



**NEWSLETTER**  
January - March 2023



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# Foreword

Dear Readers,

Welcome to ActionAid Rwanda's January - March 2023 Newsletter.



**Ines Mwangavu**

Interim. Executive Director

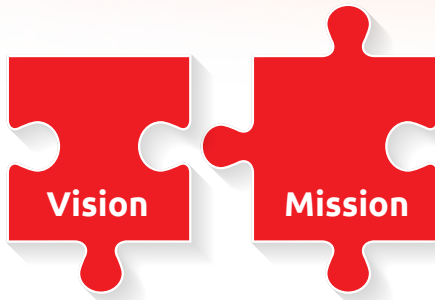
We hope you will enjoy reading about the realized successes and impact towards sustainable and dignified peoples' lives. We undertook several interventions with a particular focus on marking International Women's Day which takes place every year on every 8th March.

In all these activities, AAR aims to work to achieve social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication by reaching out to the most vulnerable people in Rwanda to help them enjoy their rights with the capacity to participate in making decisions that affect their lives.

Enjoy reading!

## OUR VISION

A society without poverty and injustice where every person enjoys the right to life with dignity



## OUR MISSION

We work with people living in poverty and the marginalized to eradicate poverty by overcoming injustice and inequity that cause it.



# OVERVIEW

## **1. Celebration of International Women's Day 2023**

ActionAid Rwanda joined the rest of the World to celebrate International Women's Day 2023 to recognize the contributions of women to the well-being of families, communities, countries and the entire world.

## **2.Support to 50 vulnerable women families with 1205 iron sheets**

ActionAid Rwanda participated in the closure of the Women's Month in Kigoma Sector of Huye District. ActionAid Rwanda supported 50 vulnerable women families with 1205 iron sheets to roof their shelters in the view to address recurrent human security issues.

## **3.National level advocacy workshop on SRHR**

On 7th February 2023, ActionAid Rwanda convened the National level advocacy workshop on SRHR with the objective of to advocate for the issues identified by Youth and CSOs around GBV and SRH services.

## **4.AAR staff celebrated IWD2023**

AAR staff celebrated IWD2023 internally, reflected on the incredible contributions of women to society and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen interventions that promote gender equity

## **5.Roll out of Women Led Community Based Protection Approach**

AAR promoted and rolled out Women-Led Community Protection (WLCBP) approach in all LRPs to facilitate the work of local women in emergencies, support them and their organizations to work together to ensure their safety, dignity and rights of women and girls in humanitarian crises and support their resilience.

## **6.Support to 72 Women cooperatives with agroforestry tree seedlings**

AAR supported 72 Women cooperatives in Muko with Agro-forestry trees seedlings that can be planted along with other crops to combat the negative impact of climate change. They also contribute to minimizing of the effect of soil erosion, being used as animal feeds, sell them for cash as well as using them as stakes for climbing beans.

## **7. Handover of girls' room to support girls' education in Karongi**

AAR completed and handed over a girls' rooms in Rurumbu & Burega in Karongi District to advocate for education as a basic human right and ensure sustainable development.

## **8. Fun events to promote children's rights in Nyanza**

AAR/Nyanza LRP organized children's fun events to raise awareness of children's rights and issues affecting them and support children through talent development.

## **9.Staff capacity development in Organisation's policies, safeguarding and fundraising**

AAR organized different trainings to build their capacities in human resource and Organization policies and safeguarding, fundraising, advocacy workshop on SRHR and fundraising training.

## **10. Partnership for advocacy and community development**

While AAR operates 7 Local Rights Programs in 5 Districts, there are also ongoing discussions with different stakeholders who expressed interest in working with AAR through Public-Public Partnership (PuP) to promote women's and girls' rights and community development.

## **11. Workplace relationship strengthening efforts**

AAR organized different programs to boost staff morale and strengthen workplace

relationships. Those included employee recognition awards, celebrating staff colleagues' birthdays and staff friendship games cacahuète.

