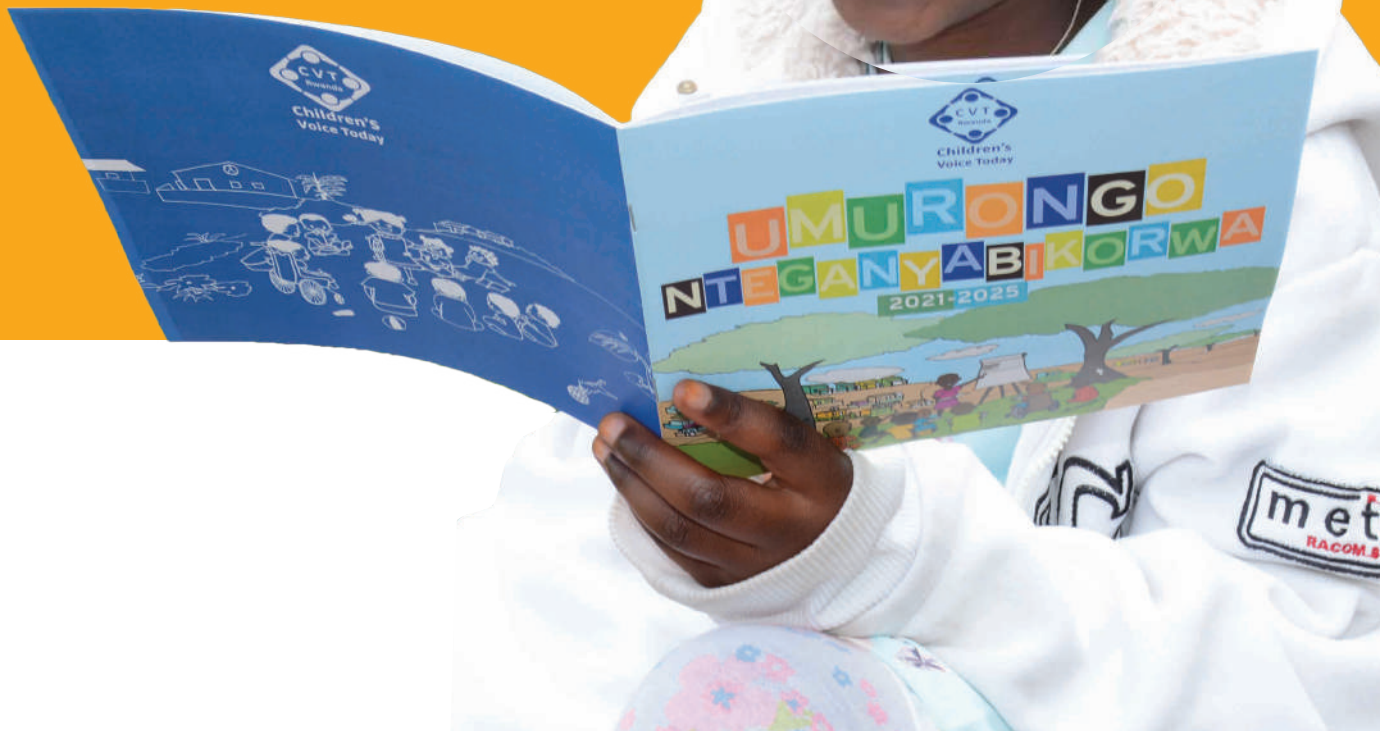




Children's
Voice Today

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2020-JUNE 2021



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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ACRWC:	African Charter on the rights and Welfare of the Child
AMWCY:	African Movement of Working Children and Youth
AU:	African Union
BFP:	Budget Framework Paper
CAC:	Children's Advisory Committee
COVID-19:	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CRC:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
CVT:	Children's Voice Today
DAC:	Day of African Child
ECDC:	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
IZU:	Inshuti z'Umuryango
JADF:	Joint Action Development Forum
TV:	Television
MINECOFIN:	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
NCDA:	National Children Development Agency
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
OBP:	Open Budget Portal
PHP:	Physical and Humiliating Punishments
SCI:	Save the Children International
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
STDs:	Sexual Transmission Deaseses
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
UNCRC:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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MESSAGE FROM CHILDREN'S VOICE TODAY



Dear children friends,

From the bottom of our hearts, we the children once again, we are very pleased to thank you for your will and effort to you in protecting and promoting children's rights and wellbeing. We also thank you for your endless effort to facilitate us participate in matters in concerning our lives.

We therefore to promise you that we shall continue to work hard to promote our rights and wellbeing in general. All together, we can.

Children's Representative
Muyinganyiki Elisabeth



Dear Partners,

Children's Voice Today appreciate a lot our partners, donors, including all children's friends, parents, caregivers for their excellent contribution to promote and protect child rights and empowering children to voice out their different views in the development process.

Children's Voice Today (CVT) also acknowledge children's contribution towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and participation of children in COVID-19 response. It is in this regards that children will play a dominant role in promoting their rights as a mandate in the strategic plan that we are developing. This strategic plan envisages to make CVT interventions spread extensively.

CVT believe that we will continue to work together for a common goal to promote children's rights by involving them in the decision-making processes as far as children's development is concerned.

CVT Representative
Nsengumuremyi Omar Tony



INTRODUCTION

Children's Voice Today (CVT) is a child/youth led organization that was established in 2001 to promote the rights of the children through meaningful child participation, where children/youth initiate and lead all activities of the organization. CVT is operating in fifteen Districts of Rwanda to promote and lead actions towards the realization of children's rights ensuring their participation in 4 provinces and the City of Kigali.

VISION

A child-friendly society where children enjoy their rights without discrimination, and have equal opportunities to realize their full potential.

MISSION

To be the voice of Rwandan girls and boys, to empower them to advocate for their rights and to fight violence against children.

This report is in line with three CVT strategic directions which are: Promotion of the children's right to protection, Promotion of children's right to participation, Promotion of culture and language amongst children. Under these directions, specific interventions have been implemented targeting and involving children themselves and their families, the Rwandan community at large, different institutions and duty bearers.





OUR BELIEFS

- ✦ Every child can learn and has the right to education;
- ✦ They want to be heard, listened, feel loved and experience joy;
- ✦ They are naturally good people, honest and innocent;
- ✦ They need diverse experiences to broaden their minds to what's possible; children often ask about how to deal with issues that affect them, which will in return make them exceptional adults;
- ✦ They speak out their truths and observe everything, which makes them natural learners;
- ✦ They are vulnerable and highly impressionable and are often shaped by what they see hear, and experience;
- ✦ All children with disabilities and children with special needs can do more when they obtain possible opportunities to achieve their potential.



