

POWER **In** PEOPLE

Newsletter July - October 2023



“We aim to facilitate the effective implementation of Rwanda's policy commitments towards alleviating the challenges posed by unpaid care work”.

UKAid - AAR Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work

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Foreword

Dear Partners,

Welcome to the July - October 2023 Newsletter from ActionAid Rwanda. We are delighted to share our achievements and the positive impact on the lives of those we serve, as we work towards sustainability and human dignity.

Throughout this period, we have actively participated in various initiatives, placing a special emphasis on the pursuit of gender equality and sustainable development, addressing the burden of unpaid care work (UCW) and the launch of our Climate Justice campaign, among other interventions. Achievements of this period make great contribution to our unwavering commitment is rooted in our mission to advocate for social justice, promote gender equality, and eliminate poverty by offering support to the most vulnerable communities in Rwanda. Our goal is to empower women and girls with the capacity to actively shape the decisions that impact their lives.

We invite you to explore the contents of this newsletter and immerse yourself in the stories of positive change and progress. Thank you for your continued support.

Enjoy your reading!

Ines MWANGAVU
Interim Executive Director

1. UKaid - AAR support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work



Launch at National level of the "Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) Recognition, Reduction, and Redistribution" project

In the pursuit of gender equality and sustainable development, addressing the burden of unpaid care work (UCW) is paramount. Recognizing this, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) got funding from UKaid to implement the "Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) Recognition, Reduction, and Redistribution" project.

This initiative aims to facilitate the effective implementation of Rwanda's policy commitments towards alleviating the challenges posed by unpaid care work. The project spans eight months, from August 2023 to March 2024, focusing on five districts: Musanze, Karongi, Gisagara, Nyagatare, and Gasabo.

The overarching goal of the project is to support the effective implementation of Rwanda's policy commitments concerning unpaid care work through the National Strategy for Transformation 2 (NST2), Districts Development Strategies (DDS), annual Performance Contracts (Imihigo), and Gender Budget Statements.

One of the outcomes of the project will be to have improved Policy Dialogues and Recognition, Redistribution, and Reduction of Unpaid Care Work. The project aims to foster inclusive sustainable change by strengthening agents of change, including individuals, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and other relevant stakeholders. Through improved policy dialogues, the project seeks to recognize, redistribute, and reduce the burden of unpaid care work.

Another outcome will be effective and Accountable Structures/Institutions Integration: The project strives to ensure that accountable structures and institutions actively contribute to integrating care services into NST2, DDS, Imihigo, and Gender Budget Statements.

The beneficiaries include public and non-state actors at the central level, including at least 70 decision-makers from government institutions, responsible Ministries, National Gender Machinery, Development Partners, UN Agencies, Private Sector Federation (PSF), CSOs, and media houses. Local leaders at decentralized entities in the five districts, encompassing district leadership members, local leaders from all administration entities (sectors, cells, and villages), Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), and PSF members, and citizens' representatives.

The Final Beneficiaries will be approximately 2,655,666 household members across the five targeted districts standing to benefit from the project's outcomes.

The project was officially launched on November 2, 2023, at the national level. Partners from the public, private, and civil sectors gathered to express their commitment to AAR's initiative. The event saw the convergence of stakeholders dedicated to supporting and collaborating for the project's success in Musanze, Karongi, Gisagara, Nyagatare, and Gasabo districts.



Ines Mwangavu, Executive Director, AAR giving her opening remarks



Participants contributing ideas on addressing Unpaid Care Work

During the launch, Deputy Chief Gender Monitor Mr. Habiyaemye E Florien emphasized Rwanda's commitment to addressing gender equity and equality gaps in policies and strategies, including tackling unpaid care work. He called on all partners to join this important cause, underlining the significance of collective efforts in achieving meaningful change.

In addition to the national launch, the project was introduced in each of the five districts, setting the stage for localized engagement and implementation.



The Deputy Chief Gender Monitor presenting his remarks during the Project Launch



AAR's "Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work" project marks a significant stride towards a more inclusive care economy in Rwanda. With committed partners and a comprehensive strategy, the project aspires to bring about tangible change in recognizing, redistributing, and reducing the burden of unpaid care work.

By actively involving decision-makers, local leaders, and citizens, this initiative holds the promise of fostering gender equality, empowerment, and sustainable development across the targeted districts. As the project unfolds over the next eight months, it is poised to leave a lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals and contribute to the broader vision of a more equitable and prosperous Rwanda

Quote

"Supporting accountability to policy commitments on unpaid care work is not just a matter of principle; it is a crucial investment in recognizing, valuing, and redistributing the invisible labor that sustains our communities. By honoring these commitments, we pave the way for a more equitable and just society where the burden of care is shared, and the potential of every individual can flourish."

Ines Mwangavu, ED, AAR



Lauch of the "Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) project in NYAGATARE District



Lauch of the "Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) project in KARONGI District



Lauch of the "Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) Project in Gasabo District



Lauch of the "Support Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) Project in GISAGARA District

2. UNWOMEN - AAR Joins Hands to Empower Women: Reducing the Burden of Unpaid Care Work in Rwanda



Launch of the "Women Have Equal Economic Opportunities & Autonomy" Project

Care and domestic work constitute the pillars of communities worldwide, involving both paid and unpaid responsibilities. However, the burden of unpaid care and domestic work disproportionately falls on women, resulting in significant disparities in time allocation and economic opportunities. Globally, women spend an average of four hours and 25 minutes daily on unpaid care work, in stark contrast to men's average of just one hour and 23 minutes. Addressing this issue is not only a matter of justice but is also crucial for achieving gender equality, economic autonomy, and sustainable development.

