

In Rwanda, individuals living with disabilities are confronted with a range of challenges related to health care including supporting accessories, infrastructure without facilities for PWDs, fewer economic opportunities and lower rates of employment, education, stigma, discrimination and stereotypes.

According to fourth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV4) conducted by National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, People with disabilities still face more significant challenges across the lifecycle. Around 52 per cent of people with disabilities aged over 16 years were in employment compared to 71 per cent of the national population.



Grace Nishimwe is Speak Out mentor who works with young children in their clubs (Photo: AAR)

“ As members of community, we have different understandings towards disability. From this training, I learned that disability is not inability ”

Grace Nishimwe

ActionAid Rwanda provided 360 male change agents with bicycles in support to their anti-conflict effort



The inclusion of male change agents in the Speak Out! project has contributed significantly to the project's aims, with most families visited by male change agents experiencing reduced domestic conflict.

Speak Out! Project has been implemented in Rwanda since 2018 by ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) in partnership with Faith Victory Association and Rwanda Girl Guides with the aims of addressing Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Rwanda by targeting girls' and women's rights organisations.

In 2018, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) and its implementing partners partner organizations on the Speak Out! Project recruited 360 male change agents from four districts of operation, for them to have significant influence within their communities, engaging them in the Speak Out! project by raising awareness on SRHR and reducing GBV in local communities.

The male change agents began working as facilitators, supporting families with conflicts through conflict management and carrying out awareness-raising activities. However, they consistently expressed concern over a lack of means of transportation which prevented them from carrying out their duties as change agents and requested bicycles as support. AAR has responded to their worries by providing 360 bicycles to remedy the lack of transportation.

Nzabona Jean Pierre, a male change agent and a bicycle recipient from Murundi Sector, Karongi District, expressed his appreciation for the support provided by AAR and its partners. "I will use this bicycle to do awareness raising and supporting families with conflicts to reduce and stop conflicts and Gender Based Violence since I will be able to reach them easily and quickly and I will continue doing this work even at the end of the project as I will be having means of transportation", stated Jean Pierre.

The project focuses on increasing girls' confidence and knowledge of their rights, their ability to claim their rights and to take control over their bodies and make their own decisions. Speak Out! has been implemented in four districts, namely Karongi District in the Western Province, as well as Nyanza, Gisagara, and Nyaruguru districts in the Southern Province.



360 male change agents were happy to receive transport facilities (Photo: AAR)

Peer educators training for EU funded project to empowering young people to prevent and fight SGBV in Rwanda



Peer educators from school clubs and non-school youth groups in Karongi District were trained on sexual and gender based violence prevention. (Photo: AAR)

ActionAid Rwanda in partnership with Faith Victory Association have trained 60 peer educators from school clubs and non schools youth groups in Karongi District in the implementation of a project to empower young people to prevent and fight SGBV in Rwanda that was funded by the European Union.

The four-day training was the beginning of other training that are taking in Gasabo District as the second place where the project activities are taking place. The participants were on sexual reproductive health and rights and after the training, they will help the club members to increase their SRHR knowledge.

This two-year project is for strengthening the capacity of CSOs in Rwanda to promote and protect the sexual and reproductive rights of teenage girls and vulnerable young people, with a focus on increasing knowledge, access to appropriate health services and combatting sexual and gender-based violence.

The project targets 1200 young people aged 10-18 who are the members of 40 SRHR clubs already set up in schools 600 young people aged 18-24 who are out of school that are grouped in 20 groups.

Case of Manirakoze Aurerie: Livestock in promoting rural women’s livelihoods

By Theogene Uwiringiyimana

The 2010/11 Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV3) conducted by National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda showed that a big percentage of the population in Gisagara District are classified into extremely poor (32%) and poor (27%) of population categories, a big number compared to national level which was 21% and 24% of extremely poor and poor categories respectively.

The major problem was that even those who were categorized as farmers were still doing archaic and less productive farming while others were lacking starting capital to involve themselves in income generating activities other than farming.

Through women cooperative, ActionAid Rwanda provided members of women cooperative known as TUGANEHEZA in Gisagara District with skills and financial resources to improve their socio-economic life and improve their families’ wellbeing.

Manirakoze Aurelie is one of the rightholders who, apart from benefitting from women’s rights training and other empowerment programs provided by ActionAid, was supported with pigs and cows that helped her to initiate small but promising business for her home.

