



Children's
Voice Today

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2023-JUNE 2024



July 2024

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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

CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child

CSOs: Civil Society Organizations

CVT: Children's Voice Today

DAC: Day of African Child

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

SCI: Save the Children International

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

STDs: Sexual Transmission Diseases

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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Children's Voice Today

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Children from grassroots groups



MESSAGE FROM CHILDREN'S VOICE TODAY



Dear children friends and partners,

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.

MUYINGANYIKI Elisabeth,
Children's Representative



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 acknowledges children's contribution towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs. It is in this regards that children will play a dominant role in promoting their rights as a mandate in the strategic. This strategic plan envisages to make CVT interventions spread extensively. CVT will continue to work together other partners 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.

NSENGUMUREMYI Omar Tony,
CVT Legal Representative

INTRODUCTION

Children's Voice Today (CVT) is Child/youth led organization that was established in 2001 aiming to promote the rights of the child and create a safe environment for all children through meaningful child participation. CVT is registered as national non-government organization with No: 26/RGB/NGO/2015.

CVT is operating in fifteen Districts of Rwanda in 4 provinces and the City of Kigali. And supporting child led initiatives in south Sudan and Somalia to promote and lead actions towards the realization of children's rights, ensuring their participation

From 2021, we are focusing on three 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 their families, the Rwandan community at large, different institutions, and duty bearers.

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 children, to empower them to advocate for their rights and to fight violence against children.

OUR VALUES

● **Accountability**

We are committed to be accountable to ourselves, to children, to our donors, partners and communities.

● **Excellence**

We challenge ourselves to the highest level of learning and performance, tapping into the best of the human spirit to create impact in the lives of children.

● **Inclusion**

The work of our organisation and the practice include everyone without any sort of discrimination and remove all barriers to ensure everyone's participation.

● **Integrity**

We are accountable to the people we work with and transparently share our results and lessons for learning purposes.

WE BELIEFS THAT

- Every child can learn, lead and decide
- They want to be heard and listened to;
- They are naturally honest and innocent;
- They need diverse experiences to broaden their minds;
- Empowered children are good actors for their rights.
- 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, fulfilment, respect, and enjoyment of children's rights. We have been empowering children through organizing trainings, workshops, dialogues, 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 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 space for them to learn more about their rights and responsibilities, carry out advocacy for issues affecting them. Games, leisure, talent exhibition and sharing experiences 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.

At the end of 2023, CVT counted 4,867 children's members, grouped in 102 grassroots groups. CVT works with children in 15 districts. 94% of the members are children (under 18), 6% are youth who graduated in the children's groups, 56 % of the members are girls and 44 % are boys.

NETWORKING



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 child rights 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 Consortium of Street Children Network based in UK.

Read more at: www.streetchildren.org



DIRECTION I PROMOTION OF THE CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PROTECTION

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. The government of the Republic of Rwanda recognizes the importance of children growing up safe and protected and within family care. This is well-reflected in Rwanda's national policy and legislative framework. Chief among the laws and policies include the National Integrated Child Rights Policy (2011) and National Child Development Agency (NCDA) Strategic Plan for the Integrated Child Rights Policy (2019 - 2024), as well as the LAW N°71/2018 OF 31/08/2018 Relating to the Protection of the Child and the Strategy for National Child Care Reform.

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 ERADICATING CHILD LABOUR

1.1.1 Dialogue with leaders

CVT in collaboration with Nyarugenge District, Dialogue Works, organized a District Dialogue on child labor. Children held dialogue with duty-bearers in Nyarugenge District to discuss and advocate for issues related to child labor and the challenges faced by working children. The goal was to encourage open dialogue, collaboration, and awareness building among stakeholders. The meeting served as a platform to address the specific needs and concerns of working children and develop strategies to improve their well-being.



CAC member used drama to deliver their messages to the duty bearers during dialogue session

The dialogue was attended by Government Officials representation from MIFOTRA (2 labor inspectors), National Child development Agency, (District and Sector levels), representatives of community-based child protection volunteers (Friends of Family), Security organs, CSOs, and children. The participants have been identified as key child protection actors in their organizations who reach out to the community as well as the decision-making organs. They normally work on child protection and engaged with in the advocacy campaigns on child rights.

The CAC members delivered their advocacy message through an impressive sketch by showing their rights, cases of violence, the challenges they face, and highlighting their need for support from different stakeholders.

The dialogue created an increased space for children to articulate and advance their child rights and protection issues to different levels of duty-bearers. The session facilitated the active addressing of key issues raised by the children, fostering a constructive dialogue between them and duty-bearers. Moreover, the meeting resulted in the development of concrete advocacy plans and commitments to champion the issues affecting working children

DENISE'S JOURNEY BACK TO SCHOOL

Meet Denise, a 13-year-old girl who used to attend school but had to drop out. Denise is a member of the Amahoro Y'abana grassroots group in Burera district. When her peers in the grassroots group learned that she had left school to work in heavy child labor, they visited her at home. Grateful for their support, Denise's friends convinced her of the importance of education, explaining that studying well could bring her more opportunities and money. Inspired by their words, Denise decided to return to school. She asked her mother to buy her new notebooks to restart her studies."

Denise shared, *"It was the worst experience carrying heavy loads on my head. The next day, I could barely turn my head. I'm glad I quit, even though we haven't paid all my school fees yet. I dream of becoming a police officer once I finish my studies."*



I.2 CAMPAIGN ON PREVENTION OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY



CVT staff talking to the public about prevent child abuse and teenage pregnancy, Ruhango District, May 2024.

Teenage pregnancy is a major protection, as well as health concern because of its association with higher morbidity and mortality for both the mother and the child. Childbearing during adolescence is known to have adverse social consequences, particularly regarding educational attainment, as women who become mothers in their teens are more likely to drop out of school.

In Rwanda, 5% of women age 15-19 have begun childbearing; 4% have given birth, and 1% are pregnant with their first child

It may be due to continuous efforts to fight teenage pregnancy in the community as well as in schools. The percentage of teenagers who have given birth or are pregnant with their first child has declined since 2014-15, from 7% to 5%.

It is in this regard that, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) in collaboration with its key partners in fighting GBV and child abuse jointly organized a Campaign in preventing teenage pregnancy in 8 Districts. Including Ruhango

In May 2024, CVT in collaboration with Ruhango District and Save the Children Rwanda, organized a campaign to fight against teenage pregnancy in community. The theme for the campaign was, “Let’s build a strong Family, free from sexual violence and teenage pregnancy” The event took place in Rwoga Cell, Ruhango Sector. It was attended by over 476 (Males=228, Females=248) community members, including 29(Males=21, Females=8) Local Leaders.

The topics discussed include; types of child abuse, child sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy, causes and consequences of child sexual abuse, reporting cases of child sexual abuse, and actions by parents and local leaders to prevent child sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy.

The community members came up with resolutions and recommendations on the issue of teenage pregnancy:

- Parents to spare time and dialogue with their children to understand issues affecting them.
- Reporting child abuse cases on time and to the right authorities.
- Treating every child as your own.
- Not hiding the perpetrators.
- Each citizen must be the eye of the other in compliance with preventing child abuse.
- Parents to ensure good care of their children by providing them with the necessities and protecting them from abuse.
- All citizens to report issues of domestic conflicts before they affect children.

The way forward (actions taken):

- Village Leaders (and their team) have committed to organize children’s meetings every week in their respective villages and discuss with children about the issues affecting them, and share information on child abuse. The program to start in two weeks.
- Children’s Voice Today to continue with campaign with children through the children formal and informal structures (Children’s Groups, Children’s Forum Committees) in community.



Photo of community members attending the campaign at Rwoga Cell Office ground, Ruhango Sector.

1.3 REINTEGRATING STREET CHILDREN INTO FAMILIES

This reporting period, 11 street children (M=6, F=5) were reintegrated into their families by their fellows to return to their families, and eventually joined school and Children Groups. In their advocacy, children from Grass root Groups collaborate with IZU, parents and Local Leaders in their respective areas. Children have increased knowledge and skills to carry out evidence-based advocacy. This is to increased skills and knowledge in child rights, evidence-based advocacy and campaigning, and reporting. 228 children (M=113, F=115) were trained on child rights, advocacy, and campaigning and how they can apply them in their daily activities. They developed advocacy plans for advocating for identified issues affecting their lives. Through, Grass root Groups. children identified and reached to children living and those connected to street and their parents, and discussed with them about the causes and how they can reintegrate to their families.

