

POWER **in** PEOPLE

ActionAid Rwanda Newsletter, April - June 2020



**ActionAid Rwanda COVID-19 response
saving lives in Rwanda**

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Executive producer: ActionAid Rwanda
Content developer: Clarisse Kawera, AAR Communications Officer
Design: City Press Ltd.

ActionAid Rwanda
 Tel: +250 280 300 142
 Website: rwanda.actionaid.org
 Twitter: [@actionaidrwanda](https://twitter.com/actionaidrwanda)
 Facebook: ActionAid Rwanda

FOREWORD

Dear Readers,

Welcome to ActionAid Rwanda's Newsletter for April - June 2020 and greetings to you all our esteemed supporters, partners and stakeholders.

We are pleased to present to you this newsletter which focuses on stories of our work to respond to COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda.

The first COVID-19 case in Rwanda was recorded on 14th March 2020. From then, Rwanda like other countries across the world has put in place different measures including a total lockdown whereby schools, offices, industries, churches, shops and recreational centers were closed from 21st March 2020 with exception to service providers for essential services mainly food, medicine, hygiene and cleaning products as well as fuels which were allowed to work on conditions to comply to health guidelines in place.

However, on 2nd May 2020 Rwanda eased the lockdown by allowing some businesses and offices to open but with essential staff while other staff remain working from home, and on 3rd June, motorcycles and movements across districts were allowed to operate.

As of 30th June 2020, 1,025 cases had been recorded in Rwanda, with 447 cases recovered and 2 deaths. However, communities in all ActionAid Rwanda's Local Right Programs (LRPs) are still safe from COVID-19.

Even if communities in ActionAid Rwanda intervention areas are still safe from COVID-19, communities engaged in economic activities which were not taken as essential during the lockdown or those which depended on daily income to survive were economically affected by the lockdown.

To respond to COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda and support affected communities, ActionAid Rwanda has conducted community awareness raising activities on COVID-19 prevention, Gender Based Violence (GBV), Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) as well as effects of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) to women and girls through radio and TV spots, Radio and TV talkshows, live debates, megaphones using our national language for the message to reach as many people as possible. The said community awareness raising activities were done in all our 7 LRPs.

We also supported vulnerable families affected by COVID -19 lockdown with food stuffs as well as hygienic and handwashing materials including handwashing facilities, soap, masks and sanitary pads.

So far, we have supported 1273 families with soap, 1,240 women with sanitary pads, 17,650 individuals with masks, 64 women's saving groups with handwashing facilities, 1,253 families with food relief and 240 teen mothers with cash transfers to help them meet daily subsistence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also disseminated awareness raising materials including posters and banners with messages on preventing the spread of COVID-19 and facilitated students' sessions on GBV and SRHR through community radio talkshows since the face to face sessions were not possible due to COVID-19.

We take this opportunity to thank all our supporters, partners and stakeholders for their support and collaboration to make our response to COVID-19 pandemic a success. We look forward to a continued collaboration to overcome this pandemic, contribute to national development and achieve social justice for all!

Enjoy reading the stories of how our response to COVID-19 in various parts of the country is contributing to people's resilience to the pandemic.

Your Comments and feedback are very much valued, therefore, please feel free to share them with us.

Have a pleasant read.

