

POWER **in** PEOPLE

NEWSLETTER January - May 2018



**ActionAid; 35 years of impact
in Rwanda**

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Executive Producer ActionAid Rwanda
Managing Editor James Butare
Content Developer Maria Kaitesi
Design AAR Communications Unit

ActionAid Rwanda
Tel:+250 280 300 142
www.actionaid.org
[Twitter.com/actionaid](https://twitter.com/actionaid)
[Facebook.com/actionaid](https://facebook.com/actionaid)

Foreword



Dear Readers,

Welcome to another issue of the AAR newsletter. We ended the year with lots of activities and began a new year too swamped with huge milestones to celebrate. In December we hosted the International Board Meeting and we were delighted to have Adriano Campolina, the ActionAid General Secretary, visit us.

A few months ago, we celebrated 35 years of impact in Rwanda and launched our new Country Strategic Paper 11 under the theme, “*Transformative Development Based on Rights and Dignity-Together for social justice.*” ActionAid Rwanda will ensure coherence in the implementation of two key priorities in this strategy guided by the 3Rs that include rights, resilience and redistribution, in alignment to the global strategy and national priorities, to achieve social justice and transformative development geared to Rwanda’s aspirations.

This issue highlights some of the numerous gripping stories of AAR’s work together with its partners. As you flip pages, you will find stories about the many visits we have been hosting, the public dialogues held to encourage citizen participation and get their views on several pressing issues, the community scorecard that holds leaders accountable and many more.

As we continuously strengthen our efforts to eradicate poverty and injustices with a focus on mostly women and girls, **Power in People** remains our driver of change. We do appreciate and value your views and look forward to your feedback. Have a pleasant read!

In solidarity,

*Josephine Irene Uwamariya,
Country Director,
ActionAid Rwanda.*

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF IMPACT IN RWANDA



ActionAid Regional Director, Honorable Mutesi (Guest of Honor) and Isaac Nyarwaya, AA Rwanda Board Chair paying keen attention during the event

ActionAid Rwanda recently celebrated its 35 years anniversary. The celebration was held during the close of the One Africa Country Directors' meeting that was hosted by ActionAid Rwanda.

During the celebration, Jemal Ahmed, ActionAid Regional Director in Africa, stated that ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) is a transformed and vibrant organization in advancing ActionAid federation mission as far as the Rwanda context.

"I have witnessed remarkable achievements mainly in the areas of women rights, women economic justice, livelihood and food security and putting women at the center. We see all that through the testimonies of the women from the community. ActionAid Rwanda has been explicit

in its work and its conviction to work with women, young people and children. On top of the program achievements, AAR journey for its self-governance by its own citizens is on the right track and should be recognized during this anniversary. All this has been achieved in the journey of the three and a half decades because of the tireless effort of staff, matured and passionate leadership and having a responsible board to the cause of its citizens. We must recognize community mainly women role for the success of AAR in the country," Jemal cited.

He further noted that ActionAid Federation is grateful for Rwanda's achievements and added that while celebrating all

the successes achieved from the last 35 years, AAR will visage with its new Country Strategic Paper 11 to build the future from the lessons of the past; considering the newly evolving realities that affect women and young people and to contribute to making a difference on gender equality, poverty eradication as well as social justice.

Isaac Nyarwaya, the AAR Board Chairperson shared background of AAR's journey since its inception in May 1982 since the signing of an MOU with the government of Rwanda. He said that AAR has tackled poverty and injustices among women, particularly smallholder farmers



AA Rwanda Country Director, Josephine Uwamariya cheerfully giving her remarks at the 35 years celebration

since women contribute over 70 percent of the labor force in agriculture.

“Today am glad to inform you that AAR has transitioned to a national organization as of January 2017 and has a fully-fledged board of nine members and we also participate actively in the entire family of ActionAid International Federation. AAR has contributed to the reduction

of poverty and social injustice in its areas of intervention. Through support from the government of Rwanda, AAR along with other development partners has greatly contributed to policy influence through evidence-based research and public dialogue, “added Nyarwaya.

He also noted that through the human rights-based approach, AAR has reached around 35,000 direct beneficiaries/rightsholders of whom

22,000 are women, formed groups and cooperatives to increase farm productivity using climate friendly methods, established small scale income generating activities to fight poverty and restore their dignity.