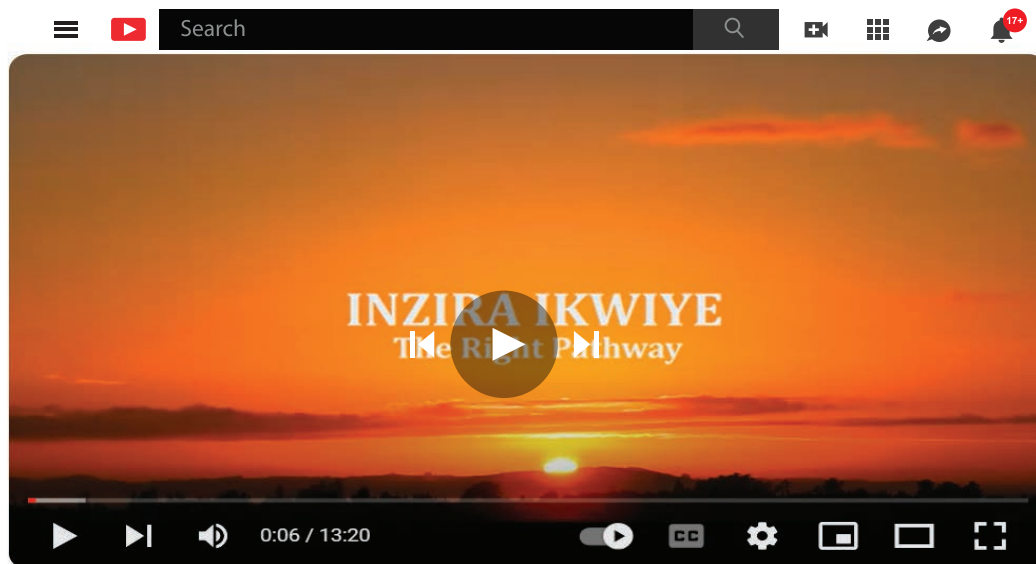


1.4 CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE LAUNCH OF THE CHILD PROTECTION CASE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

When given opportunities children are able to utilise the existing space/forums as opportunities for advocating for their rights. Late in 2023, in collaboration with NCDCA and Save the Children, children participated in the launch awareness on the national Child Protection Case Management (CPCM) Framework. The launch event took place at national level in Marriot Hotel, Kigali. For the launch and awareness on the framework, children from CVT produce a drama/sketch (Inzira ikwiye) which was performed on the event to pass the message to the public in an artistic way. The event was attended by different people including 14 children.

The sketch aimed to reflect on the importance of the CPCM and how it will strengthen the child protection system in Rwanda; stimulate needed ownership and use of the CPCM among Government institutions/agencies and its partners involved in child development and protection; tensure Government actors are clear on their roles and responsibilities as per the CPCM Framework; and encourage Government institutions/agencies and its partners to start using the CPCM as after its official launch.

The sketch was also played in different Children Groups, latter produced into a short movie which is posted on CVT media platforms for view.



Inzira ikwiye/ The right pathway short film by CVT



Children's V...
80 subscribers

Subscribed

8



Share



Link for short movie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CApQe79EV1k&t=113s>

I.5. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

I.5.1 Our life in our hands

Understanding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) is fundamental to children's well-being and rights. The National Children's Rights Committee (NCRC) recognizes the significance of imparting SRHR knowledge to children to pay particular attention to the different "needs of girls and boys, and the impact of gender-related social norms and values on the health and development of boys and girls.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is one of the key focus of CVT interventions as it is stipulated in the Strategic Plan.

During this reporting period, CVT organised training for children on sexual and reproductive health. The training was attended by 31 (Males 12, Females 19) Children representatives in Burera, and Ruhango Districts. The training aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills on sexual and reproductive health rights so that can lead to behaviour change. The training was facilitated in form open discussions, brain storming, games.

These sessions help children and youth to increase knowledge and sexual and reproductive health and rights and take actions to mitigate related risks and challenges; enhanced capacity of children to articulate their SRHR needs and concerns; strengthened peer support networks for discussing SRHR topics; improved understanding among children about available SRHR services and resources; and they are conducting peer-to-peer learning within the groups.



LEARNING SRHR THROUGH GAMES



04th April 2024 in Nyarugenge district With the support of the Urukundo Initiative, CVT is set to introduce the "Urukundo Life Skills Board Game" to children from different grassroots groups in Nyarugenge districts, the game has questions and answers related to SRHR topics for children between 10 to 18 years old. These games, filled with accurate SRH information, promise to transform learning into an immersive and enjoyable experience, merging fun and education effortlessly.

Additionally, children had time to ask questions and receiving answers to allow children to address their queries and concerns.



they also shared their knowledge with their peers in their grassroots groups

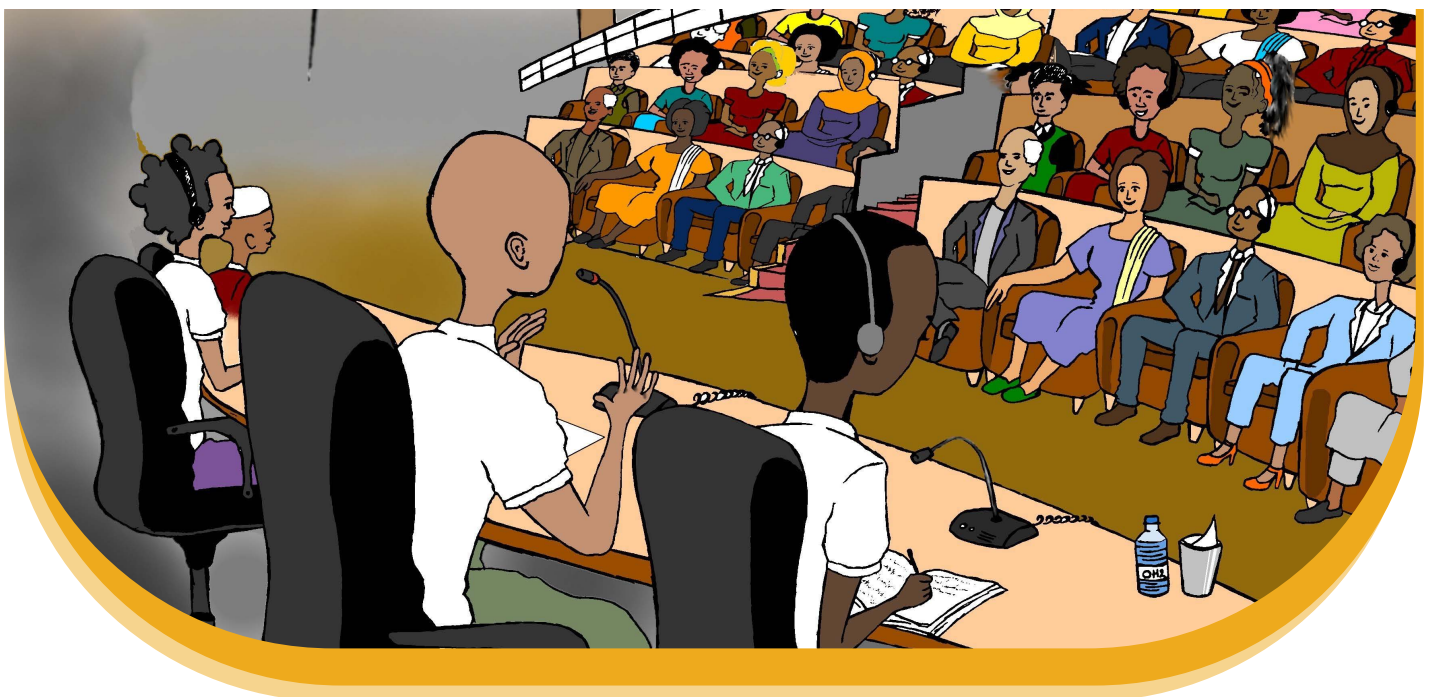
"I have learnt that there are diseases from STIs, and that one time of sex is enough to be pregnant, I really needed this information to help me to make decisions about my reproductive health and well-being in the future, to learn while playing is fun" reflects Tumukunde Claudine, 15 years old

DIRECTION II PROMOTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

The right to child participation is one of four foundation principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child participation is also built into the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child plus many other international conventions and national policies like the Rwanda National Integrated Child Rights Policy(ICRP) theme 7.

Engaging children builds their own self-esteem and helps them find ways to support themselves and others. Giving them the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings can result in a better and more sustainable support-plan. It is in this regard that CVT continues to empower them to lead, learn, decide and implement their own activities to influence decisions at local, national, and international level aimed at promoting their rights.