In solidarity,



Josephine Irene Uwamariya

Country Director



Françoise Kayitare Tengera

Board Vice Chair

SUMMARY OF ACTIONAID RWANDA COVID-19 RESPONSES

April – June 2020

FOOD KITS

26
Tons



Delivered to
1,253 families

SOAP

548
Boxes



Delivered to
1,273 families

SANITARY PADS

11,560
Pads



Delivered to
1,240 Women

PROTECTIVE MASKS

17,650
Masks



Delivered to
17,650 individuals

HAND-WASHING FACILITIES

64
Hand-washing
facilities



Delivered to
64 women's saving groups

CASH TRANSFERS



2,472,000

Rwandan Francs

Delivered to
240 teen mothers

ROADSHOWS ON GBV & COVID-19 PREVENTION VIA MEGAPHONES

5
Tours



Delivered to
Communities in 5 LRPs

TV TALKSHOW ON GBV & COVID-19 PREVENTION

1
TV talkshow



Reached
Communities in 7 LRPs

RADIO TALKSHOWS ON GBV & COVID-19 PREVENTION

8
Radio
talkshows



Reached
Communities in 7 LRPs

RADIO SPOTS ON GBV & COVID-19 PREVENTION, UCW & SRHR

2
Radio spots
per 5 radio
stations in 45 days



Reached
Communities in 7 LRPs

TV SPOT ON GBV & COVID-19 PREVENTION

1
spot,
in 30 days



Reached
Communities in 7 LRPs

BANNERS AND POSTERS ON COVID-19 PREVENTION

117
Banners
and posters



Delivered to
Communities in 7 LRPs

STUDENTS AND YOUNG GIRLS' RADIO SESSIONS ON SRHR

2
Radio
sessions



Reached students and
young girls in 7 LRPs

COVID-19 PREVENTION KITS

96 Masks, **35L** of hand
sanitizers, **1** handwashing
station & **1** thermometer

Provided to
32 ActionAid Rwanda staff



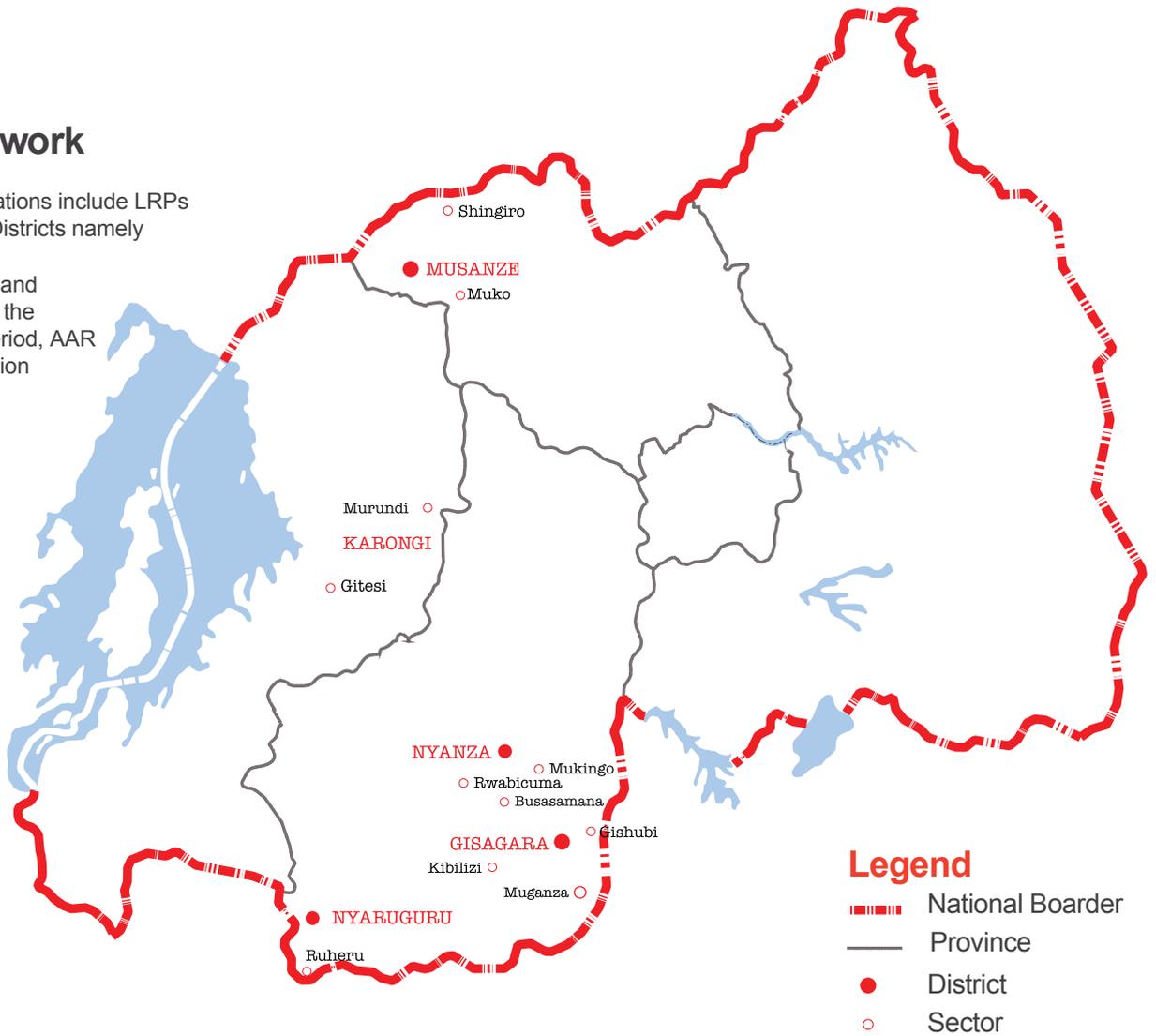
PARTNERS AND DONORS FOR AAR COVID-19 RESPONSES

- **Donors:** UK Aid, Amplify Change and AAR Child Sponsors.
- **Local Implementing Partners:** Faith Victory Association, Rwanda Girl Guides Association and Rwanda Religious Leaders Initiative.
- **Other Partners and Stakeholders:** WICECEKA Network (comprised on 30 local Women's Rights Organisations), Rwanda's Ministry of Health, Rwandan citizens (with focus on women and children in 5 Districts where AAR operates) as well as local administration in Nyanza, Gisagara, Nyaruguru, Musanze and Karongi Districts.

MAP OF ACTIONAID RWANDA CURRENT AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Where we work

Current AAR operations include LRPs and Projects in 5 Districts namely Gisagara, Karongi, Musanze, Nyanza and Nyaruguru. During the current strategy period, AAR anticipates expansion of coverage within Districts as well moving into new locations of need.



EMPOWERMENT

ACTIONAID RWANDA'S COVID-19 FOOD RELIEF SAVING LIVES IN RWANDA

Like all other countries across the world, Rwanda is affected by COVID-19 pandemic, especially from 14th March 2020 when the first COVID-19 case was recorded in Rwanda.

To curb the spread of COVID-19, many countries including Rwanda implemented lockdown measures that have brought much of global economic activities to a halt.

Due to the 40 days lockdown in Rwanda which started on 21st March 2020 and was eased on 2nd May 2020, many businesses and institutions reduced operations and others including restaurants and bars are closed, hence increasing unemployment.

The shutdown also negatively impacted households which depended on daily income to survive as most breadwinners in households were not working, yet daily expenses had to be catered for. This exacerbated poverty in those households to a point that it was very hard for them to get food and other necessary items.

To respond to this problem, the Government of Rwanda has supported vulnerable people with basic needs like food and hygienic materials, but the government's support was not enough since it was few compared to people in need, hence not reaching all targeted people.

In this context, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) as an organization that promotes human rights, with

reference to its priority II of “*Strengthening resilient livelihoods and secure climate justice, ensuring women smallholder farmers’ access to market and credit for increased agricultural production and food security*”, with its specific focus of “*ensuring access to land, resilient livelihoods and food Security*”, supported 1,253 families economically affected by the COVID-19 lockdown in Rwanda with food relief including 12.53 tons of rice, 8.765 tons of maize flour and 5 tons of Beans.