AAR has also supported with establishment of over 12 ECDs, through people led advocacy and policy influence, constructed over 500 classrooms, 103 playgrounds, and promoted rights in schools

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which has enhanced the learning environment.

Nyarwaya emphasized that these milestones wouldn't have been achieved without the resilient right holders, partners, stakeholders, resource partners and the global federation. He also attributed the successes to the commitment and cooperation of the government of Rwanda.

Honorable Anitha Mutesi, who was the Guest of Honor at the celebration also appreciate AAR's work and achievements over the last 35 years.

“ActionAid is one of the outstanding organizations based on the transformational work it has done and still doing here in Rwanda. We are privileged to be working with AAR and the fact that we do work with them to reach communities, shows that we appreciate their work, “she pointed out.

Mutesi, likewise noted how she is delighted to see right holders that can boldly speak before large crowds about their achievements through AAR support and how they've been empowered.

Esperance Nyirahabiyambere, one of AAR's right holders also appreciated AAR for having empowered her with knowledge and skills as she's now empowered, can claim her rights and can fend for her family through the economic empowerment she received too. She also noted that through AAR, she's been able to travel to different nations for meetings related to agriculture where's she's learned a lot and been able to share her experience as well.

Long serving staff and formerly AAR sponsored beneficiaries who have stood out were recognised, during the celebration.



ActionAid Regional Director, Honorable Mutesi (Guest of Honor), Nyarwaya Rwanda Board Chair and AA Rwanda Country Director applaud after officially launching the new CSP

New Country Strategic Paper (2018-2023) launched

ActionAid Rwanda(AAR) also launched its second Country Strategic Paper 2018-2023 under the theme, “Transformative Development Based on Rights and Dignity-Together for Social Justice”, during its 35 years anniversary.

The two key priorities that ActionAid Rwanda will focus on based on its recently launched Country Strategic Paper include addressing the structural causes of violence against women and girls and secure women's economic justice as well as strengthening resilient livelihoods and securing climate justice.

In alignment to the global strategy and national priorities, AAR is committed to ensuring coherence in the implementation of two key priorities in this strategy guided by rights, resilience and redistribution, to achieve social justice and transformative development geared to the country's aspirations for prosperity for all.

The overall goal that AAR will work towards achieving for this strategy is; to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication by shifting power, redistribution of resources, strengthening the resilience of communities and enforcing rights of people living in poverty and exclusion.



James Butare, Head of Programmes & Policy enlightens the audience about what the new CSP entails



A girl explains to the bystanders how she and others are benefiting from the girls' rooms



Rightholders exhibiting some of their work to the visitors at the 35 years event



Rightholders happily display some of their work that generates income for them



Former AA Rwanda staff standing up for appreciation of their contribution



Urunana acting out a sketch on Unpaid Care Work during the 35 years Anniversary Celebration



Mwanafunzi ,FVA Executive Director, receives an accolade on behalf of Faith Victory Association as one of AAR's outstanding partners

Greek Volunteers take solidarity trip to Karongi District

A team of 47 volunteers from Greece visited ActionAid Rwanda on a solidarity trip. While visiting the communities in Karongi District, the team supported with the construction of Girls' rooms and toilets at Ecole Primary school, Muvungu in Gitesi sector.

The Greek Volunteers also visited Gitesi ECD where they spent time with the children, played and interacted with them. The children were excited to spend time with the Greece volunteers.



Greek supporters helping with the construction of a school in Muvungu primary school, Gitesi sector

The team also visited Duhagurukiramajyambere Cooperative.

Members of this cooperative merrily shared their knowledge & skills while teaching the Greece volunteers basket weaving techniques.



Mukagemanyi from Duhagurukiramajyambere cooperative teaching a Greek supporter how to weave baskets



Greek supporters having a light moment with children at one of the ECDs in Gitesi sector

Girls' Camp; empowering girls with knowledge on SRHR



Josephine Uwamariya, AAR Country Director, speaking to the girls during the girls' camp

"I have learned a lot about Sexual & Reproductive Health Rights. Now I know my rights and no one can take advantage of me. It's my first time to attend a girls' camp but I wish to attend more and get equipped with knowledge. I wish all my friends can have a chance to attend the girls' camp," Florence Niyigena, 14 years old, one of the girls who attended the girls' camp.