At the beginning, she had been supported with pig that gave birth to 10 piglets that she sold later on high prices that allowed her to start small business of selling local/traditional beverages.

She was later supported with cow that kept the momentum on her development. Due to manure from cow, Aurelie planted banana and improved her farming production. Beside manure, the cow produced 10 liters of milk per that allowed to feed her children and even sell the surplus milk to get money for other home’s needs and business expansion.

“

After getting the cow, my life changed completely. From cow’s manure, I learned how to plant bananas and you can see that my plantation is productive and can provide me with more than 100,000 Rwf annually

”

Manirakoze Aurerie



The cow has been productive up to five offsprings that she sold to expand her business by adding modern beverages that would earn her more money. She still has one cow.

"Before I started working with ActionAid, I was someone without self-confidence. ActionAid brought us together as women and we started saving from 500 Rwf as personal share, but due to my limited financial ability, I could only save 100 Rwf per week. ActionAid supported us with different livestock to improve our agriculture and welfare. They firstly had given me pig that gave birth to 10 piglets. Later, they also gave me cow that has already given birth to five offsprings that have hugely contributed to my current development which based on agriculture and selling beverages. After getting the cow, my life changed completely. From cow's manure, I learned how to plant bananas and you can see that my plantation is productive and can provide me with more than 100,000 Rwf annually." Said Aurelie.

Furthermore, she was awarded market of collecting raw coffee and supply them to manufacturing industry that pays her more, all thanks to ActionAid's empowerment programs that instilled her with self-confidence, motivation and financial capacity.

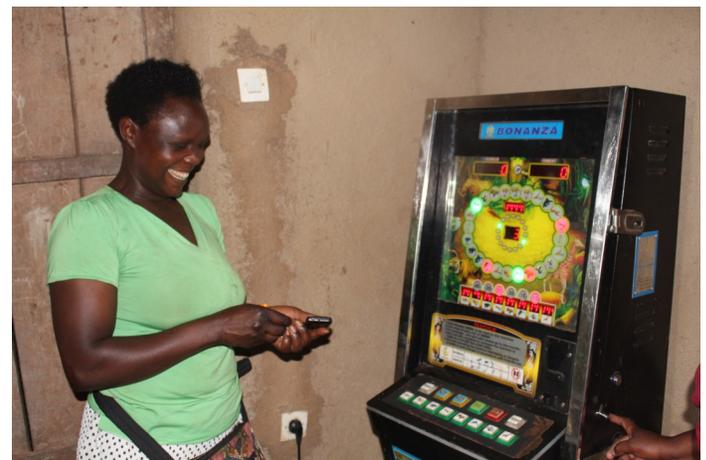


Manirakiza Aurerie has the business that beverages, thanks to ActionAid Rwanda that supported her with livestock (Photo: AAR)



Manirakiza Aurerie feeding her cow (Photo: AAR)

She is able to sell 10 dozens of modern beer that earn her more than 10,000 Rwf of interest per day and other 6 crates of local beers. To improve her business, she has acquired slot machine that, beside attracting customers for her business, the owning company pays her weekly stipends of 10,000 Rwf for accommodating the machine into her bar.



Aurerie acquired slot machine that attract customers and pays her 10,000 Rwf per week (Photo: AAR)

Over 60 group representatives trained on family laws to strengthen women resilience to achieve social and economic justice



Sexual and Gender-based violence (SGBV) remains rampant despite of various measures adopted to address it. A significant number of gender discriminatory laws have been revised, although not exhaustively, but their dissemination needs to cover the entire national territory. Different influencing factors have been identified including poverty, ignorance, consumption of alcohol, to name a few.

Gender inequalities have not seen as unjust, but as respected social normality, which resulted into Women becoming the majority among the victims of SGBV and men as the majority among the perpetrators.

In order to build women capacity, ActionAid has trained 66 women group representatives on Family law, matrimonial regime and inheritance law that are key role in protecting women’s rights and

new land reference price law 2021 to enable women take informed decisions on their land.

TWAGIRAMARIYA Mariana, is a women group representative in DUHARANIRE ITERAMBERE, from NYERANZI Cell, GISHUBI sector in GISAGARA District and one of participants in this 3-day training. Mariana was so much interested to be part of this training and she leant a lot during the training that she will use in her daily life in supporting other women in their group.

