

'Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women through Access to Energy (SEWAE)' Project

Impact Newsletter

Rwanda
Southern Province
Muhanga District



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- Explore different pictures showcasing the project's transformative initiatives that empower girls and women.

YWCA's Executive Director's Acknowledgement

As we celebrate the successful completion of the "**Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women through Access to Energy (SEWAE)**" project, I am immensely proud of our achievements.

Over the past 12 months, in collaboration with ACORD Rwanda and with the generous support of Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and CCFD-Terre Solidaire, this initiative has enabled women and girls to take control of their futures and contribute to their communities.

By reducing the time spent on unpaid care work, facilitating their involvement in productive activities, particularly in the agricultural field, and promoting their inclusion in decision-making, we have laid the groundwork for lasting socio-economic change.

Supporting women and girls is not just about empowerment. It is an investment in a brighter future for our society and nation. When women succeed, communities thrive, and countries progress.

I extend my sincere thanks to all our partners and stakeholders who have helped make this project a success.

Let us remain committed to advocating for the rights and opportunities of women and girls, knowing their empowerment fosters sustainable development for all.

Pudentienne UZAMUKUNDA
Executive Director
YWCA Rwanda



Project Overview



Project goals:

- Reduction of time women spend on unpaid care work.
- Participation of women and girls in productive activities.
- Participation of women and girls in decision-making at the household and community levels.



Reach:

- 150 girls and women grouped into 6 savings group, each consisting of 25 participants.



Duration & implementation area:

- 12 months: 2024 – 2025 | Nyagasozi and Rwigerero Cells, Mushishiro Sector, Muhanga District



Project interventions and achievements:

- Provision of 150 improved cooking stoves.
- Training 256 girls, women, and their partners on the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) approach. Supplying materials for tree nurseries, including 12 hoes, 6 spades, 9 nail bags, 6 shipper ropes, 9 watering cans, 6 sacks, 6 pickaxes, 3 shade nets, 12kg of polythene bags, 30 planting trays, 960 avocado seedlings, 1,200 orange seedlings, 1,200 mango seedlings, 1kg of tree tomato seeds, 1kg of passion fruit seeds, and 45 tall trees for the nurseries.
- Establishment of three tree nurseries, each linked to two savings groups. Training 150 women in tree nursery establishment.
- Training 150 women in horticultural grafting skills, resulting in the grafting of 3,360 seedlings.
- Distribution and planting of the grown seedlings from the tree nurseries, including 960 avocado, 1,200 orange, 1,200 mango, 2,214 passion fruit, and 455 tree tomato trees.
- As part of the women's newfound goal to plant more trees, they took the initiative of purchasing and planting 217 eucalyptus and 283 papaya seedlings in their tree nurseries.

Green Stories of Change

Empowering Change: Marie Delphine's Story of Tree Planting and Gender Equality

In her local community, Marie Delphine Nibagwire was once confined to her home, focusing solely on domestic responsibilities. Today, the young mother has become a beacon of change, championing environmental protection through her mastery of tree nursery preparation and grafting techniques. These skills have empowered her to contribute to sustainable fruit tree planting initiatives at her home.

Reflecting on her journey, Marie Delphine highlights the transformation in societal norms.



Activities like tree nursery preparations and especially grafting were considered men's work in our local community. Learning these skills as a woman has given me a renewed sense of purpose. Today, we are using our acquired skills to showcase that we can be catalysts for positive change, such as planting our grafted trees at home. This will boost our agricultural yields, provide us with financial income at local markets, and help combat malnutrition in our families.

Beyond her personal achievements, Marie Delphine's work has inspired her community members, including both women and men, to engage in tree planting and environmental conservation. This has helped break gender stereotypes and build resilience against climate change.

Marie Delphine is a member of a 25 girls' and women's savings group, which focuses on supporting their agricultural activities.

As an advocate for change, Marie Delphine hopes her story will encourage more women to embrace roles traditionally dominated by men, proving that gender is not a barrier to making impactful contributions to society.



Regarding environmental protection, the trees we develop in nurseries and plant will contribute to protecting our soil.



Marie Adelphine Nibagwire
SEWAE Project Beneficiary



Marie Chantal: Improved Family Health and Forest Protection Through a Modern Stove

For Marie Chantal Nyirabagirishya and her family of five, life was once dominated by the arduous task of trekking long distances to gather firewood for cooking. Relying on a traditional three-stone stove significantly impacted the family’s well-being.

The turning point came when they received a modern cooking stove and store, transforming their daily lives and enabling a brighter future for the entire family.