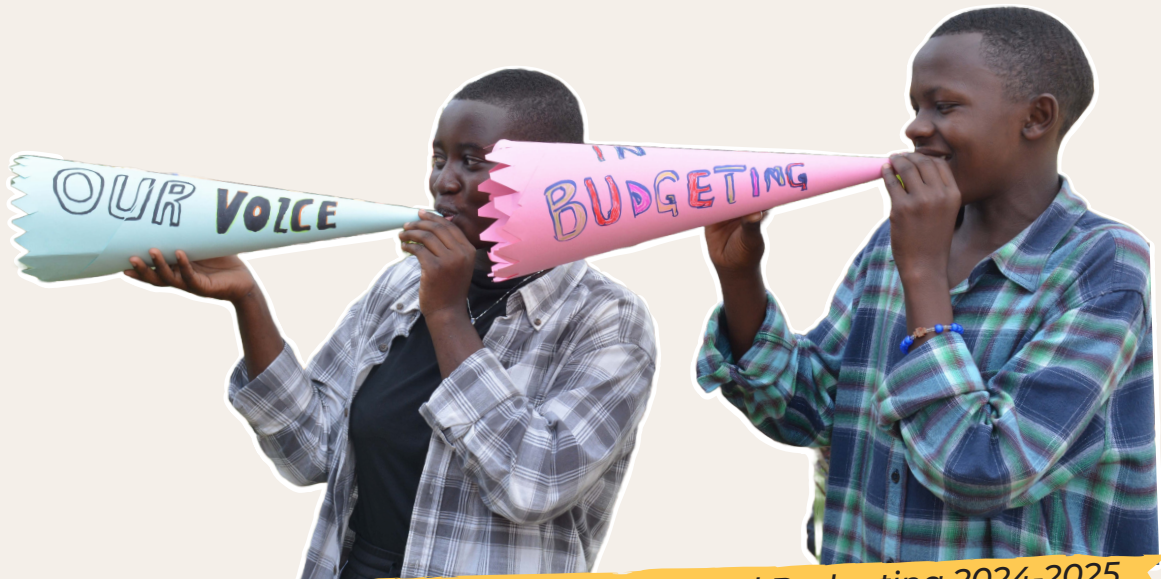
In this reporting period, CVT focused on the following interventions: Facilitating participation of children in planning and budgeting processes, promotion of child-led advocacy and Influence, increasing knowledge and participation of children in protection of environment, increasing participation of children in child rights monitoring and reporting, and increasing participation of children in the promotion of gender justice.



II.1 CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC PLANNING AND BUDGETING

To enhance children's involvement in public planning and budgeting, this year, CVT in collaboration with Ruhango District organized a consultation meeting with children to understand the public planning and budgeting process and sharing their views on District planning and budgeting for 2024-2025, as other categories of citizen. It was also an opportunity for children to receive feedback on the District budget of 2023-2024.

The session was attended by total of 32 participants, including 27 children representatives (M=11, F=16, including 3 with disabilities) from Grassroot Groups working with CVT and Forum Committees at the District and Sector level, and District staff, actively participated in the session.



Children's Voice in District Planning and Budgeting 2024-2025

Children shared some issues that affecting them including; addressing the issues school dropout, street children, increasing classrooms and materials in schools including ICT devices, addressing the issue of sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies which still affect the lives of children; to fight against malnutrition among children; increase the supply of clean water and electricity especially to remote areas and schools; and detecting and supporting children's talents from the grassroot level.

The actions taken include; setting up teams for field monitoring visits to the areas with issues mentioned by children; increased supervision and collaboration among duty-bearers to effectively address children's issues, and engaging and give feedback to children on addressing issues affecting them.



Children posing after meeting to share their views on public planning and budgeting.

Quotes from participants



Mr. KABANO Charles, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Director at Ruhango District:

"Including children into the planning and budgeting processes within our District holds significant importance, considering that children represent the future leaders of our community. In the previous, children actively contributed their ideas, some which were considered while others were not incorporated into the budget due to limited resources. We gave them feedback on their participation"

Delphine, 16 from Kinazi Sector:

"I'm grateful to the Government for including our ideas in the budget of fiscal of 2023/2024. It's great to see some of them, like approving assistive devices for children with disabilities and bringing street children back to school, being addressed."



II. 2. CHILD-LED ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCE

II.2.1 Advocating for our rights



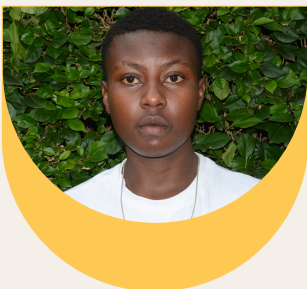
Children discussing their rights and responsibilities that need to be fulfilled

More than 68 children (M=35, F=33, 2 CWDs) were withdrawn from child labor including (47-M=24, F=23), school dropout (11-M=5, F=6), and street children (10-M=6, F=5). Children play this important role through their groups by identifying and reporting the cases to responsible duty-bearers to address them. They also collaborate with families, IZU, teachers, local leaders, and others.

Children have increased knowledge and skills to carry out evidence-based advocacy. This is due to the training of 31 children representatives (M=13, F=18) from Nyarugenge and Burera District on child rights, evidence-based advocacy and campaigning, and how they can apply them in their daily activities. They developed advocacy plans for advocating for identified issues affecting their lives. For example, children in Ruhango District developed and submitted a Paper of their views on child rights priorities for the District planning.



Group photo of children from Nyarugenge and Burera district respectively after the training, April 2024.



Nadine, a 16-year-old member of the Ugushishoza Grassroot Group, shared her thoughts on her journey. She said, "I used to mix up my rights and responsibilities, but now I understand that as a child, I have both. I realize I have duties in my home and community. So, I plan to share what I've learned with other members of our group. Together, we can make our now and future better."

II. 2.2 Celebration of International Day of Girl Child 2023

“Our time is now, our rights, our future.”



Children posing after the celebration event of the International Day of the Girl, Kigali, October 11, 2023

The International Day of the Girl observed annually on 11 October is a global platform to advocate for the full spectrum of girls' rights. This day promotes the rights of a girl child and also throws light on gender inequalities that exist in the world. It is also devoted to the rights of girls and the specific difficulties that girls face worldwide.

This year, eight children (girls and boys) from Children Voice Today (CVT) joined others from different parts of Rwanda, Government officials, International and Nation NGOs, Un Agencies, and other child rights Actors to celebrate this day. At national level, the celebrations took place in Gasabo District, at FAWE Girls' School.



Children from different schools attending the celebration event of the International Day of Girl Child at FAWE Girls School, Kigali.

The theme for this year is "Our time is now, our rights, our future." (Igihe cyacu ni iki, uburenganzira bwacu, ejo heza!). The objective of this event is to share the right platforms and available opportunities to all girls and conduct awareness of their rights and their contribution to the positive changes for a better future.

For children's participation, CVT in collaboration with NCDA and Save the Children, facilitated children to produce a drama/play entitled "Umukobwa Wacu Iwacu"(Our Girl) which was performed on the event as way deliver their advocacy message on gender equality promotion, The play demonstrated that girls and boys have the same rights- must enjoy the same opportunities and protected equally.



Children performing their play on the stage



Summarily, her speech, the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion who presided over the event as the Guest of Honour informed the entire community that women and girls can lead the world to a fairer future. She also argued them to amplify girls' voices, and recommit to working together to build a world where every girl can lead and thrive

Former Honorable Minister of Gender and Family Promotion MUJAWAMARIYA Velentine addressing the public

FROM SHADOW TO SUNSHINE

FABRICE'S JOYFUL RETURN TO SCHOOL




Fabrice, a 12-year-old from Burera District, faced discrimination due to his disability, leading to his unwillingness to attend school. The issue reflects broader challenges of discrimination and exclusion faced by children with disabilities in the education system. The purpose of documentation is to shed light on successful grassroots interventions, advocate for inclusive education, and contribute to a broader understanding of the challenges faced by children with disabilities in the education and in their social life.

The solution to Fabrice's challenges and those faced by other marginalized children in Burera District was initiated through a grassroots supported by Children's Voice Today through Sida CSOs strengthening program 2022-26. This project has the goal of A strong civil society that demands and supports the fulfilment of children's rights – holding states to account and mobilizing and empowering children and their communities. Children who were supported by CVT conducted a mapping initiative within Fabrice's neighbourhood. The objective was to identify and address the most marginalized children, including those not regularly attending school. Through this initiative, Fabrice's case was identified, leading to decisive action by the grassroots group. They visited Fabrice and his parents, engaging in conversations about the importance of education, child rights, and the inclusion of all children, including those with disabilities. Fabrice's mother's shift in perception, as evidenced by her statement, reflects the project's success in promoting equality and understanding within families. The project's approach prioritized community engagement and empowerment, leveraging the agency of children themselves to drive positive change. Fabrice's successful reintegration into school life and his newfound confidence serve as tangible outcomes of this grassroots intervention, highlighting its effectiveness in addressing educational exclusion and promoting inclusivity.

