

# POWER **In** PEOPLE

Newsletter March 2022



**IWD2022: Empowering communities to fight gender inequality and climate change**

**act:onaid**

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**March, 2022**



# Inside

Inside .....	1
Foreword .....	2
Tree planting for climate change mitigation.....	3
Promoting girls and women’s rights through sports .....	5
Smallholder farmers supported with irrigation system .....	7
Families urged to avoid conflicts .....	8
Families supported with cooking gas, vegetable seeds.....	9
Parliamentarian calls on solidarity to overcome climate change effects.....	10
“Women are no longer beggars” – Mukamatayo speaks out .....	11
ActionAid in promoting Gender Accountability.....	13
A project to empower youth to prevent and fight SGBV in Rwanda kicked off.....	14
Awareness on GBV prevention through Radio/TV shows.....	15
Where we work .....	16

# Foreword

Welcome to March 2022 Newsletter that focuses on women's empowerment as we have been commemorating International Women's Day, a campaign that was executed under national theme "Gender equality to address climate change".

Climate change impacts men and women differently, largely due to their gender differentiated relative powers, roles and responsibilities at the household and community levels. Women tend to be overly burdened with household work and caring for children, the sick and the elderly.

Commemorating this year's International Women's Day, It was a great occasion to reflect on pivotal role played by women in natural resources management as well as in other productive activities at the household and community levels that put them in a position to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental conditions.

Trees and forests have a clear role to play in helping to mitigate climate change. Tree planting activity was carried out within this campaign as valid ways to offset unavoidable carbon emissions and also provides a number of other environmental and social benefits that many other offsetting options do not provide.

In Solidarity!



**Josephine Irene Uwamariya**  
Country Director

ActionAid Rwanda in partnership with Kayonza District and partners has planted 16,000 trees for climate change mitigation. In this occasion, the participants were tipped off on prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence and teen pregnancies. However, there is a need to keep the practice as the effort to maintain climate change is a process.

In Nyanza District, right holders were supported with environmentally friendly cooking stoves. ActionAid provided 65 families with 65 energy serving cooking stoves to help women in the communities to use less fuel-wood usage, less trees cut down, and lower greenhouse gas emissions that will help to mitigate climate changes effects. This was done as well to help women smallholder farmers in time management and largely contribute to reduce burden of unpaid care work that affects women and girls in our communities.

To keep the momentum in changing people's lives, ActionAid Rwanda have launched a project to empowering young people to prevent and fight sexual and gender-based violence in Rwanda that was financed by European Union. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of CSOs in Rwanda to promote and protect the sexual & reproductive rights of teenage girls & vulnerable young people, with a focus on increasing knowledge, access to appropriate health services and combatting sexual and GBV.

## Kayonza: GBV prevention campaign coincided with tree planting for climate change mitigation



Nyemazi John Bosco, Mayor of Kayonza District addressing citizens on SGBV prevention after tree planting

*By Theogene Uwiringiyimana*

Women in developing countries are generally the first to respond to managing the environmental capital that surrounds them. From collecting water for cooking and cleaning, using the land for livestock, foraging for food in rivers and reefs, and collecting firewood, women all over the planet use and interact with natural resources and ecosystems daily.

According to the United Nations Development Programme, they are also the first to feel the effects of climate change when they are forced to travel longer and longer distances to find what they need to feed their families.

Addressing global indifference towards the issues of sustainability and climate change mitigation was core message for this year's International Women's Day, that lead ActionAid Rwanda to carry out joint campaign for climate conservation and women's right protection.

ActionAid in partnership with Kayonza District and partners has planted 16,000 trees for climate change mitigation. In this occasion, the participants were tipped off on prevention of Gender Based Violence and teen pregnancies.

In her remark, Josephine Uwamariya, Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda reminded that women have had a special relationship with nature through enormous contribution to the well-being and sustainable development of their communities.

“In celebration of International Women's Day, ActionAid has launched a multi-faceted campaign including environmental protection as one of the key to sustainable development. We have to take care of the family in which we live in by caring girls and women because they are the ones who suffer the most impact of climate change. The girl child drops out school because she has to take care of the family and take care of the household chores such as fetching woods, water etc.” said Josephine.

