



KVINNA

T I L L K V I N N A

NARRATIVE ANNUAL

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| GENERAL INFORMATION | | |
| Title of the programme/project Young Women & Girls Leading in Preventing , Resolving Conflict and Peacebuilding through Sports. | | |
| Name of the organisation The Organization of Women in Sports (AKWOS). | | |
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1. SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT

The Organization of Women in Sports (**AKWOS**) has implemented this initiative aimed at fostering peacebuilding, gender equality, and environmental sustainability in Rwanda in 2023 and 2024. With support from Kvinna till Kvinna, under DUFATANYE Program, AKWOS implemented the project named; **“Young Women and Girls Leading in Preventing and Resolving Conflict and Peacebuilding through Sports.”** The project engaged 450 women and girls directly in Rubavu and Musanze districts.

This project successfully empowered young women and girls to take active roles in conflicts preventing and peacebuilding. Through workshops, mentorship programs, community dialogues, and sports events participants built leadership, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding skills gained from AKWOS rightsholders. Additionally, the program addressed gender stereotypes, amplifying the voices of women and girls in traditionally male dominated spaces.

In Rubavu and Musanze districts, 40 women participated in a conflict resolution workshop in May 2024. Before the training, many of them lacked awareness of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms, leading to frequent disputes within families and communities. The session, facilitated by trained peace ambassadors, introduced practical skills such as mediation techniques, active listening, and gender-sensitive negotiation. As a result, 90% of participants reported improved confidence in handling conflicts, and 15 women later volunteered to lead community peace dialogues. The program also inspired broader community involvement, encouraging long-term cultural and social change. By integrating sports and peacebuilding, the initiative created safe spaces for dialogue and promoted sustainable peace, underscoring the transformative potential of women and girls in leadership roles.

40 **women** 
*participated in a conflict resolution
workshop in May 2024.*

A pre-and post-training assessment on GBV awareness was conducted among 50 women in Rubavu and 50 women and girls in Musanze district. Before the training, only 40% could correctly identify different forms of GBV. After the training, this increased to 85%, showing a significant improvement. One participant said: I never realized that emotional abuse was a form of GBV. Now, I feel more confident in recognizing and addressing it properly.

The work done by AKWOS has impacted the communities in Rubavu and Musanze districts, particularly in the areas of peacebuilding, gender equality, women's empowerment, and environmental protection. By strengthened women's role in peacebuilding and Conflict resolution, Reduced gender-based violence (GBV) and Improved family relationships to prevent conflicts, as well as Community engagement and Women led environmental initiatives promoted recycling and climate education. Example of testimonies from Rahab Ukwishaka from Rubavu district and Kayitesi Sandrine of Musanze District here below:

”

Before attending AKWOS sessions, I didn't recognize that I was a victim of emotional abuse. the training helped me understand my rights and seek for justice, and I now live in peace with my family.” Shared by Rahab Ukwishaka from Rubavu District.

”

I used to think housework was only for women. After discussions with my sister, who attended AKWOS training, I now share chores with my family.” From Kayitesi Sandrine of Musanze District.


2. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Environmental challenges such as deforestation, climate change, and natural disasters have significantly worsened the socio-economic conditions of women and girls in Rubavu and Musanze districts. Climate-induced disasters, particularly the heavy rains and floods of 2023, have disproportionately affected women, increasing their vulnerability to poverty, gender-based violence (GBV) according to the **DHS Rwanda 2020 report said that 35% of women in Rwanda have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, and social exclusion. For many women in Rubavu and Musanze, over 60% of women rely on informal cross-border trade, but border insecurity and environmental disruptions have significantly reduced their income opportunities (World Bank, 2023).** This economic instability has made women more vulnerable to financial dependency, gender-based violence, and family conflicts. To address this, AKWOS has trained women in plastic recycling and alternative livelihoods, ensuring they can generate income despite economic barriers.

The impact of environmental changes extends beyond economic hardship, leading to increased risks of GBV and household conflicts. Disruptions caused by flooding, for example, have heightened tensions in families as resources become scarce, leading to a rise in cases of domestic violence. Many women, especially those living in displacement-affected areas, have faced greater difficulty in accessing protection services or reporting cases of abuse. Additionally, environmental degradation has forced many girls to walk longer distances to fetch water or firewood, exposing them to higher risks of harassment and sexual violence. **The lack of access to clean water and proper sanitation in some areas has also placed a heavier burden on women and girls,** who are traditionally responsible for managing household water and hygiene needs.

