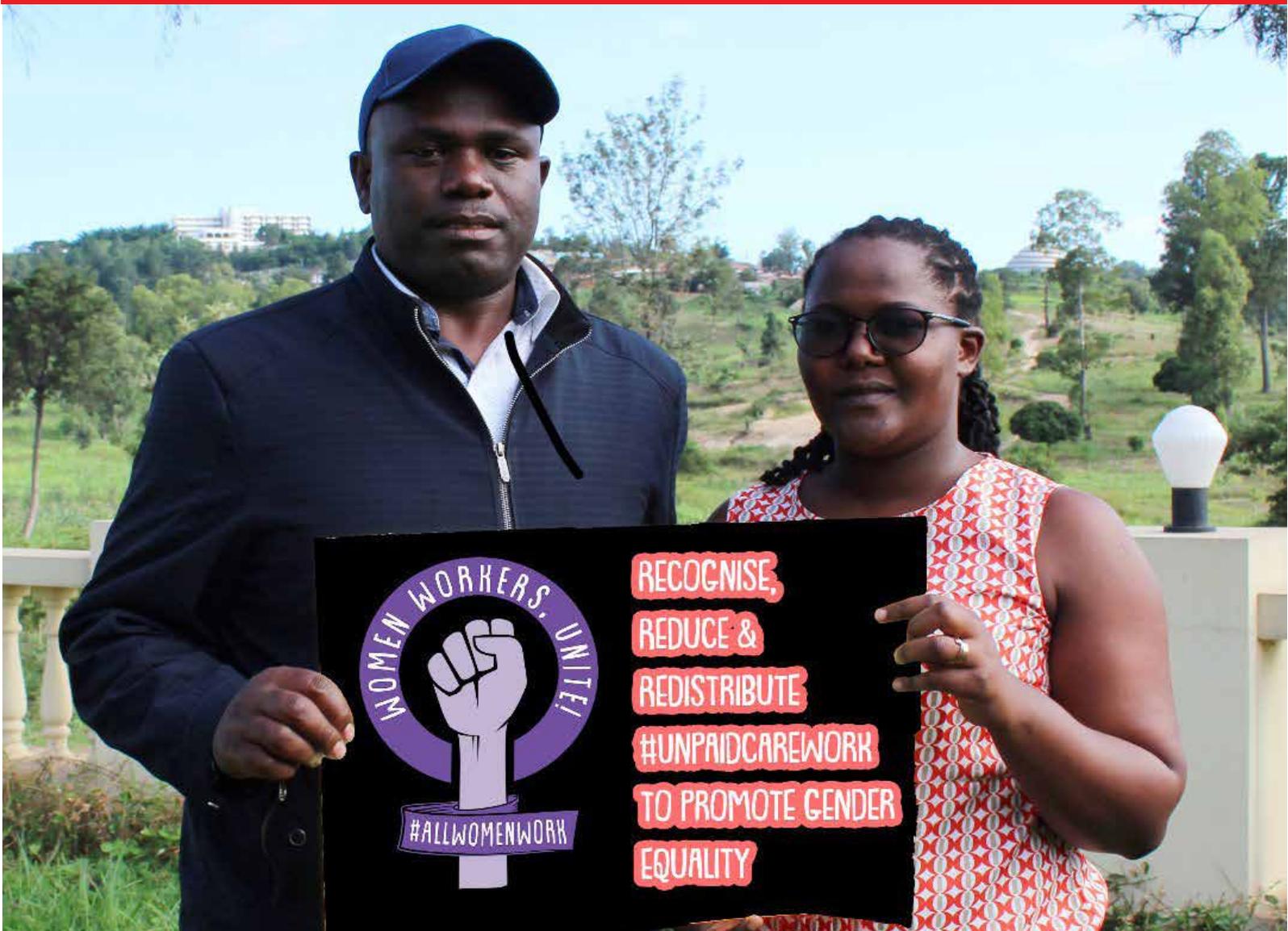


POWER **in** PEOPLE

NEWSLETTER Issue 1

2019



**Rwanda participates in the
One Global Campaign**

act:onaid

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Building CSO's Capacity to promote Sustainable Agriculture Policies & Citizen's Participatory Budgeting



Participants at the Media Awards & SCAB closure event pose for a group photo

In March, one of ActionAid Rwanda's projects, SCAB, phased out, after a period of three years of implementation.

Strengthening CSO Capacity in promoting Sustainable Agriculture Policies & Citizen's Participatory Budgeting (SCAB) project, implemented in 8 districts, registered various achievements over the last 3 years.

These include building capacity of CSOs, CBOs and women farmers' networks in 8 districts, to engage in agriculture policy shaping and public accountability, to ensure sustainable food security in

Rwanda.

Prior the phasing out period, a survey and evaluation of the SCAB project, was conducted by ICOS Consultancy. According to this survey, over 83% of CSOs that participated in a survey conducted by ICOS Consultancy, said that they now know their roles in formulation, monitoring and implementation of agriculture policies, budget and planning processes.

All the District agriculture officers talked do during the survey, also indicated that CSOs/CBOs and farmers networks roles and engagement in policy advocacy has improved over the past three years, and attribute it

to the SCAB project. Over the past three years, farmers have been empowered too-by SCAB Project, and started engaging policy makers & parliamentarians, advocating for increase in the budget allocated to agriculture.