TOGETHER FOR ERADICATING MALNUTRITION

Having proper nutrition is one of the fundamental rights of the child for the survival and wellbeing. It is in this regard that nutritious is one the discussions in the children groups. In advocating for this right, children carry out awareness in their groups, community, and school on proper feeding of children especially those under 5. They also take the initiative to construct kitchen garden for some identified families so as the example for the parents and the neighborhood to ensure adequate and nutritious food for their children. This year, children managed to construct 8 kitchen gardens in Ruhango, Burera, and Nyarugenege Districts, serving...26 children (M=15, F= 11). Children collaborate with parents, Friend of family(IZU), and Local Leaders on this initiative



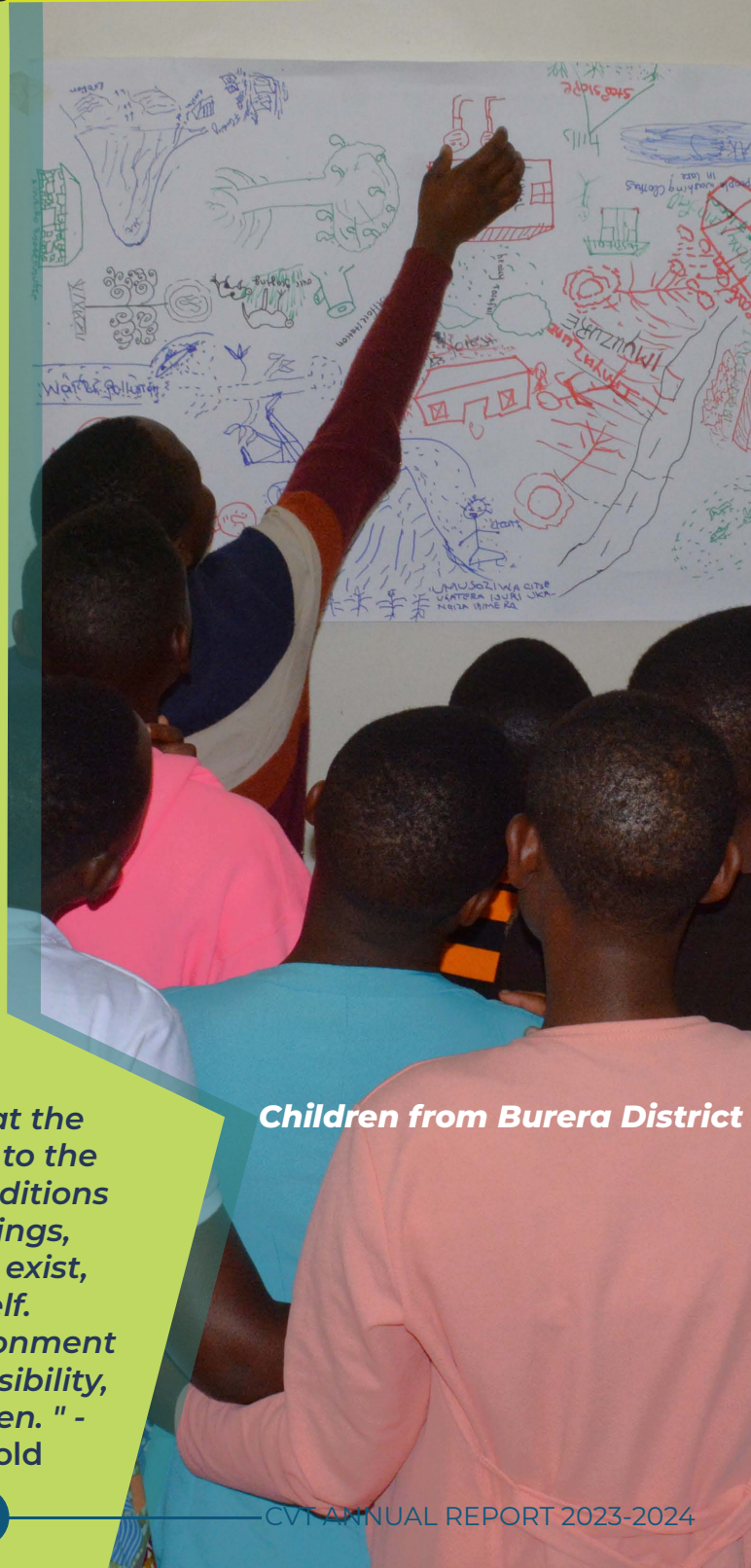
Gisele, 16 years old, from the Happy Grassroot Group, after learning the importance of vegetables, took the initiative to plant them at her home. Now, the entire family is benefiting from the home-grown produce.

II. 3. CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

II.3.1 Capacity building of children on climate change and Environment

Recognizing the need for greater integration of climate change and environmental protection into child participation activities, CVT has undertaken several initiatives. A self-capacity assessment on these topics revealed areas where CVT must start, continue, and stop certain actions to enhance its approach.

In this regard, CVT conducted awareness session jointly with Nature Rwanda with children in in Burera distric 16 Total participants (M=3, F=13) aimed to emphasize the significance of the environment and provide practical methods to safeguard it. children conducted awareness within their grassroots groups, educating others, about the importance of environmental protection and sustainability. Additionally, they informed their peers and the broader community about the importance of cleaning up public spaces to remove waste, such as plastics, thus promoting a cleaner environment. Furthermore, the children engaged with local authorities to advocate for initiatives that support environmental protection and sustainability.



Children from Burera District



"I have learned that the environment refers to the surroundings or conditions in which living beings, including humans, exist, excluding myself. Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility, including us children." - Dative, 16 years old

II.3.2 Children's voice on Climate Change and Environment

On November 4, 2023, in Nyamagabe District, in collaboration with Save the Children International Rwanda, Nature Rwanda, and Coporwa, we conducted a children's simulation in line with #COP28 at the national level. This event aimed to amplify children and young people's voices in climate decision-making and ensure that decision-makers consider their views.

During the simulation, children gathered to express their views on the climate change crisis, expressing a strong desire to meet the Minister of Environment to share their insights and recommendations. This goal was successfully achieved on November 13, 2023, when children's representatives from various Eco-Clubs engaged in a dialogue with the Honorable Former Minister Mujawamariya Jeanne d'Arc. They eagerly shared their perspectives on solutions to address climate change risks in Rwanda, ensuring that their voices were integrated into climate discussions and decisions at #COP28.



Children representatives including one from CVT after the visit to Ministry of Environment



“ Thank you Eco-Clubs representatives for the visit to Ministry of Environment. Together as one " We be the change we want in others"- live in harmony with nature”

Former Honorable Minister Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya

II.3.3 General Comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment

II.3.3.1 Children's voice in development of General Comment No.26

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has published General Comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change

To ensure General Comment No.26 is representative of the diverse experiences and best interests of children globally, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child took a collaborative, intergenerational approach to its development.

The Committee's work to develop the General Comment was supported by a steering group led by its official partner, Terre des Hommes, in collaboration with various stakeholders, including the Children's Environmental Rights Initiative (CERI), OHCHR and Child Rights Connect, and guided by expert advisors including a global Children's Advisory Team. To create this General Comment, children and adults across the world were invited to share their views on what should be included. More than 230 children participated in different consultation sessions at different stages of development of General comment No.26 that were conducted between December 2021 and Feb 2023.

The views of children were shared through Elisabeth who is a member of children's Advisory Team in the development of this General comment.



II.3.3.2 Translation of General Comment No.26 into local language

In collaboration with Save the children under the support of sida, we translated Child-friendly versions of General Comment No. 26 into Kinyarwanda, in collaboration with Save the Children International Rwanda and with the support of Sida. Given the importance of making this important document accessible to Kinyarwanda-speaking communities especially children, we believe that its availability in our local language will significantly improve understanding and implementation of the principles it outlines.

 **Kinyarwanda version Link: <https://shorturl.at/w9fto>**



II.3.3.3 Awareness and dissemination on General Comment No.26

Environmental harm is a significant threat to children's rights globally. Children are demanding immediate action, and their rights must be protected. A clean, healthy and sustainable environment is both a human right itself, and necessary for children to enjoy their rights. This General Comment explains why urgent environmental and climate action is needed and what governments must do to protect all the rights children have. It also makes it clear that governments must protect the rights of children today as well as children in future generations.

All children's rights are connected and equally important. Some rights are particularly threatened by environmental harm and climate change. Some rights also play an important role in helping to protect children's rights - such as their right to education.

After we translated Child-friendly versions of General Comment No. 26 into Kinyarwanda, we disseminated this version in different children's grassroots, children had time to read and understand their right and roles in protection environment.