In response to the persistent gender disparities in unpaid care work, ActionAid Rwanda, in collaboration with UNWOMEN, has embarked on a groundbreaking project. This initiative aims to recognize, reduce, and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work on women, focusing on eight districts in Rwanda. Aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5.4, which emphasizes the recognition and valuation of unpaid care work, the project signifies a crucial step towards achieving gender equality.

The project's overarching goal is to promote women's empowerment by recognizing, redistributing, and reducing the burdens of unpaid care work.

It will operate in key regions, including Gasabo district in the City of Kigali, Musanze district in the Northern Province, Nyanza, Gisagara, and Nyaruguru districts in the Southern Province, and Karongi district in the Western Province. Key objectives include facilitating women farmers' access to time-saving technologies, promoting positive social norms, behavioral change, and positive masculinities. Additionally, the project aims to increase awareness of gender equality and civic understanding of women's rights.

In that view, on October 30th, 2023, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) introduced the "3Rs of UCW for Women Empowerment Project" to its staff. Subsequently, an inception workshop took place in Huye. During the workshop, AAR underscored the significance of partnerships and called for collaboration from the public, private, and civil sectors to ensure the success of this project.

ActionAid Rwanda has adopted a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and embraces feminist leadership principles. Operating through a decentralized structure, the project will utilize participatory tools, quarterly reviews, and a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. Essential activities encompass awareness campaigns, capacity-building programs, and the provision of time-saving, climate-resilient technologies.



Inception workshop on "Addressing 3Rs of unpaid care work for women empowerment from GISAGARA and NYARUGURU Districts."



Emphasizing collaboration with government institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector, the project will foster stakeholder engagement through joint activities, policy dialogues, and advocacy efforts. ActionAid Rwanda's active involvement in various committees and working groups will ensure sustained partnerships and continuous support from local leadership.

The initiative by ActionAid Rwanda and UN Women aligns seamlessly with Rwanda's commitment to gender equality and resonates with the global agenda outlined in the SDGs. By directly addressing the issue of unpaid care work, the project aims to unlock new opportunities for women, reduce gender disparities, and contribute significantly to Rwanda's economic development. Empowering women in the agricultural sector and promoting positive social norms are integral steps toward constructing a more inclusive and equitable society.

through collaborative efforts and targeted strategies, this project stands as a beacon for positive change, offering hope for a future where the burdens of unpaid care work are shared equitably.

This project was launched in GISAGARA, NYARUGURU and MUSANZE District. Women participants in the inception clarified the following interventions as the one that can help to reduce the burden of UCW: Availability of water harvesting tanks at home, energy saving cooking stoves, and Early Childhood Development Centers (ECD).

The initiative holds the promise of fostering a society where women can fully realize their potential, contributing not only to their individual empowerment but also to the prosperity and well-being of the entire community.

3. Empowering Women: AAR's Initiatives in celebration International Rural Women's Day



AAR Rights Holders showcase their achievements during the celebration of International rural Women's Day

In its ongoing commitment to fostering gender equality and fighting gender-based violence (GBV), Actionaid Rwanda orchestrated a series of impactful interventions during the celebration of International Rural Women's Day (IRWD).

The event, held across various Local Rights Programs (LRPs), aimed at raising awareness about women's rights, addressing GBV, and recognizing the pivotal role of women in community development.

Under the theme "**Dushyigikire iterambere ry'umugore wo mu cyaro**," Actionaid Rwanda facilitated community celebrations that showcased the accomplishments of women in their journey towards empowerment and the prevention of GBV. The event provided a platform for women to demonstrate their achievements and contributions to the community's development.

The event was attended by 2,298 women and 948 men who actively participated in the activities organized during IRWD and who acquired the message, and they will take to the community.



Rights Holders in Musanze showcasing their achievements during the International Rural Women's Day 2023



AAR supported women in Nyanza with Energy saving cooking stoves to develop their resilience to climate change

A pivotal component of the initiative was the community awareness campaign conducted during IRWD. Actionaid Rwanda delivered messages on the prevention of GBV against women and girls, emphasizing the importance of upholding women's rights. Additionally, the initiative focused on the recognition, redistribution, and reduction of Unpaid Care Work, aiming to reduce the burden placed on women.

Actionaid Rwanda didn't stop at awareness campaigns; practical support was also extended to empower women. On International Rural Women's Day, distributed 214 cooking gas units, with 217 in SHINGIRO and 7 in MUKO. Furthermore, 18 water harvesting structures and 240 energy-saving cooking stoves were provided in NYANZA, GISAGARA, and MURUNDI. These interventions aimed to reduce the workload of unpaid care work on women, enabling them to engage in more productive activities.



In Shingiro, AAR supported women with water harvesting tanks to reduce the burden of unpaid Care Work



In Gisagara LRP, AAR supported Rights Holders with Energy Saving Cooking Stoves to ease the burden of unpaid Care Work

The implementation period of these interventions spanned the month of October on 15th, with a budget execution of Frws 13,774,500. The positive impact of these initiatives on the community is evident, not only in the numbers reached but also in the tangible support provided to women. By addressing key issues such as GBV, women's rights, and the burden of unpaid care work, Actionaid Rwanda's efforts are contributing significantly to the well-being and empowerment of women in the community.



Photos highlighting the celebration of the International Rural Women's Day in LRPs

On that special event, 12 couples legalized their marriage, as result of AAR's sensitizations on fighting GBV, family conflicts and family law. AAR's active participation in International Rural Women's Day stands as a testament to the organization's unwavering dedication to supporting and empowering women for a brighter and more equitable future.