During the SCAB closing ceremony, Arnaud De-Vannsay, Head of Rural Development-European Union, urged CSOs to continue playing a role in ensuring improved sustainable agriculture and budgeting now that they had been receiving capacity building from SCABP project.

"It is very important to see and hear the reality of what happens on

ground. CSOs and NGOs should strengthen effort to support farmers to organize themselves, so their voices are heard, and dialogue is facilitated,” he stated.

Jean Claude Musabyimana, permanent Secretary, MINAGRI, who was the Guest of Honor at this event, commended ActionAid through SCAB Project, for the role they played in improving sustainable agriculture and citizen’s participatory budgeting. He pledged MINAGRI’s unceasing support to farmers to improve sustainable Agriculture.

The Permanent Secretary also highlighted that MINAGRI has now introduced an agriculture insurance scheme in a bid to improve agriculture, adding that the pilot project was started in 8 districts but will be scaled all through the 30 districts.

The overall achievement of the SCAB project over the past three years, was building capacity of CSOs, CBOs & Women farmers’ networks in 8 districts to engage in agriculture policy shaping and public accountability and to ensure sustainable food security in Rwanda. The SCAB Project mainly received funding from the European Union, which led left huge milestones through agriculture policy shaping and citizen’s participatory budgeting.

Launch of PSTA4 - Kinyarwanda Version

During the SCAB closing event, the PSTA4-Kinyarwanda version book was also launched. The translation and production of this book was through combined effort of CCOAIB, TROCAIRE, ActionAid Rwanda and the European Union. ActionAid Rwanda greatly appreciated the efforts of European Union in Rwanda, CCOAIB and TroCaire



AA Rwanda Country Director, MINAGRI Permanent Secretary, European Union Head of Rural Development and Esperance, a farmer, awarding a Journalist during the awards event

for their effort in ensuring that a PSTA4-Kinyarwanda version is produced so that farmers who can only read Kinyarwanda can also have a chance to read and gain information from it.

Through the PSTA4-Kinyarwanda version, farmers who can only read Kinyarwanda will have a chance to read and gain information from it around agriculture.

Arnaud De-Vannsay said that PSTA4 is an important outcome and expressed his gratitude for a Kinyarwanda version being launched.

Esperance Nyirahabiyambere, a farmer from Karongi District appreciated the availing of the PSTA4-Kinyarwanda version and she was quoted saying, **“Before, it was hard for us farmers to gain information from the books since they were in foreign languages, yet we don’t cultivate in the foreign languages. I am so glad that other farmers and I now can farmers and I now can happily read the PSTA4-Kinyarwanda version and apply the**

knowledge to enhance our skills in agricultural work.”

Other farmer representatives, Media, CSO representatives and other stakeholders appreciated the launch of the Kinyarwanda version for PSTA4.

Media Awards-Stories of Impact on agriculture Policies & Budgeting

Action Aid Rwanda through the SCAB Project also awarded Journalists who covered stories of impact in the areas of; agriculture policies, budgeting and citizen participation. Over 15 Journalists across Rwanda from Print, Broadcasting, Online and Television Media had participated and submitted stories. Over 30 Journalists attended the event,

The best three stories that were awarded where submitted by Jean Bosco Mbonyumugenzi from Huguka Radio Station, Cyprien Niyomwungeri from Igihe.com and Regis Murengezi from The New Times Publications. The three winners were given awards that included laptops, smart phone, voice recorders and cash prizes. All the Journalists that participated were given certificates.

Speak Out! Project; An enabler to amplify Girls' voices



Some of the girls at Nyarutovu Groupe Scolaire seated in their safe space during one of their SRHR discussion sessions

Iratabara is nine years old. She goes to a primary school in Nyanza district, which is one of the areas where ActionAid/ Speak Out! Project operates. She participates in the trainings facilitated by Speak Out! project mentors at her school.

“I didn’t know I had rights. It was thrilling and exciting to learn about my rights and those of other children. I can now know and identify when my rights are being violated. If I get to see that another child’s rights are being violated, then I can report to leaders or the teachers at school,” Iratabara states.

Iratabara knows that any sexual advances done to her body, exploiting her with too much work, and calling her bad names are all kinds of harassment that she must stand up against not only for herself, but for her fellow girls as well.

She is one of the targeted over 5,000 girls that are being empowered by the Speak Out! Project to know their rights, and gain knowledge, skills and support them to report and respond to cases of violence.

Claire Mugese, who is also a teenager in high school said she was also empowered with knowledge on sexual reproductive and health rights through the Speak Out Project.

“I have learnt about the changes my body will experience as I grow and learned how to guard against lies that could lead to unplanned pregnancies and sexual harassment. I’ve also learned how to make the right choices regarding my body and health. Now am fully aware of my rights and no one can easily abuse them,” Mugese cited.

15-year-old Munezero says she has learned about menstruation periods and how to maintain hygiene during that period which she says most parents shy away to talk about, hence the reason she appreciates her mentors for not shying away to discuss such crucial information with her and other girls.

John Rugerindida, whose daughter is one of the girls who benefit from the trainings, said that it’s hard for most parents to speak to their children about sexual reproductive and health rights and many times just live it to the children to learn on their own.