Among these food items, 5 tons of Rice, 5 tons of Beans and 5 tons of Maize Flour were donated through to the National Strategic Food Reserve which distributed the food relief to 500 most affected families on grassroots level, while the remaining 7.53 tons of rice and 3.765 tons of maize flour were distributed to 753 families affected by COVID -19 in Murundi, Gitesi and Nyanza LRPs, in collaboration with the District's administration.

The food relief items distributed in Murundi, Gitesi and Nyanza LRPs were supported by Speak Out project, funded by the UK Aid. The three LRPs were selected among seven LRPs in which ActionAid Rwanda operates because the three LRPs are semi urban, therefore community members in those LRPs do casual works and their livelihoods rely on their wages. Apart from doing casual work, Murundi, Gitesi and Nyanza LRPs' communities also have very little land for cultivation, therefore during the COVID-19 lockdown it was a challenge for them to get food to put on the table.



Annet Kakibibi, AAR staff (in the middle) handing over AAR food relief support to the National Strategic Food Reserve representative on 05th May 2020 (photo / ActionAid Rwanda)



Administrative Officer of Busasamana Sector, Nyanza LRP receiving sacks of rice donated by AAR on 19th May 2020, that had to be distributed to community members affected by COVID-19 lockdown (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)



Administrative Officer of Busasamana Sector, Nyanza LRP receiving AAR food relief (Rice and maize flour) on 19th May 2020, that had to be distributed to community members affected by COVID-19 (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)

ActionAid Rwanda channeled the COVID-19 food relief through the National Strategic Food Reserve and the Districts’ administration because this is the channel recommended by the Government of Rwanda to provide COVID-19 food relief to affected communities, to ensure enhanced coordination of the COVID-19 food relief.

“ActionAid Rwanda worked with the local administration in each district to develop lists of families most affected by COVID-19, to ensure that our support benefits people in need. We worked with Districts’ authorities to set ways of distribution following COVID-19 personal protection measures,” said Josephine Irene Uwamariya, ActionAid Rwanda Country Director.

Mukarutesi Chantal, is one of beneficiaries of AAR Food Relief. Chantal, a mother of 4 children, lives in Mukingo Sector, Nyanza LRP. She says that the food package she received from ActionAid Rwanda saved her family from starvation during the lockdown.

“My husband works in a bar in Kigali City, then sends me money so that I look after children. When

the COVID-19 lockdown started, bars were closed, and his job stopped. So, it was very hard for us to get food and other basic needs for the family, it was really hard,” Chantal said.

“I received 10 kgs of rice, 5kg of maize flour and 3 bars of soap. I managed well these food items and they sustained us for a month. I am really grateful to ActionAid Rwanda for this food support,” She added.



Mukarutesi Chantal from Nyanza LRP is one of beneficiaries of AAR Food Relief. The food package she received from AAR saved her family from starvation during the COVID-19 lockdown (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)



“The food and hygienic materials kits supported by ActionAid Rwanda helped communities in my sector, especially daily wage workers whose job had stopped, to survive during the lockdown. We really appreciate ActionAid Rwanda’s support and collaboration in responding to COVID-19,”

**Niyonsaba Cyriaque,
Executive Secretary of Gitesi Sector, Gitesi LRP.**

HYGIENE AND SANITATION KITS DISTRIBUTED TO VULNERABLE FAMILIES TO HELP THEM PREVENT COVID-19



The in charge of Social Affairs in Mukingo Sector (left) and FVA Project Officer looking at a representative of the Women's Saving Group from Mukingo Sector, Nyanza LRP demonstrating the proper way to wash hands, using a handwashing facility and soap received from AAR and FVA. (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)

To support communities to adhere to COVID-19 preventive measures including wearing face masks in public spaces and washing hands often with clean water and soap, on 18th June 2020, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) in partnership with Faith Victory Association (FVA) supported communities in Nyanza, Murundi and Gitesi LRPs with handwashing facilities, soap, face masks and sanitary pads. This activity was funded by different AAR projects including Speak Out Project funded by the UK Aid.

As part of this activity, 1,273 families from the above-mentioned LRPs were provided with soap (548 boxes of soap), 1,240 families supported with sanitary pads (11,560 pads), 17,650 people provided with masks (17,650 masks) and 64 women's saving groups supported with handwashing facilities (64 handwashing facilities).

Each family received 3 bars of soap, 10 sanitary pads and 10 masks, while each women's saving group was given one handwashing facility (commonly called Kandagira-Ukarabe in Kinyarwanda) that will help its members to wash hands before and during the saving group's meetings.



A beneficiary of AAR handwashing facilities demonstrating how to properly wash hands using clean water and soap. (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)



A women's saving group representative receiving a face mask donated by AAR in partnership with FVA (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)



The in charge of Social Affairs in Mukingo Sector (right) and FVA Projects Officer (centre) handing over a roll of sanitary pads to Nyirarukundo Alphonsine (left), chairperson of a women's saving group from Mukingo Sector, Nyanza LRP. (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)



FVA Projects Officer (left) and the Executive Secretary of Gishyike Cell, Rwabicuma Sector, Nyanza LRP (right) handing a box of soap over to a women's saving group representative (center) who will later distribute 3 bars of soap to each group members. (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)

With joyful faces, beneficiaries of AAR hygiene materials kits said that the hygiene materials will help them to fully adhere to guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“We are advised to follow personal protection measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the handwashing facilities, soap and face masks that we just received from

ActionAid Rwanda and FVA will help members of our saving group to improve our COVID-19 prevention measures so that we and our family members can stay safe from the virus. We also appreciated that sanitary pads were included in the sanitary kits, because it is hard for some of us to afford them in this trying time,” said Nyirarukundo Alphonsine, chairperson of a 30 women's saving group located in Mukingo sector, Nyanza LRP.