OUR APPROACH

Children's Voice Today creates children's grassroots groups at the community level and empowers children to lead, learn, decide and implement their own activities that promote children's rights. Since 2001, we have put a lot of time and efforts into the promotion, protection, fulfillment, respect, and enjoyment of children's rights in Rwanda. We organize trainings, workshops, press conferences, roundtable discussions, campaigns, exhibitions, study tours, Radio and TV shows to advocate for children's issues and to empower them to advocate for their challenges on their own.



CHILDREN'S GRASSROOTS GROUPS

A children's grassroots group is a community children's platform where children discuss and share ideas about children's rights and responsibilities. It is a good opportunity for them to carry out advocacy for issues affecting them, games, leisure and talent exhibition and help children to enjoy the group. In addition, children strengthen their relationships and get more friends. The main objective of the children's grassroots group is to equip children with knowledge about their rights and to enable them to play a role themselves in promoting their rights and wellbeing through capacity building, self-efficacy and confidence and to link them with various government institutions and other child-focused institutions.



CHILDREN GROUPS' SITUATION

At the end of 2020, CVT counted 5,881 children members, this number reduced from 10,653 in 2019. Those children grouped in 107 grassroots groups, these groups also reduced from 136 in 2019. CVT works with children in 15 districts. 90% of the members are children (under 18), 10% are youth who graduated in the children's groups, 45 % of the members are girls. This percentage increased from 32 in 2019 and 55 % are boys this percentage reduced from 68% in 2019. The changes in these categories is the impact of COVID-19, which also affected all organs of our organization.

5,881 children's groups members,



45%
Girl members
55%
Boy members



90%
Children members
10%
Youth members



NETWORKING IS OUR PRIORITY



CVT is a member of the child rights civil society coalition in Rwanda known as Coalition Umwana Ku Isonga based in Kigali – Rwanda

Read more at: www.cuirwanda.org

CVT is a member of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) based in Dakar – Senegal,

Read more at: www.maejt.org



CVT is a member of the Consortium of Street Children network based in UK.

Read more at: www.streetchildren.org

The right to protection is well recognised by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and African Chart on the Rights and Welfare of Child (ACRWC) ratified by the governments of Rwanda.

This year, CVT focused on the following interventions: to reducing the number of children in child labor, increase knowledge of children on sexual and reproductive health rights, and eliminate physical and humiliating punishments in all settings including schools and homes.

1.1. CHILD LABOR:

THEY ARE TOMMORROW LEADERS NOT LABORERS

Child labor is one of the threats to children's rights. Children supported to conduct activities fight against child labor begins with the prevention through awareness raising, identification and reporting of the cases to competent authorities. During this period where community gatherings are not allowed, children carried out awareness and advocacy using the home visits, one-on-one, and meetings in small group method to withdraw children from heavy and hazardous work like; making and carrying mud bricks, carrying heavy loads of potatoes, sugarcanes, and sand, and pushing loaded bicycles.

This has been a success due to the collaboration between children, parents, IZU, and local leaders. However, more effort is needed by all partners to raise awareness, do the mapping of areas where child work is rampant, and reporting. Children continue to monitor and follow up the children who were withdrawn from child labor to ensure that they do not go back.



Children from Ruhango District presenting about forms of hazardous work children do, and advocating for the elimination of child labor, Ruhango, April 2021.

DIALOGUE WORKS

Children's Voice Today is a members of the global campaign "*Dialogue Works*" (2020-2024) organized by child-rights organizations. Dialogue Works aims to increase spaces and opportunities for working children to express their views and to participate in dialogues with adults who have the responsibilities to improve the lives of children. It is intended that dialogue between working children and adults can take place at different levels, from local to global levels, so that adults have increased understanding of children's experiences and ideas, and that they act on children's suggestions to improve practices and policies affecting working children and their families. Children's Advisory Committees (CACs) is group of working children that meet regularly on the local level to promote working children's right to participation. Children's Advisory Committee supported to plan and implement action and advocacy dialogues to improve their lives.

In this reporting period, working children were facilitated to meet as on opportunities for them to exchange experiences, and to participate and represent working children in higher level advocacy dialogues at national, regional and global levels. The main purpose is to support working children to have space and skills to dialogue with key influential people on matters that are important to them to improve the lives of working children.

From the discussions working children proudly share that: from their work, they manage to buy clothes for themselves; helping their families to get what they need; buying school materials; paying school fees; sell all the products and get enough profit; buy domestic animals and are paid in an expected time.



Working children are brainstorming on the challenges they encounter in their work, and the possible solutions to overcome them, Nyarugenge District, May 2021.

Even if they are happy about their work, there are some challenges which they face and most ones are: lack of enough time to revise our books; not being paid; lack of customers; being abused by our employers; lack of enough money to pay our expenses; going long distance to find a job; physical violence; discouragement and lack of capital.

Success story:

A CHILD IS MEANT TO LEARN NOT TO EARN

Abdul, a 14 years boy, used to do hazardous work for money, sleeping out the home, and not studying. He lives with his mother in Buhoro Cell, Ruhango Sector. He had left of school and working for money. He used to carry heavy jerry cans of water and mud bricks. On top of that, the money he earned used it to buy and drink alcohol. When children in grass root group (Happy) realized that Abdul is doing heavy work, not schooling, and sleeps outside, they decided to go and talk to him and his mother about child rights and the dangers of child labor. After a while, Abdul was convinced and promised his peers to stop doing heavy work for money and go back to school. His mother also promised to provide the school materials and will not close him outside the house anymore. Currently, Abdul does decent work for helping his family living, and is schooling at Buhoro Primary School.

While appreciating the role of children in leaving child labor, Abdul said;

“ I thank the children from the grass root group for their effort to come to talk to me and my family. I had left school and working for money, and engaging in bad behavior like drinking alcohol. Now, I have realized that I was spoiling my future. I decided to leave working for money, do decent work to support parents for family living and then go school.”



1.2. DO WHATEVER TO END STREET CHILDREN ISSUE

Children from grass root groups and children forum committees have been empowered on child rights including child rights violation monitoring, advocacy and reporting. After this capacity building, they came up with different initiatives including the identification of children in conflict with families and are at risk to go and stay on the street. After meeting identified parents and children and discussing on risk of street children situation, 10 children agreed to stay with their families. In order to achieve this, children in grass root groups collaborated with parents, IZU, teachers, and local leaders.