“My daughter told me she has so far learned about her rights and how to prevent and deal with abuse such as rape and defilement. Teaching my child is my responsibility but glad that Speak Out! Is supporting us to do this since it’s hard for most of us, parents,” he noted.

Speak Out! Project, targets 5,600 girls, community members in 9 sectors and 14 women rights organizations to increase willingness, confidence and ability to report and respond to cases of violence in four districts across Rwanda. The project is implemented by ActionAid in partnership with Faith Victory Association and Association des Guides du Rwanda. The project is funded with UK aid from the UK Government.



Girls at Nyarutovu Groupe Scolaire having an indepth discussion on SRHR

Breaking the Silence through Speak Out! Project to address SRHR and GBV in Rwanda



Girls in a Gisagara-based school ready for a session about their rights among other SRHR related topics

One of the challenges faced in several communities across Rwanda is the culture of silence whereby people, especially women and girls, are afraid to speak out or report incidences of violence they fall victim to.

Through empowering people to not only know their rights but also report cases, Speak Out! Project works towards addressing Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights (SRHR) and Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Rwanda.

According to Marie Frederick Kantarama, who coordinates three parents' clubs in Gisagara district, there's need to break the culture of silence and empower people to be able to boldly speak out and tell the truth. She noted that among the parents she meets with, it was very hard for them to speak out but through the several trainings they hold, the situation is changing.

"We had so many cases of teenage pregnancies and defilement in this area, but girls and their parents were afraid to speak and report those who abuse the young girls. Most girls and their parents weren't even aware that they had rights and laws protecting them but now they are learning and coming out to report offenders, and seeking support for victims," she stated.

Kantarama says that they tackle several topics in their trainings that include girls and women rights, challenges faced by adolescents and how to deal with them, and generally about SRHR and GBV.

Mukamusoni whose real names are withheld on request, a resident of Ruheru sector who was a victim of abuse for over 7 years of her marriage. The husband would always come back home drunk and beat her up, causing bruises on her body.



Kantarama radiates with joy as she poses for a photo

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Mukamusoni whose real names are withheld on request, a resident of Ruheru sector who was a victim of abuse for over 7 years of her marriage. The husband would always come back home drunk and beat her up, causing bruises on her body.

"I have suffered a lot of abuse from my husband. A week wouldn't go by without him beating me up and hurling all sorts of insults at me. I was always nursing wounds and heartaches.

I was afraid to report him because I felt like he owned me and can do whatever he wants with me. I was also afraid that if I reported him, he would chase me, and I would have no where to seek refuge. I was afraid people would laugh at me. I was empowered with knowledge on GBV through Speak Out project. Now I know my rights and can't accept to be harassed anymore. I am no longer ashamed, and I always counsel other women going through the same to speak out, report to authorities and seek help," she recounted.

Mukamusoni is now an agent of change in her community who reaches out to other women who are victims of abuse. She is passing on the knowledge on rights to other women and supporting other victims to speak out.

Christine Mukankusi, a teacher by Profession cited that many people decide to keep silent while going through issues of violence and abuse.

"The situation is changing now. People are kicking the culture of silence away and these days we hear more women and girls speaking out when faced with cases of abuse. We hope that this project continues to empower more people, so we can overcome sexual abuse and gender-based violence," she added.

Speak Out! project aims at increasing girls' confidence and knowledge of their rights, ability to claim their rights, take control over their bodies and make their own decisions. The project is being implemented by ActionAid Rwanda (AAR) in partnership with Faith Victory Association and Association des Guides du Rwanda in four districts which include Nyanza, Karongi, Gisagara and Nyaruguru.

The project targets 5,600 young school girls between 9-18 years of which 4% are girls with disabilities. It also includes 14 women's rights organizations of which are two that represent women and girls with disability. Speak Out! project is funded with UK Aid from the UK Government.

8 years of a marriage characterized by GBV, a life time of happiness ahead



Nyirasafari and her husband, Kanyamugenge happily working together in their garden

Philomene Nyirasafari is a 37-year-old mother of three children. Philomene and her husband, Kanyamugenge, are farmers based in Musanze district. The couple could hardly go a week without a fight in their home. Violence was more like a trade mark for their home. They were known for that.

“We were famous in our neighborhood for mainly one thing-violence. I spent eight years of my marriage being beaten & bruised and I started retaliating by hurling insults back at my husband. Our home was like a war zone where my husband and I were always fighting over anything. My husband would beat me up and even call me useless several times. Gender Based violence was a big issue in our home that nearly ended our marriage. We would fight and even both refuse to go dig yet that’s what our livelihoods & daily meals depended on,” Philomene explains.

Philomene and her husband continued to live in a

marriage characterized by abuse and violence for over eight years. She was tired of the situation and would at times pack her bags and return to her parents’ home but as a mother, guilt would eat her up for leaving her children behind and she would return to her abusive marriage, for the sake of her children.

He would never let her join other women for developmental engagements and meetings. He would beat her up and she would hurl insults back at him too. Their children were always sad, and it felt like joy was something they would only hear about but never experience.