Niyigena, a student from Nyanza district, made these remarks while attending the Girls' Camp that was organised by ActionAid Rwanda for girls between the ages of 9 to 18 years, from the five districts where AAR intervenes.

The girls' camp is a platform to raise awareness to girls on the importance of their education where they learn

laws protecting children and women, SRHR, cognitive skills, discover commonalities and celebrate differences while learning to express themselves in a positive manner.

According to Clare Katwesigye, the Women's Rights & Advocacy Coordinator at ActionAid Rwanda, the main purpose of the camp was to equip girls with knowledge about their rights and reproductive health.

"Girls at that tender age face so many challenges in the area of reproductive health and usually they are even about their rights. So we want to empower them with knowledge. We believe this will motivate them to be responsible, reduce school drop outs and the rate of teenage pregnancies," she noted.



Participants busy taking notes during one of the girls' camp session

Murekatete also pledged to share what she had learned with other girls in her village who weren't able to attend the Girls Camp.

Over 100 girls from 5 districts across Rwanda took part in the week long Girls' Camp .ActionAid Rwanda organises a girl's camp every year to empower girls in raising awareness on their rights and mentor them to grow up responsible for themselves and be agents of change in their communities.

Among other topics covered at the camp included sexual and Reproductive Health Rights with a focus on teenage pregnancy, sexual gender based violence, introduction to laws protecting children and women, leadership skills, cultural values and gift raising, creativity and cognitive skills.

Louise Murekatete, 18, noted that she's learned how and where to report during cases of abuse and violence against girls.

"I have also been empowered to always make the right decisions concerning my life and not be influenced by peer pressure. Our parents never talk to us about such issues yet when we get problems they are also affected. I hope our parents stop shying away and realise how vital it is," said Murekatete.



ActionAid Global Federation Secretary General, Adriano Campolina and International Board Members addressing the students during the girls' camp

ActionAid Supporters applaud AAR work



Italian supporters interacting with the community members in Nyanza LRP during their visit

A team of ActionAid staff and fundraisers led by Jessica Thompson from ActionAid Italy had a one week visit with ActionAid Rwanda (AAR). The team; which was comprised of members of the fundraising team from different parts of Italy as well as Switzerland was visiting Rwanda to see firsthand, ActionAid Rwanda's work in the Local Right Programme areas.

The team visited Local Rights Programs (LRPs) in Gisagara and Nyanza districts, Southern Province of Rwanda. In the LRPs, the team visited two ECDS and several cooperatives.

Daniele Cicala, one of the visiting AAR supporters hailed AAR for the great work they have done. "It is apparent that more financial support is needed but it is astounding to see the progress that has been made, both visually and from the testimonies that we have heard over these past few days."

"After seeing the work being done in Rwanda, we feel committed to work harder to seek support for Rwanda. I am very motivated now that I see how my work is helping to transform lives here in Rwanda." he added.

Laura, one of the team leaders commented on the beauty of Rwanda, saying that it was one of the most beautiful countries she had ever had the pleasure of visiting. She expressed the desire to keep coming back, saying that Rwanda had captured her heart.

Clemence Gasengayire, the Vice Mayor in charge of Social Affairs in Gisagara district while speaking to the Italian visitors lauded the partnership that exists between AAR and the district authorities. She asserted that AAR is a member of Joint Action Development Forum (JADF).



Italian supporters pose for a photo shoot before they play soccer with children in a Nyanza based school

“ActionAid Rwanda is one of the best performers in this district. AAR has greatly improved the area of education in Gisagara district. We now have ECDs built by ActionAid, they have built classrooms, they work hand in hand to support the transformation of the rural woman and girl child. Through their support; children are able to attend school and now we have the lowest rate of dropouts in the district than we have ever had. We truly appreciate the work they do here and in the other districts they operate,” Gasengayire emphasized.



Italian supporters pose for a group photo with some of the staff at ActionAid Rwanda offices

Josephine Uwamariya, ActionAid Rwanda’s Country Director thanked the Italian team for their visit, expressing joy for choosing to come to Rwanda out of all the countries that they could have visited. She urged them to be AAR’s ambassadors, using their experience of Rwanda to garner more support for the activities. The Italian team supported one of the cooperatives they had visited with a cow and pledged to do more soon.