CASH TRANSFERS HELPING TEEN MOTHERS TO MEET DAILY SUBSISTENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Kampire holding some cash received from AAR & FVA through Speak Out Project. (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)

Kampire, 23 years old, is a teen mother living in Rwabicuma Sector, Nyanza LRP. She is one of 240 teen mothers from Nyanza, Gisagara, Ruheru, Murundi and Gitesi LRPs who received COVID-19 food relief through cash transfers to help them survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. The one-off cash transfers were done on 11th June 2020 by ActionAid Rwanda in partnership with Faith Victory Association through Speak out Project funded by the UK Aid.

Each teen mother received 10,300 Frw (Approx. 11\$) and the total amount of food relief provided to the 240 teen mothers through cash transfers is 2,472,000 Frw (approx. 2,630 \$).

Before COVID-19 outbreak in Rwanda, these teen mothers used to do casual works to earn a living, but due to COVID-19 lockdown, they were not allowed to work yet they had to pay for daily expenses.

According to Kampire, this cash support came at the right time since it was difficult for her to get money to

pay for this year's health insurance subscription for herself and her baby.

"The money I received from ActionAid Rwanda helped me to pay for the health insurance subscription for me and my baby, then with the remaining amount, I bought other items that I needed," Kampire noted.

As noted by Josephine Irene Uwamariya, the Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda, the cash support was meant to help the teen mothers meet daily subsistence during these trying times of COVID-19 pandemic.

"Teen mothers that we supported with cash transfers are those who were very vulnerable and mostly affected by COVID-19 lockdown. Most of them were casual workers who were relying on getting casual works from businesses which are closed now because of the lockdown. They used to rely on daily wages and now they find themselves with empty pockets, yet they must feed themselves and their babies," Josephine said.

YOUNG GIRLS' SESSIONS ON SRHR SHIFTED FROM FACE TO FACE SESSIONS TO RADIO SESSIONS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19



Mentors from Rwanda Girl Guides delivering the radio session on SRHR via Radio Rwanda (Photo / AGR)

Since March 2020 when COVID-19 outbreak was recorded in Rwanda, schools were closed and are expected to reopen in September 2020. Because of this, all students returned home and young girls' sessions commonly called "safe spaces' sessions" were put on hold as these sessions are normally conducted in schools, whereby young girls meet with peer mentors and share freely their experiences and trainings on GBV prevention and response, as well as Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR).

To ensure that young girls continue to receive the required education on GBV prevention, GBV response and SRHR from their respective homes and cope with the COVID-19 preventive measures, ActionAid Rwanda adopted a new way of conducting the young girls' sessions through radio.

In this context, from 20th June 2020, ActionAid Rwanda in collaboration with Rwanda Girl Guides Association organizes a weekly session on SRHR via the National radio station which reaches almost all parts of the country. In each radio session, one of

the Speak Out Project's mentors lead the session on radio and young girls especially safe space members listen through their radios from their respective homes.

The 15 minutes young girls' radio session on SRHR is broadcasted on Radio Rwanda every Saturday, from 3:00PM - 3:15PM.

The young girls' radio sessions on SRHR are conducted by Rwanda Girls Guide through Speak Out Project funded by the UK Aid.

Bandebe Claudine, 18 years old, is in Senior 6 at G.S Bwiza School located in Gisagara LRP. Claudine is a member of a safe space at her school, however as safe spaces sessions are on hold due to COVID-19, she participates in radio sessions conducted by Rwanda Girl Guides Association in partnership with ActionAid Rwanda. She notes that listening to the young girls' radio sessions on SRHR helped her to learn more information on menstrual hygiene management.

“Through radio sessions on SRHR, I learnt more information about menstruation periods and how to behave during that particular period. No one can give me wrong information about menstruation now because I am well informed about it. After acquiring that information, I also shared it with my colleagues who are less informed about menstruation,” Claudine said.



Bandebe Claudine from Gisagara LRP listening to the young girls' radio session on SRHR via her parents' radio set



Aline, 10 years, from Gisagara LRP listening to the young girls' radio session on SRHR via her parents' radio set.

WICECEKA NETWORK - A WOMEN NETWORK EMPOWERED BY AAR LEADING AWARENESS RAISING ON GBV PREVENTION AND SRHR AMIDST COVID-19



Mutyemariya Jacqueline (left), staff from Duhozanye Association – A Women Rights Organisation member of Wiceceka Network - Gisagara District (Left) in a radio talkshow on GBV prevention and SRHR services held on Huye Community Radio on 26th June 2020 (Photo / FVA)

A women network empowered by AAR through the “Strengthening the Effectiveness of Women’s Rights’ Advocacy (SWA) to Advance Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and to Fight Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Project” commonly called “SWA-Project” is leading awareness raising activities on GBV prevention and response as well as encouraging women to access Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) services in this period of COVID-19 pandemic. The radio talkshows are aimed at preventing the increase of GBV cases in Rwanda and ensure timely response to GBV cases.

The network comprised of 30 Women’s Rights Organisations conducted radio talkshows on GBV prevention and response as well as the importance of SRHR services in COVID-19 period. The radio talkshow were conducted through community radio stations that reach communities in all the 7 AAR LRPs, namely Huye Community Radio, Musanze Community Radio and Isangano Community Radio.

The radio talkshows were conducted by the network in partnership with ActionAid Rwanda and Faith Victory Association (FVA) with funding from SWA – Project funded by Amplify Change.