When AmplifyChange project started working in Rwanda, they offered trainings for women on Gender Based Violence & rights. Philomene gradually started passing the lessons onto her husband who later became a changed man until there was no more abuse in her home.

“My husband changed. Our home is no longer faced with issues of abuse. The people in our neighborhood think I used sorcery or witch craft for him to be a changed man. My husband now respects and loves me. He doesn’t beat me up or hurl insults at me anymore. I have even added weight because of the peace I have in my heart. We now have a happy and peaceful home. Our children are happy too. I am so glad to have taken part of the trainings organized by ActionAid through AmplifyChange. I was able to learn about my rights, and to be supported to end the violence that had ruined my marriage,” said Philomene.

Philomene and her husband, Kanyamugenge, even took a family portrait dressed in the same fabric(kitenge) that now hangs in their house. They exude bliss as they show the photo to everyone who comes over to their house. Their faces radiate with joy and they lately treat themselves like they’ve just met. Kanyamugenge no longer beats or disrespects his wife.

Kanyamugenge, Philomene’s husband, affirms that indeed he was an abusive husband who didn’t disrespect his wife. The wife would never know where he puts all profit from their produce from the garden. He notes that if the wife hadn’t attended the AmplifyChange trainings that she later shared with him, the situation would still be bad in their home.

“We wasted a lot of time fighting over trivial issues that would have been resolved amicably. Today, we are peaceful, we plan everything together. I even bought for my wife clothes that have the same fabric as mine. We go to the garden together. Our children are happily going to school. We are a happy and focused family now. My only wish is for more men to be engaged in these trainings, so they can also gain knowledge and transformed



Nyirasafari and her husband, Kanyamugenge pose for a photo together

Early Childhood Development Centers; an intervention reducing Unpaid Care Work (UCW) in Rwanda



Mutegarugori carrying her daughter while at Busasamana ECD

Marie Chantal Mutegarugori is a mother of four children. She lives with her husband and four children in Nyanza district. She is a Farmer who grows a variety of vegetables and mushrooms.

Mutegarugori would leave her daughter with the neighbors whenever she had other errands to run. However, she had no peace in her heart leaving her little daughter with the neighbors since they too had a couple of their own children to take care of. She didn't have a choice though. This made it hard for her to engage in business. She would grow lots of vegetables and mushrooms that she needed to sell but it was hard. She was tasked with taking care of all the other home chores like cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children and doing all the other home chores. Since she had a little girl and it was hard leaving her with the neighbors, the only choice she had was to take care of her kids and other home tasks.

“It was extremely hard for me to do anything else apart from stay home and take care of my little girl and other home chores. I used to live my daughter with the neighbours who also had a couple of children to take care of. I was always unsettled wondering if they were really taking good care of her and sometimes I would just keep home with her,” she noted.

Mutegarugori adds that life wasn't easy having to depend on her husband to meet all the family needs, yet she felt like she too would be able to contribute if she could work. Her biggest challenge failing to find a safe space to take her little girl, so she could be able to work too.

Fortunately, ActionAid Rwanda established Busasamana Early Childhood Development Center (ECD) within her neighbourhood. She was excited at the opportunity of having a safe space to take her child to stay all day while she runs her business.

“Since my daughter joined the ECD, I can now comfortably and happily do my farming work and then go sell my mushrooms and other vegetables in the markets. I enjoy working with my hands, so I love working in my garden and seeing my vegetables grow. I am overjoyed that I can now earn money from my own sweat while my daughter is safe and happy at the ECD. I don't think I would be able to earn some money and meet my needs, if the ECD hadn't been established,” Mutegarugori narrated.

Mutegarugori hopes every area especially the rural areas have access to ECD's, noting that it won't only give their children a good foundation but enable women to engage in paid work.

“I am grateful to ActionAid for this ECD that has changed not only my child's life but mine too. My child enjoys spending time at the ECD. While at the ECD, she plays with several toys, given nutritious meals, enjoys her nap time and play time with her friends,” she added.

Another parent, Chantal Nirere expressed her gratitude towards the transformation the ECD has brought to her home area; something the parents have greatly benefited from.

Many families depend on farming to sustain their livelihoods. They get up early at dawn and go to their gardens to dig. Many of them go to their gardens with their children, which is quite tiring as watching the kids while they work takes too much attention slowing down the parents' work in the garden which makes them less productive.

Nirere expounds, “Most of us would go to the garden or to fetch water with children on our backs which was very exhausting. At the end of the day, we wouldn't be as productive as we should have been. Now we have enough time to do all our

chores and spend time with our children when they return from school. We even have time to engage in paid work now.”

Many women in Rwanda are victims of Unpaid Care Work. They mainly stay at home to take care of house chores such as taking care of the children, collecting firewood, fetching water, cooking among other home chores. This halts them from engaging in other productive/paid work which leads to poverty, lack and dependence on men which also at times result into abuse. When they have little children, it gets harder because they must stay at home and take care of the children all day.

ActionAid has supported with the establishment of Early Childhood Development centres (ECD's) in five districts across Rwanda, to support women to have a safe place to leave their children while they go about to engage in more productive work thus reducing UCW. ActionAid Rwanda has so far supported with the construction of over 12 ECD's so far across 5 districts for children between the ages of 3 to 6 years.