A TALE OF TRIUMPH



Mukandekezi tending to her cow that she bought after getting empowered by ActionAid

Maria Mukandekezi is a 59 year old single widowed mother who lives with her grandchildren in Ruhindamiyaga village, Murundi sector, Karongi district. Mukandekezi recalls a time when she was living a miserable life. She was left to take care of 9 children when her husband passed away. She was very poor and could hardly afford the bare necessities. She did not have any land to farm and she made a meagre living through digging for other people in their gardens.

“My life was a sad tale even before when I was married; I was a sad lonely woman. My first husband used to beat me. He was very violent. Even my second husband was not any better. He would refuse to take care of his children and the burden of caring for all nine of them was on my shoulders. When they died, I could not afford school fees, medical insurance, even food was a hassle. Many times I would go to bed in tears because my children were hungry and I had nothing to give them” She asserts with a shudder.

However, in 2007 when she and a group of other women formed a cooperative known as TwizeraneMuzanga, her situation slowly started

to change. First, she gained self-esteem and she started making some money but this was just the beginning. In the same year she joined the group, ActionAid Rwanda started empowering the group’s members including her. They were trained in sustainable agriculture and livestock farming. They were also sensitized on domestic violence. In addition AAR supported the 27 member rural women cooperative with livestock.

She used the knowledge which she had acquired from the trainings to become vocal and empowered. Today she is a Health Advisor and the National Women’s Council President at cell level. Through a pig she had received from ActionAid Rwanda she was later able to buy a cow. Today, she says she lives a life of triumph.

“My life has changed life ever since I joined a cooperative in 2007. It has been 10 years of total transformation in my life, physically, mentally, financially and socially. Honestly, I could not have done this without ActionAid Rwanda helping our community.” She says with a smile.

ACTIONAID BANGLADESH TEAM WOWED BY AAR ACHIEVEMENTS



Bangladesh smallholder farmers interacting with fellow farmers from Duhagurukir'amajambere cooperative to share learning experience

"I wish I could stay here for a whole year to study the way ActionAid Rwanda implements its policies. I am so impressed by your hard work that the staff puts into serving the community," Ahmad Ibn Salim, the POWER Project Officer, ActionAid Bangladesh.

Ahmad Ibn Salim is part of a team of 5 people that visited ActionAid Rwanda from the Power Project in Bangladesh. This team also comprised of two representatives of the rural women farmer cooperatives in Bangladesh as well as ActionAid's International POWER Project Coordinator, Christina Kwangwari who coordinates ActionAid's FLOW project in four countries; Ghana, Rwanda, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This team was in Rwanda on an exchange learning trip organized between the two countries.

The team traveled to districts where the POWER Project is implemented including Karongi, Musanze, Nyanza and Gisagara. They also visited partner organizations like Tubibe Amahoro, and FVA (Faith Victory Association).

One of the places they visited was Gitesi sector, Karongi district where they visited one of the small holder farmer cooperatives that receives support from ActionAid Rwanda called Tuzamure Agaseke Cooperative that has managed to attain a maize milling plant.

Speaking to the visitors; Esperance Nyirahabiyambere the President of the Cooperative spoke of the impact of owning the mill, remarking that it reduces the expenses of having to travel to grind their maize in Kigali. She also noted that having a maize mill has empowered



Bangladesh smallholder farmers visiting Tubibe Amahoro Association, one of AAR partners working along with the Power project

them as business women thus helping them get out of poverty and providing the people of Gitesi employment.

“I am always impressed at the great work that ActionAid Rwanda does. But it’s always great to go to the project areas to hear and view for yourself the transformative change that the POWER project has caused in rural women small holder farmer lives. Seeing the joy on their faces; It’s everything.” Kwangwari remarked.

They also visited the Early Childhood Development center in Gitesi where they met and spoke to the ECD staff and parents on the positive impact the ECD has had towards reducing on Unpaid care work.

POWER Project Manager, Anatole Uwiragiye lauded the learning visit initiative and promised to return the courtesy in the near future. WW



Bangladesh women farmers engaging with Gitesi Executive Secretary to share insights from their visit

ActionAid Rwanda pays homage to victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis



AAR staff visiting the Campaign against Genocide Museum (CAG Museum) at the Rwanda Parliament in honor of the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis

ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) staff recently paid homage to the victims of 1994 Genocide against Tutsi, that also claimed lives of some of its former staff members during that dark period.