4. AAR empowering Change through Participatory Review and Reflection Processes



AAR Executive Director officiating PRRP sessions in Nyanza

Participatory Review and Reflection Processes (PRRPs) serves as an approach for continuous learning and improvement in development interventions. When executed effectively, PRRPs energize and empower participants, fostering collective action, strengthening advocacy, and enhancing program quality. This article delves into the intricacies of PRRP 2023, where ActionAid and its partner organizations facilitated a comprehensive review to inform the development of the 2024 plan and Country Strategic Paper III (CSP III) for the years 2024-2028.

The primary objectives of PRRP 2023 were multi-faceted, aiming to ensure the development of CSP III based on the active participation of right holders. The process sought to critically examine existing work, approaches, and theories of change, assess progress against strategies, and gather insights into what works and doesn't work in various contexts.



PRRP session in Karongi / Murundi LRP

Moreover, the objective was to ensure that the learning and analysis generated through PRRP inform decision-making, contributing to ongoing action plans and work.

ActionAid and its partner organizations adopted an inclusive methodology to engage communities at the sector and district levels. The diverse group of participants, including women group leaders, men engaged in ActionAid's work, children, and various sector authorities, ensured a comprehensive representation of perspectives. The facilitators kick-started the process by elucidating the objectives of PRRP, emphasizing accountability, and presenting issues raised in the previous year's review, along with actions taken to address them.

The participants were then provided with a translated version of the proposed CSP III, outlining strategic objectives designed to address identified priorities and target groups. Group discussions ensued, where participants proposed actions to effectively address the presented issues. Emphasis was placed on safeguarding, ensuring the participatory nature of all sessions, and preventing any form of abuse.



A Girl from RUHERU LRP Sharing issues they face as a teenager



PRRP session in Karongi / Murundi LRP

The field consultations yielded valuable insights, categorizing identified issues into different priorities and strategic objectives:

1. Priority I (P1), Strategic Objectives I (SO1):
 - 10 issues identified.
 - 6 high priority, 4 medium priority
2. Priority I (P1), Strategic Objectives II (SO2):
 - 5 issues identified.
 - 2 high priority, 3 medium priority
3. Priority II (P2), Strategic Objectives III (SO3):
 - 10 issues identified.
 - 3 high priority, 6 medium priority, 1 low priority
4. Priority II (P2), Strategic Objectives IV (SO4):
 - 4 issues identified.
 - 3 high priority, 1 medium priority

Additionally, issues in education and disaster management emerged, leading to a program focus on women, children, and youth. Participants highlighted issues that would be included in CSP III, emphasizing long-term planning beyond a one-year scope.

PRRP 2023 exemplifies the power of participatory processes in shaping development initiatives. The engagement of diverse stakeholders, the transparent sharing of progress and challenges, and the prioritization of issues through collective deliberation contribute to a robust foundation for future planning.



School children contributing their ideas during PRRP

As ActionAid moves forward with the insights gained from PRRP 2023, it underscores the importance of ongoing reflection and collaboration in creating positive and sustainable change.

Quote:

“The PRRP serves as ActionAid Rwanda’s integrated system designed to ensure organizational accountability. The organization collaborates with partners and stakeholders at various levels, fostering collaboration among staff, communities, partners, and stakeholders to collectively review both achievements and shortcomings. The aim is to reflect on challenges and extract lessons for the future”.

Dr. Jean Marie Nyilingabo, AAR General Assembly Convenor

5. AAR launched the Climate Justice campaign



AAR's Launch of the Climate Justice Campaign in Gisagara

Climate change is impacting our world profoundly. In this regard, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) joined AA federation members to embark on a transformative journey toward a just, green, and feminist future. ActionAid Rwanda recognizes the profound interconnections between climate change and environmental shifts, which have profound and far-reaching consequences for societies worldwide.

In response to these mounting challenges, ActionAid Rwanda embarked on a historic journey, launching the Climate Justice Campaign on September 4th, 2023. Its primary objective was to guide a transition away from unsustainable agribusiness practices and fossil fuel dependence, instead embracing sustainable agroecology and renewable energy alternatives.

In Muko LRP, the official inauguration of the campaign took place on September 4th, 2023, drawing over 600 participants from the local community. The event was graced by the presence of ActionAid Rwanda's Executive Director, Ines Mwangavu, and dedicated AAR staff members. Local leaders, led by Executive Secretary Janvier Bisengimana, also joined in the celebration.

The launch was a dynamic affair, featuring various activities, including marches, songs, dances, and sketches, all meticulously designed to elevate community awareness regarding the impacts of climate change and the necessary actions for climate justice. The event underscored the vital role of agroecology over industrial agriculture, a practice that contributes to climate change.

In line with the campaign's launch in Muko, AAR supported Right Holders with livestock, empowering them to embrace organic manure over chemical fertilizers. Furthermore, AAR supported 68 women by providing them with sheep as part of their commitment to fostering sustainable practices. The campaign also involved a partnership with Hugukirwa Muko to propagate agroforestry trees, a crucial element of sustainable agriculture for the Muko community.



Rights Holders in Compost Making as a practice of agroecology in Musanze

Climate justice requires more than individual actions, emphasized AAR's Executive Director during her speech. The campaign champions broader systemic changes by collaborating with local leaders, policymakers, and influencers to pave the way for policy adjustments that prioritize sustainable practices and equitable climate policies.