Children from Burera District after receiving copies of Kinyarwanda version of the General Comment No 26-Burera District, June 2024

“I am happy that there is a child-friendly version of GC26 in my local language. I can read and understand other children's views on climate change. Now, we see how our rights are related to the environment and our roles in protecting it.” - Yvette, 16 years old, Burera District

II.4 CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN CHILD RIGHTS MONITORING

II.4.1 Children's involvement in follow-up and reporting on their rights

This reporting period, CVT facilitate children to submit their Complementary Report to the State report on the status of children's rights in Rwanda, and interacting with the ACERWC during the 42nd Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) held from 08 to 17 November 2023 Report, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Prior to submission of the report in September, 2023, children representative from different district conducted a review of the report see if the information therein is still valid or not. Then, in November, 2 children delegates from CVT attended the 42nd Ordinary Session of the ACERWC where they shared and discussed on their child-led Complementary Report submitted. The session with children took on November 15th, 2023.

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child appreciated the report submitted by children for their additional information provided. The Committed will use that information during the consideration of the State reports and the Concluding Recommendation.



Children give their own report with Hon. Wilson Almeida Adão the chair of African Committee of Expert on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC).



Children and CSOs members exchanging with African Committee of Experts on the rights and welfare of the Child (ACERWC) on child rights situation in Rwanda

II.4.1.2 Children participation in Africa Learning Event

“Follow-up and reporting to the Global and AU human rights mechanisms”

Children are engaged in reporting, and follow up work to the outcome recommendations at the national, regional, and global level. It is therefore important for civil society organizations to support a stronger focus on involving children in follow up work to reporting with Child Rights Coalitions and Governments. Ultimately, we need to support Governments to fulfill their rights obligations by ensuring the implementation of the recommendations coming out of these reviews

It is in this regard that CVT is supporting children to report and follow up on the national, regional, and global human rights mechanisms. These include, among others, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). These ensure accountability to children and the realization of child rights and wellbeing through Governments policies and practices.

After the development and submission of different reports and informing child rights mechanisms, children have been involved in the follow up and implementation of the relevant recommendations:

- Dissemination of UNCRC Concluding Observations of February, 2020 including translation into child-friendly and printing copies for children, as well as the ACERWC Concluding Recommendations issued to Rwanda in September, 2019.
- Translation and dissemination the General Comment No. 26 to our fellow children through the Children’s Groups and Forums.
- Discussing the recommendations and developing the advocacy plan to advocate on the issues mentioned in the recommendations.

As a result of children’s follow up on the fulfilment of recommendations, there has been increasing and improvement in educational infrastructures and conducting regular training for teachers to ensure quality education; development of National Child Protection Case Management Framework which was launched in September 2023, for ensuring the prevention of VAC and accessibility to holistic services for the victim of VAC; campaign for eradicating children stunting “Turandure igwingira”, and increasing and improvement in health infrastructures including operationalisation of Health Posts for ensuring accessibility to quality health services and reducing the distance.

II.2.4 Regional and Pan-African Child-led Advocacy

CVT works with Children's Groups/Clubs, and Networks of child rights organisations at the community, national, regional, and international level and empowers children/youth to lead, learn, decide, and implement their own activities that promote their rights.

Since September 2023, CVT in collaboration with Save the Children international (SCI) East and South Africa Regional Program Unit (ESA RPU), with the financial support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), are implementing a program on Advancing Children's engagement at the regional, Pan-African governance and international platforms until 2025.

The program aims to contribute to building child-led groups capacity in advancing the resilience of children, young people, families and communities affected by conflict, climate change and migration in the East and Horn of Africa.



Children representatives from CVT Rwanda participating in the virtual inaugural meeting of the Regional Children's Forum, Kigali, March 2024

In the sense of amplifying the voices of children at regional level, through the Regional Child-led Initiative, CVT is worked with the Child Rights Coalition(CRC) in South Sudan, Generation 711 from South Sudan, and Somali Peace Line(SPL) from Somalia to facilitate children to carry out their advocacy on issues affecting them at regional level. 15 children (M=8, F=7 including 1 CWD) from Rwanda joined others on the African Continent to advocate for issues affecting them through the regional and Pan-African level. The activities conducted include;

- Conducting consultation meetings to discuss and identify key issues affecting them that need to be advocated for at regional and Pan-African level. In this regard, they developed the outcome statement indicating key areas to focus on in their advocacy in the year 2023-2024;

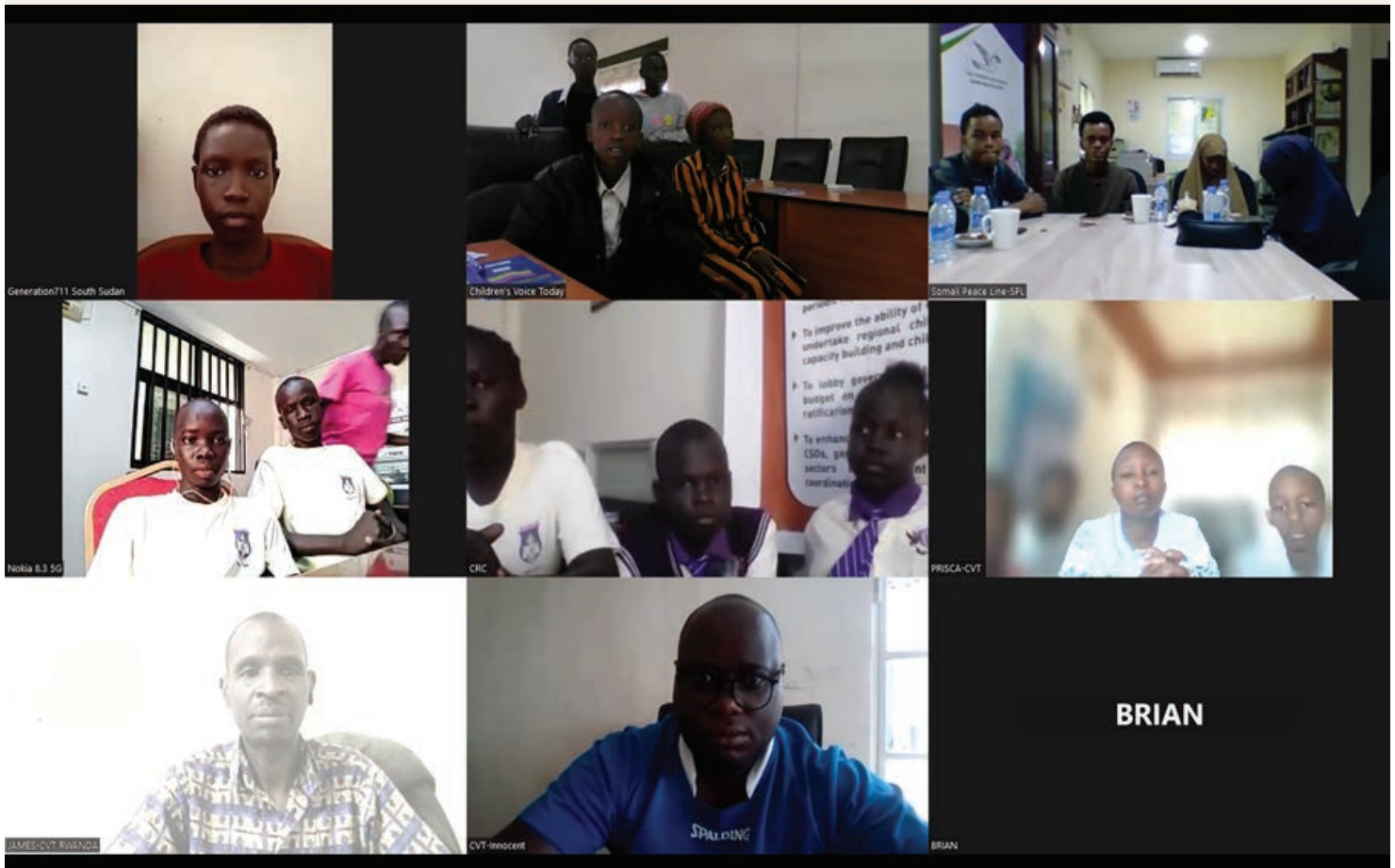


Photo of children participating in the virtual meeting from South Sudan, Rwanda, and Somalia, and Facilitators, June, 2024.

Summary of key areas to focus on and advocacy messages

Advocacy topics	Suggested solutions/messages
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing free primary education ○ Providing enough materials in schools ○ Programs to ensure total school enrollment.
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen programs to protect the environment ○ Engage children in environment protection programs ○ Supporting child-led initiatives to protecting the environment.
Child protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advocacy on developing child rights policy in Somalia ○ Investing more resources in addressing protection issues of drug abuse in children, child labor, and street children.
Child participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Empower children on children's rights and responsibilities, advocacy, and social accountability. ○ Strengthening the children structures at different levels. ○ Engaging children in decision making processes at all levels.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governments to increase and equip health facilities especially in rural areas. ○ Improving health services to reduce child mortality rate.
Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support poor families for income generating activities. ○ Supporting children in poor families to get basic necessities.
Political instabilities/crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional and international bodies to advocate for peace in member countries. ○ To increase the monitoring on respecting children's rights especially in political crisis. ○ To advocate for psychosocial and material support to people affected by political instabilities.