Dusingize Donatha, Executive Secretary of Impuhwe Association – A women’s Rights Organisation, member of Wiceceka Network - Karongi District (right) in a radio talkshow on Isangano Community Radio to sensitize communities to fight against GBV and attend SRHR services amid COVID-19 pandemic (Photo / FVA).

ACTIONAID RWANDA FACILITATES STAFF TO ACCESS COVID-19 PREVENTION KITS, AS PART OF ITS DUTY OF CARE



Temperature screening is done for all incoming visitors at all AAR Offices' entry points

ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) as an organization committed to protect and increase access to information to its staff and all people it works with, as part of “ActionAid’s Duty of Care” especially in this unprecedented time of COVID-19 pandemic, is facilitating its staff and communities to access COVID-19 prevention kits.

To protect staff and communities working with AAR from COVID-19, hand-washing facilities (including a hand-washing station and hand sanitizers) have been installed at all AAR premises for compulsory hand washing for staff /visitors on arrival in offices, protective masks are provided to staff, a thermometer is available at all AAR Offices entry points for temperature screening for all incoming visitors and staff, updates on COVID-19 preventive measures are provided via Emails, WhatsApp groups and other means of communication.



One of AAR staff wearing a protective mask and washing hands at a handwashing station installed at AAR Headquarters in Kigali City.



Banners and posters about COVID-19 prevention are pinned in all AAR offices (entry points and inside offices) to remind AAR staff about COVID-19 personal protective measures.

In addition, all staff were working from home from 16th March 2020 until 2nd May when the lockdown was eased, allowing essential staff to work from offices. Face to face meetings by ActionAid Rwanda were also suspended from 16th March 2020 until 16th June 2020 when meetings of not more than 30 persons were allowed. However, virtual meetings are still encouraged.

ActionAid Rwanda has also suspended all unnecessary travels to reduce travel-related risk for its staff, local partners and the communities it works with. AAR vehicles have been availed to transport staff to and from the office to avoid public transport, in order to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of the staff. ActionAid Rwanda has also taken measures to ensure that its remote working solutions are appropriate for purpose, so that its vital work with women and girls can continue with minimal disruption.

“Our top priorities now are ensuring the wellbeing of our staff, local partners and the communities we work with as well as maintaining our commitment to the development programmes we support across the country. We encourage our team members to take personal measures to protect self and others as part of enhancing our Feminist Leadership Principles,” said the Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda, Josephine Irene Uwamariya.

SOLIDARITY

ACTIONAID RWANDA SUPPORTS THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH’S EFFORTS TO RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS ON COVID-19 PREVENTION



A megaphone mounted on a vehicle moving across Nyanza LRP to raise community awareness on COVID-19 and GBV prevention (Photo / FVA)



A megaphone mounted on a vehicle moving across Gisagara LRP to raise community awareness on COVID-19 and GBV prevention (Photo / FVA)

From 14th March 2020 when the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in Rwanda, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) in partnership with different partners including Faith Victory Association (FVA) and Rwanda Religious Leaders Initiative (RRLI) undertook different community awareness raising activities on COVID-19 prevention including the dissemination of banners and posters with messages on COVID-19 prevention as well as the use of megaphones and radio spots calling for community adherence to COVID-19 prevention measures.

The banners and posters were pinned in all AAR offices, selling points and schools located in the 7

AAR LRPs mainly Nyanza, Gisagara, Ruheru, Muko, Shingiro, Murundi and Gitesi LRPs, while radio spots were broadcasted through community radio stations that reach community members in the 7 AAR LRPs. AAR also used megaphones mounted on vehicles which were moving from one LRP to another, transmitting messages on COVID-19 and GBV prevention.

“The Ministry of Health and other partners has done a good job in raising community awareness on COVID-19 prevention measures. However, behavior change is not a one-off effort, it requires sustained efforts to change people’s mindset. It is for that reason that we included community sensitization activities in our COVID-19 response and our efforts are paying off because community members in our intervention areas are actively taking personal protection measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” said Josephine Irene Uwamariya, Country Director, ActionAid Rwanda.



Banners and posters on COVID-19 prevention are pinned in different areas including AAR Offices, selling points and schools to raise community awareness on COVID-19 prevention (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)

ADVOCACY AND POLICY ENGAGEMENTS

ACTIONAID RWANDA INTENSIFIES CAMPAIGNS AGAINST GBV AND UNPAID CARE WORK AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Clare Katwesigye, AAR Women's Rights and Advocacy Coordinator (left) with a representative from the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) and the journalist during a TV talkshow on GBV prevention and UCW redistribution during COVID-19 lockdown done on Flash TV on 26th April 2020.



Anatole Uwiragiye, AAR POWER Project Manager with Gisagara District's Vice Mayor in charge of social affairs and a journalist moderating a radio talkshow on GBV prevention and UCW redistribution during COVID-19 lockdown, held on Huye Community Radio on 28th April 2020.

It is known that humanitarian crises exacerbate gender inequalities and increase Violence Against Women and Girls. The United Nations has warned that from March 2020 when Coronavirus (COVID-19) was spreading around the world, the combination of economic and social stresses brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as restrictions on movement, have dramatically increased the number of women and girls facing abuse, in almost all countries.

To respond to this “shadow pandemic” of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), from April 2020, ActionAid Rwanda intensified campaigns against GBV and unequal workload of Unpaid Care Work, and called on families to fight all forms of domestic violence that may arise under the COVID-19 lockdown. The campaigns against GBV and unequal workload of Unpaid Care Work were done via radio and TV talkshows, radio and TV spots, megaphones and online news media.