On the same note, different leaders from Nyarugenge district, children, and partners in child protection forum including Children's Voice Today, held the advocacy meeting to discuss the issue of street children where they came up with recommendations for addressing this issue as follows: identification of street children for protecting them, empowering poor families economically, organizing regular community meetings to discuss the issues affecting children, build the capacity of local authorities, working closely with families especially those in conflicts, and organizing case management sessions combining all the stakeholders. At the end of the meeting, Jean Sauveur KALISA, Director of Good Governance, thanked children for their contribution in addressing the issues affecting them.



I.3.SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

Children's Voice Today in collaboration with Club Rafiki Youth friendly Center, conducted a training session on Sexual and Reproductive Health for Children's Groups Leaders and Youth Mentors. They were trained on sexual transmitted diseases (STDs), early pregnancy, physical and behavior changes in boys and girls during adolescence. From this training, Children's Groups Leaders and Youth Mentors increased their knowledge on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights who in turn cascaded the knowledge to other children in their respective grass root groups and other children/youth.

This training was very crucial to children/youth because they understood different diseases and infections they can acquire through unprotected sexual activities and how they can prevent them, preventing unwanted pregnancies, and different body and behavior changes boys and girls go through during adolescence and how they affect their sexual life.

Diane of 17 years old from Kigali sector said, *"I understood well the physical changes of my body and this will help me to change behavior so that I cannot have early pregnancy which may make me have parental duties at early age and miss my education. Many children and youth have understood the reason for changes on their bodies and the effects of their behaviors. We request parents/caregivers and leaders to put more effort in educating children/youth on sexual and reproductive health"*

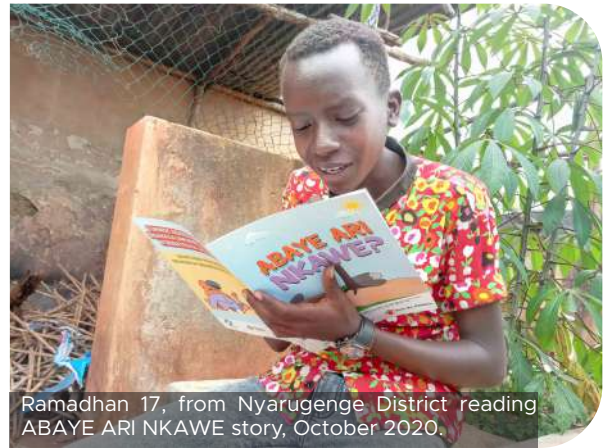


Access to sexual and reproductive health is essential not only to achieve sustainable development

I.4. ELIMINATING PHYSICAL AND HUMILIATING PUNISHMENTS



James, a CVT staff is discussing the message on physical and humiliating punishments delivered in ABAYE ARI NKAWE story with parents, children, and local leaders, Kirehe District, September 2020.



Ramadhan 17, from Nyarugenge District reading ABAYE ARI NKAWE story, October 2020.

Some parents believe that children who are not disciplined by a stick may not become important persons. The ways parents beat children cause negative effect to the life of children. From the story of children from grassroots groups, CVT facilitated children to produce a child friendly sensitization material on eliminating physical and humiliating punishments to children called ABAYE ARI NKAWE (IF IT WAS YOU). The story booklet was disseminated to different child rights stakeholders with the aim to increase knowledge of parents/caregivers on the effects of corporal and humiliating punishments to children, and encouraging them to adopt the use of positive discipline. This year, 2,230 copies of ABAYE ARI NKAWE booklet were printed and disseminated to parents and local leaders. As a result, 62 Parents (14 men and 48 women) out of 80 visited, among the 340 parents who received the booklets confirm that they understood the effects of physical and humiliating punishments and committed themselves to use positive discipline in the everyday parenting of their children.

NIRERE, a parent, and a resident of Ruhango district who read the booklet and adopted the use of positive discipline testified and said;

“Before, I was a parent who used to punish my child with harsh punishments. I used to beat and yell at him with abusive words. When I read the story of a child called HIRWA in “Abaye Ari Nkawe” story booklet brought to me by my child from the grass root group, I was so much touched by how HIRWA was beaten and humiliated by the teacher at school and parents to the extent of running away from home. Since then, I decided to stop using physical and humiliating punishments and devote to using positive discipline. I also advise other parents not to use physical and humiliating punishments because they cause a lot of bad consequences to their children”

Read more on:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_Mo1NsRH7yclpVS-NdCDndCMzNnUfpB5/view

1.5. CHILDREN AND COVID-19:

CHILDREN'S VOICES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Children at risk of being infected with COVID-19 identified were sensitized on the preventive measures to COVID-19 to raise their awareness, and received hygiene materials that helped them to prevent from the spread of COVID-19.

Through the grass root groups, children identified, sensitized, and provided support to 105 children (M=37, F=68) identified from poor families in Burera and Ruhango districts.

After the outbreak of the pandemic, children realized that wearing face masks, washing hands, and social distancing are the key measures to fight against COVID-19. In this context, children supported other children from poor families who lack the preventive materials and provided them with face masks, washbasins and soap.



We can all join our efforts to end the spread of COVID-19 pandemic through respecting the prevention measures.

DIRECTION II

PROMOTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

The right to participation is an important right that every child has, and which is stipulated in article 12 and 13 of the UNCRC and the ACRWC in its article 9 on Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion. CVT commits to continue championing child participation by empowering children and creating platforms for them to take part in solving matters affecting them at all levels.

In this reporting period, CVT focused on the following interventions :

Increased participation of children in planning and budgeting processes, promotion of child led advocacy and Influence, Increasing knowledge and participation of children in protection of environment, Increasing participation of children in child rights monitoring and reporting and increasing participation of children in the promotion of gender justice.



Active participation through media : children use the media to communicate and educate

II.1. PUBLIC BUDGET: CHILDREN'S VIEWS ON PUBLIC BUDGETING



Children participating in the online consultation on the Budget Framework Paper analysis and development of Budget Allocation Advocacy Paper, Rugarama, Burera District, May 22, 2021

On May 22, 2020, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) issued the draft budget for the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 which was approved by the Parliament on May 5, 2021. In this regard, CVT facilitated children to take part in virtual meeting for developing a Budget Allocation Advocacy Paper after analyzing the Budget Framework Paper (BFP) and this paper was officially submitted to the Parliament.

CVT facilitated children from Burera, Kirehe, Nyarugenge, Ruhango and Rutsiro to share their views on the issues that should be addressed by the 2021/2022 national budget. CVT also helped children to submit the documented Advocacy Paper to the Parliament, on May 22, 2021.