II.5 CELEBRATION OF DAC 2024

Continental



The celebration of DAC at continental level held in Kiryandongo refugee settlement, in Uganda on 15-16 June, 2024. Under the theme of: “Education for all, the time is now”. On 15 June 2024, children for different African countries gathered in Kiryandongo district conference hall and discussed the issues in education and proposed the action that should be taken by the Governments.

The children statement was presented during the celebration on DAC on 16 June 2024 and submitted to the African Committee of the Expert on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Government of Uganda.



Diogene facilitating children’s discussion on issues affecting them in education sector, June 2024, Kiryandongo, Uganda, June 2024.



Diogene, asking questions to the ACERWC, respectively, Kiryandongo, Uganda, June 2024.

At District level



The celebration of Day of the African Child in Burera District

The Day of the African Child (DAC) was commemorated with the theme "Education for All: The Time is Now," translated into Kinyarwanda as "Uburezi kuri buri bose; Igihe ni iki." The celebration emphasized the importance of child education and the collective responsibility of parents, communities, and stakeholders in ensuring that every child has access to quality education.

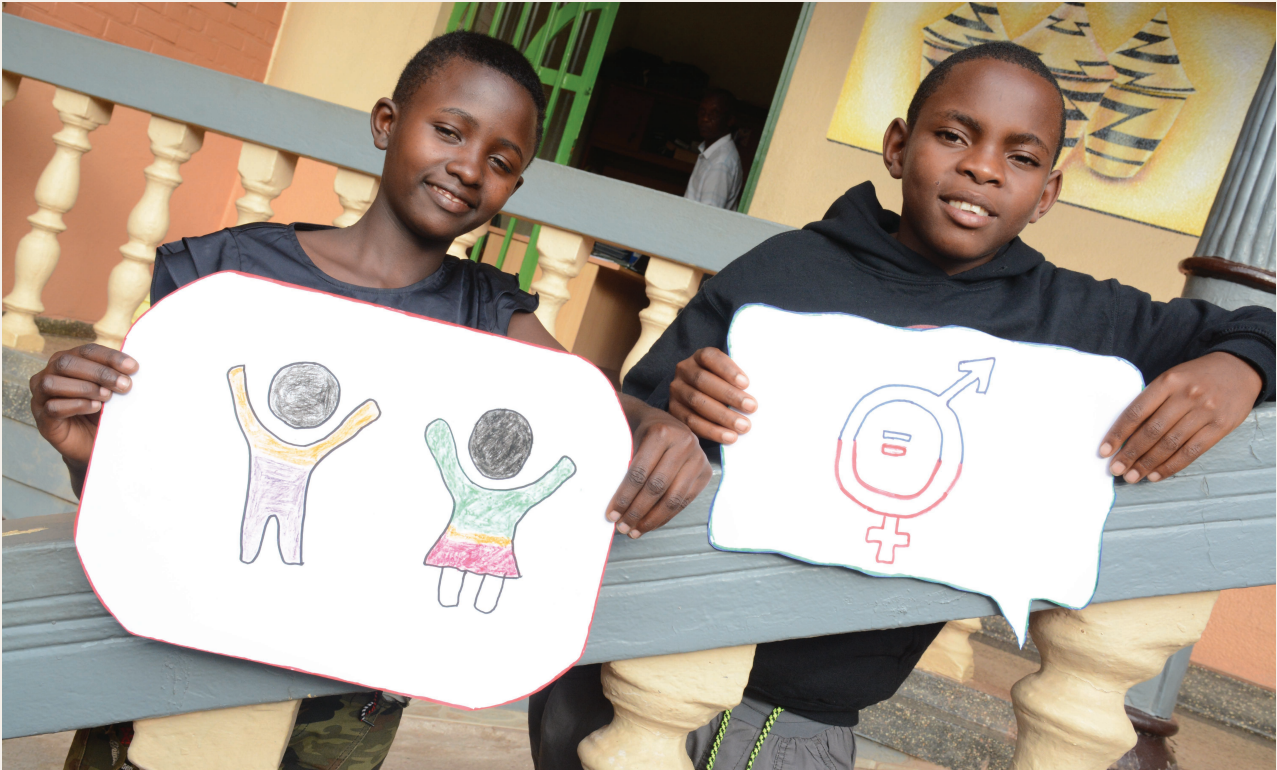
Children's Voice Today Joined Burera district and other partners to the DAC 2024. The celebration of the Day of the African Child started at GS Ruhanga, in Rusarabuye sector-Burera District. Participants included children (Teachers, Leaders and students from GS, Ruhanga, District leaders and Partners team of Burera Districts) involved a series of activities aimed at promoting child education and welfare.



In his speech, the Deputy Mayor in charge of Social Affairs, Mr. Mwanangu Theophile, advised participants to uphold children's rights in all circumstances, especially in education as the theme of this year "Education for all, the time is now". No child should be out of school doing labor.

II.6 GENDER JUSTICE PROMOTION

For the real development the community, citizens and different stakeholders aim can only be achieved if no boy, girl, man or women left behind. While knowing that gender inequalities already exist, children are committed to drive in promoting gender equality through their activities.



Engaging boys and men as allies in promoting gender equality through gender transformative workshops/activities, Nyarugenge District, April 2024.

It is in this regard that CVT registered the following achievements in this reporting period:

- 46 children (M=19, F=27 including 2 children with disabilities) from Burera, Ruhango, and Nyarugenge Districts have benefited from capacity increased resulting from training on gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The training led the raising of awareness among boys and girls, men and women about the importance of gender equality and its benefits to the society as a whole; challenging and deconstructing harmful gender norms, stereotypes, and behaviors that lead to inequality and discrimination; and empowering boys with the knowledge, skills, and tools to become advocates for gender equality within their communities.
- Boy committed to champion positive change on gender promotion by helping their sisters with household chores so that they all together go to the Grassroot Groups meetings and conducting different activities Promoting Gender justice.

- As a commitment, increased the number females in managerial positions
- Girls and boys, women and men are given equal opportunities to participate in program activities.
- Ensuring that while electing Children's Groups Leaders, the principle of at least 30% females is applied.
- Children in Burera, Nyarugenge, and Ruhango Districts conducting awareness and monitoring on the promotion of gender equality in children's groups and community using a developed child-friendly and inclusive tool. The awareness reached 944 people (including 344 children M=163, F=181).
- Children understood gender justice and produced a short film entitled "Our Girl" which they use in awareness on gender equality and justice. The film was performed into a play during the celebration event of International Day of the Girl Child at National level on October 11, 2023 in Fawe Girls School, Gasabo District. Over the Youtube, the short film has been viewed 493 people.



The link below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjwAIs_P_-4



Children conducting community awareness on gender equality in Cyanika Sector, Burera District using different means including songs.



"As children of Unity of the Children, we organized an awareness event on gender equality and equity. During the event, some adults shared their feedback, expressing their belief that gender equality and equity pertain primarily to property rights, specifically the notion that in case of separation, property should be divided equally, 50/50."

- Diogene, 16 years, Burera District.

DIRECTION III

PROMOTION OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE AMONGST CHILDREN

Culture has the power to transform entire societies, strengthen local communities and forge a sense of identity and belonging for children and young people. As a factor for preparing future leaders and civic engagement, culture plays an essential role in development and promoting children's talents and potentials. In this regard, CVT focused its interventions aimed to promote culture and language in children. These include; promotion of Rwandan values and culture, public speaking and debating, and enhancing children's capacities in Languages-Kinyarwanda, English and French.