Michel Ndayambaje, Musanze LRP Manager (left) with Musanze District's Vice Mayor in charge of social affairs and the National Women Council's District Chairperson during a radio talkshow on GBV prevention & UCW redistribution during COVID-19 lockdown held on Musanze Community Radio on 28th April 2020.

Speaking to local media about this campaign, the Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda, Josephine Irene Uwamariya said: “Due to COVID-19 pandemic, we adopted the use of tools that do not require mass gatherings such as radio, TV, megaphones and online media to raise community awareness on GBV prevention and Unpaid Care Work redistribution.”

“Preventing any form of Gender Based Violence especially domestic violence is a collective responsibility that requires the role of both men and women. Therefore, we urge families to uphold this responsibility, and build an environment that suits their children who are the hope of a better future,” she added.



Pierre Celestin Kabano, Executive Secretary of Tubibe Amahoro (AAR Local Partner) with the National Women Council's Chairperson in Karongi District during a radio talkshow on GBV Prevention and UCW redistribution during COVID-19 lockdown held on Isangano Community Radio on 30th April 2020.



A megaphone mounted on a vehicle moving across Nyanza LRP to raise community awareness on GBV prevention (Photo / FVA)

Unequal workload of unpaid care and domestic work

Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) refers to the many services that women and girls provide in their homes and in communities, from preparing food and cleaning to taking care of children, the ill and the elderly. In most societies, cooking, cleaning, fetching water and collection of firewood are considered as women's work.

Researches revealed that when Unpaid Care and Domestic Work is left to women and girls only, it limits women and girls to sufficiently engage in economic and leadership opportunities that leads to psychological, physical, sexual and property violence to women and girls due to economic dependency to their male partners.

A countrywide research commissioned by ActionAid Rwanda in 2019 that assessed the status and effects of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) on women's economic empowerment found that domestic work is unevenly shared whereby women spend 6 hours in rural, 5 hours in semi-urbans and 2 hours in cities daily while men spend 2 hours in rural, 1 hour in suburbs and towns daily as in cities most household chores are done by domestic workers. Evaluation in 5 Districts where ActionAid operates found that its target groups have increased time allocated on productive work from 5 to 7 hours that significantly increased their income between 8-12%.

The decline in the time women spend on UCDW and the increase of time women spend on productive work is a result of different interventions including ActionAid Rwanda's sensitization campaigns on Unpaid care and Domestic Work redistribution which changed the mindset of some men who started realizing the burden of women's Unpaid Care and Domestic Work then started helping their wives in doing it, infrastructures set by the government and other development partners including time saving interventions such as water points which helped women to fetch water nearby their households and energy saving cooking stoves which reduced the amount of firewood needed by women to cook food, hence reducing the time they used to spend collecting firewood; among other interventions.

In these campaigns which are still underway, ActionAid Rwanda encourages family members to share Unpaid Care and Domestic Work as one of the ways to avoid domestic violence.

"During the COVID-19 lockdown and always, women, men and children should share domestic chores because at the end of the day, they all share the resulting benefits. Not doing this always results in conflicts which end up in violence where women and girls are the most affected," Josephine reiterated.

Increased unpaid care work redistribution among family members during the covid-19 lockdown

Some citizens say that the COVID-19 lockdown became an opportunity to share home responsibilities between men, women and children.

Jean de la Paix Manirakiza, is a taxi-moto operator in Musanze City Centre. His family stays in Bukinanyana Cell, Cyuve Sector of Musanze District. Previously, he would get up as early as 5.00 a.m., have breakfast prepared by his spouse and leave the house at least thirty minutes later for his work. Taxi-moto business is one of the activities that were suspended during the COVID-19 lockdown in Rwanda to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

For Manirakiza, the two-month lockdown at home together with his wife and children proved to him how burdensome is unpaid care and domestic workload that are often unevenly distributed within families, mainly leaving this burden to women.

"I had never realised domestic chores and care responsibilities are that difficult until this lockdown," he said adding; *"I would always blame my wife for being idle, but I found I was wrong. I personally realised that our wives are unsung heroes given the hardship they go through while juggling with various home chores that we, the men never recognize."*

Speaking with a smiling face, Joselyne Mukantwali, the wife of Manirakiza noted that she felt relieved by her husband who turned to helping with domestic chores.

"It brings joy when family members are redistributing household chores and care responsibilities; having my husband on board has really helped; it has also enhanced cohesion within our family," she said.



Jean de la Paix Manirakiza bathes his two-year-old daughter. He says that spending about two months at home together with his wife proved to him how burden are unpaid care and domestic workloads

Lucie Nyiraharerimana who lives in Muko LRP, Musanze District, Northern Province also confirms this. She notes that: *"In my village, men and women are now helping each other in home duties more than before because men who used to go to work are staying home. They do farm activities together with their wives as well as other domestic works, and this has made work easier."*

As noted by the Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda, Josephine Irene Uwamariya *"This attitude of sharing household chores should continue after the COVID-19 lockdown, keeping in mind that a family is a lifetime institution that continues in existence even after the COVID-19 pandemic."*

AAR COUNTRYWIDE RESEARCH ON UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK VALIDATED IN A VIRTUAL MEETING, AS MASS GATHERINGS ARE STILL RESTRICTED DUE TO COVID-19



As mass gatherings are still restricted due to COVID-19, ActionAid Rwanda organized a virtual meeting on 19th June 2020, to validate a countrywide research on effects of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) on women's economic empowerment in Rwanda. The virtual meeting brought together around 50 participants from research institutions, civil society organizations, Government institutions and other key stakeholders engaged in the promotion of women's empowerment.

This research was commissioned by ActionAid Rwanda in 2019, through FLOW II Project, with funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of this research was to assess the status of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work in Rwanda and its effects on women economic empowerment within households, and how Policies and Programmes can positively influence the balance between paid work and unpaid care work.