Read more: https://www.cabri-sbo.org/uploads/bia/Rwanda_2019_Formulation_External_BudgetFramework_MinEcosFin_COMESAEC_English.pdf



Isaac, the president of children's forum committee from Kimisagara Sector in Nyarugenge district leading virtual session

Watch the video on youtube
on the link below:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VfJTQILC6IQ&t=20s>

Children's quotes on the Budget Framework Paper analysis:



"As child, I'm very happy that some of the issues mentioned in our views in the 2020/2021 budget framework analysis were addressed like; eliminating child labor in Cassava plantations and factory. I also appreciate that CVT has facilitated us to have the online consultations that enabled us to share our views on the budget framework paper. I request CVT to help us send our views to the Parliament so that it can also deliver them to respective authorities for review". Said Pascal, 14 years, from Ruhango district.

Jacqueline, 15 years, from Rutsiro district appreciates the platform given to children to participate in the planning and budgeting process. *"It is important for us as children to participate in the planning and budgeting process of our country. Through our participation, we can know the amount of budget allocated to child rights areas to promote the rights and improve the wellbeing of children. We will also be able follow up the budget implementation"*



"I am happy that some of the issues we raised last year on the national budget were considered and were done. In Kirehe, there was the provision of electric power and clean water. The Health Post at Kigarama was constructed and good health services are offered now. In this coming year's budget, I would request that materials should be increased in schools, allow people with disabilities to get Insimburangingo through Mutuelle de Sante since some poor family cannot afford to buy them for their children" Explained Ephesso, 16 years, from Kirehe District.

"I'm very happy about the construction of this bridge. I was studying at this school, but due to the inconveniences caused by lack of the bridge, my parents decided to take me to another school. When the rain fell, we could not cross to the school until the water dries out. I'm happy the leaders responded to our request and now my fellow children are able to go to school easily and peacefully"

Emerance, 13 years from Rugarama sector said



Children (Dieu Aimée & Emérance) observing the completed bridge at Karangara Primary School, Burera, April 2021.

11.2 INVESTING IN CHILDREN:

BUILDING THE FUTURE GENERATION



CVT facilitated district public dialogue on investment in children meetings between CSOs, media, children, parents, and government officials. The meetings aimed at discussing the budget allocations to areas related to children's rights and wellbeing, and budget information accessibility to citizens. The dialogue was conducted in four districts which are Burera, Kirehe, Rutsiro and Nyarugenge. The districts partners committed themselves to increase their engagement in the budgetary allocations to improve the child rights increase and children's involvement in public planning and budgeting process. They discussed areas that need improvement which are: to increase their effort to fight against child labor, addressing the issue of street children, school dropout, teen pregnancy, promoting child participation, and positive parenting in all settings.

The Vice Mayor for Social Affairs in Burera District Mr. Jean de la Paix MANIRAFASHA said, *"Children are the future leaders, we need to invest what it takes to raise them in a way that they grow up in good conditions and achieve their full potentials."*

Clementine 16, a child from Kanyinya Sector appreciated the meeting. She said, *"As a child, I am very happy for the opportunity to participate in this meeting to discuss on how promote and improve the rights and welfare of children. We have had the space to express the issues affecting our lives to the duty-bearers present here and they have assured to increase the budget in child-related activities. They have also committed themselves to work with other partners to increase the involvement of children in planning and budgeting process. We request that such meetings should be regularly conducted"*

II.3. NATIONAL CHILDREN'S SUMMITS HAVE PLAYED A BIG ROLE IN ADVANCING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Annual National Children's Summit is a Consultative Forum which brings together children's delegates from across the country to exchange views and ideas on the issues affecting their lives. It was initiated in Rwanda in 2004 to grant every child a right to participation and to provide an opportunity for dialogue amongst children, policy makers, Government officials, civil society, development partners and all citizens. The 14th children summit was held on November 20, 2020 coinciding with celebrations of the World Children's Day at Rwanda Parliament Building, which was marked under the theme: *"the role of the family to fight against online child abuse."*

Speaking at the summit, Jeannette BAYISENGE, the Minister for Gender and Family Promotion said that there has been remarkable improvement in terms of children's rights thanks to the annual National Children's Summits. *"National Children's Summits have played a big role in advancing children's rights and equality for girls,"* she said. She added that as government, they always pay attention to the children and implement recommendations they make during their summits.



Children with Government officials, civil society and development partners representatives in the Rwanda parliament during the 14th National children's summit, Kigali, November 2020

II.4 CELEBRATION OF THE DAY OF AFRICAN CHILD WITH CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS

This year, children from the grass root groups joined the rest of the world to celebrate the Day of African Child on June 16, 2021. In Rwanda, the day coincided with the parenting month which was observed on 16 June 2021, under the theme *“Isibo, as a pivot to the child development”* to inspire a reflection within Isibo residents towards their role and responsibilities in child development and protection, with a focus on preventing and eliminating all forms of child malnutrition, while promoting child’s growth and development within the households.

Children from grass root groups in Ruhango District in collaboration with local and national leaders, organized and celebrated the DAC in Mbuye sector. The event was presided by local leaders, children, Inshuti Z’Umuryango, Community Health Workers and citizens. Children informed the audience about their contribution in addressing the issues affecting the welfare of children like; construction of kitchen gardens, distribution and planting of fruit trees, and sensitization on child rights and responsibilities. Parents and local leaders thanked children for their role in the development their community.

In his speech, the Mayor of Ruhango said, *“in commemorating the Day of African Child, we reflect on the problems affecting children in our respective Isibo. This year, the emphasis was to empower ISIBO as pivot to take the lead in addressing family issues including malnutrition and stunting among children under 5 years. I thank the people of Kizibere for your effort to reduce the cases of malnutrition in children from 59 last year (2020) to 8 this year (2021). I also appreciate the contribution of children in fighting against malnutrition. I urge all parents, leaders, and partners to work together to address the issues affecting children”.*



The Mayor of Ruhango District participating in feeding children on a balanced diet meal prepared by parents during the celebration of DAC, Ruhango District, June 2021.

II.5. CHILD LED ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCE

II.5.1. LISTENING AND SUPPORT CHILDREN FROM THE VULNERABLE FAMILIES

Children from grass root organized and conducted home visits to sensitize parents from vulnerable families on the importance of education, associating with other children, and accessing other community services for the future of their children.

After realizing that children from the vulnerable families are not enjoying some of their rights like going to school and associating with others, children from Inyemeramihigo grass root group in Cyanika sector, Burera district conducted home visits to sensitize parents to take their children to school and allow them to join children's grass roots groups in order to associate with others in the community.

Children from the grass root groups also found out that some the children could not get basic school materials from their parents to join school where they provided them with some materials like; shoes, soap, books, and pens to three children. The children supported are happy to receive the support which helped them to study and perform well in their studies.

MUKUNDWA, 13 years old is one of the children who received the supported. She said that the notebooks and pens given to her were much needed, They facilitated her to attend school and performed well at the end of the term.