### 1. ActionAid marked International Women's Day 2023

ActionAid Rwanda joined the rest of the World to celebrate International Women's Day 2023 to recognize the incredible contributions of women to the well-being of families, communities, countries and the entire world.

IWD2023 was celebrated under the theme: "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality" and ActionAid Rwanda used that opportunity to promote #EmbraceEquity and advocate for the greater use of technology to advance gender equality. AAR also denounced the increasing cyberviolence against women that disempowers and limits them to make use of the diverse opportunities that technology presents.

In this view, ActionAid Rwanda celebrated IWD2023 in all its Local Right Programs and recognised the incredible contributions of women. In Gisagara, IWD 2023 celebrations took three advocacy forms: First, were advocacy activities to embrace DigitAll: innovation and technology to advance gender equality, second, were advocacy activities to fight GBV, third, were advocacy activities to address barriers that hinders women's socio-economic development and support women.

Hence, IWD2023 was attended by 650 people and Actionaid Rwanda supported women with 6 smart phones to exchange information on issues that affect them including reporting GBV cases to relevant authorities and to adapt to digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality and greater economic and social development.



*AAR supported women with smart phones to adapt to digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality*

ActionAid Rwanda also advocated for fighting against GBV and couples who benefited from ActionAid anti-GBV programs, testified how they changed from conflict - prone couples to agents of change for peacefulness of families and now they work together to improve their well-being.



*AAR Photo: A couple testified how they benefited from the AAR anti GBV Program and now live in peace and harmony*

Through the use of body maps, capati diagram and power dynamic representation games, women facilitators educated the public about the barriers faced by women that affect their socio-economic development, including lifelong negative consequences of unpaid care work.





*AAR Photo: Women donated two cows to fellow women through a community cycle of gift (cow) giving (Kuremera)*

There followed supporting women by donating two cows to poor families through the community cycle of gift (cow) giving (Kuremera) and Girinka Program. Women also supported fellow women from families with food insecurity with food stuff.

In Muko & Shingiro 2200 attended the event in which AAR officially handed over two classrooms constructed by AAR at Muko ECD and 3 classrooms, a sleeping room, kitchen, dining room, toilet constructed at Nyamurimirwa Primary school.



*AAR Photo: AAR handing over of classrooms in Musanze District*

AAR supported 6 women with 6 smart phones to facilitate them to exchange information on issues that affect them including reporting GBV cases to relevant authorities and to adapt to digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality and greater economic and social development.

Inspired by the culture and approach of ActionAid to empower the communities to improve their livelihood and impact on individual lives, women cooperative members in Shingiro also supported fellow women with 20 cell phones for women to adapt to Digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality. Women to women support also included 376 kgs of maize, 20 hoes, goats, sheep, etc.



*AAR Photo: AAR supported women with livestock in Muko/Musanze District*

ActionAid Rwanda also celebrated IWD2023 in Murundi Local Rights Program and was attended by 700 people. AAR supported 11 women, including Women Led Protection committee members, with 11 smart phones and 4 radios in order to facilitate them to exchange information on issues that affect them including reporting GBV cases to relevant authorities and to adapt to digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality and greater economic and social development. 15 families also legalized their marriages with the view to minimizing family conflicts and gender-based violence.



*AAR Photo: In Murundi/Karongi District. ActionAid Rwanda supported women with smart phones during IWD2023 to adapt to Digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality*

The event was started by a women's exhibition showcasing their agricultural production and efforts towards food security. Two women also supported their fellow community members through a community cycle of gift (cow) giving (Kuremera) and Girinka Program.



*AAR Photo: In Murundi, IWD2023 was started by an exhibition showcasing Women's agricultural production and efforts towards food security*

In the Ruheru Local Rights Programme, AAR celebrated IWD2023 which was attended by 964 people including District Officials, representatives from CSOs, PSF, religious organizations and citizens of Ruheru. ActionAid Rwanda supported women members of WLCP with 6 smart phones to facilitate them to exchange information on issues that affect them including reporting GBV cases to relevant authorities and to adapt to digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality and greater economic and social development. Women also supported fellow women with cows to get milk to address malnutrition and manure to boost their agricultural production.