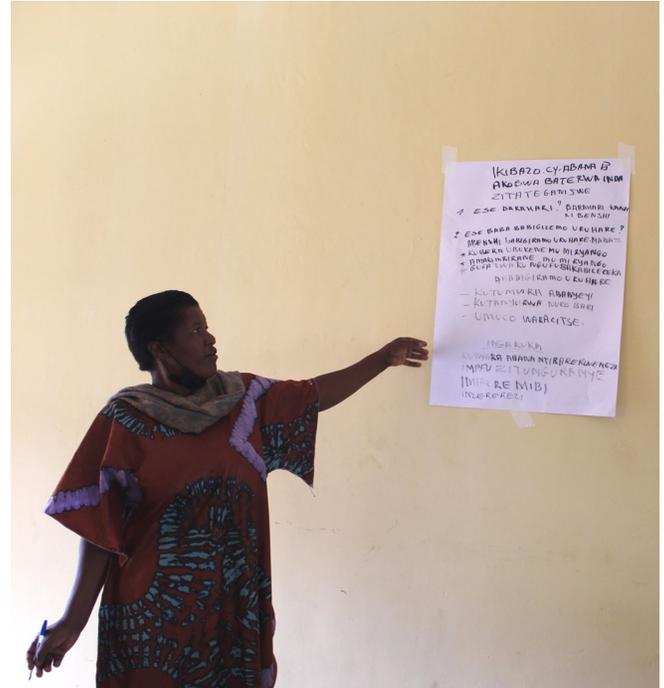
“During this training I have leant different types of violence including Sexual Violence, Emotional Violence, psychological Violence, Financial abuse. The training shed light on different laws that protect our rights as women including Family laws, land laws and inheritance law. I was so much interested about the inheritance

Law, now I know who must be inherited in the family and how it is to be done and when. My knowledge on this was so general but today I know every detail.” Said Mariana.

The trainees committed to share knowledge on the learned laws with their peers and apply them in their daily practices

Twagiramariya Mariana, apart from being a member of the women group, she is one of the mediators at sector level. “Having adequate skills on these laws will enhance my capability in mediating community members who often seek mediator’s committee in case of conflicts and misunderstanding before appealing to the court.”

“I am now committed to teach other group members on this Laws because this will help so many women to fights for their rights and able to claim for it, I will advocate for women’s rights as I know laws that can be used to protect for women’s rights when violated” she added.



Participants shared skills on laws protecting families (Photo: AAR)



Participants women group representatives committed to share acquired knowledge with their fellow women to raise their awareness on family laws (Photo: AAR)

AAR supported 15 families with iron sheets amid of celebration of partners' week in Nyaruguru District



Mayor of Nyaruguru District Emmanuel Murwanashyaka (left) and Ruheru LRP Supporter Care Officer Havugimana Jean de la Croix (wearing branded kaki waistcoat) handing over iron sheets to vulnerable family. (Photo: AAR)

By Lucia Fernandez de Velasco

ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) has supported 15 vulnerable families in Ruheru Local Right Program located in Nyaruguru District with 375 iron sheets to renovate their houses whose roofs were too old and could put their life at risk.

The activity took place during the celebration of partners and councilors' week to engage all stakeholders in the District development to increase awareness on the activities and sharing best practices and good achievements for learning among stakeholders towards rightholders' development.

As part of ActionAid Rwanda's priority of strengthening resilient livelihoods and securing climate justice for women smallholder farmers by ensuring their access to markets and credit for

increased agricultural production and food security, women smallholder farmers exhibited their agro-farming products they produced with AAR's support, thus exposing them on the market.

The partners' week was an occasion to showcase the importance of girls rooms, safe spaces where girls regularly meet with their mentors, that were introduced by Speak Out! Project to help young girls to learn more about their sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as having enough time for discussions on the related complex topics that most girls are not aware of them despite having role for them to take informed decisions on their body.



Women smallholder farmers benefitted from the exhibition by showcasing and sell their agro-farming products.

Mentors showing students how to properly use pads during menstruation in girls room established by ActionAid Rwanda through Speak Out! project.



Ruheru LRP Supporter Care Officer Havugimana Jean de la Croix explaining ActionAid programming to the participant in exhibition.

ActionAid Rwanda supported 5 families of former Aide et Action employees killed in genocide against Tutsi



By Theogene Uwiringiyimana

From 7th April 2022 Rwanda is commemorating for the 28th the genocide against Tutsi, the most tragic event for human being that left over one million ethnic Tutsi killed only in 100 days in 1994.