“Commemorating International Women’s Day should not be an act of only celebration, but rather a beginning to preserve the life of a woman, the life of a girl child as we work together to combat any form of violence. Let's work together to protect the rights of every girl, every child and every woman starting from our respective families as everything starts within the family.” Added Josephine.



Women in Kayonza District took lead in tree planting to mitigate effects of climate change (Photo ActionAid)

John Bosco Nyemazi, the Mayor of Kayonza District planted trees as mobilization to his residents, urging them to take lead in environment protection. He further reminded the them that they should put more effort in Combating sexual and gender-based violence and Protecting children by returning to school those children who have dropped out their studies.

Kayonza District is the second largest district of Rwanda and one of the most arable districts of the country located in Eastern province. However, it has been massively affected by droughts in most of its sectors. In 2016, Kayonza District and other districts in Eastern Province were affected by a severe drought, and many people become food insecure and the Government had to provide food relief and water for livestock to support the affected families.



From Left: Tunga Catherine - representative of National Women Council in Kayonza District, Josephine Uwamariya - Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda, Nyemazi John Bosco - Mayor of Kayonza District and Jimmy Mulisa - Founder and President of UMURI Foundation joining community in tree planting (Photo by ActionAid)



Josephine Uwamariya, Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda planting tree (Photo AAR)

**ActionAid Rwanda partnered with UMURI Foundation in promoting girls and women’s rights through sports**

*By Theogene Uwiringiyimana*



ActionAid Rwanda in partnership with UMURI Foundation, an organization that strives to empower young people of Rwanda in regaining hope, poverty alleviation and education attainment using sport as a tool for social change, has supported football and rugby women’s tournament that was organized as mobilization tool for raising awareness and promoting women’s rights.

The tournament was part of International Women’s Day campaign that was organized with the aims of reflecting on teen pregnancies, fighting gender-based violence and tackling gender and climate change issues.

Clare Katwesigye, Women’s Rights & Advocacy Coordinator at ActionAid Rwanda highlights importance of sports in promoting women and girls’ rights.

“Sports was used in form of mobilization to reach young people especially girls and we take part in this girls’ tournament that was organized by our partner, UMURI Foundation. We saw it as a strategy of mobilising more girls and empower them with knowledge on gender-based violence and teen pregnancies prevention. We believe that through sport activities, young women and girls can overcome other obstacles that would lead them into other activities that will not benefit them such as involving themselves in drugs abuse, among others.” Said Clare.

“It was also an opportunity to empower these young women and girls to know their potentials that will help in shaping their future. When we talk about equality in sport, women and girls should not be left out as they are all capable and can do even better than boys. In terms of economic development, if these girls are empowered in sport, they will be professional footballers or Rugby players and this will earn them enough income.” added Clare.

According to Jimmy Mulisa, the founder and president of UMURI Foundation, girls are still facing barriers limiting them from engaging in constructive social and development activities, unlikely to their fellow brothers who often have green light to participate in those activities including sports.



“One day, a girl approached me asking me to convince her parents that she had to play football. This shows that most parents deprive their daughters the right to sport activities, ignoring the fact that sports protect their children from attending to unworthy activities.” Said Jimmy.

“Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow” is the 2022 global theme for International Women’s Day which was officially commemorated on Tuesday, 08 March 2022. In Rwanda, the theme was locally contextualized as “Gender equality to address climate change.



Women playing football match in 6 Aside Tournament organized by UMURI Foundation (Photo: UMURI Foundation)



Clare Katwesigye, Women’s Rights and Advocacy Coordinator highlighting role of sports in women’s empowerment (Photo: UMURI Foundation)



Jimmy Mulisa, The Founder and President of UMURI Foundation said young women and girls are still deprived of rights to participate in sports activities (Photo: UMURI Foundation)

**IWD 2022 in Gisagara: AAR supported women cooperatives with irrigation system to protect their agriculture from climate change**



IWD 2022 celebration kicked off with awareness walk heading to Mutimawurugo Village (Photo ActionAid)

As part of celebrations of International Women’s Day 2022, ActionAid Rwanda supported 4 women cooperatives in Gisagara Local Rights Program located in Gisagara District with irrigation system to maintain their agriculture during dry season.