35% **women**
in Rwanda have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, and social exclusion.





Recognizing these challenges, AKWOS has taken steps to integrate environmental sustainability into its peacebuilding and gender equality initiatives. Through the Women's Sports Clubs for Peace (WSCFP- Abateramahoro), AKWOS has empowered women to take leadership roles in environmental conservation efforts. One of the key interventions has been the planting of 250 trees during Umuganda community activity end of October 2023 in high-risk areas of Rubavu and Musanze to prevent soil erosion and mitigate the effects of climate change. **An additional 2,000 trees have been planted December 2024, reinforcing long term community resilience against environmental disasters.** These initiatives not only contribute to climate adaptation but also create opportunities for women to actively engage in decision-making processes related to environmental sustainability.

In response to the economic disruptions caused by climate change, AKWOS has also introduced income-generating activities that promote both financial stability and environmental conservation. One of the most successful initiatives has been training women in plastic recycling, where they learn how to transform plastic waste into marketable products such as jewellery. This project has provided an alternative livelihood for women, particularly those who previously relied on cross border trade but can no longer sustain their businesses due to security issues.

By equipping women with new skills, AKWOS has initiated and ensured that they have the economic independence necessary to support themselves and their families, reducing their vulnerability to financial exploitation and domestic violence. Through community dialogues and workshops, AKWOS has also raised awareness about the links between climate change, social instability, and violence against women, ensuring that both men and women understand the broader implications of environmental challenges. To change this, **AKWOS has worked with local government officials to integrate gender-sensitive approaches into climate resilience policies.** Women leaders who have been trained through AKWOS programs are now actively participating in policy discussions on climate adaptation, environmental protection, and disaster risk management.

This advocacy ensures that women's voices are heard and that the unique challenges they face are addressed in long-term sustainability plans. AKWOS intensified its advocacy efforts, working closely with district authorities in Rubavu and Musanze to integrate its programs into local governance structures.



3. RESULTS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

Throughout the reporting period, AKWOS implemented a series of strategic interventions aimed at strengthening women's leadership in peacebuilding, addressing gender-based violence (GBV), enhancing economic empowerment, and promoting environmental conservation. **These initiatives directly engaged 450 young women and girls in Musanze and Rubavu districts for the last 2 years of reporting period**, with a broader indirect impact on their families and communities.



These initiatives
directly engaged

450

young women and girls
in Musanze and Rubavu
districts

The activities were planned to respond to existing challenges while ensuring long term solutions.





75%

Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution

Before AKWOS's intervention, women in the targeted districts had limited involvement in community conflict resolution. Cultural norms traditionally assigned leadership roles in mediation to men, leaving women without the necessary skills or confidence to engage in peacebuilding efforts. Recognizing this gap, AKWOS designed capacity-building workshops that trained **450 young women and girls on conflict resolution strategies, leadership skills, and community dialogue facilitation**. These sessions introduced practical mediation techniques, active listening skills, and gender-sensitive negotiation strategies, empowering participants to take on active roles in dispute resolution within their communities.

The impact of this training was substantial. Before participating in the program, only 20% of women reported confidence in their ability to mediate community conflicts. By the end of the training, this number had risen to **75%, with many participants demonstrating their skills in local dispute resolution forums**. Additionally, 30 women were selected as community mediators to continue leading peace dialogues at the grassroots level. The effectiveness of these interventions was measured through pre- and post-training assessments, which included role-playing exercises, observation reports, and feedback from community members who witnessed the increased involvement of women in resolving conflicts.

Preventing Gender-Based Violence and Strengthening Family Stability

40

community
dialogues

Gender-based violence remained a critical challenge in the target communities, with limited awareness among women about their rights and the available support structures. Many cases of emotional, physical, and economic abuse went unreported due to stigma and fear of retaliation. **AKWOS responded by conducting 80 Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions on GBV prevention and response strategies**. These trained facilitators then led **40 community dialogues**, reaching women in village meetings and local market spaces. These sessions focused on recognizing early warning signs of GBV, understanding legal protections, and accessing available support services.