DROCELLA, The Executive Secretary of Kabyiniro cell, thanks children from Grass root group who advocated for the issue of mindset of parents who had refused to provide support needed for their children to go to school. Now, the children are going to study and this will motivate parents and children and it will lead to positive change in these families.

II.5.2 ADVOCACY ON MALNUTRITION: CHILDREN CONTINUE TO MAKE KITCHEN GARDENS

Children from grass root groups constructed kitchen gardens for vulnerable families and conducted awareness on the prevention malnutrition and stunting in children as their contribution in eliminating malnutrition among children. Through the grass root groups, children learnt about the right of children to good health through eating balanced diet and aware that green vegetables are one of the food stuff needed in the balanced diet. Children work with parents, Friend of family and local leaders on this initiative

Success story:

"IF YOU CAN'T FEED A HUNDRED PEOPLE, THEN FEED JUST ONE" Mother Therese

Children from Urumuri grass root group in Byimana Sector constructed a kitchen for Mahembe home-based ECD operating at Mahembe Cell. They grew green vegetables like, carrots, onions, beets, and others. Today, the vegetables are grown up and are benefiting over 30 children who attend home based ECD.

Seraphine a parent said; *"I appreciate that my child is getting a balanced diet while attending the ECD program at Mahembe cell. It is a courageous activity that we as adults never considered as important, but children showed that they are capable of bringing positive change in the mindset. The kitchen garden they constructed became a lesson to us and I, myself, I am planning to construct mine at home"*



The kitchen garden constructed by children at Mahembe Cell, Byimana Sector, Ruhango District.

II.6. GENDER JUSTICE PROMOTION

Gender equality is considered in CVT priorities and included in the five-year guiding strategic plan. The organization's activities allow equal opportunities to boys and girls, men and women without any gender-based discrimination. This year, gender equality was considered in planning, implementation and during the activities considering the views and value of each part:

Staff and children were trained on gender equality mainstreaming in program activities, and the knowledge received was shared to children's grass roots groups' leaders to apply in everyday activities of the groups. In this context, children apply the knowledge during the election of the Groups Committee Leaders where they respect the (at least) 30% of female principle, and in other activities involving boys and girls.

As observed from the organization activities, females are equally active as males, meaning that, participation to both girls, boys, men, and women are equally presented and provide equal chance to share their views. Sometimes, in consultation or working groups, we separated boys and girls depending on the issues to discuss if it is sensitive to boys or girls. This helps them to express themselves freely.



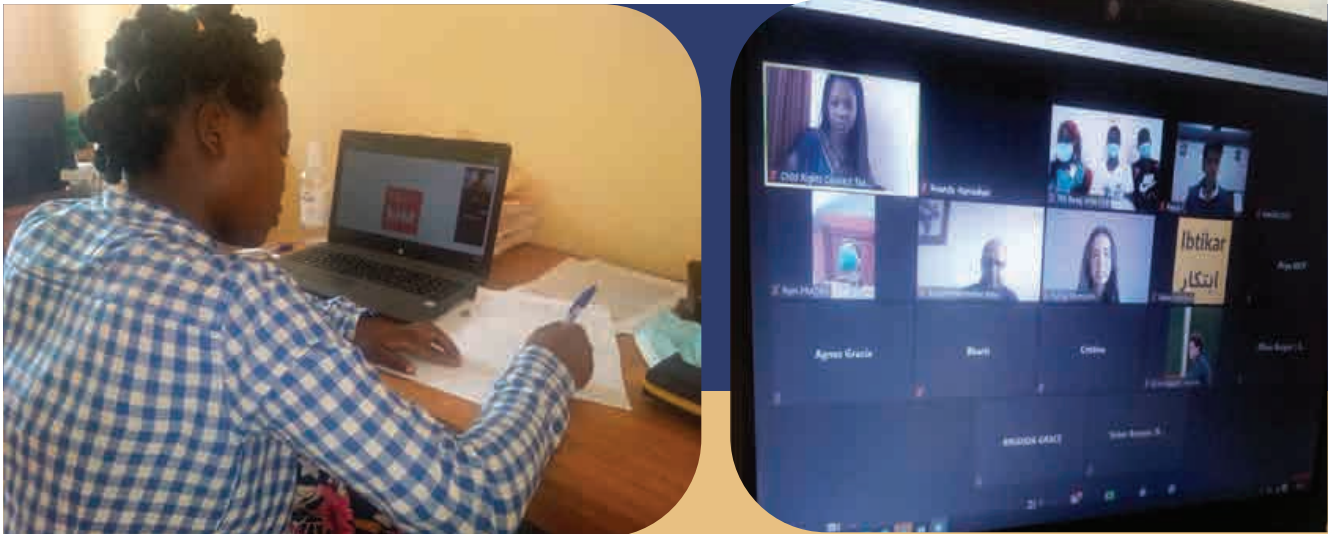
Education on Gender equality plays a key role in challenging gender based violence and unequal society

II.7. CHILD RIGHTS MONITORING AND REPORTING



SDGS FOR CHILDREN:

II.7.1 THE WORLD WE WANT, THE FUTURE FOR ALL



Grace (a child from Rwanda) participating in the online children's consultation session with the UN Human Rights Office on children's rights and the SDGs, February 2021.

Children informed the UN Human Rights Office report on the challenges in implementing the SDGs, what the leaders can do to change things for the betterment of children, what children can do to bring about positive change in community, and their sustainable and resilient recovery the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic.

In February 2021, the UN Human Rights Office conducted consultation with children on child rights and SDGs, and how they resist and recover from the effects of COVID-19.

Children were facilitated to participated in the consultation. The information collected include; the challenges facing children today that are preventing progress towards the selected 9 SGD, what can the world leaders do to change things for the better for children, what can children and their peers do in their community to create positive changes, and the support their need.

For respecting the COVID-19 preventive measures, the consultation was done online through conference call where selected children were called on phone and participate in the consultation. After the consultation, the views were compiled and share to the UN Human Rights Office.