The 4 cooperatives namely DUTERIMBERE, ABUNZUBUMWE, TWISUNGANE and TUZAMURANE from Gishubi Sector that were supported, expressed their happiness and how the support will improve their agriculture.

“For this irrigation materials received we are so happy, before we used to cultivate only one season annually but today we are going to cultivate in all seasons, no wasting of time, we are going to cultivate different vegetables no more climate change challenges in our agriculture activities and this will increase agriculture production and income” Said NIYONAGIRA Jacqueline who represented women cooperatives that received the irrigation system.



Women Cooperative members after receiving irrigation materials provided by ActionAid (Photo: AAR)



4 families supported with cows (photo: AAR)

**IWD 2022 in Nyanza District: Parents urged to avoid family conflicts for the sake of children**



The celebrations of International Women’s Day 2022 were marked by a variety of activities aimed at sensitizing community, calling on protection of family by avoiding domestic conflicts among the parents that lead to divorces that are affecting children.

Nyanza District located in Southern Province, is one of ActionAid Rwanda’s area of operations, it is the same place where regional celebrations for International Women’s Day at Southern province level took place. As part of celebrations, ActionAid Rwanda supported 65 families of sponsored children with energy saving cooking stoves.

In reference to this year’s national theme, “Gender Equality to address climate change”, Alice KAYITESI, the governor of Southern province advised the community members to focus on protecting environment to minimize the effects of climate change. She further appreciated ActionAid for having supported the community with improved energy saving cooking stoves and recommended other families to have such stoves for climate change mitigation.

“I urge family members to combat any form of sexual and gender-based violence, encouraging parents to take lead in combating domestic violence that is contributing to divorces which are affecting children as well.” Added Alice.



Governor of Southern Province urged residents to avoid family conflict for the sake of their children

The support to the 65 Families of environmentally friendly cooking stoves will help women in the communities to use less fuel-wood usage, less trees cut down, and lower greenhouse gas emissions that will help to mitigate climate changes effects. They will also help women smallholder farmers in time management and largely contribute to reduction of unpaid care work that affects women and girls in our communities.



65 families supported with energy saving cooking stoves (Photo: ActionAid Rwanda)

**Families supported with cooking gas, vegetable seeds to improve their lives in Musanze**



8 families were supported with cooking gas during IWD celebrations (Photo: ActionAid)

In the celebrations of International Women’s Day, ActionAid Rwanda through Muko and Shingiro Local Rights programs located in Musanze District, has supported 400 community members with vegetable seeds and other 8 families with cooking gas and pans to enable them to adapt to new cooking system that conserve environment.

The cooking gas provided were not enough to the whole community but was raising awareness campaign to shift from traditional cooking with woods that heavily contributing to deforestation, air pollution and climate change and adhere to using cooking gas which in addition to contributing to climate protection, also helps in reduction to Unpaid Care Works that burden women through firewood collection.

Recipients of the cooking gas and pans expressed their gratitude on the support, adding that it will protect them from going to bushes to collect firewood where at times they are in great danger of being sexually violated. In addition, they will be saving time for other activities because cooking will be taking them less time.

“I am very thankful to the government Rwanda for bringing us adequate partners like ActionAid. I am a mother of six children and one husband. We have been struggling to get firewood and again so often getting breathing difficulties due to the smoke. I can’t forget to mention how much time it has been taking me to cook for my children and husband. I am thankful because I never expected to own a cooking gas.” said Mukandamage Julienne, one of the rightholders supported with cooking gas. Recipients of the vegetable seeds have also thanked AAR for the support, and they committed to play their part in the fight against malnutrition which has been in issue in the entire district.

In his remark, Michel Ndayambaje, the Local Right Programs Coordinator in Musanze reminded men to change mindset to share the house chores and other care works with women, and called on government to establish infrastructures to reduce women unpaid care work including water, energy saving cooking stoves and Early Childhood Development Centre.

Besides ActionAid support, cooperative members in Shingiro supported their fellow residents with 5 sheep. They are happy to support because they were also supported by ActionAid before and now they are passing on to others.