50
couples

The change was evident in the increased awareness and confidence among women. Before the intervention, only 30% of participants could accurately identify different forms of GBV, while after the training, this figure rose to 85%. As showed in the data from a short baseline survey conducted before the start of activities on **100 women and girls' sample from 10 clubs from both districts which are in age groups of 16 – 35 years old.**

More importantly, there was a 40% increase in reported GBV cases to local authorities, indicating that more women felt empowered to seek help and justice. One notable outcome was the decision of **50 couples to formalize their unions, inspired by discussions on women's rights and family stability during AKWOS-facilitated dialogues.** These behavioral changes were assessed through community leader reports, participant testimonials, and case follow ups from local support services.

Skills on Economic Empowerment and Environmental Sustainability


40
Increase

Economic insecurity remained a significant concern for women in Rubavu, where over 60% of women previously depended on cross-border trade with the Democratic Republic of Congo. Due to regional instability, many women lost their primary source of income, making them more vulnerable to financial dependency and economic abuse. To provide alternative livelihoods, AKWOS launched a plastic recycling training program, where **100 women from each district learned to convert waste into jewelry and household products.** Additionally, the organization provided small financial support to 20 women-led cooperatives, enabling them to establish sustainable income-generating activities.

The program resulted in tangible economic improvements. **Before the training, only 10% of participants had experience with sustainable income-generating activities. Afterward, 60% of trained women began selling recycled products in local markets, and 40% reported an increase in household income.** These economic gains were verified through follow-up interviews and financial tracking surveys, demonstrating the positive impact of AKWOS's intervention on women's financial independence.



Sports as a Tool for Peacebuilding and celebrate women's power

In Musanze and Rubavu, before AKWOS's intervention, community members lacked awareness of how sports could be utilized as a tool for promoting peacebuilding and social cohesion. To address this, AKWOS started to organize competition and celebration of International days including (Women's day, Peace day, Rural women's day, Environmental protection campaigns and 16 days of activism against GBV through five major sports tournaments, which engaged over 3,000 community members, including local leaders, and other partners. These events provided platforms for discussions on conflict resolution, gender equality, and teamwork while promoting women's participation in public spaces.



80%

attendees recognized
the role of sports

By the end of the reporting period, **80% of attendees recognized the role of sports in fostering dialogue and peace, a significant shift from the 25% baseline recorded before the intervention.** Additionally, men's participation in gender equality discussions increased by **30%, highlighting a growing societal shift toward more inclusive community leadership.**

These changes were assessed through post event surveys and focus group discussions, where participants reflected on their evolving perspectives on gender and peacebuilding. By integrating pre - and post-training assessments, community leader reports, focus groups, and participant testimonies. Beyond the numbers, the true impact of AKWOS's work can be seen in the individual success stories of women who have gained financial independence, resolved family conflicts, and emerged as community leaders.

Assessment report on 2nd National Action Plan and Grassroots data collection to feed in 3rd NAP Development Process.

As part of Human rights-based approaches, AKWOS in collaboration with other NGOs – actors of Women Peace and Security (UNSR1325 RESOLUTION) supported by Kvinna till Kvinna conducted a quick assessment to document the key achievements, challenges & lessons learnt, that needed to inform decision-makers on further efforts needed to ensure women's participation in peace building and reconciliation processes. The assessment also explored women's participation in decision-making in security organs among other governance frameworks, as well as in effective GBV prevention and response at the local level, in regional and international peace processes and enhancing their resilience and management of disasters and shocks among others. The assessment covered 10 districts from all provinces plus Kigali city.

The assessment focused on the following five intended outcome objectives for achieving effective women, peace and security agenda:

1. Meaningful and increased participation of women at decision-making levels in all institutions and mechanisms of governance, in particular at local levels;
2. Effective prevention of SGBV at the local level;
3. Effective and operational ISANGE ONE STOP CENTRES (IOSC) across the country that provide free and comprehensive services to SGBV victims;
4. Increased accountability for gender in humanitarian assistance including disarmament and demobilization programs and economic reconstruction efforts in post-conflict countries and
5. Existence of policy frameworks to support effective participation of women in regional and international peace processes.

On behalf of local leaders, districts officials and security organs. they gained more knowledge on the NAP and **1325 Resolution and committed to help AKWOS create awareness within their daily activities.**



3.1 Changes from the original plan

The only change made from the original plan is to enhanced focus on mental health and trauma. The decision to incorporate a refresher training on stress management and psychological interventions was made to address the significant mental health challenges faced by survivors of GBV and individuals impacted by disasters.