Many women who have taken their children to the ECD's are now engaged in paid and productive Income generating activities thus reducing UCW. ActionAid Rwanda has also supported women with rain water harvesting tanks and biogas as time saving interventions that have helped reduce Unpaid Care Work.

ActionAid Rwanda has intervened in several ways in effort to recognize, reduce and redistribute Unpaid Care Work. These include community sensitization and trainings on UCW, advocacy at national and international level through media platforms and symposiums, increasing clean water access at household and community level and establishment of early childcare centres.



Mutegarugori working in one of her gardens after dropping her child at the ECD

Liberata's new dawn after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi



Mukamana poses for a photo besides her kraal ready to feed her cattle

Liberata Mukamana is 44 years old and a mother of five children. She lives with her grand child too, and another mother and her child, who she took in because they had nowhere to stay. She got married in after dropping out of school because she had gotten pregnant out of rape. She is one of the thousands of Genocide survivors supported by ActionAid, in Rwanda. Liberata is a Genocide survivor who suffered a lot of abuse and horrifying experience.

Raped by over six men during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

When the Genocide started, she was 19 years old. It was the most excruciating period of her life, she said. She was raped countless times by several men. There's a time over six men raped her at the same time, one right after the other.

"I was raped by over six men, one after the other, during the Genocide. I had several kinds of violence including sexual violence, many times. My mother was raped too, and pieces of head cut

off as she struggled to keep alive. Later we found her dumped among other corpses and they had even raped her from a church. I witnessed and experienced unspeakable violence that left me traumatized. Images and flash backs keep coming back to me. I was left so bruised but couldn't find help. I crawled trying to escape. And then I knocked at a random door and a man I didn't know helped me. It was tough, it's an experience I can hardly describe," Liberata narrated.

During this period, she lost many of her family members who were also killed during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis. Those who killed them where their neighbors. Later they asked for forgiveness and she gradually forgave them much as it was hard for her.

Because of this appalling experience, I used to suffer from consistent headaches for over a year. I would receive medication from a psychiatric hospital called Ndera. Whenever I get the flash backs or stressful moments, the headaches come back.

News Letter

In the year 1998, a few years after the Genocide, she got married to her husband. Her husband, who was also abusive then refused her from resuming school and would stop her from interacting with other people because he was afraid other men would take her. She would always just keep to herself in her home and never meeting up with other women or making friends, because her husband wouldn't let her. And yet, she had to do all the work too since her husband, lives with a disability. She had to learn how to juggle all the work alone including fetching water, collecting firewood, taking care of the children and all other home chores. It was not easy to juggle all that on her own while lacking skills to even engage in any productive work where she could earn a living. Life still felt worthless for her.

Years later, fellow women in her community started to visit her and urging her to join them and even take part in community meeting because she had brilliant ideas.

ActionAid Rwanda intervenes in Liberata's struggle for a better life

Liberata's husband moved to town and was no longer living with her. She used that as an opportunity to engage with other women and join their groups. When she joined the group, ActionAid Rwanda started empowering them with knowledge on human & women rights, Gender Based Violence and equipped them with skills to enable them to engage in income generating skills. Through the trainings, she gained knowledge and confidence and her life changed. She joined leadership positions in her community.

Today she is a leader at several levels in her community. She is a representative in her cell in in charge of elections and voting for leaders. She's also the head in charge of all leadership and empowerment groups in her sector area.

"After ActionAid empowered us with skills, I felt like I too have a role to play in my community. I was slowly recovering from all the heartache brought about by the Genocide, but I picked the pieces up and started to live a life of purpose. I established a group of women who lost their husbands during the Genocide and the Survivors too. I brought them together, so we could come together and do something for ourselves," Liberata stated.

Before, she couldn't speak out, her self-esteem was low but she's now a role model and inspiration to other women in her community. She's helping with improving livelihoods of other people especially women and girls in her society.

"Many people in my community leave in abject poverty. Many of them where sleeping on grass because they couldn't afford mattresses. They would go pick grasses

from the bushes and sleep on it for a little comfort-I wanted this situation to change. As a cooperative we bought proper mattresses for 54 families that didn't have and members of our cooperative," she added.

Liberata is a member of a cooperative with 30 other women, that receive trainings, empowerment and other forms of support from ActionAid Rwanda.

"A day isn't enough for me to describe how ActionAid supported me and other women who are survivors of the Genocide. Our lives have greatly changed. I managed to save and bought a piece of land on my own. I was able to build a three-bedroom house, I have my own garden, pay school tuition for my children and meet all their needs. ActionAid also gave me a cow and a water tank. Now I have access to clean water and fertilizers for my garden," she concluded.

Liberata is one of around 1000 genocide survivors supported by ActionAid Rwanda. Today she travels to participate in regional meetings, representing other women. Despite having experienced all the trauma during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, her life has been transformed.



Mukamana cutting firewood so she can prepare a meal

Stephania: A Mega Business Owner who couldn't afford Soap

Stephania Mukantwari is a 57-year-old Woman, and a mother of five children. She is a member of Abadahigwa Cooperative. She is a resident of Murundi sector, Karongi district. She joined the cooperative in 2008.

She was living in abject poverty. She was very vulnerable. She was un happy and sad.