Each year, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) engages in commemoration activities following government directives put in place. AAR Family (then Aide et Action) was not spared during the 1994 genocide because 12 staff members were deprived of their life for no other reason but their ethnic belonging. ActionAid remembers them annually and most importantly meet with the families they left for consolation.

In this year's commemoration, ActionAid supported 5 family members of former employees of Aide et Action that were killed during genocide against Tutsi with financial support, the event that was preceded by a visit to Kigali Memorial site in Gisozi and series of dialogues to raise awareness on genocide against Tutsi and the post genocide reconstruction that took place at ActionAid Rwanda's office.

Speaking at the event, Josephine Irene Uwamariya, Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda called on everyone to play role in improving the lives of genocide survivors.

"Supporting people in need is rooted from Rwandan culture and so is to support genocide survivors. Genocide survivors are heartbroken and financially suffering. This act of supporting them was a demonstration that we should be close to them and also advocate for them so that those who have the ability and the will to support genocide survivors can understand that they are out there and need our support." Said Josephine.

"We lived under persecution, we never lived in peace that even finding a job for Tutsi was like a miracle. At the working place we were like siblings. Since 1990, we have been so persecuted that some of our colleagues were imprisoned accused of complicity and collaboration with outsiders who wanted to invade the country. We were persecuted until the foreigner who was leading ActionAid (the then Aide et Action) would pick us from home and drive us back at the end of work, we were not safe. But this did not discourage us, we continued our work under persecution, we continued to build schools, we continued to empower them." Said Emma Marie Therese Uwayirege who was working for Aide et Action during genocide against Tutsi.

During the commemoration, Jean Damascene Kalinda, the commissioner in charge of legal affairs in Ibuka, the umbrella body of genocide survivors' organisations highlighted the steps of preparation of genocide and called on everyone to fight against genocide denial calling it 'a battle that needs regular and consistent fight'.

The 28th Commemoration at ActionAid Rwanda was attended by different Officials from the government including Chief Gender Monitor from Gender Monitoring Office Rose Rwabuhiri who was the guest of honour, ActionAid Rwanda board and Assembly members, ActionAid partners, families of former staff of ActionAid Rwanda (Aide et Action) who were killed during genocide against Tutsi and AAR staff.



Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda Josephine Uwamariya and AAR staff laying flowers on the graves of Tutsi at Kigali Memorial site located in Gisozi. (Photo: AAR)



Chief Gender Monitor Rose Rwabuhiri giving support to one of the family member of former ActionAid (then Aide et Action) who was killed during Genocide against Tutsi (Photo: AAR)

Teamwork highlighted for employees' productivity as ActionAid Rwanda celebrating International Labour Day



By Theogene Uwiringiyimana

International Labour Day, also known as International Worker's Day or May Day, takes place every year on May 1st. International Labour Day serves to commemorate the struggles, sacrifices, and rights of workers worldwide, and is also celebrated as a public holiday in Rwanda.

Within this framework, staff, volunteers and interns at ActionAid Rwanda gathered outside their usual working environment, bonding, celebrating the organization's achievements in the past year, and making commitments for the following year.

Ines Mwangavu, People and Finance Management Lead at ActionAid Rwanda thanked the staff for their hardworking and commitment over the past year, and urged them to enhance teamwork to make the organisation more effective and efficient in achieving its goals.

"Over the past year, ActionAid Rwanda recorded success in achieving its goal. All the success would not be achieved without teamwork."

ActionAid acknowledges the barriers faced by women in fulfilling their economic rights, and actively works towards advancing women's economic rights worldwide by amplifying their voices and tackling the structural causes of gender-related economic inequality. In Rwanda, ActionAid's work focuses on promoting women's economic alternatives by reducing women's Unpaid Care Work to break the cycle of poverty and Gender-Based Violence (GBV), while ensuring women's access to social protection schemes and their ability to engage in productive activities.

According to Josephine Uwamariya, Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda, "Despite the hardships brought by COVID-19, AAR staff's effort is still commendable to help organization in realizing its mission."