AAR staff with Gisagara residents marching during launch the climate justice campaign



AAR staff with Rights Holders in Gisagara establishing tree nursery during the launch the climate justice campaign

On September 8th, 2023, AAR extended the reach of the Climate Justice Campaign to Shingiro LRP. The event convened more than 500 men and women, Shingiro sector leaders, and dedicated AAR staff. The festivities encompassed marches, dances, and songs echoing calls to abandon fossil fuels while embracing renewable energy and agroecology as essential solutions to address climate change. The campaign also made its mark in Nyanza, Gisagara, Karingi and Ruheru LRPs, attracting a total of 2,750 participants. These launches placed a significant emphasis on climate justice and sustainable practices while engaging communities in various activities aimed at raising awareness. The Climate Justice Campaign extends over a three-year period, during which ActionAid Rwanda will persist in its collaboration with various partners to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The campaign will continue to advocate for the adoption of agroecology over fossil fuels and industrial agriculture as a sustainable approach to address climate crisis. These launches placed a significant emphasis on climate justice and sustainable practices while engaging communities in various activities aimed at raising awareness. The Climate Justice Campaign extends over a three-year period, during which ActionAid Rwanda will persist in its collaboration with various partners to mitigate the effects of climate change. The campaign will continue to advocate for the adoption of agroecology over fossil fuels and industrial agriculture as a sustainable approach to address climate crisis.

6. ActionAid report on how banks are fuelling climate crisis



ActionAid International launched a climate justice campaign accompanied by a groundbreaking report, "How the Finance Flows: The Banks Fuelling the Climate Crisis." The report exposes major international banks for financing fossil fuels and industrial agriculture in the Global South, primary contributors to climate change.

Since the 2015 Paris Agreement, these banks have allocated \$3.23 trillion to fossil fuel operations in the Global South, including \$870 billion in loans and \$2.4 billion in underwriting. An additional \$1.1 trillion has been directed towards financing industrial agriculture in the region. The report contends that such financial support exacerbates the climate crisis, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities in the Global South.

It calls on banks to cease financing fossil fuels and industrial agriculture, urging them to invest instead in sustainable solutions.

Highlighting the role of public finance, the report reveals that governments in the Global South have provided \$1.4 trillion in fossil fuel subsidies and \$500 billion in industrial agriculture subsidies. ActionAid advocates for discontinuing these subsidies and redirecting funds towards sustainable alternatives. The report concludes by emphasizing the need for a global movement to redirect finance from harmful activities to sustainable solutions. It underscores the essential role of such a shift in addressing the climate crisis and building a more just and equitable future.

The following are the key takeaways of the report:

1. Major international banks finance fossil fuels and industrial agriculture in the Global South, major contributors to climate change.
2. This financing worsens the climate crisis and disproportionately harms vulnerable communities.
3. Governments in the Global South provide substantial subsidies to fossil fuels and industrial agriculture.
4. Urgent action is needed to redirect finance from harmful activities to sustainable solutions through a global movement.

7.Transforming Lives: AAR supported 20 families with 20 cows in RUHERU LRP, Nyaruguru District



AAR supported 20 families living in poverty with 20 cows in RUHERU LRP to develop farmers capacities to adopt to sustainable farming practices.

In a significant move towards fostering resilient livelihoods and supporting families living in poverty, Actionaid Rwanda (AAR) took a proactive step on October 26, 2023. The organization provided substantial support to 20 families living in poverty in the Ruheru Local Rights Program (LRP) by supporting them with 20 cows.

The primary objective of this initiative is to empower women smallholder farmers within the community, ensuring their access to sustainable agricultural practices. By doing so, AAR aims to contribute to more secure livelihoods for these families. The event, held in Ruheru, was a beacon of hope for those facing economic hardships.

The event was graced by the esteemed presence of Mr. Gashema Janvier, the Vice Mayor responsible for Economic Affairs of Nyaruguru District. The Executive Secretary of Ruheru Sector, various partners, and the local residents of Ruheru also attended, underscoring the collaborative effort invested in uplifting the community.



The District Vice Mayor, Mr. Gashema Janvier attended the event

At the heart of this support initiative are the 20 cows, each playing a pivotal role in transforming the lives of the recipient families. Cows are not merely livestock; they represent a key element in the pursuit of sustainable agriculture. The manifold benefits include the enrichment of soil through their manure, which, in turn, boosts crop yields. Importantly, this holistic approach minimizes reliance on chemical fertilizers, promoting environmentally friendly farming practices.

The support provided by AAR extends beyond immediate relief; it aims to foster long-term agricultural sustainability. By introducing cows into the community, AAR acknowledges the interconnectedness of livestock and agriculture. This approach aligns with a broader vision of building resilient livelihoods and creating a more sustainable future for the recipients.

The economic security of the families is bolstered as they now have access to an additional source of income through dairy and other related activities. Simultaneously, the environmental impact is noteworthy, as the community reduces its dependence on chemical inputs, contributing to a more ecologically balanced farming system.

AAR's initiative to support families in Ruheru with 20 cows transcends the conventional concept of aid. It symbolizes a commitment to sustainable development, economic empowerment, and community resilience. The impact of this endeavor will be felt not only in the immediate future but also for generations to come, as Ruheru takes significant strides towards a more sustainable and prosperous tomorrow.

8. UKaid funds ActionAid Rwanda to Tackle Unpaid Care Work



ActionAid Rwanda and the British High Commission Kigali signed a grant agreement to implement the "Supporting Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW)" Project.