"I couldn't afford even soap to do laundry or bathe, or even salt. I could hardly afford any basic need. I depended on my husband to provide all my needs and my children's needs. It was hard for him too as he was also just surviving with hardly any sustainable source of income," she miserably narrates.

Life was unbearable for her, but she had to bring her self together and take care of her dependants, her children. Her relationship with her husband was on the verge of ending too. He was abusive.

"My husband used to beat me up. He would hurl insults at me and used not to value me. Life was sad. He was the only bread winner at home too which I think made the situation worse whenever I would ask him for any of the basic needs that we didn't have at home," Mukantwari recalls.

She had no source of income as she was a stay home mother whose life revolved around house chores that included fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking, doing laundry, taking care of the children, cleaning and so many more. The Unpaid Care Work was taking its toll on her too, it was draining and that was life as she knew it then....

Mukantwari and her husband were also living in a tiny one roomed rented house with her husband and five children.

Productive Work; Stephania's Break through

One of the areas where ActionAid Rwanda operates



Stephania(far right) showcasing some of her cockery stuff during an exhibition

in, is Karongi district, Stephania's home town. While ActionAid was sensitizing and supporting women to join cooperatives in Karongi, Stephania was among those women.

She joined Abadahigwa Cooperative in 2008. Through the cooperative she benefited from training on women rights, cooperative management, income generating activities, project management and many more.

She gained knowledge and skills through cooperative trainings. She then started a business where she would get local brew from brewers, sell it off, make some profit and then pay back her suppliers. Stephania continued with this business for a year while saving some money too.

Through her savings she was able to get start-up capital to implement another business idea. She bought a moto cycle that was transporting people as business. She continued to be saving and decided to now venture into another business.

Stephania's husband had pottery skills. She then decided to venture into a pottery business and involve her husband as well. She got a loan from the bank to inject into the business. She currently runs a factory that makes crockery or tableware out of clay.



Stephania sharing her remarks during an entrepreneurship training for smallholder farmers

“Today I own a factory that molds crockery such as cups, plates, trays and candle stand among others. We also manufacture tiles and bricks among other things. My business is growing,” she happily retorts.

Stephania’s Business, worth over 20 Million Rwandan Francs!

“My pottery business is worth over 20 Million Rwandan Francs as of today. I have employed over 15 people from my community, in my factory. I work together with my husband who also does molding for some of our products. My husband supervises the technical work while I deal with marketing and sales and looking for more clients,” she adds.

Stephania and her husband are now a happy couple. Their children are happy too. The husband no longer abuses her. They can afford enough salt and soap unlike before!

“I have been able to cater to my children’s

scholastic needs and two of them have now graduated from University. My husband now respects me and values my opinions. I was able to buy a car to use for business too. I have livestock too. I am so grateful for all the trainings and empowerment I received from ActionAid and I believe many women’s lives will be transformed too through ActionAid work,” she states merrily.

Stephania alongside other 29 women, is still a member of Abadahigwa Cooperative supported by ActionAid Rwanda and she also supports in empowering other women in her community. She is no longer a victim of Unpaid Care Work but engages in productive work.

NIYONSABA: How my life has been transformed through learning my rights



Niyonsaba working in her garden in her front yard

Vestine Niyonsaba, a resident of Ruheru sector is a widow, her husband died last year. She is a mother of four children and takes care of her two nephews, who currently live with her.

Niyonsaba had no right to property and was unaware about her rights, especially land rights. All the property they had as a couple, the husband would CLAIM it was all his, and she had no share or say, regarding it. Also, her husband would force her to have sexual intercourse against her will. Much as she was unhappy with all this, she didn't think it would ever end because of growing up in a patriarchal society where males dominated everything.

"I got married in the 1990's but I had no idea that I or other woman had rights. I thought it was normal that men dominate, and women are subordinates. I was not confident, and I was ignorant about women rights. I was even afraid to approach the leaders in my community," narrated Niyonsaba.

That's the life she saw other women living and it began to look like a normal ordeal since many were going through the same. Later, when she joined a cooperative with other women, Niyonsaba learnt about women rights that she didn't know she was entitled to.

Though forming and working with cooperatives in rural areas, ActionAid and it's partners offered & still offers trainings on women rights. Niyonsaba and many other women (and men) are now empowered with knowledge on women rights. ActionAid also supported illegally married couples to have their civil

rights to ownership of land-those who aren't legally married aren't lawfully guaranteed land ownership rights in marriage.

ActionAid also simplified and translated to the local language 'Kinyarwanda' a booklet on women rights and it was given to women to read so they can be aware of information about their rights and policies in place. That is how Niyonsaba continues to learn and be impacted with knowledge on her rights among other empowerment topics learned that rebuilt her life.

"Today I can advocate for other women. I wish more women knew their rights; and the men too, so they can stop abusing women rights. I am glad that at least my husband died after he had learnt about women rights and had stopped abusing my rights. I help other women in my community who are abused to learn about their rights through sensitising them and their spouses and ensuring that they receive further assistance if need be. Even though he's gone, I am empowered now and will continue taking care of our children and property & help other women get empowered too," added Niyonsaba.