Labour Day Celebrations in pictures



Advocacy & Campaign

ActionAid Rwanda in advocacy to end patriarchal and cultural beliefs that hinder family's development



The illustration designed by ActionAid Rwanda showing all family members sharing home caring works in raising awareness to unpaid Care Works (Illustration by ActionAid Rwanda)

In a radio talk aired on Radio Imanzi that was aiming at discussing the effect of gender equality in promoting family's welfare, Josephine Uwamariya, Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda explained how people have been hiding themselves behind the culture and history to oppress women for a longtime without realizing that leaving behind development of the women was detrimental to the development of the family as a whole.

Josephine further denounced patriarchal thinking that always kept women behind and promote men as the real owner and leader of the house.

“According to the culture, both husband and wife were assigned to their respective household chores with women often focusing on unpaid care works to improve the home and caring for the family members while men concentrating on jobs that bring in money or require special skills and knowledge.” Said Josephine.

Women who were previously regarded only as home caring people, they now have ability to involve in economic activities like men, which community should understand.

“In some Rwandan communities, traditional practices are strong. Problems emerge when it comes to management of family fortunes. For example, cases like who should determine sale of land, is it the man or woman?” Said Josephine adding that a man was regarded as the head of the family and his word was normally final.”

The Government of Rwanda embarked on a development and inclusive agenda with a strong and solid stage for gender equality set for women and men of Rwanda to realize their rights, potentials, aspirations and be full partners and beneficiaries in the Country’s development. However, Patriarchal beliefs based on culture and history still affecting a big number of community who unconsciously assume habits that devalue women and limit them from attending to certain social and economic activities with ease.

The talk show ended with a calling to mindset changing on misconception towards gender equality that is regarded by certain members of community as women favoring.

“ According to the culture, both husband and wife were assigned to their respective household chores with women often focusing on unpaid care works to improve the home and caring for the family members while men concentrating on jobs that bring in money or require special skills and knowledge. ”



Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda Josephine Irene Uwamariya in the Studio of Radio Imanzi advocating for gender equality on 19 April 2022

Stakeholders gather to celebrate Speak Out! Project's achievements



As a result of Speak Out! girls have gained more self-confidence which allows them to make informed decisions about their bodies, and both children and communities at large no longer treat SRHR as a taboo subject. Following trainings given as part of the Speak Out! project 360 teenage mothers were able to join credit and savings groups and start different businesses in order to adapt to their new life as mothers.

Furthermore, 360 male change agents are now able to provide support to their communities by raising awareness on SRHR, as well as through GBV prevention and conflict management in families. This has been facilitated by Speak Out!'s SRHR and GBV prevention curriculum, and bicycles provided by AAR which allow the men to carry out their project duties more easily.

Dr Denise Mukandoli, National Women's Council (NWC) representative in Nyanza District, expressed her appreciation for ActionAid's contributions in reducing teenage pregnancies and increasing adolescents' awareness on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) through awareness-raising activities in schools. Dr Mukandoli mentioned that NWC would use ActionAid's contributions to keep up the momentum when it comes to children having the necessary information on their bodies and making the right decisions over their bodies. She stated that this will reduce school dropouts and teenage pregnancies in Nyanza District.

Speak Out! Project is a four years project that is implemented by ActionAid Rwanda with partners that was initially funded by UKAID and later with People's Postcode Lottery.