*AAR Photo: stakeholders joined the residents of Ruheru to celebrate IWD2023*

In Nyanza, ActionAid Rwanda supported 6 women from Busasamana sector with 6 smart phones to facilitate them to exchange information on issues that affect them including reporting GBV cases to relevant authorities and to adapt to digital, ICT and innovation for gender equality and greater economic and social development. This will also help to reduce the existing digital gender divide.



*AAR Photo: In Busasamana/Nyanza Dist. ActionAid Rwanda supported women with smart phones during IWD2023 to adapt to Digital, ICT and innovation to advance gender equality and technology*

Also, Actionaid Rwanda supported 100 teen mothers with hygienic materials such as sanitary pads, Vaseline, soaps, buckets, basins to support them improve their hygiene as well as for their children. Other stakeholders also supported community members with food items to feed their families.



*AAR Photo: In Murundi/Karong Dist. ActionAid Rwanda supported women with hygienic materials*

## 2.Support to 50 vulnerable women families with 1205 iron sheets

Following the International Women’s Day that was celebrated on 8th March 2023, ActionAid Rwanda participated in the Women’s Month and its concluding that took place in Kigoma Sector of Huye District. ActionAid Rwanda supported 50 vulnerable women families with 1205 iron sheets to roof their shelters in order to address recurrent human security issues



*AAR Photo: AAR supported women with 1205 iron sheet to roof their shelters at the closure of Women’s Month, March 2023*

The event was attended by the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, MIGEPROF, Prof. Jeannette Bayisenge who commended AAR for its advocacy and support of women . She also encouraged the residents of Kigoma Sector to make their efforts to improve their livelihood, fight Gender-Based Violence and address Unpaid Care Work, etc.

Actionaid Rwanda, represented by Ines Mwangavu, the interim Executive Director highlighted that AAR has so far supported Rights Holders with 1,131 decent shelters, 21 ECDs, 258 classrooms, 24 hand washing stations, 460 toilets , 17 playgrounds, 2 TVETs , 62 girls’rooms, 10 selling points, 24 water kiosks etc.



*AAR Photo: Residents of Kigoma Sector attend the closure of Women’s Month*

AAR will continue to strive for women’s poverty eradication, reach out to the poorest and most vulnerable people to realize their rights to services such as shelter, work on emergency response to support people in need with basic needs to also improve their livelihood and resilience.

### 3.National level advocacy workshop on SRHR

In February 2022, ActionAid Rwanda, in partnership with Faith Victory Association started the implementation of a 2-year project: Empowering Young people to prevent and fight SGBV in Rwanda.



*AAR Photo: AAR staff and partners attended the training*

This project is funded by the European Union and its aims to empower Civil Society Organizations and young people to promote and protect their sexual and reproductive health rights and support in the fight against sexual and gender-based violence, leading in the long-term to a vibrant civil society contributing to social justice, a decrease in teenage pregnancy and communities that do not condone SGBV of marginalize its victim.

Following the establishment of in and out of school youth clubs in Gasabo and Karongi District, ActionAid Rwanda worked with Faith Victory Association with the support of local and school leaders to select and build the capacity of youth representatives on leadership and advocacy.

The task of this new committee, was to go back to their communities, work with their peers to identify protection and SRH issues affecting young people's lives. This was concluded by youth themselves who subsequently developed an advocacy plan of all identified issues. In this view, On 7th February 2023, ActionAid Rwanda convened the National level advocacy workshop on SRHR with the objective of this event is to advocate for for the issues identified by Youth and CSOs around GBV and SRH services.

The workshop gathered different stakeholders from the public, private and civil sectors including the Ministry of Health, Ministry Gender and Family Promotion, Gender Monitoring Office, Rwanda Investigation Bureau, National Police, District Officers, Gender and family promotion officers (Karongi and Gasabo), Youth representatives (Karongi and Gasabo), Friends of Family: IZU sector coordinator (Karongi and Gasabo), National Women Council, National Youth Council and 8 Civil Society Organizations.