Staff visited the Campaign Against Genocide Museum (CAG Museum) at the Parliament of Rwanda in honor of those who lost their lives during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis. They were able to learn more about Rwanda's history specifically about the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis. After this, staff also convened at the AAR headquarter offices to honor the memory of their colleagues who were killed during the Genocide.

Dignitaries from CNLG, Pastor Antoine Rutayisire and families of former staff who were killed during the genocide, are among those who attended the AAR commemoration vigil. Pastor Rutayisire urged staff and visitors to always remember and reflect on

the role they should all play to ensure that the genocide never happens ever again.

Among the other Kwibuka related activities AAR took part of included a remembrance walk in memory and commemoration of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis. The walk commenced from Petit Stadium to Centre Christus church where the team joined other Rwandans from the sector and convened for a dialogue thereafter.



Canon Reverend Antoine Rutayisire giving remarks during the AAR Kwibuka 24 Commemoration vigil



AAR Right holders, also Genocide survivors sharing their testimony during the AAR Kwibuka 24 commemoration vigil

Public speaks out during dialogue on addressing Unpaid Care Work

ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) through the Power Project recently held a live Public Dialogue on Rwanda Broadcasting Agency, national television, under the topic, “Addressing Women’s Unpaid Care Work for their effective participation in economic activities & decision-making processes.”

The panelists included Bosco Murangira, Director of Women Economic Empowerment, MIGEPROF, David Museruka, RWAMREC Executive Secretary, Anatolia Niyonambaje, smallholder farmer from Gisagara district and Josephine Uwamariya, AAR Country Director.

During the televised show, Uwamariya emphasized that unpaid care work shouldn’t be left to women alone but requires men involvement too. “Women need to find time to engage in productive work too but it’s hard when they are the only ones doing the unpaid care work. Therefore, there should be

recognition, redistribution and reduction of unpaid care work. This work should be shared by both women and men,” she advised.

She further stated how ActionAid is playing a role to address this by supporting communities in its areas of operation to have access to clean water in their vicinities through provision of rainwater harvesting tanks, so women don’t have to spend a lot of time going to wells that are usually far away from their homes. Among other AAR interventions include supporting with the construction of Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDs), and provision of biogas among others.

This discussion incited a lot of public attention across the country as many people were calling in to give their views on the topic.

Marita Ntakirutimana, who called in from Nyaruguru district said that women especially in rural areas do get overwhelmed with unpaid care work.



AAR Country Director, Josephine Uwamariya, together with other panelists from RWAMREC, MIGEPROF and a smallholder farmer during the live public dialogue on UCW

“The men in our communities usually claim that according to the Rwandan culture, this kind of work solely belongs to women and they never step in to support us, so we get so worn-out and can’t get time to engage in productive work. We really need government and other stakeholder to raise awareness as this is a huge challenge especially for us women in villages,” she noted.

Doricella from Nyanza noted that there’s need for more ECD’s, so mothers can have a safe place to leave their children for them to find time for productive work.

Claude who called in from Nyamasheke noted that they (men) were ignorant about this due to the upbringing but now some have learnt through awareness and are being supportive. He also stressed the need for more sensitization meetings on unpaid care work through various channels, for men to understand their role in supporting women in this area.

Museruka, RWAMREC, noted that unpaid care work isn’t an issue only in rural but urban areas too. He called for inclusion of gender transformative approaches.

Murangira from MIGEPROF called upon CSOs and other stakeholders to work together with government to address the issue of unpaid care work.

Tuzamurane Cooperative empowering lives in communities



Tuzamurane cooperative members sharing a light moment during one of their meeting sessions

Tuzamurane Cooperative is among cooperatives that have been supported by ActionAid Rwanda in Murundi Sector, Karongi District. The cooperative was supported with livestock and received skills development trainings to improve the livelihood of its 29 members who were living below the poverty line of one dollar a day. AAR also gave trainings on Gender Based Violence prevention, property rights, as well as women's rights.

AAR also supported the cooperative by training them on credit and saving schemes. It also encouraged other women to join voluntary saving and credit groups where every member of the group saves a certain amount weekly on the bank account they opened in their names. This also gives them the access to borrow from the saving scheme.

AAR supported the cooperative with livestock including cows and piglets among others. The financial support will be returned to another Cooperative after one year.

Liberata Mukabatsinda, 57 years, married with 5 children, living in Gisebeya village, Kareba cell, of Murundi sector is a member of the cooperative. She says the members have saved 20 million out of their business activities which is kept in the cooperative's bank account. They are now in the final stages of opening a maize milling factory which came out of their savings.

"I now have two cows. As a cooperative, we own land and we even have a forest. In 3 years, our trees will be fully mature and we can sell them. We have also been able to open a maize mill plant. All of this is owed to ActionAid Rwanda's sensitisation, trainings and support." she said.



Mukabatsinda along with other members of Tuzamurane cooperative elatedly working in their banana plantation

Another member of the cooperative recounts how before they received trainings, they could not even afford mattresses for their beds. Their husbands used to mistreat them because they used to rely solely on them for everything.

“Now, I bought a mattress for my home. I can afford to buy whatever I want and this has brought peace

to our home.” She remarks. With income from the cooperative, members are able to meet basic needs such as food for their families, medical insurance and cater for the needs of their school going children.

Members are also able to use part of the income to improve their individual farming activities while others buy domestic animals such as goats and cows.

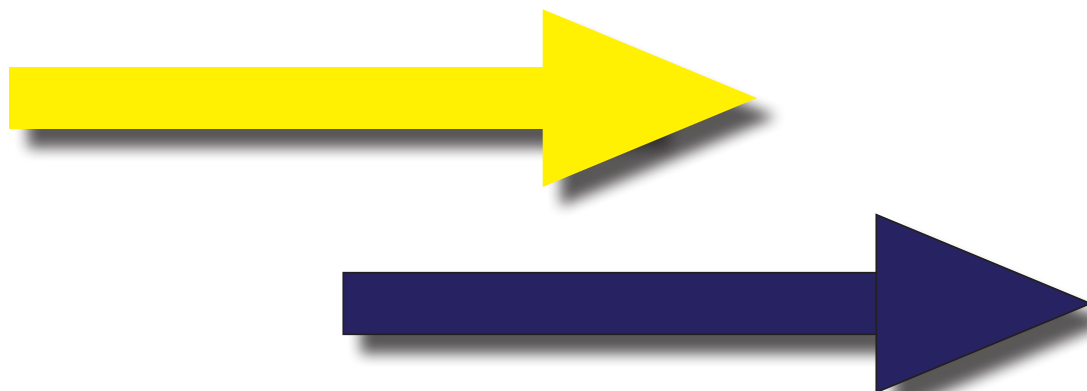


Strengthening Capacity in promoting sustainable Agriculture policies and citizen's participatory Budgeting in Rwanda(SCAB) project

SCAB is a 3 year project funded by the European Union and implemented by ActionAid Rwanda through it's partners,CLADHO and CCOAIB. ActionAid Rwanda is implementing this project to strengthen CSO capacity in Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Policies and citizen participatory Budgeting in Rwanda.

The main purpose of this project is for CSOs,CBOs and women farmer's networks in 8 districts, to be supported and have the capacity to engage in agriculture policy shaping and public accountability to ensure sustainable food security in Rwanda.The three year project is being implemented in 8 districts including Musanze,Gakenke,Karongi,Nyanza, Nyaruguru,Gisagara, Kamonyi and Muhanga;

Here is what the SCAB Project has been up to in the past months;



Community Scorecard; increasing public participation and good governance



CLADHO meeting with district officials for the community scorecard reevaluation in Musanze district

CLADHO in partnership with ActionAid Rwanda and CCOAIB implements the community score card and social audit as highlighted in the “capacity building project that aims at promoting Sustainable Agriculture Policies and Citizens participatory Budgeting in Rwanda (SCAB project)” funded by the European Union.

This was selected by the SCAB Project to be conducted in its areas of intervention as a means to achieve good governance and increased public participation, for improved public service delivery, especially in agriculture sector. The main goal of the Community Score Card is to positively influence the quality, efficiency and accountability with which services are provided at different levels.

Hiram Hitimana, the Executive Secretary of Mburabuturo cell in Muko sector, Musanze district, lauded the activity. “It is the perfect example of top-down mobilization. Now we as leaders cannot be lazy. We must be called out where we do not do the things we promise to do. There is also clear communication with our community members. There is no hearsay and it will leave no room for corruption. ActionAid Rwanda has once more come to solve one of the biggest hindrances of development.”

CLADHO commenced with a community score card and social audit in the agriculture sector. This activity was held in Muko sector, Musanze district of the Northern Province. The community score card was conducted by a professional consultant in the field of evidence-based advocacy and community score card from

the restricted lists of potential consultants working with CLADHO supported by women networks representatives under supervision of the project team.

Government staff evaluated themselves based on the government programs they carry out for the benefit of the

communities they serve. The level grade is 1-5 with one being very poor and 5 being the best.

The local communities evaluated the local government staff who work in the agriculture sector; Directors of Agriculture at District level, Agronomists, Veterinary officers from Districts and Sectors, cell leaders and village leaders. They also evaluated the women farmers. Each group evaluated itself and justified the marks.

After this initial evaluation, sector and village authorities had an interface meeting with the local communities to compare their marks.

“It makes me happy that we are now evaluating our leaders. Sometimes I cannot believe myself when I stand there and boldly explain why we gave the district authorities a low mark. And it’s even more exhilarating when they have to be accountable and humbly explain where they went wrong and how they will correct themselves. This is unbelievable. I thank ActionAid Rwanda with all my heart, because to me, this is true empowerment of us rural farmers.” Mujawamungu Hillarie, says, visibly elated.

Mujawamungu, 48, is a rural woman smallholder farmer who participated in the Muko scorecard evaluation. She has so far attended two of these meetings and she plans on attending more asserting that it is her right as a citizen to hold leaders accountable.

The community score card was conducted in 5 Districts which are Gisagara, Nyaruguru, Nyanza, Musanze and Karongi.

COMMUNITY SCORECARD BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN AUTHORITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Mujawamungu, a smallholder farmer presents the community evaluation to the leadership and community in Musanze district

“I traveled all the way from Shingiro to come and have a say in my development. It is amazingly thrilling to see our leaders justifying themselves to us. I feel powerful. I feel like our leaders will have to be more accountable from now on,” Marie Goretti Uwamahoro, 30, Smallholder Farmer.

Uwamahoro made these remarks during an interface meeting between sector authorities and local communities where they compared the evaluations they had done in the Community ScoreCard(CSC) program under the SCAB Project of ActionAid Rwanda funded by the European Union, implemented by CLADHO Rwanda and CCOAIB.

The CSC approach is bringing together community members, service providers, and local government authorities to identify service utilization and provision challenges, and to mutually generate solutions, and work in partnership to implement and track the effectiveness of those solutions in an ongoing process of quality improvement.

The main goal of the Community Score Card is to positively influence the quality, efficiency and accountability with which services are provided at different levels. The core implementation strategy to achieve the



Evariste, from CLADHO, speaking to the Muko community during the community scorecard evaluation

goal is using dialogue in a participatory forum that engages both duty bearers and right holders. The SCAB project intends to strengthen capacities of CSOs and their constituencies towards promoting Sustainable Agriculture Policies and Citizens participatory budgeting in Rwanda.

In the community scorecard activity; which was carried out in Mburabuturo cell, leaders and local communities discussed the viability, relevance and impact of government programs like the Land use consolidation, VUP, agri inputs and Gir'inika program, and many others. Authorities promised

to do better where they had failed and also got direct feedback from the local communities on the programs they had implemented.

The Muko sector Executive Secretary, Aloys Niyibizi applauded this activity, saying that it made leaders more accountable to the people they governed, and also made them closer. He thanked ActionAid Rwanda and the European Union through the SCAB Project for this innovative method of governance adding that this would put Rwanda on the map as one of the best countries in the world soon.

Civil Society Platform present Budget Framework Concerns to Parliamentary Committee



The Parliamentary budget committee gives feedback to the Civil Society Platform during the BFP presentation

The Civil Society platform under the leadership of CLADHO, recently submitted and presented their feedback and concerns regarding the Budget Framework Paper(BFP) 2018/2019 to the Parliamentary Budget Committee.