In a significant development for Rwanda's commitment to addressing the issue of Unpaid Care Work (UCW), ActionAid Rwanda and the British High Commission Kigali signed a grant agreement aimed at "Supporting Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) Recognition, Reduction, and Redistribution Care Economy."

The core objective of this project is to provide comprehensive support for the effective implementation of Rwanda's policy commitments concerning the burden of unpaid care work. This is to be achieved through various national mechanisms, including the National Strategy for Transformation 2 (NST2), Districts Development Strategies, annual Performance Contracts (IMIHIGO), and Gender Budget Statements.

The issue of unpaid care work is central to gender equality and economic development, as it often disproportionately affects women and hinders their access to education, employment, and participation in public life. By addressing this issue head-on, Rwanda aims to create a more equitable and prosperous society.

The project's reach is extensive, as it will be implemented in several key districts across Rwanda. These districts include Musanze in the Northern Province, Karongi in the Western Province, Gisagara in the Southern Province, Nyagatare in the Eastern Province and Gasabo in the City of Kigali

This wide geographical scope ensures that the project will have a far-reaching impact, touching the lives of individuals in diverse regions of the country.

One of the anticipated major outcomes of this project is to elevate policy dialogues surrounding Unpaid Care Work. By fostering recognition, reduction, and redistribution of UCW, the initiative seeks to empower individuals, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and various stakeholders to become true agents of change.

This empowerment will enable communities to collectively address the unequal burden of care work, contributing to gender equality and economic growth. Moreover, it will align with Rwanda's broader commitment to achieving its sustainable development goals and building a more inclusive society.

The collaboration between ActionAid Rwanda and the British High Commission Kigali represents also a transformative partnership in the pursuit of gender equality and social justice. By focusing on the critical issue of unpaid care work, this project is set to make a lasting impact on the lives of Rwandans across the country.

As the project unfolds over the coming months, it is expected to bring about tangible changes, ensuring that the burden of care work is more equitably shared and that all individuals, regardless of gender, can fully participate in and contribute to Rwanda's development journey.

Quote:

"The issue of unpaid care work is central to gender equality and economic development, as it often disproportionately affects women and hinders their access to education, employment, and participation in public life. By addressing this issue head-on, Rwanda aims to create a more equitable and prosperous society".

Clare Katwesigye, Women Rights and Advocacy Coordinator, AAR

9. AAR Campaign on SRHR and SGBV



AAR conducted a media Campaign on Sexual Reproductive Health Right

In the steadfast pursuit of positive societal transformation, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) has launched an impactful advocacy campaign, strategically utilizing the influential platforms of RTV and Pacis TV. Spearheaded by Ines Mwangavu, the Executive Director of AAR, and in collaboration with dedicated partners, this advocacy initiative is a pivotal element of the broader "Empowering Young People to Prevent and Fight SGBV" project, generously funded by the European Union. The project is being implemented by AAR in partnership with Faith Victory Association and spans across the sectors of Rugabano, Gitesi, Kinyinya, and Rusororo.

Understanding the profound impact of media in shaping opinions and fostering awareness, AAR strategically harnessed the outreach potential of RTV and Pacis TV. Through these platforms, key messages on the sexual and reproductive health needs, rights, and prevention of SGBV among young people were disseminated. This comprehensive approach ranged from impactful radio talk shows to youth-led campaigns within local communities, creating a mosaic of touchpoints for the extensive dissemination of crucial information.

AAR's unwavering commitment to reaching diverse audiences is evident in the deliberate use of varied communication techniques. Engaging with different media outlets and formats, the campaign aimed to break down barriers and ensure that its messages resonated with a wide spectrum of the public. This approach significantly contributed to fostering a broader understanding and acceptance of critical issues surrounding sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and the prevention of gender-based violence (SGBV).

The advocacy efforts on RTV and Pacis TV were intentionally designed to transcend traditional boundaries, initiating a crucial dialogue essential for societal transformation. Through insightful discussions, interviews, and visually compelling campaigns, the initiative sought not only to inform but also to engage the public in a meaningful conversation about the challenges faced by young people in the realm of sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of gender-based violence.

As AAR and Faith Victory Association continue their impactful work under the EU-funded project, the success of their advocacy efforts on RTV and Pacis TV stands as a testament to the transformative power of information and dialogue. Actively engaging with communities and utilizing diverse communication channels, AAR is not merely disseminating knowledge but creating a ripple effect that contributes to positive change in attitudes and behaviors surrounding sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention.

The advocacy campaign on RTV and Pacis TV underscores the dedication of AAR and its partners to effect tangible change in the lives of young people. Through strategic communication, informed discussions, and community engagement, the initiative continues to make significant strides toward fostering a more informed, accepting, and empowered society in the realms of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention. The ripple effect of this campaign is creating a lasting impact, paving the way for a brighter and more inclusive future for the youth in Rwanda.



Campaign for Gender Equality through Redistributing Unpaid Care Work in Ruheru LRP

In Ruheru community, AAR took a stride to address the often invisible but profoundly impactful issue of unpaid care work (UCW). Recognizing UCW as a fundamental human rights concern that impedes women's rights, economic growth, and social development, AAR orchestrated a four-day advocacy campaign to transform the community's perception and handling of this critical matter.

Like elsewhere, in Ruheru, unpaid care work encompasses a range of tasks crucial for household functioning, including childcare, eldercare, cooking, cleaning, and laundry. Traditionally falling disproportionately on women, these responsibilities have limited their access to education, economic opportunities, and active participation in society.