This addition was in direct response to the growing recognition of the importance of mental health support in such contexts. The training engaged 40 participants from all women sports clubs and equipped them with skills to deal and reduce trauma and stress. The immediate outcome was an improvement in their mental resilience and a strengthened capacity to manage emotional challenges. The long-term impact has been the integration of mental health support into the broader community healing processes, contributing to the overall success of the project. This was aligned with the project's objectives of promoting emotional well-being and building community resilience.

Emphasis on Environmental Sustainability: While environmental conservation was initially included in the plan, we expanded its scope to offer more hands-on, practical activities that also provide economic opportunities for women. As part of this enhanced focus, 80 women were trained in the innovative practice of recycling plastics into jewelry, empowering them to create sustainable products. The provision of funds for materials and support to the existing small projects of WSCFP- Abateramahoro enabled them to scale up their businesses and improve the quality of their work. This initiative not only addresses environmental issues but also supports women's economic empowerment, with the work small products of jewelry being sold on local community market. The broader impact on the community has been the creation of a more sustainable local economy, as well as increased awareness around both environmental conservation and women's entrepreneurship.

Expansion of Community Dialogues by Abateramahoro from WSCFP: In alignment with the baseline study findings, the scope of community dialogues was expanded to address broader issues beyond sports, including family stability, GBV, and drug abuse. Originally, the plan called for 20 dialogues through sports activities; however, we ended up hosting 40 community dialogues (2 per sector), which focused on open discussions about social issues affecting families and communities. These dialogues engaged more than 3,000 community members, including parents, youth, local leaders, etc, and led to the increase work of awareness of GBV prevention, improved family dynamics, and a stronger collective resolve to address drug abuse. The dialogues have fostered a more informed and supportive community, contributing to the overall peacebuilding and social cohesion goals of the project.



4. ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES

AKWOS underwent there was only and strengthened collaborations with local authorities and grassroots groups, which, while beneficial, required additional coordination efforts. These partnerships helped amplify the program's reach but also necessitated adjustments in implementation strategies.



5. RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Throughout the project, AKWOS engaged different stakeholders whose contributions played a great role in achieving project outcomes and fostering long-term impact. Some of them are: Local government authorities as key partners in facilitating community mobilization, integrating AKWOS programs into local governance structures, and ensuring policy alignment. Their support enabled wider outreach, allowing rightsholders to access services and participate in awareness campaigns at the grassroots level.

Additionally, collaboration with women-led organizations and civil society groups strengthened advocacy efforts, particularly in promoting gender equality, GBV prevention, and women's economic empowerment. **These partnerships provided platforms for dialogue and knowledge sharing, ensuring that AKWOS initiative resonated with broader community priorities.** Engagement with other partner organization operating in the same districts played a vital role in conducting dialogues on family stability, GBV prevention, and drug abuse, amplifying AKWOS's reach within vulnerable communities.

Lastly, media partnerships helped raise awareness of key project themes, shaping public perceptions and fostering long-term behavioural change.

Herein is the links of media coverage from our different works:

- 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Px08vrEV2w8>
- 2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnZ6RvAp_qQ
- 3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Csr7HNR-zVU>
- 4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PU1V1RKjN4Y>

6. NETWORKING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

In the recent years, AKWOS placed a strong emphasis on networking and capacity development, ensuring that both organizational and community capabilities were strengthened for sustainable impact. For example AKWOS received small funds from Ambassade du France au Rwanda under TINYUKA Project and currently there is a program called Tout en Sports under support from Play International- Rwanda which AKWOS is going to start its implementation in Gasabo, Rwamagana and Kirehe district.

Networking

AKWOS has established a strong network of local, national, and international stakeholders, collaborating across government, civil society, development partners, and the private sector.

These partnerships have expanded project outreach and secured support for initiatives like community dialogues, sports tournaments, and data collection work at grassroots level during the development of NAP, AKWOS collaborated with other NGO like Haguruka, Benimpuhwe, RWN, SEVOTA and other to ensuring that women's participation in the decision , peacebuilding and gender equality efforts were supported at multiple levels.

Capacity Development

The project prioritized capacity development for both AKWOS staff and community members. AKWOS invested in staff development through specialized training, particularly in stress management and psychological interventions to support GBV survivors and disaster-affected communities.