Women right holders receiving vegetable seeds provided by ActionAid (Photo: ActionAid)

## IWD2022 Celebrations in Ruheru: Parliamentarian calls on solidarity to overcome climate change effects



Hon. Elizabeth Mukashema addressing residents of Nyaruguru during IWD 2022 celebrations (Photo: ActionAid)

In the celebrations, ActionAid Rwanda supported 10 vulnerable families with hygienic materials and utensils, and six families supported with cows that will provide them with manures, thus improving their agriculture. Other children who have resumed their studies after drop out, were supported with school materials as



Gashema Janvier, Vice Mayor for Economic Development in Nyaruguru District handing over a cow to rightholder to improve her agriculture. (Photo: ActionAid)

In the celebrations of International Women’s Day 2022, ActionAid Rwanda partnered with rights holders in Ruheru Local Right Program in Nyaruguru District, local leaders and members from Rwanda Parliament to reflect on climate change and it’s nexus to gender inequality.

On 8th March 2022, the participants convened to reflect on sources of sexual and gender-based violence and to raise awareness on climate change adaptation and mitigation as drivers of sustainable development.

In her remark, Hon MUKASHEMA Elizabeth, a member of Rwanda parliament appreciated ActionAid’s outstanding work in improving lives of rights residents in Ruheru Sector, urging community members to embrace solidarity to overcome their problems.

“Gender Equality is important in dealing with effects of climate change. As community members, it is our responsibility to work together as family regardless of gender status. Women and men need to work together in addressing all the related issue and attain Gender equality and climate justice.” Said Elizabeth.



Children who resumed their studies after drop out were supported with school materials (Photo: ActionAid)

## “Women are no longer beggars” – Mukamatayo speaks out on IWD Celebrations



Two families received cows from their fellow community members who were previously supported by ActionAid (Photo:ActionAid)

Mukamatayo Anne Marie is one of ActionAid rightholder in Murundi Local Right Program located in Karongi District who is supported through women cooperative.

In the celebrations of International Women’s Day (IWD), she reiterated what she passed through after her husband’s death, calling on other fellow women to rise up and strive for their bright future, reminding them that their life should not depend on begging.

“I am very grateful to our government and its partners especially ActionAid that has been supporting us to get out of the box that we lived in for long time. In past, women were excluded from economic activities and it becomes pure for widows but now things have changed. I am a widow, but it is no longer a barrier for me. ActionAid helped us to get together in women’s groups and I can testify on behalf of many others who have the similar story as me that Women are no longer beggars.

We can do all activities as men and we can even do it better than them.” Said Mukamatayo.

“When I lost my husband, I thought it is over for me. I had no idea of what to do but now through different trainings and other supports, I am different person with full of hope and enthusiasm. As one small example, Recently I have been able to pay for home tap water. Fetching water was a big challenge for me and I decided to request a loan of 100,000Rwf in a bank that I used for home tap water. Now I have successfully paid my loan and I am planning to take another loan for another purpose. So, I want to sensitize my fellow women to demystify working with financial institutions. Women are also able to take loans and use them efficiently and pay the back. I am an example.” Added Mukamatayo.



Mukamatayo Anne Marie addressing participants in IWD celebration in Karongi (Photo: ActionAid)

Annet Kakibibi, the Speak Out project manager that is being implemented by ActionAid called upon togetherness in family affairs for faster and sustainable development.

“The International Women’s Day was adopted by UN to show that women are evenly crucial as men in world development journey. Back in the days, majority believed that men are only agents of development but now we are witnesses of development achieved through women and men working together. I take this opportunity to call upon men to support women and to foster their development because when a wife and a husband are all economically active then the family development will be faster and sustainable.” Said Annet.

Two families received cows from their fellows that had been supported by ActionAid with cow and then they passed on to their neighbours.



Participants in the celebrations of IWD (Photo: ActionAid)

## ActionAid joins Gender Monitoring office in promoting gender accountability

*By Theogene Uwiringiyimana*

Gender Monitoring Office, the Government body for Monitoring the respect and compliance of gender related commitments across public, private, non-governmental and religious institutions, has annual campaign dubbed “Gender Accountability Day” that convene partners from all sectors to discuss on their role in promoting accountability to gender equality and fighting gender-based violence in the community.

ActionAid Rwanda was among the partners that participated in rounds of dialogues that were carried out to increase awareness on accountability to gender equality and equitable GBV service delivery to victims. Through Gender Accountability Day, problems that are affecting communities were discussed with both public and Civil Society Organisations to collaboratively find solutions.

Teen mothers were identified and provided with space to express their problems and how they can be resolved; identification of families living in conflicts and how to support them to overcome their problems; and how to mitigate the alarming issues of child defilement and teenage pregnancies.

“Gender equality is possible, what we need to do is to change mindset and attitudes starting basically within the family. It is from the family that we overcome cultural barriers to gender equality that have placed all burdens related to Unpaid Care Works over the woman.” Said Josephine Uwamariya, Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda during dialogues with local leaders in



Participants in dialogues that convened village leaders in Kamonyi District, Southern Province.

Kamonyi District, Southern Province.

Apart from supporting teen mothers with sanitary materials, ActionAid has participated in different related dialogues between Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) intervening in gender and GBV prevention/response; and other dialogues that featured GMO with local leaders that were aiming at mobilizing the new leaders and a community of practice around gender accountability and good governance by providing a space and tools for increase effectiveness to account for gender responsive services at local level.

The dialogue with local leaders has been an opportunity for them to share experience on effective ways of handling gender related issues in their respective communities. They also committed to strive and ensure that their villages are free of gender-based violence through mobilizing community to prevent GBV issues and report them timely for handling.

According to reports by the Ministry of Health, teenage pregnancy has been increasing. From 2016 to 2020. 98,432 cases of teenage pregnancy (aged 15-19) were recorded in all health centers across the country, which calls for increased efforts and synergy between service providers, partners and stakeholders to fight this problem.



ActionAid was among core partners in Gender Accountability Day

**A project to empower youth to prevent and fight SGBV in Rwanda kicked off**



ActionAid Rwanda and implementing partner Faith Victory Association (FVA) launched a project funded by European Union that aims at promoting and protecting the sexual and reproductive health and rights of teenage girls and vulnerable young people, with a focus on increasing knowledge, access to appropriate health services and combatting sexual and gender-based violence in Gasabo District in City of Kigali and Karongi District in Western province.

This two-year project will mainly benefit in schools and out of school youths with a large majority being girls and young women, peer educators, schools’ facilitators. Other key stakeholders are government service providers and a network of local civil society organisations already actively involved in the fight against teenage pregnancies and the promotion of Sexual and Health Reproductive Rights among the youth.

The project will benefit 1200 young people aged between 10-18 who will be the members of 40 SRHR clubs to be set up in schools in targeted Districts and 600 young people aged between 18-24 who are out of schools that will be identified by ActionAid and FVA in consultation with community and peer educators.



Director of Family Promotion and Child Protection in the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion addressing participants in the project launch (Photo: ActionAid)

**Awareness on GBV prevention and teenage pregnancy through Radio/TV talk show and social media engagement**



From Left: Andrew Kareba (Journalist from Rwanda Radio and TV), Josephine Uwamariya (Country Director of ActionAid Rwanda and John Bosco Nyemazi (Mayor of Kayonza District) in the studio of Radio/TV Rwanda.



From right: Jimmy Mulisa (Founder and President of UMURI Foundation and Antonia Mutoro (National Coordinator of FAWE Rwanda Chapter in the studio of Rwanda Radio/TV .



ActionAid Rwanda @actionaidrwanda · Mar 8  
As we celebrate #IWD2022 🌟, we are challenging gender stereotypes, discrimination and bias by calling out gendered actions and assumptions. #BreakTheBias  
Under the global theme: "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow". #HappyWomensDay