Children from different Grassroots Groups in Burera District performing traditional dance with visitors from Save the Children Sweden and Rwanda Country Office

III. 1: PROMOTING CHILDREN'S TALENTS

III.1.1 Our culture, our development

In the context of promoting Rwandan culture and values, CVT facilitated children in different groups to enjoy their rights and develop talent in traditional and modern dancing, singing, poems and plays. CVT provided drums to children to support their traditional dancing activities within their groups



Children are happy to use the drum given by CVT and are learning traditional dancing and singing

ACTING TALENTS PROMOTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

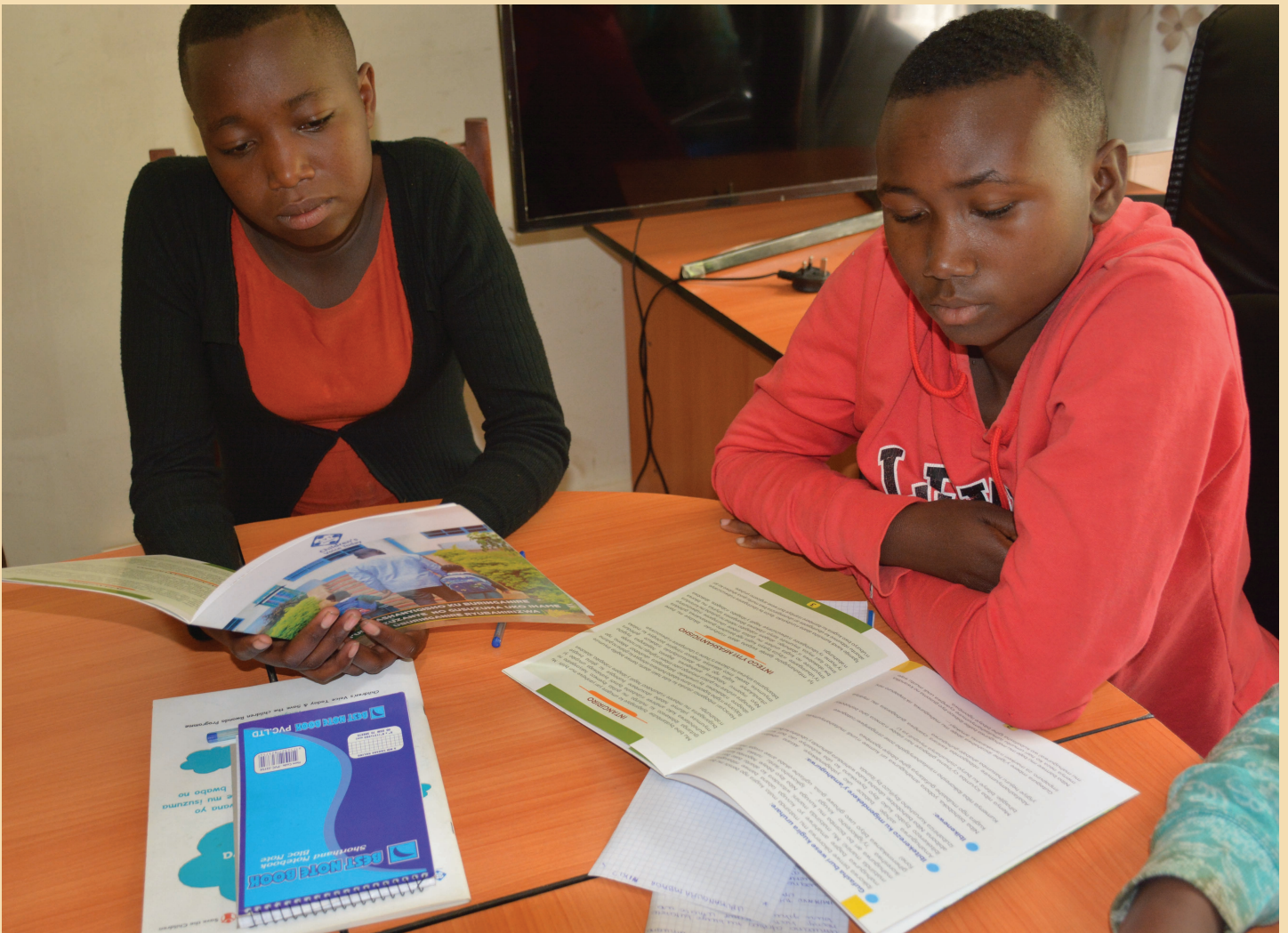
Children were trained to enhance their acting skills through various drama and movie making initiatives projects supported by CVT. Notable movies and sketch made include "Inzira Ikwiye" and "Umukobwa Wacu," among others. These initiatives provided children with opportunities to engage in professional acting, learning key techniques, and gaining practical experience in front of the camera. Through these movies and sketches, they not only honed their performance abilities but also developed confidence, creativity, and teamwork skills. Additionally, these initiatives served as a platform for the children to advocate for their rights, using their newfound acting skills to raise awareness and promote their rights through the powerful medium of film.



Children acting in the film

LEARNING THROUGH READING

CVT has distributed booklets about children's rights written in Kinyarwanda and English to children in Grassroots Groups. These booklets serve a dual purpose: they educate children about their rights and help them develop their reading and understanding skills of different languages. By providing accessible and engaging materials, CVT supports the children in becoming literate and informed advocates for their own rights. The multilingual aspect of the booklets ensures that children from diverse linguistic backgrounds can benefit, fostering inclusivity and broadening the impact of this initiative.



III.2: LEARNING ENGLISH AS A MEANS FOR COMMUNICATION

English communication skills for children help them in various facets of life, both professional and personal. An effective English communication skill helps children express themselves clearly to others and be understood by them. Also, English communication skills for children teach them to be polite and know how to respect others and be respected. With good English communication skills for children, other important skills among children develop, including speaking, listening, observing and sequencing. In today's world, with good English communication skills for children, it is easier to interact with others.

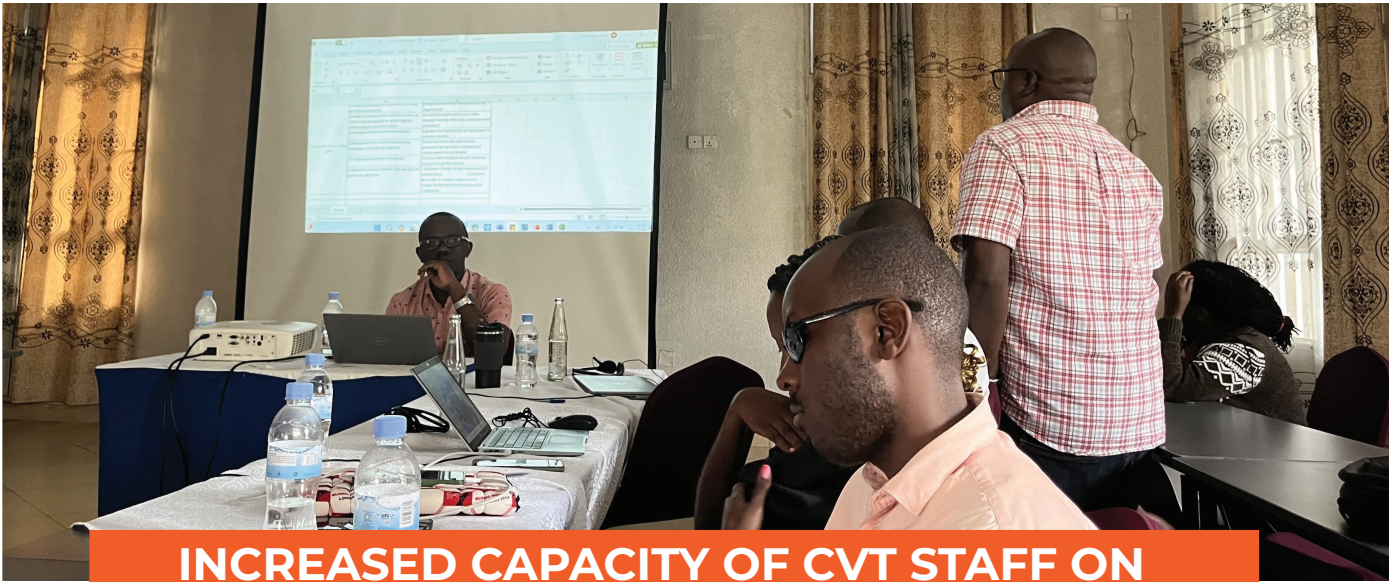
In the previous years, children from different grassroots groups working with Children's Voice Today face a challenge of sharing experience with other children from other countries due to the lower communication skills in English. One way of addressing this challenge is to encourage children to practice English language in children grassroots groups activities and those who are strong in English can support their fellow to improve their level of speaking English. Amizero and Icyizere grassroots groups champion the initiative of teaching English language among themselves. As a result of this practice, some children are able to communicate in English and share experience with others at Regional and International level. Over 45 children, both girls and boys are active on this program.



IV. ORGANISATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The Organizational capacity development is important because it plays a key role in the success and sustainability of the organization. It enables organizations to effectively plan and execute programs, respond to changing situations, and improving service delivery.

This reporting period, CVT focused on strengthening organizational functions including leadership, structures, policies, and staff capacities.



INCREASED CAPACITY OF CVT STAFF ON GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH (GTA)



CHILD-CENTER SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY(CCSA)

IV. 3 DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF POLICIES

CVT increased the organizational and technical capacity to integrate climate and environment as a child rights issue. To reach this achievement CVT developed the organization climate change and environment protection policy that is used as a guiding document for the organization interventions. This helped CVT to increase and manage the integration of climate change and environmental protection into child participation. Prior to that CVT in collaboration with the partner Nature Rwanda organized a two-day workshop training on climate change and environmental protection for Boards members and Staff, for increasing their knowledge and capacity on climate change and environment. It was attended by 12 participants(M=8, F=5) including 4 children(M=1,F=3).

The workshop was to build the knowledge and skills of CVT staff and board members, enabling them to take a leading role in driving positive transformations related to climate change and environmental protection within and from the organization.

This session encouraged trainees to adopt practices that minimize their ecological footprint and promote long-term well-being. They also shared their engagement in sustainable consumption, resource management, and waste reduction; we can mitigate the harmful effects of overconsumption and environmental degradation.



Group photo after training session on Climate Change and Environment, Kigali, August 18, 2023



Each participant is assigned by his/her fellow the recommendations to focus on in minimising his/her ecological footprint.

V. CHALLENGES

- Insufficient level of engaging children in decision making
- Limited access to information of children's rights activities and events
- Budget constraint to continue empowering children and supporting their initiative

VI. FUTURE PLAN

- Enhancing Child Participation in Governance to significantly increase the participation of children in planning and budgeting processes
- Advancing Child-Led Advocacy to promote and support child-led advocacy initiatives, empowering young leaders to influence policies and practices that affect their lives.
- Environmental Stewardship Among Children to enhance children's knowledge and active participation in environmental protection, cultivating a generation that values and protects their natural surroundings.
- Championing Gender Justice to increasing children's participation in promoting gender justice, working towards an equitable society for all genders.
- Ensuring Children's Right to Protection to promoting children's right to protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation
- Empowering Children's Right to Participation to uphold and expand opportunities for children to participate in decisions impacting their lives.
- Promoting Cultural and Linguistic Heritage includes fostering the promotion of culture and language among children, helping them to preserve their heritage and identity.
- Reducing Child Labor to drastically reduce the number of children involved in child labor by advocating for access to education and the protection of their rights.
- Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health Education to increasing children's knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights, addressing the rising issue of teenage pregnancy in Rwanda.

VII. CONCLUSION

Generally, the activities planned 2022-2023 were implemented. 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 1. NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES REACHED

FROM JULY 2023- JUNE 2024

REDUCING CHILDREN ENGAGED IN CHILD LABOR

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	11	17	28
ADULTS	75	58	133
TOTAL	86	75	161

PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	327	445	772
ADULTS	265	272	537
TOTAL	592	717	1309

TRAINING AND AWARENESS ON SRHR

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	65	90	155
ADULTS	0	0	0
TOTAL	65	90	155

PUBLIC PLANNING AND BUDGETING

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	91	108	199
ADULTS	0	0	0
TOTAL	91	108	199

CHILD-LED ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCING

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	636	699	1,335
ADULTS	29	31	60
TOTAL	665	730	1,395

GENDER JUSTICE PROMOTION (TRAINING AND AWARENESS)

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	542	598	1,140
ADULTS	288	312	600
TOTAL	830	910	1,740

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT (TRAINING AND AWARENESS)

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	214	310	524
ADULTS	0	0	0
TOTAL	214	75	161

CHILD RIGHTS MONITORING AND REPORTING

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	7	10	17
ADULTS	0	0	0
TOTAL	17	10	17

STRENGTHENED CHILDREN'S TALENTS IN PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATING

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	108	145	253
ADULTS	0	0	0
TOTAL	162	218	380

ENHANCED CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE IN ENGLISH, KINYARWANDA AND FRENCH

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	162	218	380
ADULTS	0	0	0
TOTAL	162	218	380

TRAINING ON FINANCIAL AND GRANT MANAGEMENT

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	1	3	4
ADULTS	6	2	8
TOTAL	7	5	12

TRAINING GENDER

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	8	9	17
ADULTS	0	0	0
TOTAL	8	9	17

TRAINING ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	1	3	4
ADULTS	6	2	8
TOTAL	7	5	12

TRAINING ON CHILD RIGHTS GOVERNANCE AND CHILD-CENTERED SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
CHILDREN	0	0	0
ADULTS	2	1	3
TOTAL	2	1	3

GRAND TOTAL

CHILDREN → MALE 2,166 FEMALE 2,645 TOTAL 4,811

ADULTS → MALE 671 FEMALE 675 TOTAL 1,346

G.TOTAL → MALE 2,837 FEMALE 3,320 TOTAL 6,157

APPENDICES 2. FINANCIAL SITUATION 2023-2024

Total budget in RWF 126,899,803

Salaries 43,234,833

Equipment 3,420,346

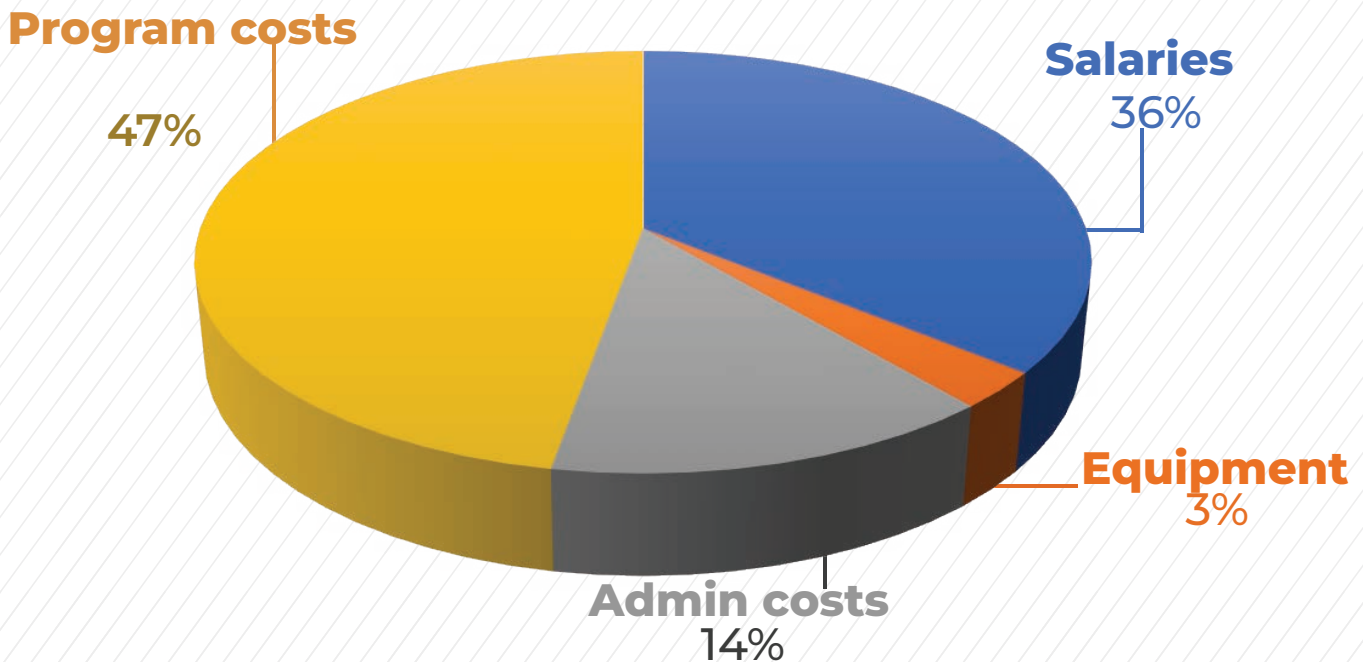
Admin costs 16,944,608

Program costs 56,848,370

Total spending 120,448,156

Carried Forward to 2024-2025 6,451,647

EXPENSES



REMARKABLE MOMENTS

JULY 2023-JUNE 2024



Children from Ruhango, Burera, and Nyarugenge districts celebrated Christmas together in December 2023

Thank you so much for hosting us and for sharing the good work you do in the Children's Club. We are very impressed with all the great stories and successes you have achieved. Keep up the good work. You are great child advocates.

Catherine Khamali
Save the Children Regional Office
07/07/2023



A team from Save the Children Rwanda country office and Save the Children's AID Academy visited children from different grassroots groups in Burera District in November 2023.

07.09.2023

Amazing work you are all doing. It has been an inspiring afternoon learning from you all, listening to your accounts of the vital work you do with children in Rwanda and globally. All the best Jen. : SCI RD USA.

21.09.2023

Thank you so much for the fantastic work that you do! I am amazed by your professionalism and warmth you are the future and we will do whatever it takes to support you in the important mission you have!

See you soon again

Love, Ekin

Save the Children





SPECIAL Thanks TO



Save the Children



Sweden
Sverige



kinder
not
hilfe



CONSORTIUM FOR
STREET CHILDREN


terre des hommes
Help for Children in Need




EACRN
The Eastern Africa Child Rights Network



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