With reference to available information on minimum wage in Rwanda, the research also aimed to estimate the monetary value of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) that will guide advocacy towards the consideration of UCDW in the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The research found that domestic work is unevenly shared where women spend 6 hours in rural, 5 hours in semi-urbans and 2 hours in cities daily while men spend 2 hours in rural, 1 hour in suburbs and towns daily as in cities most household chores are done by domestic workers.

With reference to available information on minimum wage in Rwanda, the research revealed that a woman

engaged in UCDW every day without a paid work, makes an average of 3,132 Rwandan Francs per day, resulting in 93,960 Frw per month and 1,127,520 Frw per annum. This means that a woman fully engaged in UCDW on daily basis contributes an average of 1,127,520 Rwandan Francs per annum to her family's development.

"By commissioning this research, we wanted to have credible data that may help us to contribute towards addressing the challenges of women empowerment in Rwanda," Josephine Irene Uwamariya, Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda said during the virtual meeting.

According to this research, despite remarkable achievements on gender equality in Rwanda, it is still evident that some challenges persist in different aspects; most of these challenges result from the societal cultural gender stereotype which unequally distributes more UCDW to girls and women.

This research also states that, Unpaid Care Work (UCW) is interlinked with the location individuals occupy in paid work through many channels and it is the basis of the time poverty which limits women's opportunity to learn how to increase sustainable productivity and how-to better access markets; to know how to claim their rights, and to participate in decision making which affects control over their resources.

The research recommended more efforts in the promotion of positive masculinity and increased engagement of men in the process of women empowerment to reduce the current gap.

ACTIONAID RWANDA ADVOCATING FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD DEFILEMENT AND TEEN PREGNANCIES THROUGH LIVE DEBATES



Participants to the live debates in Gisagara District on 23rd June 2020 (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)

From 23rd - 26th June 2020, ActionAid Rwanda in partnership with Women's Rights Organizations organized live debates on the prevention and response to child defilement and teen pregnancies in Gisagara and Karongi District. The debates brought together local authorities, communities and institutions in charge of Violence Against Women and Girls' prevention and response.

The live debates were conducted in compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures including social distancing, wearing face masks and washing hands frequently. This followed the Government of Rwanda's decision, on 16th June 2020, to allow hotels to offer conferences services in adherence with the said health guidelines against COVID-19.

The live debates on child defilement prevention and response in Gisagara and Karongi Districts aimed at increasing awareness on the prevention of child defilement and strengthening community protection strategies. The live debates focused on the prevention of child defilement and teen pregnancies especially during this COVID-19 period whereby schools are closed until September 2020 and girls are staying home with their relatives and neighbors who may be perpetrators.

During these debates, community members and Women's Rights Organization had the opportunity to discuss with Government institutions in charge of VAWG prevention and response on emerging child defilement and teen pregnancies cases that need special attention.

"In these live debates, we are advocating for improved prevention measures and response to child defilement and teen pregnancies, especially during

this unprecedented time of COVID-19 pandemic. We are calling for everyone involved in the prevention and response of child defilement including community members to take action to prevent child defilement and Violence against girls," said Albertine Nyiraneza , Legal Representative and Founder of Humuriza Tamari Foundation, a women's rights organization working with ActionAid Rwanda to advocate for women's rights.



Participants to the live debates in Gisagara District on 23rd June 2020 (Photo / ActionAid Rwanda)

These live debates on VAWG prevention and response were organised by ActionAid Rwanda in collaboration with Women's Rights Organisations mainly Duhozanye Association, ARTCF, Amizero y'ubuzima, Tubibe Amahoro Association, Humuriza Tamari Foundation, Impuhwe Association, etc, through Speak out Project funded by the UK Aid.

ACTIONAID RWANDA ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Retweeted
Anne Jellema @AFJellema · May 6
 In Rwanda, we were able to channel COVID19 relief through gov't, supporting a more efficient national response. This is only possible because Rwanda has a well-run strategic grain reserve, which is also helping it fight drought & #climatechange.

ActionAid Rwanda @actionaidrwanda · May 5
 Today, @actionaidrwanda donated 5 tons of Rice, 5 tons of Beans and 5 tons of Maize Flour to vulnerable people affected by #Coronavirus. The donation was done through the National Strategic Food Reserve. #COVID19pandemic #Rwanda

ActionAid Rwanda · 24 June at 16:32 ·
 To raise community awareness on #GenderBasedViolence and #Coronavirus prevention, ActionAid Rwanda in partnership with Faith Victory Association through SpeakOut Project funded by UK Aid, is using megaphones and loud speakers to spread messages on Gender Based Violence and coronavirus prevention. The 1st phase of community sensitization on Gender Based Violence and Coronavirus prevention via megaphones is underway in Nyanza, Gisagara, Karongi and Nyaruguru Districts. The activity started from 11th June 2020 and will close on 30/06/2020. #Rwanda #WeShallOvercome #COVID19

FaithVictoryRw @FaithVictoryRW · Jun 18
 #FVA in partnership with @actionaidrwanda provided protective Materials (step&wash and masks) to 1,320 women cooperatives beneficiaries from Muko&Shingiro sectors in @MusanzeDistrict to prevent the spread of #Coronavirus while they are in their community development activities.