Niyonsaba feeds her cow



Niyonsaba having a light moment with her son while they sort beans for the next meal

Building a 5 Bedroom House

Niyonsaba lives in a small brick house. Niyonsaba, a farmer, not only became empowered with knowledge on her rights but also economically. She has been able to save together with other members in her cooperative, Icyizere Cy'ubuzima. She is also the President of this cooperative.

Niyonsaba is currently constructing a 5-bedroomed house that is close to completion. She has also been able to construct a tap with clean running water in her home, buy livestock and pay tuition for her children, through her savings. She also usually volunteers during elections & counsels people facing life's difficulties within her community.

Sharing women's stories through Video Documentaries

Women in Muko and Shingiro sectors are embracing the digital era. 10 Rural Women farmers from Musanze District participated in a two-week workshop where they learned videography content gathering skills. The women were trained to film stories about their lives and issues that affect their lives.

Many of them have previously been victims of violence from their spouses and they did share their stories and were able to shoot a video documentary about violence, how it affects them negatively and what to do when faced with violence among other issues they faced in their communities.

The women also shot a video showcasing how joining cooperatives has economically empowered them, given them a stronger voice for advocacy, a platform to share their stories and experiences, learn new skills and acquire knowledge.

Ancilla, who was among those who participated in the two weeks training also appreciated ActionAid for such an initiative, that she said had given them an opportunity to acquire new skills but also learn more about Gender Based Violence (GBV), how to deal with it and supporting other community members.

"I used to think that only well-educated people would be able to acquire such skills as filming but am so glad that I and other rural women farmers had the chance to gain video documenting skills. For me, it was a chance to also open up about the GBV experiences I've gone through, which I know for sure that many women in my community can relate to. We used our experiences to come up with a script of the struggles we go through and the solutions to these," Ancilla noted.

She further stated that she'll be an advocate of change in her community to overcome GBV, raise awareness and support victims to receive help as Isange One Stop Center; and urge more people to join cooperatives in order to improve their lives.

Donatha, one of the participants stated through the workshop, she not only learned basic video skills but she was able to open up about all the abuse she's gone through and learned that she can share her story through a video documentary which can be used for awareness raising hence helping other people who are victims and the entire community and duty bearers to take action.

Josephine Uwamariya, ActionAid Rwanda Country Director applauded the women for coming up with such an impressive script that highlighted GBV issues



Some of the participants practicing video recording and interviewing

including tips on prevention and dealing with them for those who have fallen victim.

"The idea of using video documentaries for awareness raising is brilliant and am amazed by how you came up with such powerful scripts and learned how to do the video shootings too. I urge you to use these skills and your voices to address GBV issues in your communities as you all have the potential," Uwamariya emphasized.

Uwamariya also called upon the women to stop the habit of silence when they are facing abuse and violence. She urged them to speak out against this evil and train other women not to keep quiet about it but speak to end violence.

At the end of the workshop, a community screening was held where members of the community and local leaders were invited to watch the videos shot by the rural women.

Jean Bosco Nduwimana, who is Incharge of Cooperative Promotion in that area, expressed his gratitude for the great videos that he said were educative and informative. He appreciated ActionAid for organizing such a critical training. He urged the participants to pass on these skills to other members of their cooperatives and use these skills to bring out change in their communities, raising awareness about the issues they face, how they can be addressed and urging others to join cooperatives.

The workshop was organized by ActionAid UK and facilitated by InsightShare, a company specializing in training community members in participatory videography.



Participants getting hands-on trying to capture a video shot while others look on as well



Participants acting in a role play after coming up with a script and taking a video of the play