II.7.2 CHALLENGES FACED THAT PREVENT THE PROGRESS OF SDGS:

1 NO POVERTY



Loss of jobs by parents due to COVID-19: Families are not able to get basic materials like food, clothes, school fees, and health care;

Mismanagement of available resources by parents, coupled with large number of children in families affect development;

2 ZERO HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



The lack of enough and unequipped health facilities, limited resources, illiteracy and ignorance by parent hinders access good health services;

Insufficient knowledge on entrepreneurship, lack of transparency in recruitment and sharing opportunities due to corruption, and lack of qualified workers prevents the achievement of decent work and economic development;

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Business has been affected by COVID-19. Importing and exporting goods is not effective, and prices on the market places have increased especially in rural areas;

Ignorance of people about the importance of working together in cooperatives or small groups, and lack of unity and togetherness hinders partnership between individuals and countries;

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE ACTION



Destruction of natural resources, air pollution, and little knowledge on environment protection have led to global climate change. Natural hazards and disasters like, heavy rainfall, drought which erode the soil and destroy crops cause food insecurity;

Few judicial facilities especially in rural areas and limit access to judicial services affect justice.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Ignorance of people about the importance of working together in cooperatives or small groups.

Read more on:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZlyZQtwlH1EndiVEljp3KitVGpiPUoa_/view

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CSOS FORUM ON THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD.

In March 2021, children participated in the forum on sustaining CSOs contribution in fulfilling children's rights. The meeting was organized by the CSOs Forum, and aimed at finding out what is going on well and the challenges in different countries regarding the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and how they impacts on their lives. From this meeting, children developed the Advocacy Paper and submitted it to Committee of Experts of the ACRWC.

Children shared their views to inform the African Charter on Welfare and Rights of the Child about the implementation of children's rights; the best practices and setbacks.

First of all, they acknowledged the key good things the government is doing to promote children's rights: the government is construction more the schools for reducing school dropouts caused by long distances taken by children to schools; the government together with child rights actors are revising and updating child rights related policies like, the education policy; children with disabilities are being helped to enjoy their basic rights by encouraging new buildings to meet disability-friendly necessities like; toilets, pathways, and training people to support them.

On the other hand, they suggested some areas where need improvement: to increase the partnership with developed countries for working together to provide support to children with special needs; increase the budget for dealing with street children, focusing on the preventive measures; deal with child labor issues mostly affecting children from poor families; and deal with the issue of early pregnancy, focusing on prevention, and support to victims.



Children participation in the CSOs forum on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child, Kigali, March 2021

2.7.3 DISSEMINATION OF CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The concluding observation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child are the main outcome of country session which indicates the progress achieved by the country and recommendations to the state to improve the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Concluding Observation of CRC were translated into Kinyarwanda and compiled into child-friendly booklet, and printed 1,040 copies were and disseminated to children for being used as advocacy tool for child rights issues.

Children from grass roots groups first discussed about the Concluding Observation during group meetings, They identified the issue to be advocated for basing on the concluding observation and developed the advocacy plan. Children came up with issue to focus on: prohibition of physical and humiliating punishments, make CRC known to everyone, freedom of self-expression, and birth registration of all children

Read more:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1E-T9vubweowjYK2AH8koCt_mgAkEXR4X/view



Children reading the child-friendly booklet for the concluding observation and identifying the issues to advocate for Nyarugenge, November 2020

Africa's Agenda for Children :

Fostering an Africa Fit for Children elaborates on the vision of Agenda 2063 in respect of children. In doing so, this Agenda takes cognizance of the elucidation in Agenda 2063 that 'African children shall be empowered through the full implementation of the African Charter on the Rights of the Child'. By nurturing and nourishing its children, the present generation of Africans will promote the growth of the continent and secure its future.

By taking stock and prioritizing future action, this document develops Africa's agenda for children for the coming 25 years based on the lessons learnt from the past 25 years. By 2040, the rights of Africa's children should be firmly protected, with full effect being given to the priorities in this Agenda.

The ten aspirations to be achieved by 2040:

1. The African Children's Charter, as supervised by the African Children's Committee, provides an effective continental framework for advancing children's rights; 2. An effective child-friendly national legislative, policy and institutional framework is in place in all member States; 3. Every child's birth and other vital statistics are registered; 4. Every child survives and has a healthy childhood; 5. Every child grows up well-nourished and with access to the basic necessities of life; 6. Every child benefits fully from quality education; 7. Every child is protected against violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse; 8. Children benefit from a child-sensitive criminal justice system; 9. Every child is free from the impact of armed conflicts and other disasters or emergency situations. And 10. African children's views matter.

Children members of children's grassroots groups and children forum committees were trained on Africa's Agenda for Children: Fostering an Africa Fit for Children known as agenda 2040. The objective of the training is to empower children on agenda 2040; to increase knowledge and skills of children. After the training workshop the trained children conducted awareness among their colleagues and monitoring the implementation of it.



Participants from Nyarugenge district during the training session on Africa's Agenda for Children



PUBLICATION OF IJWI RY'ABANA MAGAZINE

In this reporting period, CVT facilitated the production of “IJWI RY'ABANA” Magazine. It was produced in Kinyarwanda and disseminated to children, duty bearers at locals and National levels, CSOs, UN Agencies; and the public in General through sharing printed copies, CVT website and social media. The main articles focusing on advocating for children's rights issues, the best practices done by children in participation to finding solutions on the issues affecting them and messages for child rights awareness and campaigns. More that, the magazine contains articles on the measures to help children and other citizens to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include; wearing face masks properly, hand washing, social distancing, and avoiding unnecessary movements. The message therein, advises children to respect these measures in order not to catch or spread the disease.

This Magazine used as children's platform to express their views through drawing, poems, and writing stories. It has also helped children in campaigning violence against children including positive parenting in everyday parenting, child labor, school dropout, etc More to that, the magazine promotes the children's talents and culture of reading at home for children and parents.

Here the link of published magazine:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1agscUllkS1jF66Ox4dkfDMI10vdyPpRk/view>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TAcVt3H4_e3JMEI7pSt2NhbsXX33vs48/view



Nadia is reading a story in children's magazine after excising the reading with her mother, Nyarugenge district

11.8. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE:

BE A PART OF SOLUTION

Children understood the importance of environment protection. Some of them have started the initiative of planting seedlings that will be distributed among others and plant trees in their families. More to that, CVT as an organisation has put the environmental protection as one of the priorities and has made it one of the pillars in the new five-year strategic plan.

Children were given tree seedlings by their fellow child to plant in their respective families in order to protect the environment; to get fruits for their diet, and motivate children to commit themselves to protect the environment at their early age. Children understood the importance of environment protection. One of them (Elisabeth, 15 years girl) started the initiative of planting seedling which she distributes to other children to plant in their families.



Fred from Amizero children's grassroot groups operating in Nyamirambo sector planting mango tree

DIRECTION III PROMOTION OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE AMONGST CHILDREN

Under this direction, CVT focused its interventions on activities that promote cultural and language amongst children. This mainly focused on activities to promote children's public speaking and debating skills, enhancing children's skills in languages used in Rwanda, these are Kinyarwanda, English and French and promotion of Rwandan values and culture amongst children.