Additionally, funding for the Women Economic Empowerment project, supported by KTK, aims to boost small businesses for our rights holders and foster collaboration between small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and larger companies which give jobs to our rightsholders was an added value to our work and a hopeful sustainable tip for what have been done for the Dufatanye program.

7. LESSONS LEARNT

This project has provided valuable insights and lessons that will guide future programming and enhance the impact of AKWOS's work in peacebuilding, gender equality, and community development.

Local leaders and duty bearers communicated to the KTK team that members of the Abateramahoro club have been instrumental in conflict mediation. They expressed confidence in these well-trained women and requested that AKWOS expand its work to other cells.

At AKWOS, effective staff and board members engagement and participation took place due to the workshop funded by KTK on organizational self-assessment and strategic revision plan by addressing then previous recommendations given by Kvinna till Kvinna.

The active involvement of local leaders, grassroots organizations, and community members not only ensured high levels of participation but also fostered a sense of ownership and long-term commitment to project outcomes. Engaging men and boys alongside women and girls have helped challenge gender norms and broaden support for peacebuilding efforts.

Addressing the psychological impact of conflict, GBV, and disasters on both survivors and the broader community was a significant lesson. Integrating mental health and stress management into the project's activities like organizing community competitions and sports event tournaments helped participants cope with trauma and enhanced the overall effectiveness of the intervention.

Case Study/Learning story

1. Transforming Family Relationships through AKWOS



Rhabab UKWISHAKA, I am a mother from Rubavu, Rugerero, Nyarurembo. Before joining the AKWOS Women Sports Clubs for Peace, life was very hard. Things became especially challenging after I gave birth to my daughter. My elder brother often insulted me, saying distressful things about me and my child.

After attending the AKWOS sessions on gender-based violence, I realized that I was a victim of emotional abuse. This understanding empowered me to act. I decided to speak with the head of Isibo and two of my brother's friends about the violence I was experiencing. As a result, my brother changed his behavior.

Today, I am happy. When my daughter calls him "uncle," he responds lovingly, whereas before, he would dismiss her and say, "Shut up! You're just like your mother." Now, we share everything as a family, and I feel valued and respected in my home.

I am deeply grateful to AKWOS for their incredible work and the positive impact they have had on my life.

2. Restoring Family Harmony in help of AKWOS

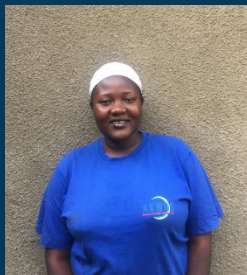
My name is **Denise NIYONKURU**. My family experienced ongoing conflict between my parents, but things became even worse after I gave birth to my son. During that difficult time, my father left us, and life became extremely hard for our family.



Later, I joined the AKWOS club and participated in the sessions on gender-based violence. Through these sessions, I realized that what had happened in our family was a form of violence. This understanding encouraged me to act. I first discussed the issue with my mother, and she understood the situation. Together, we decided to speak with my father. As a result, my father returned home, and the conflict in our family was resolved.

Today, I am happy and at peace with my family. I am deeply grateful to AKWOS for being there for us and for empowering me to make this change.

3. Testimony of Kayitesi Sandrine: Promoting Gender Balance in My Family



I am **KAYITESI Sandrine**. My father, is an elderly man who grew up without knowledge of gender balance and believed that all household chores were the responsibility of girls.

After attending a training session on gender and sex with AKWOS, I decided to have a conversation with my parents about gender balance and the fair distribution of work over 24 hours. As a result, they now understand the importance of gender balance in the family. Today, both my brother and I share household responsibilities equally.

I am grateful to AKWOS and Kvinna till Kvinna for teaching us about gender-based violence, gender equality, and conflict management. These lessons have transformed my family and empowered me to create a more balanced and harmonious home environment.

4. A story of Nyiramugisha Emerance: Transforming Lives Through Football and Dialogue

Nyiramugisha Emerance from Kinigi Sector, Rutindo Village, Musanze District. Her story began when a group of women called Abateramahoro invited me to join their football activities at Kampanga Cell. After the game, they held a discussion about personal power and how we can use it to improve our lives.

She was inspired by what she heard and wrote down some key points. When she got home, she shared these ideas with her husband and explained how women in the village were working to prevent conflicts. Before this, her family had frequent conflicts, and their issues were so severe that they were reported to the cell office. Everyone in the village knew about her struggles.



After meeting the Abateramahoro group, she began attending their football games and small group discussions regularly. She learned valuable skills about gender-based violence, conflict resolution, power dynamics, and gender equality. Over time, she became a regular member of the group, stepping in to replace someone who had gone to school in Kigali city.

The lessons she gained from Abateramahoro inspired her to talk openly with her husband about what she learned. Slowly but surely, they started to see some change. She is very grateful that her husband embraced these changes and even began reminding her when it's time to attend the group discussions.

"Today, my husband and I are role models in our village. We help other families resolve conflicts and prevent gender-based violence. Even our village leader was amazed by the transformation in our behavior especially how calm and polite we are during meetings. I am also proud to be a woman who plays football. On the field, you learn teamwork, resilience, and the drive to win all skills that I've brought into my marriage to help build a stronger and more united home.

Thanks to AKWOS, our lives have changed. They chose our village to receive training on gender-based violence and conflict management, and I am proud to say that I am one of the beneficiaries. My house was once broken, with no way to rebuild it, but today, I am happy and at peace with my husband. AKWOS OYEEE!"

5. A story of Nyiransabimana Gaudence: Overcoming Violence and Building a Peaceful Home

I live in Makoro Village, Nyarushyamba Cell, Nyakiriba Sector, Rubavu District. Before I became a member of the AKWOS-supported Abateramahoro club in my village, my family life was filled with conflict.

My husband would often come home drunk, beat me and our children, and take the little money I earned. We lived in constant fear and trouble, which left me unable to focus on anything productive.

One day, my neighbor nominated me to join the Abateramahoro club from AKWOS. I was one of the first to receive training, where I learned about gender-based violence (GBV), gender equality, conflict resolution, power dynamics, and the role of sports in fostering peace. These lessons opened my eyes to the possibility of change, and I was determined to introduce these ideas to my husband.

At first, it was very difficult. My husband resisted every attempt to discuss these topics and continued with his harmful habits. One day, after a particularly violent episode, I reached out to the Abateramahoro committee for help. I explained my struggles and how, despite helping others in the village with what I had learned, my own home was still in turmoil.

The committee decided to intervene. They visited my husband when he was sober and spoke to him about the consequences of GBV and the need for change. The first visit didn't go well, and he was dismissive. However, they persisted. By the second visit, he began to understand, and on the third visit, the committee firmly warned him that if he continued to abuse me, they would report him to the authorities. This confrontation marked a turning point in his behavior.

Since then, my husband has changed. He now supports me, giving me the chance to work and focus on our family's well-being. Today, I am happy. My children are in school, and I can provide for their needs. With the peace we now enjoy, I have managed to improve our home. I have even been able to buy furniture, including chairs and doors. I am deeply grateful to AKWOS for their support. Through their training and the work of Abateramahoro, my life and my family's future have been transformed.



1. Story of Ingabire Alice: Empowerment and Transformation Through AKWOS Training

I am **Alice** from Gataraga Cell, Gataraga Sector in Musanze District. I want to share with you how my family's life changed thanks to the lessons I received from AKWOS. It all began when I became a member of AKWOS and had the opportunity to join the Women Sports Club Committee. As one of the first members, I received training on various topics, but what resonated most with me were lessons on violence, empowerment, conflict resolution, and the role of sports in personal growth.



When I started engaging in sports with the club, my husband, neighbors, and even some relatives began to criticize me, accusing me of becoming a prostitute simply for wearing pants. This led to constant arguments with my husband, and our home became a place of endless conflict. Local authorities were often called to mediate between us.

After learning more about conflict dynamics, I started talking to my husband about the harmful effects of his actions. I explained to him how he was neglecting the family's basic needs, he didn't know what the children ate, what they wore, how they went to school, or how health insurance was paid. I was handling everything on my own.

Gradually, I started communicating with him more calmly, and over time, he began to change. Some rumors spread that I had used witchcraft on him, but despite this, he came to understand that we needed to work together for the well-being of our family.

Now, when he earns money, he brings it home. If he earns two, he contributes five. He now shares fully in supporting our household, and our home is peaceful. The children are happy when they see their father coming home. I am incredibly grateful to God and AKWOS for the training I received. The lessons I learned have transformed my family's life, and now I am committed to helping others experience similar change.

Overcoming Family Conflict with AKWOS Support



My name are **Izadufasha Mediatrice** from Musanze District, Muko Sector, Kivugiza Cell. I grew up in a difficult situation after losing my parents at the age of thirteen. I was raised by my aunt, my mother's older sister, along with her children. Over time, however, she began selling my share of the family inheritance, claiming she was doing it for my benefit. But I could clearly see that she was taking advantage of me, as I had a project supporting me and even helped build the house we were living in.

The more I asked her to show me what had been left for me, the more she continued to sell it off. I had no one to turn to, as my relatives supported her actions. I felt helpless and couldn't confront her alone.

When I joined AKWOS, I received training on issues related to abuse, and I decided to share my problem with my peers in the group. The first time, two of them came to speak to my aunt, but she dismissed them. They returned a second time, and when she still didn't listen, they told her that the matter would be taken to the local authorities.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation, my aunt finally agreed to show me what she had kept from the inheritance. She gathered our relatives and neighbors and revealed three plots of land to me, though I have not yet received the legal documents for them. Still, I appreciated that she acknowledged my share, and the neighbors were pleased to see the resolution.

Since then, we have been able to live together peacefully, and the constant arguments have stopped. This change in our relationship was made possible by the knowledge I gained from AKWOS. I am deeply grateful to my peers who helped me communicate my issues and to AKWOS staff team for giving me the courage to speak up. I thank you all for allowing me to find the support I needed, and I am now more confident in facing and dealing with whatever challenges in my life.

2. Restoring Peace in the Home with AKWOS Support

My ordeal began when my husband started coming home drunk at night. Eventually, he began refusing to provide for our household. I began hearing rumors that he was involved with another woman, and when I sought information, I confirmed it. When I confronted him, he denied it, but he continued to come home late and engage in endless arguments.

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I started to worry about the future and what I would do if he brought home HIV. That was when I decided to take my own room, and he stayed in his. The situation worsened as the arguments escalated, and after eight months of living separately under the same roof, I realized the gravity of the problems. He continued to neglect his responsibilities and didn't care about the children's needs. At that point, I reached out to Diane, one of the Abateramahoro club from AKWOS, and told her everything I was going through. She spoke to my husband, and he agreed to meet with her. After their conversation, he accepted everything I had reported, apologized sincerely, and promised that it wouldn't happen again.

Now, everything seems to be improving. We are living together in peace, and I am happy and deeply grateful to Diane and to Abateramahoro club from AKWOS for their support. Now my family is on the path to healing, and we are enjoying peace at home once again.” said Claudine Nyiratezimana a community member from Nyarurembo Village, Rugerero Cell, Rubavu District.

3. Success Story of Overcoming Domestic Abuse in support of Women Sport Club of ABATERAMAHORO from AKWOS .

A story of a community member named Nyiragutunga Donatha, from Rutindo Village, Kinigi Sector, Musanze District. "I lived in a home filled with constant conflict, and everyone in the village knew about my situation. My husband would beat me every day, abusing me physically and emotionally. I couldn't think of anything else except the fear of him coming home to beat and insult me. He even sold our food crops without consulting me.

”

One day, I attended a village meeting where I heard young women talking about gender-based violence and its consequences. After the meeting, I approached one of them and shared my situation. A few days later, two ladies came to visit me at home. They had a conversation with us and shared examples of other households where both men and women worked hard together and were happy. They continued to visit us every week, and over time, things started to change.

One day, my husband told me it was shameful to see young women coming to teach us how to build our home. He said that from then on, he wouldn't beat me anymore, and he would stop going to the bar to drink and waste money. He even promised to contribute to the household. Hearing these words from him felt like a miracle, like heaven had come down to my home. Four days later, I visited the ladies from AKWOS to tell them about the change in my situation. They helped me a lot, and today, I am very happy. My husband and I now discuss everything together, and we live in peace."

Tick one of the boxes below after writing the case study/learning story & reading the instructions:

- Yes, Kvinna till Kvinna can use this story in external communication
- This story is for internal use only and cannot be used by Kvinna till Kvinna in external communication



8. SUSTAINABILITY

The following strategies have been implemented to solidify the project's impact and maintain its momentum:

1. **Capacity Building for Local Leadership**

- o Training of Trainers (ToTs) and leadership development sessions have created a pool of skilled women leaders and community trainers. These individuals are empowered to continue cascading knowledge and implementing peacebuilding activities independently, ensuring continuity even after project funding ends.