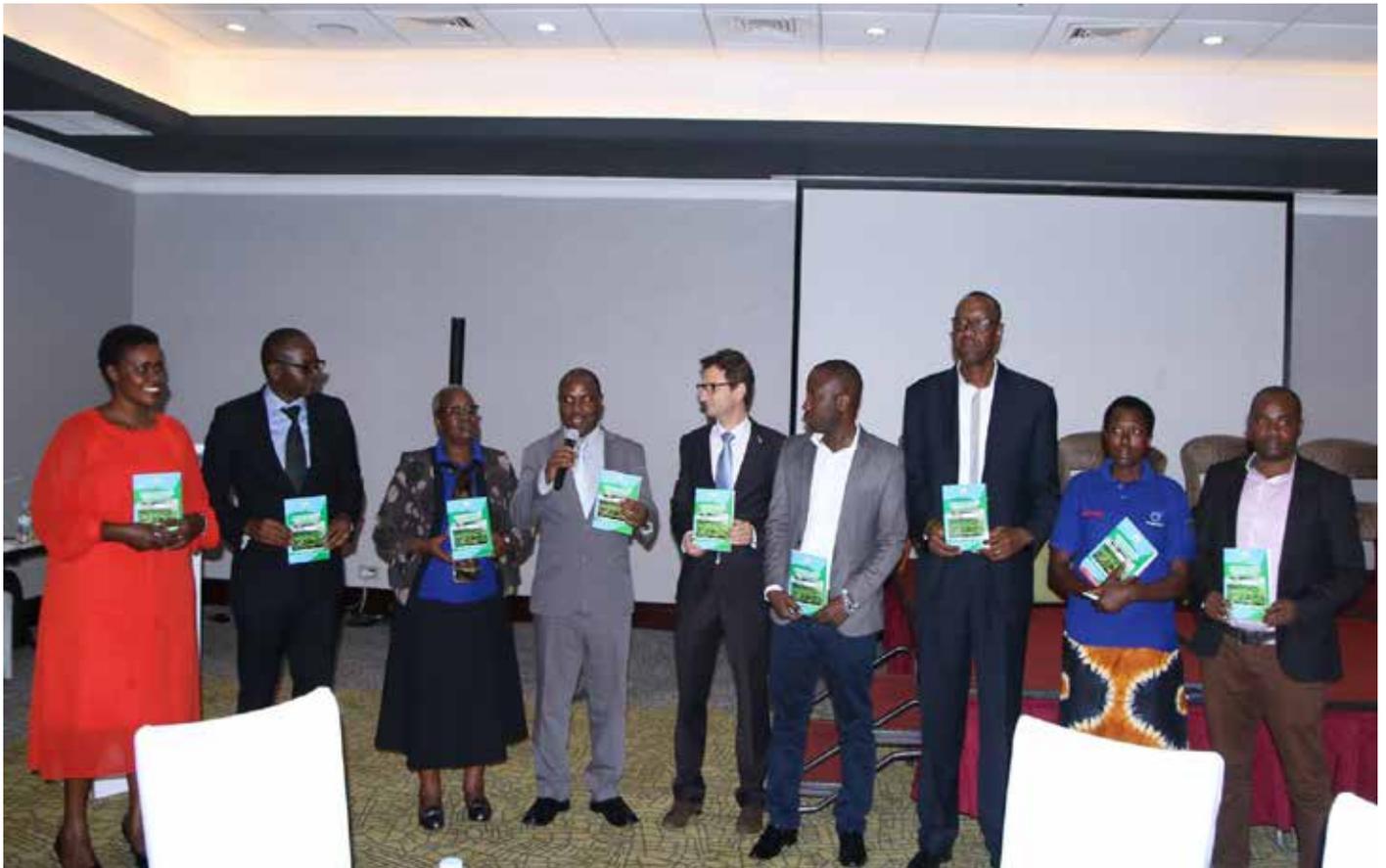
Pictorial Highlights



MINAGRI Permanent Secretary, Jean Claude Musabyimana, Head of Rural Development, Arnold De Vannsay & Esperence Nyirahabyambere, a farmer ready to award Journalists during the awards event



ActionAid Rwanda staff marching to Kigali Genocide Memorial Site during the 25th commemoration of those who lost their lives during 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi



Some of the high level guests ready to officially launch the PSTA4-Kinyarwanda version



Some of the ActionAid Senior Management members laying a wreath at the Kigali Genocide Memorial site during the 25th Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi



Members of Wiceceka network holding a group discussion during a training on Communication, organised by Amplify-Change Project



One of the rightholders receiving an energy cooking stove as one of the interventions to reduce time spent collecting firewood thus reducing unpaid care work

ACTIONAID RWANDA SAFEGUARDING POLICY FRAMEWORK

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

SafeGuarding Policies, Standards and Guideline Statements

1. Honor and Respect

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

2. Commitment to highest standards

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

3. Referral Assessment

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

4. Integrity & Transparency

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

5. Zero Tolerance

We will commit to ensure zero tolerance to all forms of sexual, gender and other exploitation & abuse while ensuring compliance to all national and federation safeguarding policies

6. Our Approach

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

7. Enquiry Process

We will ensure that all ActionAid Rwanda & Partner offices have a standing ad-hoc safeguarding committee responsible for dealing with complaints and concerns related to all forms of abuse & exploitation

8. Case Management

We will take all concerns, allegations and cases seriously ensuring zero tolerance to abuse and retaliation. We will collaborate fully with all agencies concerned with protection of rights of women, girls, children and other vulnerable adults to ensure access to justice

9. Stringent Recruitment Processes

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

10. Awareness Raising

We will train Board, Staff, Volunteers and partners and increase awareness to communities and children, in principles of safeguarding of children, girls, women and other vulnerable adults

11. Support and Oversight

We will appropriately effectively and efficiently oversee all our work with communities while interrogating, assessing potential risks, offering further trainings and supportive counselling to both rightsholders including children, women, girls and other vulnerable adults.

12. Partnerships

We will work in partnership with other agencies (statutory and voluntary) to avoid the best possible support to children, women, girls and other vulnerable adults in the communities and protect them from any harm.

13. Share information

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

14. Confidentiality

We will ensure confidentiality throughout safeguarding processes, ensuring protection of the rights of all concerned especially victims.

15. Comprehensive Due Diligence

We commit to carry out comprehensive due diligence in partnership assessment to ensure compliance and safeguarding principles, standards and protection of women, girls and other vulnerable adults.

16. Reporting, Protection and Evidence Preservation

We will ensure effective timely reporting of cases and concerns, protect victims from any form of abuse, preserve evidence and ensure referral for services and care as a prerequisite of efficient safeguarding

Rwanda National Police

Emergency: 112

Child help line: 116

Fire Brigade: 111

Anti - GBV: 3512

Isange One Stop Centre: 3029

Gender Monitoring Office: 5798

MIGEPROF Toll Free line: 2560

Office of the Ombudsman: 199

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