AAR's campaign in Ruheru aimed to break this cycle of inequality with a message encourage the Ruheru community members to acknowledge, minimize, and fairly distribute unpaid care work. The campaign sought to reach 1200 people and spanned four days. While the primary focus was on redistributing care responsibilities, the secondary objective aimed at addressing family conflicts often stemming from the unequal burden of care work.

The campaign received substantial support from a diverse group of participants, each bringing a unique perspective to the issue.

For example the National Women Council Representative, Uzamushaka Seraphine highlighted the importance of governmental and community collaboration, Seraphine's endorsement added weight to the cause, signaling a united front against gender inequality at the sector level.

In addition, IZU's Men Engage Members demonstrated their commitment to challenging traditional gender roles, signaling a willingness to contribute to a more equitable distribution of care work.

in the view, WLPC Members s enriched the dialogue with practical perspectives on the impact of unpaid care work on women's lives.

Lastly, community members from Uwumusebeya, Gitita, Kabere, and Rembera Cells with theri active participation, underscored the urgency of addressing this issue at the grassroots level.

The campaign's central message resonated that heavy and unequal care responsibilities are barriers to gender equality. Men attending the campaign boldly committed to engaging in domestic work, demonstrating their dedication to recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care work. These commitments signify steps toward a fairer and more equitable society, freeing women from traditional gender role constraints.

AAR's campaign in Ruheru exemplifies how grassroots advocacy can instigate real change. By raising awareness, fostering dialogue, and inspiring concrete commitments to shared responsibilities, the campaign has set Ruheru on a path toward greater gender equality and improved family dynamics. The anticipated ripple effects extend beyond Ruheru, inspiring other communities to embark on a similar journey towards a more inclusive, equitable, and harmonious future.

11. AAR, UN Women and Partners Rally for Gender Equality: Advocating for the 5Rs of Unpaid Care Work



On August 23rd, 2023, a high-impact advocacy meeting took place, initiated by UN Women in collaboration with ActionAid Rwanda, RWAMREC, and Nyaruguru District. The primary objective of this event was to shed light on the 5Rs of unpaid care work: Recognition, Reduction, Redistribution, Representation, and Reward.

This significant event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including community leaders, men's engagement champions, the National Women's Council, the National Youth Council, media influencers, and local partners. Together, they aimed to accelerate progress towards the ultimate goal of gender equality.

The event's importance lay in its role as a catalyst for change, igniting conversations and actions that address the often invisible burden of unpaid care work.

Ines Mwangavu, Executive Director of ActionAid Rwanda (AAR), delivered a compelling message,

emphasizing the urgent need to confront the impact of unpaid care work on women's economic empowerment.

AAR's steadfast commitment to women's rights echoed throughout the event, garnering well-deserved recognition for their collaborative efforts.

However, this advocacy meeting was not confined to speeches and discussions alone. It was a dynamic gathering that showcased tangible efforts to recognize and alleviate the burden of unpaid care work. Family testimonials highlighted the real-life impact of these initiatives, demonstrating how men and boys are stepping up to share the responsibilities of care work.

Moreover, youth competitions captured the spotlight, revealing the enthusiasm and commitment of the younger generation in the pursuit of gender equality. These vibrant displays of dedication and innovation further underscored the importance of collective action and community engagement.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment from partners and local leaders to continue raising awareness about the effects of unpaid care work.

Their focus remains steadfastly on the 5Rs: Recognition to acknowledge the value of care work, Reduction to minimize the disproportionate burden, Redistribution to ensure equitable sharing, Representation to amplify women's voices, and Reward to acknowledge and compensate for these critical contributions.

This collective effort is driving us closer to the long-awaited goal of gender equality. With each advocacy meeting and initiative, we take another step forward on the path to achieving gender equality and equity.

Quote

"In the journey towards gender equality, a transformative partnership acknowledges the value of unpaid care work, ensuring that burdens are shared, responsibilities are distributed, and societal progress is fueled by the collective contributions of all, irrespective of gender."

Ines Mwangavu, ED, AAR

12. AAR's Girls' Camps for a Brighter Future



AAR's Girls' Camps in Nyanza LRP

In a dedicated effort to empower and educate young girls on critical issues affecting their lives, ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) organized a Girls' Camp across four Local Rights Programs (LRPs). The camp, held under the theme "Sexual Reproductive Health is My Right" (**AMAKURU KUBUZIMA BW'IMYOROROKERE, UBURENGANZIRA BWANJYE**), brought together 5,218 female participants and 5,040 males, reflecting the community's engagement and commitment to addressing challenges faced by young girls.

The Girls' Camp was a collaborative effort between AAR, local districts, and sectors. This partnership underlined a collective commitment to fostering positive change and empowering the younger generation with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate challenges unique to girls.

The overarching goal of the camp was to empower young girls through education and open dialogue. Key focus areas included Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), teenage pregnancy prevention, leadership skills development, and the cultivation of handcraft skills to enhance creativity.

Throughout the camp, participants engaged in interactive sessions where they learned about the intricacies of their changing bodies as teenagers. Workshops on leadership skills were designed to boost confidence and decision-making abilities, while handcraft skills sessions encouraged creativity and self-expression.

A pivotal aspect of the Girls' Camp was the participatory nature of the discussions. Girls shared their perspectives on various issues affecting them and collectively brainstormed actionable solutions. This open dialogue not only enhanced their understanding of the challenges but also empowered them to contribute meaningfully to community development.

Beyond the camp, AAR extended its impact to the broader community. Concurrently, community awareness campaigns were conducted on women's rights, the fight against gender-based violence (GBV), and the recognition, redistribution, and reduction of Unpaid Care Work. These campaigns were crucial in disseminating information and fostering a community-wide commitment to gender equality.

Complementing the Girls' Camp, AAR distributed essential resources to support women in their daily lives. This included the distribution of 214 cooking gas units (217 in SHINGIRO and 7 in MUKO), 18 water harvesting structures, and 240 energy-saving cooking stoves in NYANZA, GISAGARA, and MURUNDI. These interventions aimed at reducing the burden of unpaid care work on women, allowing them to engage in more productive activities.

Financial Commitment for Positive Change
AAR allocated a budget of Frws 13,774,500 to finance this comprehensive initiative. This financial commitment underscores the organization's dedication to creating lasting and positive change in the lives of the community, especially young girls.

The Girls' Camp organized by ActionAid Rwanda transcends a typical educational event. It represents a holistic approach to empowerment, encompassing education, skill-building, open dialogue, and practical support. By addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by young girls, AAR is sowing the seeds for a more inclusive, informed, and empowered community, fostering positive change for generations to come.

13. AAR Advocacy Yields Results: Empowered through saving and lending schemes in Ruheru



Savings sharing event by Abafitumurava ku Murimo Ruheru LRP. Rights Holders procured themselves with essential home items after the sharing savings

In a testament to the power of collective effort and the positive impact of Advocates for All Rights (AAR) in the Ruheru community, the ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO women's savings cooperative hosted a remarkable event on August 18th, 2023. This event celebrated significant strides in social welfare and development among its members, showcasing the tangible results of ActionAid's advocacy efforts.

The ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO cooperative is comprised of five Women's Savings & Credit groups, each with its unique identity and purpose. Beyond fostering financial security, these groups have acted as catalysts for personal and communal growth. Here's a glimpse of their impressive savings and sharing:

Name of cooperative	Name of the group	Amount saved
ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO	JYENAWE TUZAMURANE	2,452,540
ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO	JYENAWE TUZAMURANE	2,160,830
ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO	TWITEZIMBERE	841,500
ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO	UMURAVA	1,600,000
ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO	TWIFATANY EBABYEYI	1,856,450

However, the impact goes beyond mere numbers. The cooperative's success story is deeply entwined with the positive influence of AAR in Ruheru LRP.

One critical facet of this success story is how savings have empowered these women. Through their accumulated savings, they have been able to enhance their agricultural productivity, gain access to credit facilities, and strengthen their income-generating activities. This financial stability has not only improved their individual lives but has also had a ripple effect on their families and the broader community.

The ABAFITUMURAVA KU MURIMO cooperative stands as a powerful example of the transformative power of collective action, financial inclusion, and the unwavering support provided by organizations like AAR. As these women continue to thrive and inspire positive change in Ruheru, it is a moment to celebrate their achievements and acknowledge the potential for further progress when communities come together.

This success story serves as a testament to what can be accomplished when individuals rise together, reinforcing the idea that together we can rise.

14. Empowering Women Smallholder Farmers: AAR's Agroecology Training in Gishubi, Muganza & Kibirizi in GISAGARA LRP

In recent years, the agricultural sector has faced numerous challenges, including climate change, soil degradation, and food security concerns. To address these issues and promote sustainable farming practices, organizations like AAR have been actively working to empower smallholder farmers. A recent training initiative organized by AAR in Gishubi, Muganza, and Kibirizi showcased the organization's commitment to advancing agroecology practices.

This event brought together 82 women smallholder farmers who gained valuable skills in compost making, conservation agriculture techniques such as crop rotation, cover cropping, and intercropping. This initiative not only aligns with the government's agricultural plans and commitments but also plays a pivotal role in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

Agroecology, a holistic and sustainable approach to agriculture, focuses on the interrelationships between crops, livestock, and the environment. By emphasizing natural processes and reducing reliance on synthetic inputs, agroecology offers numerous benefits such as improved soil health, increased crop yields, and reduced environmental impacts. This approach is particularly valuable in the face of climate change, which poses a significant threat to global food security.

AAR's recent training initiative in Gishubi, Muganza, and Kibirizi represents a significant step towards promoting agroecology practices among smallholder farmers, with a specific focus on empowering women in the sector. The event aimed to provide these farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt sustainable farming practices and increase their resilience in the face of environmental challenges. The key components of the training included:



Women practicing compost making as part of agroecology experience

Compost Making: Compost is a valuable organic fertilizer that enriches soil fertility and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers. Participants learned how to create high-quality compost from organic waste materials, a crucial skill for improving soil health.

Conservation Agriculture Techniques: Crop rotation, cover cropping, and intercropping are central elements of conservation agriculture. These practices not only enhance soil structure and fertility but also reduce the risk of crop pests and diseases. Farmers attending the training received hands-on experience and guidance on implementing these techniques effectively.

Regarding the impact of the training on agricultural sector, it was organized in alignment with the government's agricultural plans and commitments. By equipping smallholder farmers, especially women, with the knowledge and skills needed for sustainable farming, AAR contributes to the overall development and resilience of the agricultural sector. This initiative has the potential to drive positive change in the following ways:

Increased Productivity: Agroecology practices can lead to increased crop yields over time, ensuring food security and economic stability for smallholder farmers.

Soil Health Restoration: By adopting composting and conservation agriculture techniques, farmers can rejuvenate their soil, making it more resilient to adverse environmental conditions.

Climate Change Mitigation: Agroecology practices have a lower carbon footprint compared to conventional farming methods, helping to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.