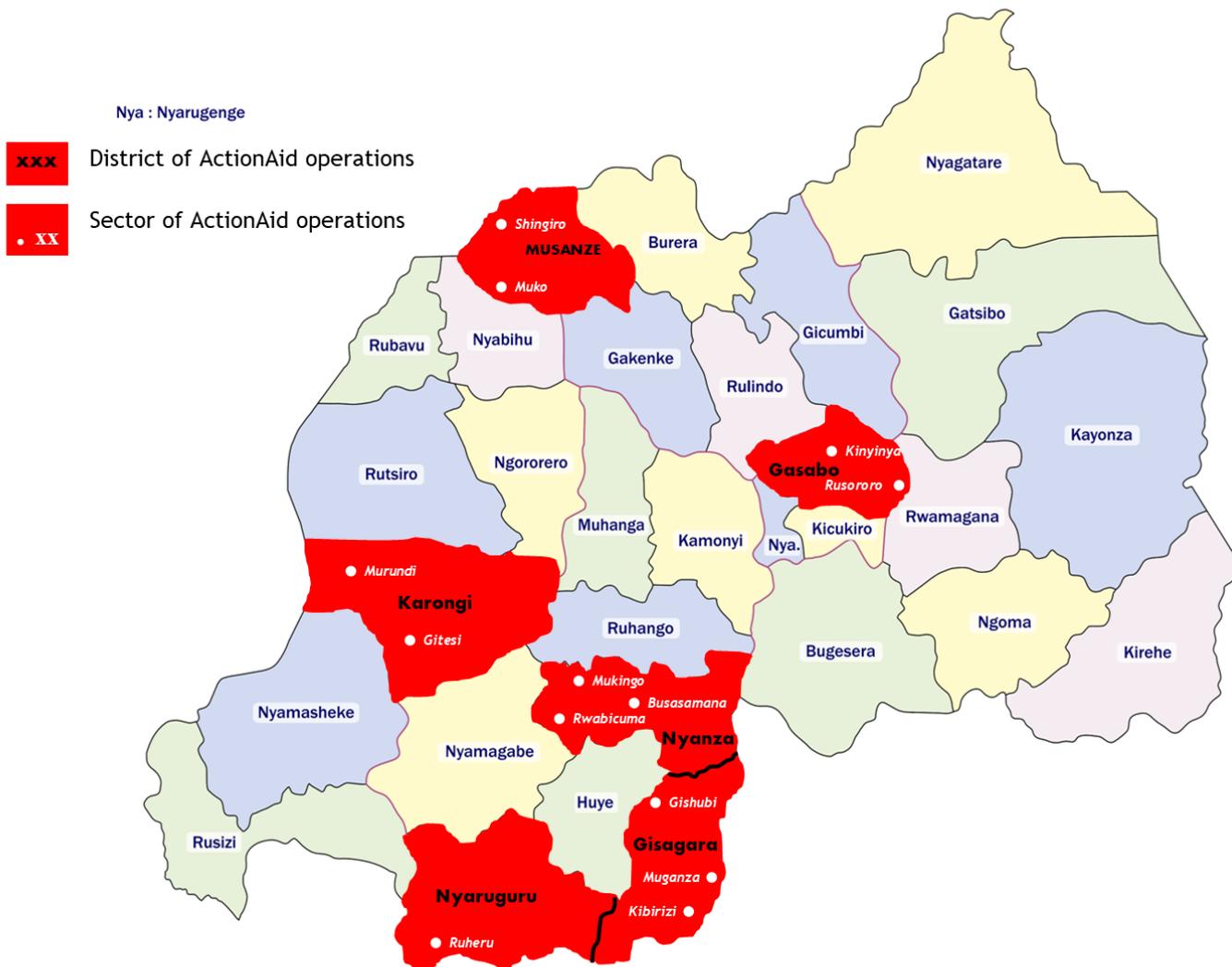
Ministry of Gender & Family Promotion | Rwanda and 9 others



ActionAid Rwanda @actionaidrwanda · Mar 3  
We are calling for everyone – no matter his/her gender identity – to actively choose to challenge stereotypes and broaden perceptions for a more equal world. #BreakTheBias #IWD2022 #Children @KayonzaDistrict @UmuriFoundation @RwandaGender @Rwanda\_Child @RwandaWomen @Josephine287



# Where we work



## ActionAid Rwanda secured fund from RGB to address SGBV in Nyanza District

In an effort to further strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organizations and to ensure their contribution to Rwanda's transformation agenda, Rwanda Governance Board awarded to ActionAid Rwanda a grant of Twenty five million Rwandan francs (FRW 25,000,000) for a one year project to strengthening community based structures to address sexual and gender based violence in Nyanza District.

The awarded fund comes after a successful grant proposal that was responding to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and RGB call for proposals for local Non-Government Organisations that play an essential role in community development, ensuring human rights, transparency and citizens' participation.

The project duration is from April 1st, 2022 and shall expire on March 31st, 2023 upon completion of planned activities.





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