2. **Integration into Local Development Plans**

- o AKWOS has successfully engaged local governments in Rubavu and Musanze districts, securing their commitment to integrating the project's activities into district-level development plans. This alignment with government priorities ensures sustained support and resource allocation.

3. **Strengthened Community Ownership**

- o By actively involving community members in the design and implementation of project activities, AKWOS has fostered a strong sense of ownership. Women Sports Clubs for Peace (WSCFP) are well-established as community-led platforms, enabling grassroots action and resilience.

4. **Partnerships and Networking**

- o AKWOS has built strong relationships with stakeholders, including development partners, private sector actors, and advocacy networks. These partnerships provide access to resources, technical expertise, and new opportunities for scaling project activities.

5. **Economic Empowerment Initiatives from Environmental Sustainability**

- o The integration of economic activities, such as recycling plastics into jewelry and other income-generating projects, has enhanced the financial independence of women participants. These initiatives provide a sustainable economic foundation for community-led peacebuilding efforts.
- o The environmental and climate change component of the project should be expanded to cover more rightsholders especially for the women in Rubavu district who have lost their economic empowerment means as they can no longer earn a living from across the border in DRC as a result of insecurity.

6. **Organizational Strengthening**

- o AKWOS continues to strengthen its internal capacity through training, resource mobilization, and strategic planning. These efforts are geared toward transitioning the organization into a foundation in the next 5 years , ensuring sustainability beyond individual projects.

7. **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

- o A robust M&E framework has been established to track the impact and effectiveness of project activities. Regular assessments allow AKWOS to refine strategies, demonstrate impact, and attract continued funding from donors and stakeholders.

8. **Involvement of AKWOS Line Ministries**

- o Rwanda's local government and anti-GBV structures are empowered and work very well to protect the rights of the local people. As well as the involvement of the line ministries, like: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) and the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) as well as the local leadership structure at the district in order for them to be aware and gain more ownership in AKWOS activities.



9. *Photos from different activities implemented during the period of the project.*



Above: Selected pictures from the Capacity Building sessions undertaken by AKWOS during this reporting period.



Above: AKWOS club members and women from the Gataraga sector cleaning their Gakuba center in Musanze district.



Above: The Executive Secretary (ES) Gataraga (l) and AKWOS Program Officer (r) addressing rightsholders and the general public.





Above: The tree seedlings (left) and right, AKWOS staff involved in the tree planting activity.



Above: Women Sport Clubs poses for a picture before a match and couples legalizing their unions on the celebration of International Women's Day 8th March.

The event took place in Musanze on 20th /September and on 21st /September/2024 in Rubavu Districts in the same sectors that AKWOS Intervene in and the event involved communities and organize the amical football game by Women Sports Clubs for Peace – Abateramahoro.



Above pictures shows the team of women sport clubs: Musanze clubs (Muhoza sector vs Muko sector)



The above pictures showed the team from Rubavu district (Nyamyumba sector vs Gisenyi sector).





The pictures taken from Nyamyumba club from Rubavu and Muko Club from Musanze receiving their trophies after winning the games on the celebration of International Rural Women's Day.



On 15th October, a great event in Musanze district to celebrate International Rural Women's Day, where the day was filled with football amical game between women teams, speeches and helping each other's.



Above: Selected pictures from activities to mark the 16 days of activism against Gender-Based Violence.





Above: Selected pictures from the assessment on the National Action Plan and the grassroots data collection.



Above pictures show how AKWOS stepped forward after receiving the final NAP document, AKWOS planned a workshop to go back to the field and provide feedback to all stakeholders, rightsholders and partners who contributed to the data collection process and this workshops took place in districts and shared to participants the feedbacks and updates from 3rd NAP.



Above: Taken pictures from one of the local government engagement events.



Above: Participants from one of the stakeholder engagement events pose for a group photo.



Above: The pictures from the field visits 2023/2024 undertaken by KTK team in Musanze district and meet rightsholder together with duty bearers working with AKWOS.



Above: Selected pictures from the mental health sessions for AKWOS Staff and Board members in order to be well equipped and help rightsholders who can have same issue.

Annexes

The following annexes shall accompany the final narrative report:

- Results framework/MEL plan (as sent with the application)
- Financial report (annual financial statement)

Date and place: Kigali, 15th/01/2024.

Felicite RWEMARIKA

Authorised signatory:





WOMEN RISE FOR CHANGE

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