The workshop resolved to strengthen engagement of youth, CSOs, and service providers, continue work with national leaders to remain supportive in terms of health services and in the fight against social injustice. Government services that were present in the workshop committed to positive actions by making, among others, GBV and SRHR data available.

AAR considers Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights as important rights mainly for the youth. It empowers young people to make informed choices about their health & reproductive rights & increase demand for quality reproductive health services.

#### 4.AAR staff celebrated IWD2023



*AAR Photo: Women's Day arch as AAR staff was celebrating IWD2023*

After joining the rest of the world to celebrate the IWD02023 and marking it in all Local Rights Programmes, AAR staff celebrated IWD2023 internally, reflected on the incredible contributions of women to society and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen interventions that promote gender equality



*AAR Photo: Ines MWANGAVU, Interim Executive Director of AAR  
Attended IWD2023*

Ines Mwangavu, the Interim Executive Director of ActionAid Rwanda urged the staff to be committed to “DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality” as their observance of it will also spotlight the importance of protecting the rights of women and girls in digital spaces and addressing online and ICT-facilitated gender-based violence.



*AAR Photo: AAR staff attended IWD2023*

Joined by their AAR male employees, they recognized their female colleagues for their great contribution to promoting gender equality in Rwanda.



*AAR Photo: AAR staff attended IWD2023*

One of the key takeaways from the event was that “A gender-responsive approach to innovation, technology and digital education can increase the awareness of women and girls regarding their rights and civic engagement”





**Janet Umuringi**



**Carine Irakoze**



**Annet Kakibibi**

*Janet M, Carine I, Annet were in attendance to IWD2023*

### **5.Roll out of Women Led Community Based Protection Approach**

ActionAid has been contributing community-based protection efforts in times of emergencies and has now rolled out the Women-Led Community-Based Protection (WLCBP) approach in all its Local Rights Programme to enhance humanitarian action, emphasizing the essential role of women leaders in emergencies.



*AAR Photo: Women-Led Community-Based Protection committee members in Ruheru LRP*

The WLCBP recognizes the critical role of women in identifying their protection needs and solutions to these challenges, and in creating community-based support structures that can better protect women and girls' rights in times of crisis.

ActionAid Rwanda's objective in adopting and rolling WLCBP out is to scale up this approach and implement it through ActionAid Rwanda's humanitarian response programming in protracted crises in all our Local Rights Programmes and elsewhere.

An accompanying toolkit that provides participatory tools and guidance on establishing this theory was shared with the elected WLCBP committee to guide them. All these fall under the Safety With Dignity's WLCBP manual which outlines the theory and core components of the WLCBP approach, and builds on a feminist, human rights-based model seeking to build women's individual and collective power, transform systems and structures, and strengthen access to rights, services and resources.

## **6.Support to 72 Women cooperatives with agroforestry tree seedlings**

In a view of strengthening a resilient livelihood and food security, on 2nd February 2023, AAR supported 72 Women cooperatives in Muko with Agro-forestry trees seedlings that can be planted along with other crops to combat the impact of climate change. They also contribute to minimizing the effect of soil erosion, being used as animal feeds, sell them for cash as well as using them as stakes for climbing beans. This comes after AAR had supported Right Holders in Muko with a community tree nursery bed in 2022.



*AAR Photo: Women in Musanze supported with Agroforestry trees to combat soil erosion*

This came also to address the needs of the Muko community members and contribute to Muko's implementing its performance contract of distributing 123,400 agroforestry trees seedlings in 2023.

One of the success stories associated with establishing that community tree nursery bed is that it is cost effective as with only 5.3 million the community will benefit 200,000 agroforestry trees seedlings, which could not be possible if ActionAid Rwanda would have used tender processes to purchase the trees planting materials.

ActionAid Rwanda will continue to work with different stakeholders to advocate for establishments of community tree nursery bed to enable the citizens to minimize the effects of climate change and combat soil erosion.

## **7. Handover of girls' room to support girls' education in Karongi**

On 9th February 2023, AAR completed and handed over girls' rooms in Rurumbu & Burega in Karongi District to advocate for education as a basic human right and ensure sustainable development.

AAR advocates for girls' safe rooms to promote girls' education and, as has been proven in different schools, girls' safe rooms prevent school absenteeism among girls and help them feel more comfortable at school when they are in menstruation periods.



*AAR Photo: AAR hands over girls' room to support girls' education in Karongi*

The room must be equipped with sanitary pads, towels, pain killers, a bed, water, soap, etc., and for the girls who cannot afford to buy sanitary pads, the respective school provides them for the duration of the period; free of charge.

AAR advocates for making safe rooms mandatory for all schools to promote the education of girls and limit school absenteeism, and therefore ensure good academic performance. AAR has so far supported schools with 62 girls' rooms.

## **8. Fun events to promote children's rights in Nyanza**

On 19th February 2023, AAR/Nyanza LRP organized children's fun events to raise awareness of children's rights and issues affecting them and support children through talent development.



*AAR Photo: AAR organized children's Fun Event in Nyanza*

The overall objective of this activity was to support children's talent development competitions in poems, drawings, songs, plays, games, and fun related activities and raise awareness of children's rights and issues affecting them in the community. The Fun event was an opportunity to share food and drinks, inspire their school retention and greater performance at school.



*AAR Photo: AAR organized children's Fun Event in Nyanza*

The fun event presented a great impact, as parents and teachers understood about child rights. Children also learned about their rights through different games which also enhanced their talents, children, teachers and parents understood how the sponsorship program works and were all encouraged to be the ambassadors of AAR especially in the children's rights domain.

The school and local leaders who participated in the event committed to continue advocating for child rights promotion, especially those children who come from poor families and denied chances to complete their education. AAR advocated that similar activity should happen in all other schools in Nyanza District and beyond.

## **9. Staff capacity development in safeguarding, fundraising, etc**

In view to building the capacities of AAR staff in human resource and Organization policies, safeguarding, fundraising, AAR organized training and workshops to empower its staff with necessary knowledge and skills to perform better, increase their productivity as they have become experts in those fields.



*AA Photo: AAR staff attended the trainings*

### **Training in Organization policies focusing on safeguarding and HR policies:**

From 23rd to 27th January 2023, ActionAid Rwanda conducted staff team building and training on Organization policies focusing on safeguarding and HR policies to develop and create a united, effective, and productive team that serve the mission of AAR with full compliance with its policies and guidelines.

**SHEA - Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse:** The training emphasized the importance of complying with the SHEA - Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse policy and AAR responding robustly when these harms take place. AAR views any form of sexual violence as a gross violation of human rights and will not tolerate any staff or other representatives carrying out any form of sexual harassment, exploitation or abuse towards anyone we come into contact with our work and beyond.

**Fundraising training:** Co-facilitated by the Regional Business Development Advisor at AA GS, Atlegang Matlala, from 20-24 March 2023, AAR staff and partners underwent a 5-day fundraising training with the aims of developing capacities for the team to become experts in project designing and proposal development.

### **10. Partnership for advocacy and community development**

While AAR operates in 7 Local Rights Programme in 5 Districts, there are also ongoing discussions with different stakeholders who expressed interest in working with AAR through Public–Public Partnership (PuP) to promote women’s and girls’ rights and community development.



*Mayor Erasme Ntazinda and his team visited AAR*

It is in this view that the Mayor of Nyanza, Mr. Erasme Ntazinda and his team met Ines Mwangavu, Interim Director of ActionAid Rwanda and discussed partnership between the two institutions to promote women and girls’ rights and community development.

AAR operates in Nyanza in three sectors: Busasamana, Rwabicuma and Mukingo and focuses its interventions on fighting structural causes of VAWG, improving Resilient Livelihoods and Secure Climate Justice.



*Uwera Parfaite, Vice Mayor and her team visited AAR*

Similarly, Uwera Parfaite, the Vice Mayor in charge of Finance and Economic Development of Gicumbi District and her team met Ines Mwangavu, Interim Director of ActionAid Rwanda and had fruitful discussions around a prospective partnership between the two institutions to promote women and girls' rights and community development.

AAR will continue to empower women, girls and other marginalized people to assert their basic needs and fundamental rights, modelling sustainable service delivery alternatives that strengthen their rights while holding duty bearers to account.

### **11. Workplace relationship strengthening efforts**

AAR organized different programs to boost staff morale and strengthen workplace relationships. Those included employee recognition awards, celebrating staff colleagues' birthdays and staff friendship games cacahuète.

**Recognition and award of the best employee:** As part of its organizational culture, AAR organizes every year the best employee recognition event to acknowledge staff for their achievements, reinforce good behavior, performance or practices that result in positive effects and results for the organization.

Hence, AAR, through her Interim Executive Director, Ines Mwangavu, awarded Uwizeyimana Leopoldine, responsible for IT, Logistics and Administration Officer at ActionAid Rwanda, for her great performance that was close to exceeding expectations.



*AAR Photo: Ines Mwangavu, Interim Executive Director awarded Leopoldine Uwizeyimana as the Best Employee of the year 2022.*



*AAR Photo: Ines Mwangavu, Interim Executive Director awarded Leopoldine Uwizeyimana as the Best Employee of the year 2022.*



AAR will always foster a sense of purpose amongst its staff by recognizing them for their efforts and let them see how their work directly or indirectly contributes to ActionAid Rwanda's success.

**Cacahuete staff friendship game:** This game has acquired popularity in both social and professional settings. It consists of random picking of a friend whose name had been secretly written on a paper. Everyone keeps his or her friend a secret and after some time, the institution will select a day to disclose everyone's secret friend. Everyone awards a gifts to his or her friend and is also an opportunity of joy and sharing food, drinks and entertainment.



*AAR Photo: Cacahuete friends offering each other gifts*



*AAR Photo: Cacahuete friends offering each other gifts*



*AAR Photo: Cacahuete friends offering each other gifts*

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HAPPY  
*Women's*  
DAY  

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8TH MARCH  
*2023*

## STATEMENT ON IWD2023

ActionAid Rwanda joins the rest of the World to celebrate International Women's Day 2023 with the intent of recognizing the incredible contributions of women to the well-being of families, communities, countries and the entire world.

Cognizant that our societies today are facing diverse and continuous livelihood challenges, it needs increased efforts to push for inclusive and equity-driven technology and innovations in order to accelerate equality and socio-economic justice that benefits everyone.

Today, world economies are depending on new technologies where innovations are backed by STEM, such as in manufacturing, food production, health care, governments' service delivery through automation, business through E-commerce to name a few. Globally, women make up 28.4 per cent of the workforce engaged in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and only 30 per cent on average in sub-Saharan Africa while in Rwanda women engaged in professional, scientific, and technical activities are only 17.9 per cent.

In this context, ActionAid Rwanda celebrates IWD2023 under the theme: "DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality", which aligns with the priority theme of the UN 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, "Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls".

As ActionAid Rwanda recognizes that we must use technology to advance gender equality, but is also aware that technology and online spaces have also given the chance to anonymous and targeted gender-based violence and harassment to flourish and misogynist groups' sharing of information to thrive despite their hateful and harmful messages to the lives of women, girls.

More so, women are more likely to face sexual harassment, cyberstalking, cyberbullying and other forms of online abuse and this disempowers and limits them to make use of the diverse opportunities that technology presents.

As we celebrate the amazing contributions of women in making impactful changes in our societies, ActionAid Rwanda is also strongly committed to promoting #EmbraceEquity, coupling it with gender equality and advocating for innovation and technology to positively support better lives of women and girls.

ActionAid Rwanda will also continue to work to address the structural causes of gender time poverty through advancing resilient livelihoods while also accompanying women-led agencies to advocate for increased public support to compensate loss and damage caused by climate change.

*Happy International Women's Day*  
**2023**



The logo for Actionaid, featuring the word "act:onaaid" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The colon in "act:" is replaced by a white exclamation mark. The logo is centered on a red background that has a white diagonal stripe running from the top left to the bottom right.

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