UK Aid Direct @UKAidDirect · 1h
 Good to see #Impact grant holders @actionaidrwanda providing hand washing kits to communities in #Rwanda. Through their #UKAidDirect grant they are training girls in #SRHR, women's rights & leadership enabling them to become 'Change agents' in their communities. #LeaveNoOneBehind

ActionAid Rwanda @actionaidrwanda · Jul 13
 Beneficiaries of @actionaidrwanda's hand-washing kits are communities & women cooperatives from @actionaidrwanda intervention areas mainly @NyanzaDistrict, @GisagaraDistr, @NyaruguruDistr, @KarongiDistr and @MusanzeDistrict. This activity is funded by the @UKaid & other supporters.

Facebook Post:
 1,238 People reached, 98 Engagements, 40 Reactions, 6 comments, 4 shares.
 Comment as ActionAid Rwanda:
 Ronald Kyome Mwebe: That's why I am an Activist, Inspirator and an ActionAider. This is a commendable act... They always "Act" "on" "Aid"!! Great work comrades in ActionAid.
 Regis Kamugisha: God bless Actionaid especially Sponsors, team and Leaders!!!
 Joyeuse Uwingabire: Wowww!! Sounds great. Be blessed alot.
 Jrka Jrka Jrka: Good job.
 James Butare: Commendable act.

Follow us on:

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@actionaidrwanda

ActionAid Rwanda

TIPS TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

1 WASH YOUR HANDS



Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or wash them with soap and running water.

2 AVOID HANDSHAKES



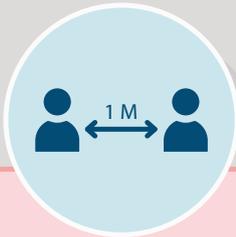
Avoid greeting each other with handshake or hugging.

3 WEAR A MASK



Wear your mask when in public.

4 SOCIAL DISTANCING



Distance yourself at least 1meter away from other people.

5 DISINFECT



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

KEY SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

1 FEVER



2 COUGH



3 BREATHING DIFFICULTIES



IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS, SELF ISOLATE YOURSELF TO PROTECT OTHERS AND CALL YOUR NEAREST HEALTH FACILITY.

PROPER USE OF A MASK

The Do's



Wear your mask when in public to prevent the spread of COVID-19



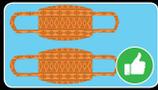
Wear your mask for a period not exceeding 6 hours



Wash your mask with warm soapy water and iron when dry



Cover your face with a mask from the nose, mouth to the chin



Do have at least 2 masks so that one can be worn when the other is being washed

The Don'ts



Do not remove or lower your mask when speaking, coughing or sneezing



Do not touch your nose or mouth when wearing your mask



Do not buy your mask from uncertified places. They are only sold in pharmacies, supermarkets and any other places approved by competent institutions



Masks are sold in sealed packages from the manufacturer. Do not try them before purchasing



Do not share your mask with anyone else

Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 While You Shop



Plan ahead



Go alone



Be quick



Wash or sanitize hands



Clean cart handle



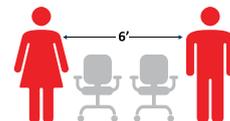
Stay 1m away from others

Social distancing at work

Slow the spread of COVID-19



Attend meetings virtually when possible.



Allow for 1m of space per person.



Maintain sufficient spacing in meetings.

ACTIONAID RWANDA SAFEGUARDING POLICY FRAMEWORK

We commit to uphold human rights and promote social Justice while we safeguard and protect the dignity of ALL by ensuring confidentiality in Response, Prevention, Reporting and Access to adequate support

Safeguarding Policies, Standards and Guideline Statements.

1.Honor & Respect

We will honor and respect the unique status of children, women, girls & vulnerable adults as valued individuals.

2. Integrity & Transparency

We will uphold integrity in all relationships with children, women, girls and vulnerable adults to ensure that we operate with transparency and avoid any form of exploitation real or perceived.

3. Commitment to highest standards

We commit to apply the highest standards of safeguarding when dealing with children, girls, women and vulnerable adults.

4. Zero Tolerance & Compliance

We will commit to ensure zero Tolerance to all forms of sexual, gender and other exploitation and abuse while ensuring compliance to Child protection policy, Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, Anti-GBV Policy, Whistle Blowing Policy, Health-Safety and Security Policy

5.Our Approach

We endorse Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), aware that an unequal balance of power is often the pre-condition from which abuse begins.

6. Collaboration with statutory agencies

We will take any allegation seriously and we will collaborate fully with the statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with abuse of children and the vulnerable.

7. Collaboration & support Communities

We will work in partnership with other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, to avail the best possible support in the community to ensure every child is protected from harm.

8. Awareness Raising

We will train Board, staff, volunteers and partners and ensure awareness to communities and children, in principles of safeguarding and child protection.

9. Linkage

We will appropriately oversee all our work with communities in accordance with assessment of potential risks, ability to interrogate, offering further training and supportive counselling.

10. Referral Assessment

We will assess every referral according to pre-defined risk thresholds.

11. Stringest Recruitment Process

We will recruit safely according to stringent recruitment processes, requiring all Staff categories to provide evidence that their behaviour has never caused harm to anyone.

12. Share information

We will share information with other agencies according to well-established principles and best practice both internal and external.

13. Timely & Effective Reporting

We believe in timely and effective reporting as a prerequisite of efficient safeguarding.

Rwanda National Police

Emergency: 112
Child help line: 116
Fire Brigade: 111
Anti - GBV: 3512
Isange One Stop Centre: 3029

Gender Monitoring Office: 5798
MIGEPROF Toll Free line: 2560
Office of the Ombudsman: 199

Actionaid Security Focal Persons

safeguarding@actionaid.org-
safeguarding.Rwanda@actionaid.org
0788318665
0788742604
Safeguarding Focal Person (AAR Board)
0788755364

 actionaid.rwanda@actionaid.org
 twitter.com/actionaid
 facebook.com/actionaid
 www.actionaid.org/Rwanda