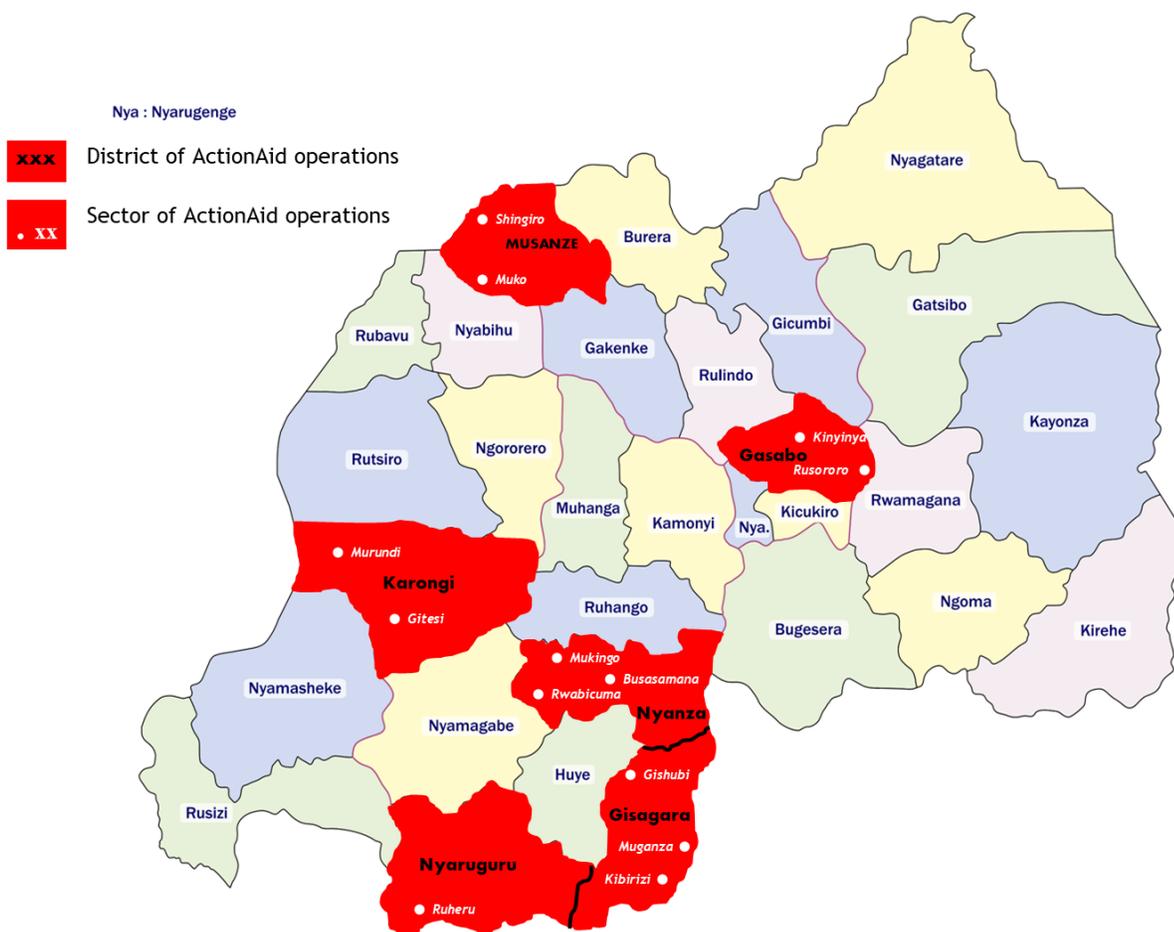
Since 2018, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR), in partnership with Faith Victory Association and Rwanda Girl Guides, have been implementing Speak Out!, project which aims to address Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in Rwanda by targeting girls' and women's rights organisations.

The project focuses on increasing girls' confidence and knowledge of their rights, their ability to claim their rights and to take control over their bodies and make their own decisions. Speak Out! Is being implemented in four districts, namely Karongi District in the Western Province, as well as Nyanza, Gisagara, and Nyaruguru districts in the Southern Province.

AAR conducted learning and sharing meetings in Karongi District in the Western Province and in Huye District in the Southern Province. These meetings were attended by over 160 project stakeholders who wished to become informed about the project's achievements and the implementation of its sustainability strategies, as well as its challenges and lessons learnt.

Thanks to the Speak Out! Project that 5600 girls and 2600 boys gained skills in advocacy and campaigning through safe spaces and school clubs. In addition, the 5600 girls gained knowledge on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and gained confidence in reporting cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

Where ActionAid Rwanda works



Projects and funds secured

ActionAid Rwanda secured **68,000,000 Rwf** ; funds provided by UN Women Rwanda to implement the project entitled “TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO RECOGNIZE, REDUCE, AND REDISTRIBUTE UNPAID CARE WORK IN WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMING” that seeks to contribute to the existing interventions in addressing Unpaid Care Work (UCW) burden affecting women and girls in both rural and urban communities for the period of six months.

Through this project, the targeted communities will be empowered and supported to advocate for Unpaid Care Work burden through engaging the local leaders, religious and opinion leaders from both local and national level. The project will also aim at engaging policy makers at national level by bringing to their attention the issue of UCW burden on women for recognition, redistribution, and reduction and hence provision of Gender Responsive Public services, influence of policy review and laws concerning UCW.

Project on climate justice worthy **4,000 GBP** that aims at exploring problems that women are facing related to climate change and the strategies to address them. The project was funded by People’s Postcode Lottery.



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