III.1. PROMOTION OF CULTURE AND RWANDAN VALUES

CVT has embarked on an important aspect to promote positive cultural values and languages amongst children. This involved working on children's ability in public speaking and debating and enhancing their skills and knowledge in Kinyarwanda, English and French languages.

CHILDREN'S TALENTS AND TALK SHOWS

This year, CVT embarked on promoting Rwandan culture and values as one of the key pillars of the organization. It educated children on the Rwandan values, norms, and beliefs through the grass root groups where children share and discuss amongst themselves the Rwandan culture values. Children in grassroot groups practice cultural activities like traditional songs, dance, poems, and plays. Sometimes, these children are invited in community events to perform, and are recognized and rewarded.



Children from Inyemeramihigo Cyanika Sector Burera District, Grass root group performing traditional dance.

III.2. CHILDREN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATE

CVT also promotes children's public speaking and debating skills by facilitating them to participate in public meetings and events to get the opportunity to express themselves in public.

This year, children from grassroot groups had an opportunity to participate in several national and international meetings and events where they had the opportunity to speak to the public including: the National Children's Summit, Interface meetings, dialogue on child labor/PHPs, Celebration of the DAC, Consultative meetings on SDGs and Child Participation, CSOs Forum on the African Charter on Rights and Welfare of the Child, and meeting to discuss the alternative care of the UNCRC.



children in their grassroot groups choose a great topics to debate as an activity that improves the skills and their participation

III.2.1 CHILDREN'S TALENTS PROMOTION

CVT facilitated children to participate in the Art Academy competition by providing them with information to children about the competition. 5 children (Boys: 3, Girls) participated in this art competition where, GIHOZO Gift Diane from Ruhango district became the first at national level and was awarded a cash prize, while Benjamin and Jackson from Nyarugenge district (Kigali & Nyamirambo sector respectively) were awarded to study in the Academy.



GIHOZO Gift Diane showing her art work submitted to Art Academy competition.

In her own words, Diane appreciates the role of CVT to inform children about the Art Competition. She said, ***“After getting the information about the art competition on the role of children to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and promoting children’s rights, I felt I could do my best to participate. In my art, I drew a school compound showing that students must wash their hands upon entering the compound, be tested for temperature, wearing their face masks properly, and respecting social distancing. I was very happy because my art became the best, and I was awarded RWF 50,000”***

In collaboration with different Radio and TV broadcasting agencies, CVT facilitated children to participate in Radio and TV Talk Shows.

12 children (Boys: 6, Girls: 6) participated in 6 Radio and TV Shows on Isango and Flash TV discussing about PHPs, child participation in positive discipline, school dropout, effects of COVID-19 on children, and preparation for school reopening after lockdown.



Ramadhan and Jeannette in the ISANGO TV Talk Show about the rights of Children

III.3. CHILDREN AND LANGUAGES

Children are learning to speak, understand, and communicate. Children acquire language through Interaction not only with their parents or caregivers, but also with other children in different Languages through poems, songs, dances, players, debating and reading the story books and other Communication materials found in the grass root groups like story books, magazine, and flyers.



Children are reading stories in grass root group to improve language reading skills, Nyarugenge, 2021.

IV. ORGANISATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The organizational capacity development contributes to sustainability, ownership, improved services, and a sense of common purpose. It also enhances institutional flexibility in responding to change, problem solving and learning. The capacity development interventions are identified and implemented to strengthen internal organizational structures, systems and processes, management, leadership, governance and overall staff capacity to enhance organizational, team and individual performance.

IV.1. DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD FRIENDLY CVT STRATEGIC PLAN OF 5 YEARS

In 2020 CVT developed the organization 5-years Strategic Plan and produced child friendly booklets that the organization disseminated to children as they played a big role in the process of developing this strategic plan and they will be the ones implementing it. In this period CVT continued to disseminate this strategic plan to children and other stakeholders.



Children received the child friendly CVT strategic plan for reviewing if their views were considered and understanding the direction of the organization in upcoming 5 years.

IV.2. STAFF EMPOWERMENT, BETTER SERVICES DELIVERY

Capacity building for staff is a key for better service delivery. This year, Children's Voice Today conducted technical capacity development training for all CVT key staff members on child rights governance, investment in children, gender equality mainstreaming, child safeguarding, and financial and grant management as key skills that assist CVT staff to increase their capacity to deliver their best in child protection, child rights governance, and advocacy on child rights issues. The training sessions also provided a platform for experience-sharing and learning on child rights governance programming; assess the progress and impact made in child rights work in Rwanda and other regions; and building the capacity of staff on evidence based learning in child rights programs.



CHALLENGES

- Many children and massive numbers of community members are still ignorant of children's rights and wellness.
- Big numbers of girl children get unwanted pregnancies while physical violence and humiliating punishments against children are still common among communities to the extent that it became a national concern.
- The budget allocated to the wellness of children is still very lower and it can not cover the cost of activities that promote children's rights and development.
- During this period of COVID-19, child labor has increased and most of children are doing work that threatens their wellness.
- The community is still unaware that children have a role and responsibility in the promotion of their rights.



FUTURE PLAN

- Reducing the number of children in child labour,
- Increasing knowledge of children on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and access to related services.
- Elimination of physical and humiliating punishments against children in different settings including schools and homes.
- Promotion of children's right to participation,
- Increasing participation of children in planning and budgeting processes,
- Promotion of child led advocacy and Influence,
- Increasing knowledge and participation of children in protection of environment,
- Increasing participation of children in child rights monitoring and reporting and increased participation of children in the promotion of gender justice.
- Strengthened capacity of children in public speaking and debating.
- Enhanced children's knowledge in English, French and Kinyarwanda.
- Rwandan values and culture is promoted amongst children



CONCLUSION

Generally, the activities planned this were progressively implemented in respect to COVID-19 pandemic preventive measures. As a child rights organization, we are planning to continue our activities envisioning the promotion of children's rights and wellbeing in line with our 5-years (2021-2025) Strategic Plan.