Walking long distances to collect firewood for cooking was exhausting, especially as a woman struggling to manage other family responsibilities. It took up so much time and energy, leaving me too tired to focus on other important duties, such as income-generating activities.

Receiving a modern cooking stove and a wonderbox for keeping food warm has been a game-changer for us. Now, we use much less firewood, which also helps conserve our forests. Cooking meals for our children has become quicker, enabling them to attend school on time. Most importantly, I now have enough time to engage in other activities, such as participating in women’s savings groups.



Marie Chantal Nyirabagirishya
SEWAE Project Beneficiary

Marie Chantal’s newfound ability to balance household duties with community engagement and entrepreneurship highlights the empowering potential for women and communities alike. Her story stands as a powerful testament to the transformative impact of environmentally friendly solutions and underscores the importance of supporting women in adopting them for a sustainable future.



YWCA Rwanda, Local Leaders, and Citizens Plant Fruit Trees to Promote Sustainable Horticulture

In a collaborative effort to boost horticultural practices and improve livelihoods, YWCA Rwanda, in partnership with local leaders, joined project participants and authorities from Mushishiro Sector, Muhanga District, to distribute and plant a variety of seedlings and seeds. These included avocado, orange, and mango seedlings, as well as passion fruit and tree tomato seeds.

This initiative follows earlier support provided by the project, which included the establishment of tree nurseries and capacity-building workshops focused on horticultural skills such as grafting. Beneficiaries expressed appreciation for the hands-on guidance, which is expected to enhance food security, income generation, and environmental sustainability in the community.

The event was enriched with vibrant skits, traditional dances, singing, and speeches. These performances not only celebrated the project's progress but also served as platforms to share key lessons learnt, challenges encountered, and actionable recommendations for future improvements. Local leaders and beneficiaries expressed their gratitude for the SEWAE project, emphasising its transformative impact on their lives and livelihoods.



Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)

Gorethe: Girls' Journeys in Advancing Agricultural Innovation and Financial Growth

Gorethe Niyomugeni, 19, is an active member of a women and girls' savings group, where participants from the local community come together to discuss and implement environmental protection initiatives, such as establishing tree nurseries, while also fostering financial savings to secure their futures.

As Gorethe recounts, she assists her parents with farm work, which has traditionally relied on outdated agricultural methods, particularly for fruit cultivation, often resulting in low yields. However, she is now optimistic that her newfound skills in tree conservation and grafting will significantly boost her family's agricultural productivity.



I have embraced modern agricultural practices, including planting a variety of fruit trees, using the skills I gained from training sessions. Working through savings groups is crucial for us girls, as it provides a platform for a brighter future. By saving Rwf 450 per week, I can financially support my agricultural activities, such as purchasing essential items like fertilizers.



Gorethe Niyomugeni
SEWAE Project Beneficiary



The savings group members meet weekly to discuss their financial goals, reinvest their savings in activities that promote environmental sustainability, and improve their livelihoods through small-scale businesses.

Gender Action Learning System (GALS)

Emmanuel and Marie Chantal: Achieving Family Harmony Through Shared Responsibilities



Emmanuel Harerimana once lived in constant conflict with his wife, Marie Chantal Bagirishya, as he shirked household responsibilities, leaving the burden on her shoulders.

However, transformative changes began when the couple participated in a Gender Action Learning System (GALS) training. Through this programme, Emmanuel gained a new understanding of the value of shared responsibilities in the family and the role of gender equality in fostering development.



I used to believe that as a man, I had specific responsibilities in the family, and the rest were for my wife. However, through the gender equality training, I learnt that when a husband and wife work together and share all family responsibilities, it strengthens the family's overall development. Today, my wife and I share every responsibility equally.



Emmanuel Harerimana
SEWAE Project Beneficiary

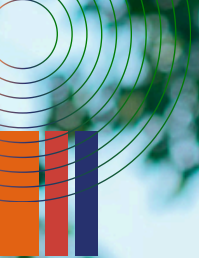


These changes have had far-reaching impacts on their household. Emmanuel notes that the family now benefits not only from the modern cooking stove they received, which conserves time and resources, but also from his newfound understanding of gender equality.

His wife, Marie Chantal, too, has been able to thrive, using the time previously consumed by household chores to engage in income-generating activities and community initiatives. The GALS approach offered a new perspective, encouraging men and women to see their families, and each other, as 'diamonds' or treasures of great value, while recognising that a home is built through shared effort, not by one individual alone.

SEWAE Project's Pictorial Stories





We extend **our heartfelt gratitude** to **all our partners** for their unwavering support and collaboration in driving these transformative **initiatives to empower girls and women**.

#EnergyForChange
#WomenEmpowerment