Empowering Women: The inclusion of women in agriculture through training initiatives like this one not only improves their livelihoods but also promotes gender equality and social empowerment. By empowering 82 women smallholder farmers with valuable agroecology skills, this initiative aligns seamlessly with the government's agricultural plans and commitments.

15. AAR supported 15 families with iron in Ruheru RLP



AAR supported 15 families with iron sheets to develop community resilience to climate related disasters

AAR supported 15 families with children under the AAR Sponsorship Program and 15 disaster-affected families with iron sheets to enable them to realize their fundamental right to shelter and support them in adapting to the effects of climate change.

16. AAR participated in Karongi DJAF Open Day

AAR actively engaged in the Karongi DJAF Open Day for the purpose of learning from others, sharing experiences and best practices, and promoting accountability. Additionally, AAR proudly received a Certificate of Participation during the Karongi District JADF Open Day, which focuses on celebrating achievements and encouraging citizen participation in governance. Members of AAR Women Cooperatives took the opportunity to showcase their accomplishments in agriculture and food security.

Staff and Partners' Capacity Building

As part of staff and partners' capacity building and institutional development, AAR organized various training programs, including:

Training on a Human Rights-Based Approach, Cost Recovery in Fundraising and Resource Mobilization and EU Funded Projects Planning and Management.

Grant Acquisition and Partnership Development

Currently, AAR is running the following projects:

- 1.Improving Food Security and Boosting Farm Income for Women Smallholder Farmers in Rwanda-IFS Project (KUNGAHARA), funded by the European Union.
- 2.Strengthening Youth-Led Organizations to advocate for enhanced Budget Accountability in Rwanda, funded by the European Union.
- 3.Supporting policy action for enhancing women economic opportunities, funded by the UN WOMEN.
- 4.Supporting Accountability to Policy Commitments on Unpaid Care Work (UCW) Recognition, Reduction and Redistribution_Care Economy Project, funded by the UKAid.
- 5.Empowering Young People to Prevent and Fight SGBV Project Coordinator/ Rwanda, funded by the UKAid.

10 Principles of Feminist Leadership



ActionAid's transformative vision of a just world free from poverty, oppression and patriarchy requires transformative feminist leaders: leaders who enable others to lead, building power with them instead of over them.

In striving to develop these skills, I make the following commitments to myself, my colleagues and the wider organisation:



SELF-CARE AND CARING FOR OTHERS

I will take care of my emotional and physical well-being, in order to ensure my most authentic leadership and commitment as that I can continue to show up for those in need.

I will encourage and support others to do the same, actively working towards a work/life and support work environment, particularly for those with caring responsibilities.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Mutual respect



DISMANTLING BIAS

I recognise that society gives me (and others) certain advantages that are not shared by or earned by everyone. Based on gender, class, race, caste, ability, sexual orientation, education or other factors.

I will strive to discover and challenge these forms of discrimination in our day to day workplace practices and policies. I will be aware of how my own advantages can create unfair advantages or barriers, as well as how I need to address privilege and accordingly change my behaviour to treat all as my colleagues as much.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Mutual respect, Equality, Equity and Justice



INCLUSION

I recognise that society gives me (and others) certain advantages that are not shared by or earned by everyone. Based on gender, class, race, caste, ability, sexual orientation, education or other factors. I will strive to discover and challenge these forms of discrimination in our day to day workplace practices and policies. I will be aware of how my own advantages can create unfair advantages or barriers, as well as how I need to address privilege and accordingly change my behaviour to treat all as my colleagues as much.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Mutual respect, Equality, Equity and Justice



SELF-AWARENESS

I will bring my ego on check, so that I can lead with authenticity and open heart. In order to do this, I will work towards recognising my vulnerabilities, as well as understanding and valuing my strengths and those of others.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Humility



SHARING POWER

I accept that the ultimate test of my leadership is the extent I create for others to lead.

Realising my own an ability shared power, I will trust and empower those to share leadership and help in making those great choices. I will trust and support those decisions or actions to guide me in the best interests of the mission.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Courage of conviction



ZERO TOLERANCE

I will not use any form of discrimination or abuse of power that creates or reinforces the oppression, and I will ensure that I do not become one of the oppressors.

I will address my own conduct to ensure that any form of harassment, oppression and abuse.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Equity and Justice



RESPONSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT USE OF POWER

I will be clear, timely and transparent in making the decisions attributed to me, with appropriate consultation and in the interests of our mission. I will ensure that those decisions and actions are in the best interests of the mission.

I will ensure that those decisions and actions are in the best interests of the mission.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Integrity



COURAGE

I will consistently aim for transformational change, identify and take action and stepping back when others have things better, and empowering leadership to do the same. When others follow, I will provide moral support to our goals, unless there is a risk to our mission or safety and well-being. I will build them and others' trust consistently in my words.

I will help to create passion and credibility to lead in our mission.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Courage of conviction, Humility



RESPECTFUL FEEDBACK

I will create and give constructive feedback as an opportunity for becoming stronger. I will seek for mutual respect - instead I will practice continuous feedback, offering the my colleagues and leaders as being manager and being asked to see me as a colleague to have a message.

I will work to receive feedback through active listening, being vulnerable and providing feedback with respectful communication and language.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Integrity, Humility



ACCOUNTABLE COLLABORATION

I will ensure that goals are clearly defined and mutually agreed, and build all team members, including myself, equally responsible for the individual and collective efforts to achieve them. I will measure my own contribution by the extent to which I can make to team success.

I will recognize and value personal collaboration, while acknowledging your performance and decisions.

ActionAid values to which this relates: Integrity



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