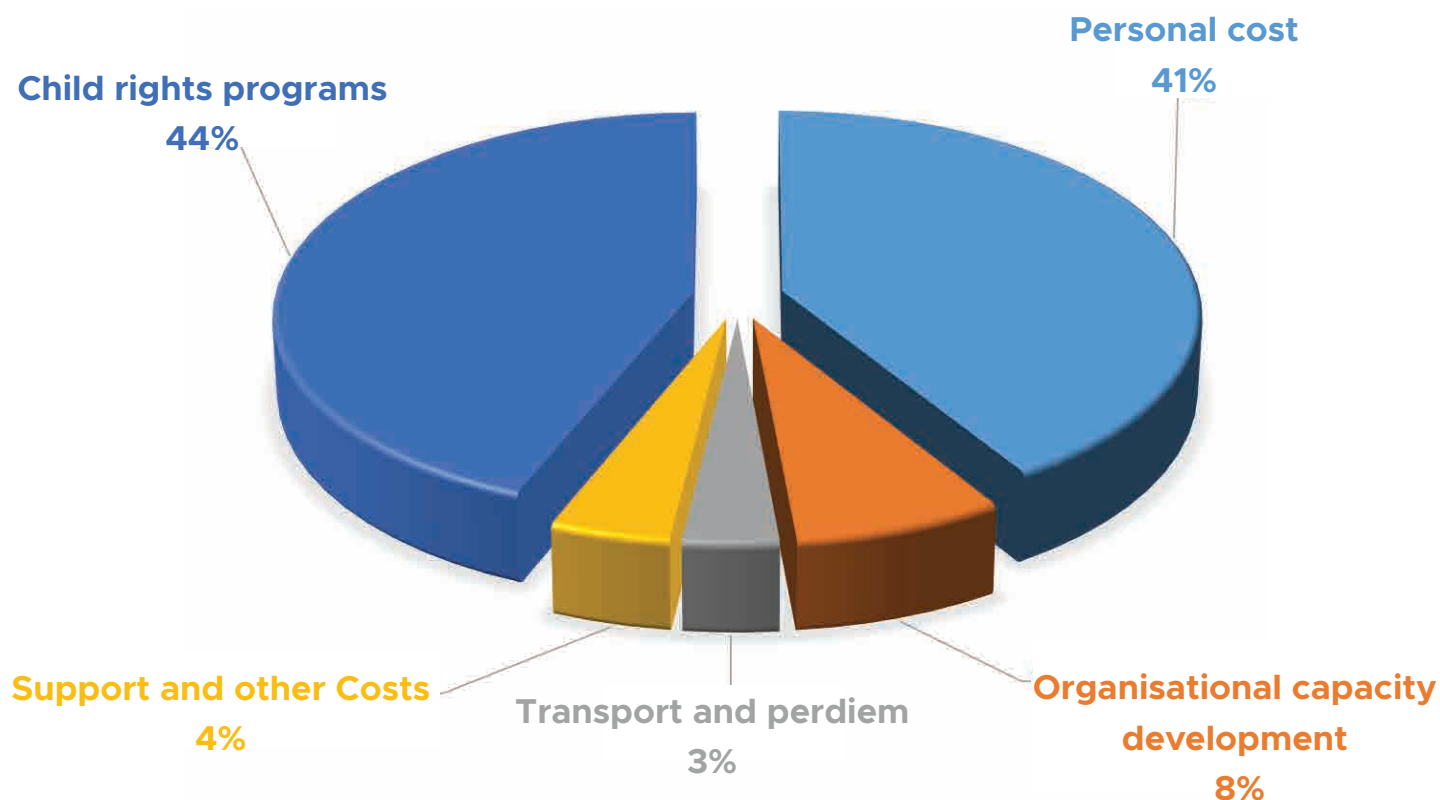
Our work was a success through the collaboration with different stakeholders. We therefore, express our gratitude to our partners, supporters, donors, and various organization who supported us to achieve our goals.

Special thanks go to all fellow children who contributed to make this report realizable.



APPENDICES

Financial situation - July 2020 to June 2021



The total expenses : 205,974,227 Frw

Number of beneficiaries reached from July 2020- June 2021

9,476

♂:Male

♀:Female

♂♀:Male&Female

PROMOTION OF THE CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PROTECTION

Campaign on violence against children

Children ♂♀
1503 2277

3780

Positive Discipline promotion

Children ♂♀
310 275

585

Sexual and Reproductive Health and rights education

Children ♂♀
28 23

63

Reducing harmful work Children activities

Children ♂♀
128 92

338

Sensitization on COVID-19 prevention

Children ♂♀
1503 2277

3780

Prevention of children street activities

Children ♂♀
50 38

88

PROMOTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

The 14th National Children Summit

Children ♂♀
14 21

40

Child-led advocacy

Children ♂♀
130 84

229

Advocating on Malnutrition

Children ♂♀
62 68

151

Advocacy on school drop-out

Children ♂♀
75 36

142

Public budget participation

Children ♂♀
972 667

3,182

Celebration of children days

Children ♂♀
237 249

584

International meetings (virtual meetings)

Children ♂♀
83 67

159

Sensitization on environment protection

Children ♂♀
1503 2277

3780

PROMOTION OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE AMONGST CHILDREN

children talent promotion activities days

Children ♂♀
237 249

584

Promotion Rwandan culture and values

Children ♂♀
1503 2277

3780

Children initiative on planting trees

Children ♂♀
131 149

280

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacity building of staff and children leaders

Children ♂♀
15 18

58

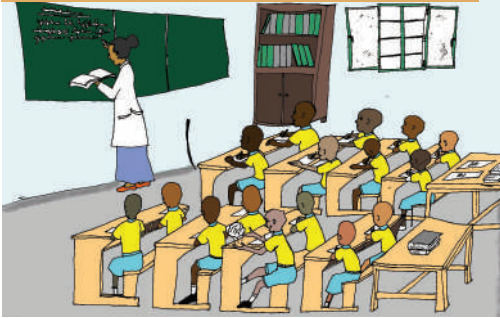
Consulted people CVT strategic plan development

Children ♂♀
8 13

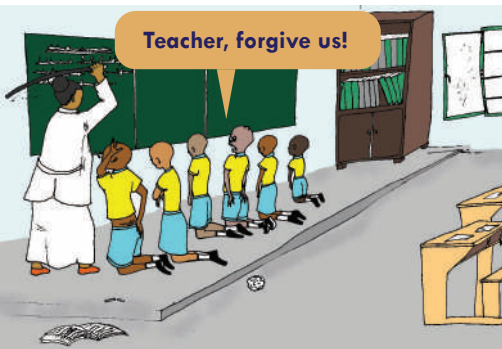
46

It breaks the bone...

In the classroom, children were studying, Kwizera is disturbing playing with a ball...



Who hit me with this ball? Speak out or else I show you all. I am going to punish all of you idiots.



In the office...

Head teacher, there is no other way a teacher would correct us instead of punishing us with harsh punishments including beating and insults!



I should reconsider/change!

Dear students, I promise I will never punish you again, instead, I will be advising you. Do you promise me to be a good student?



Yeees!

Artist: Mutiganda Ramdhan, 17, Nyarugenge district



Children's
Voice Today



Children promoting their own rights

Special thanks to:

