



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Rwanda Interfaith Response to Promote ECD&F Program Through Community-Based Initiatives

INTRODUCTION

The Rwanda Interfaith Council on Health (RICH) is a network of 100 religious organizations which are grouped in six confessional groups: The Catholic Church represented by the Episcopal conference of Rwanda, The Province of the Anglican Church in Rwanda, The Protestant Council of Rwanda, The Evangelical Alliance of Rwanda, Rwanda Muslim Community, Fédération des Eglises Protestantes Reformées au Rwanda (FEPR).

It was established in 2003 under the name of “Rwanda Network of Religious Organizations against HIV&AIDS (RCLS)” as a non-profit making organization to fight HIV and AIDS by ensuring effective coordination of FBOs interventions for the response to HIV&AIDS in Rwanda.

Although it was initiated for HIV, it is now involved in other health issues such as family planning, maternal and infant health, malaria, tuberculosis, nutrition, hygiene, and non-communicable diseases. This change was due to the expansion of scope of work from the HIV response that was the initial mission to the Health Promotion in general.

The main mission of Rwanda Interfaith Council on Health (RICH) is to promote the participation of religious-Based Organizations in promoting health.

This is achieved through the Coordination of faith-based actions aiming to promote health, Promotion of good partnership among its members and other health promotion stakeholders, Advocacy for policies that promote community health, Capacity building of members to effectively fulfill their responsibilities with regards to health promotion.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Early childhood development (ECD) interventions develop sensory-motor, social-emotional, cognitive-language skills for children aged between 0-6 years , while building the capacity of parents and other caregivers to fulfill their parenting obligations.

The Government of Rwanda and its partners including UNICEF and RICH, has prioritized ECD as part of the foundation for a sustainable country’s development and put in place an ECD policy and operational plan which highlights critical ECD issues to be tackled and mobilize stakeholders with clear role and responsibilities.

This project is then a continuation of a UNICEF-RICH partnership which started in 2015. It involves religious denominations to support ECD from national to grassroots levels

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project’s impact on promoting Early childhood development will directly address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote life long learning opportunities for all.

It will also contribute to the vision of the Rwandan government of becoming a middle income country through its contribution to the development of a strong human capital base of innovative and industrious people who can work efficiently in different spheres of the economy.

To ensure sustainable and community owned ECD initiatives ,this project aims to:

- 1.Engage religious denominations to support low cost community based ECD through its existing structures and networks
- 2.Engage the community in C4D (change in behaviour, attitude, practices and social norm) through religious networks

By engaging religious denominations to support low cost ECD , this project aims at:

- a)Upgrading existing religious community initiated initiatives into community owned ECD programs in locations identified by the project
- b)Build capacities (knowledge and skills) in provision and sustainability of religious community-based ECD programs
- c)Facilitate M&E and learning of low cost community-based ECD programs for scale up and learning purposes.

By engaging the community in C4D(change in behaviour, attitude, practices and social norms) through religious networks, this project aims to:

- a)Promote engagement of both parents to care and play with young children
- b)Reduce stigma against fathers taking care of young children
- c)Reduce violent disciplining practices
- d)Reducing the number of children left alone without any adequate care form an adult caregiver

PROJECT TARGETS

This project of Rwanda interfaith response to promote ECD&F program through community-based initiative will :

- Upgrade 17 existing religious early learning facilities to meet ECD minimum standards
- Support to 17 community-based ECD centers to become sustainable and community owned
- Reach 4590 children aged 0-6, Pregnant and lactating mothers through ECD service delivery in supported religious sites
- Support 1001 targeted parents/volunteers with comprehensive knowledge related to and empowered to become community ECD caregivers.
- Perform 10 community initiatives such as parenting clubs/committees to sustain community-based ECD responses
- Reach 160,000 members of community through outreach activities including door to door

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of this project is built on a high level advocacy involving High level religious leaders to pave the way for working with their respective denominations at (targeted) community levels, followed by community dialogues and involvement in this projects’ aims.

The collaboration between project beneficiaries, local authorities and other stakeholders are also essential for project ownership and sustainability.

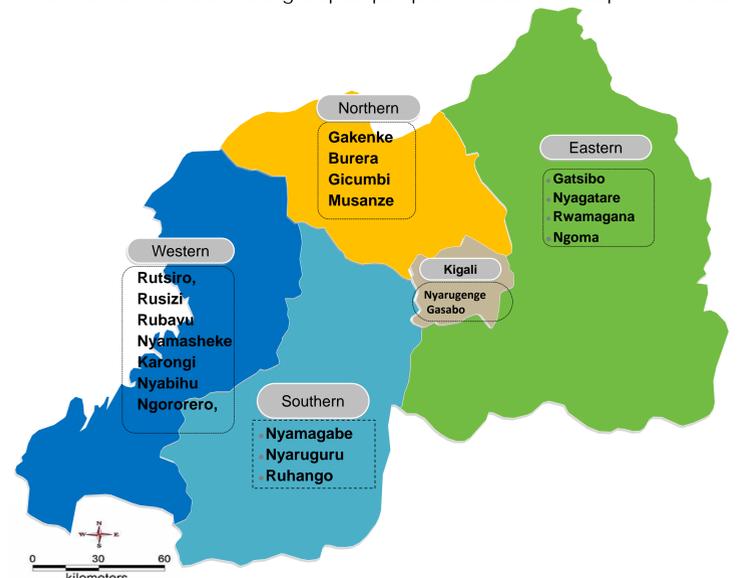
The project will therefore consist of:

- i. Upgrade of existing Early learning initiatives into community-based ECDs to increase access to quality integrated ECD services for children aged 0-6 years including early stimulation and education, health, nutrition, child protection, hygiene and sanitation.
- ii. Support provision of ECD services at community-based ECDs using the upgraded religious facilities.
- iii. Dissemination and use of the sermon guide on ECDs at denominational levels to mainstream ECD messages backed by Holy scriptures.
- iv. Training of religious leaders and religious volunteers in areas related to ECD and family health practices.
- v. Education and counselling of mothers and fathers by the religious leaders and volunteers
- vi. Social mobilisation and sensitization of communities by the religious leaders and volunteers.

PROJECT COVERAGE

	DISTRICT
C4D (communication for development): 20 districts	Nyamagabe, Ngororero, Rutsiro, Gakenke, Burera, Rubavu, Nyaruguru, Karongi, Gicumbi, Nyamasheke, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Rusizi, Musanze, Ruhango, Rwamagana, Ngoma, Nyarugenge, Gasabo, Nyabihu
ECD (Early childhood development): 15 districts	Ngororero, Rutsiro, Gakenke, Rubavu, Nyaruguru, Karongi, Nyamasheke, Nyagatare, Rusizi, Musanze, Ruhango, Rwamagana, Ngoma, Nyarugenge and Nyabihu.

The intervention districts grouped per province on the map of Rwanda



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THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA
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