Among the challenges CSOs cited included farmers limited access to agriculture financing/ loans, the need to invest in the capacity to do soil analysis and audit to improve proper

land use planning and productivity, the diminishing land for agriculture-mushrooming scattered settlements on arable land, the lack of a strategic intervention aimed at maintenance of valley dams and irrigation tools among others.

Civil Society organisations also called for transformation of milk collection hubs to act as one stop center for farmers to acquire services such as animal vaccines, animal drugs and fertilizers.



Sekanyange, the Civil Society Platform & CLADHO Chair person addressing the media during the Press conference

Jean Leonard Sekanyange, the Chairperson of CLADHO, who also doubles as the the Civil Society Platform Chairperson, expressed his appreciation to the government for the involvement of citizens in the pre-budget planning and hearings.

CLADHO & ActionAid later held



Nyirahabiyambere, a smallholder farmer from Karongi district, giving her views to the media during the BFP feedback presentation at the press conference

a press conference with the media, sharing feedback from the BFP with them.

During the conference, Esperance Nyirahabiyambere, a smallholder farmer from Karongi district appreciated CSOs, especially, CLADHO and ActionAid for empowering the rural communities with knowledge about the budget particularly in relation to agriculture.

“We had no idea at all about budgeting and where funding comes from. We didn’t even know we could have a say and could give our views on the budget today we can analyze and give feedback even in parliament,” Nyirahabiyambere stated.

James Butare, the Head of Programmes and Policy at ActionAid Rwanda also acknowledged

the parliament and government for putting into consideration citizen’s feedback on the budget, citing the increment that was made to the budget last fiscal year after farmers advocating for an increment before parliament. With the recent disasters also, we are calling for an allocation to deal with disasters because they do have a huge impact on lives and on agriculture which everyone depends on,” he mentioned.

Emmanuel Kwizera, the Project Manager of SCAB Project noted that the European Union supports civic participation programs to enhance citizen’s role and accountability. He added that it’s through the funding of the European Union that that enabled CLADHO and ActionAid to promote citizen participation in the budget formulation, which has improved the budgeting process.

Public dialogues, a platform for Citizen participation in policy formulation



De Vanssay Arnaud from the European Union giving his remarks during the public dialogue

Several public dialogues have been organized to discuss pertinent issues affecting society with the support of ActionAid Rwanda through the SCAB Project, funded by the European Union.

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

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

H.E Ambassador of the European Union in Rwanda, Nicole Bellomo, hailed Civil Society Organizations, CLADHO & with support from ActionAid for organising the dialogue & vowed to partner with stakeholders to improve the agriculture sector, adding that agriculture policies need to build on farmers' experience for sustainable development.

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



Minister Nsengiyumva (in the middle) sharing his views during the public dialogue

feedback to national institutions which gives them the opportunity to adjust their programs to better suit farmer’s needs.

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

agriculture.

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

ActionAid Rwanda believes in citizen participation

and engaging community to share their ideas regarding policies made, through public dialogues. The dialogue was organized by CLADHO under the SCAB Project that is managed by ActionAid and funded by the European Union.



One of the participants, Mukombozi speaks out about citizen participation during the public dialogue

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

WHEN ACTIONAID RWANDA HOSTED A HIGH LEVEL INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEETING ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■



Adriano Campolina,AAI General Secretary together with other AA International Board Members wrapping up a meeting they held at AA Rwanda offices



Campolina and other International Board Members during a visit in Musanze District



Campolina alongside other International Board Members & AA Rwanda Country Director during their visit to Gisozi Genocide Memorial Site





Imboni z'iterambere Union women welcoming the ActionAid International Board Members and showing off some of their achievements that include that a maize milling and storage factory that they run. The Union, made of rural women farmers, owns the factory that currently supplies maize flour to several schools, and they supply to other wholesalers, retailers and individuals.



Campolina giving his remarks at the gathering in Musanze district, while winding up the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence



Adriano Campolina signing in the visitors book during his visit to the maize milling and storage factory in Muko sector





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RWANDA

KG 178 St, Remera - Kigali | P. O. Box 3707 Kigali Rwanda | Tel. +250 250 300 142
Email: actonaid.rwanda@actonaid.org | twitter.com/actonaid | facebook.com/actonaid

www.actonaid.org