

# A Project Proposal on Enhancing Women's Capacity to Prevent and Respond to Gender Bases Violence through Sports

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# **1 THE AKWOS ORGANISATION**

## **1.1 Team**

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# **2 PROJECT OVERVIEW**

This section covers the objectives of the project and then provides a background on the need for this project. The necessity of this project is crystallised through four perspectives: having a role model, the international and national perspective and the gap that this project fills and the needs it addresses.

## **2.1 Aim and Objectives**

### **2.1.1 Global Aim**

The aim of this project is to increase women's capacity to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

### **2.1.2 Specific Objectives**

- To increase women's awareness on their legal rights.
- To improve women's knowledge on types and extent of gender based violence and its consequences.
- To empower women with information on available services providers for response to gender based violence.
- To develop women's skills in sports for improved health, team spirit and self-confidence.
- To promote women participation in sports as a tool for promotion of their rights.

## **2.2 Project Justification**

This project aims at increasing women's capacity to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence through sports as a tool for campaigning against Gender based Violence, confidence building and skills development.

### 2.2.1 Role Models

Tegla Loroupe was born in rural Kenya as one of 24 siblings. At the age of seven she started making a barefoot run of ten kilometres to and from school every morning. In 1994 she won her first major marathon in New York City. She then went on to win almost all the major marathons in the world. Tegla has since used her fame and inspirational power to promote conflict resolution, peace building and poverty reduction among people affected by and vulnerable to conflicts and civil strife around the world.

Taking Tegla as a role model, Rwandan women could exploit their talents in sports and use sporting forums to campaign against Gender Based Violence (GBV) and challenge cultural beliefs and practices that deny them their basic human rights. Kigali Association of Women in Sports (AKWOS) with its mission to empower women and a strategic objective to promote women's rights is ready to facilitate the process of women's empowerment through sports.

### 2.2.2 International Perspective

*“Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. And it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.”—Kofi Annan<sup>1</sup>*

The Security Council resolution 1325 in its application of CEDAW<sup>2</sup> as a human rights convention demands that all actors engaged in peace negotiations and post conflict reconstruction to protect and respect women human rights. It also requires that women's experiences, needs and views be integrated into the political, Legal and social decisions that determine peace sustainability, reconciliation and development. The Beijing platform of action also has strategic objectives to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations. The platform also advocates for promoting women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.

### 2.2.3 National/Rwandan Perspective

The Rwanda government has shown commitment to promotion of women's rights through the 2003 constitution, which states that each person is sacred and inviolable, and the state and all its agencies have the absolute obligation to respect, protect and defend the individual (Art 10). Article 16 of the constitution also states that all human beings are equal before the law. They shall enjoy without any discrimination equal protection of the law. All Rwandans are born and remain free and equal in rights and duties (Art 11).

Laws have also been enacted to protect women and children rights including the law on matrimonial regimes, liberalities and succession and the child protection law. The government is also signatory to international convention and commitments including CEDAW, Beijing Platform of Action, Millennium development goal 3 for promotion of gender equality, African charter of peoples and human rights and its protocol related to women's rights and Convention on the political rights of women. Rwanda Government has further facilitated promotion of women's rights by establishment of relevant mechanisms including ministry of Gender and Family promotion, National women councils and the Forum for Women parliamentarians.

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<sup>1</sup>Secretary General of the United Nations during a UN interagency global video conference on “a world free of violence against women”, 8th March 1999

<sup>2</sup>Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Despite the high level political commitment to promotion of women's rights in Rwanda, Gender based violence especially against women and children continues to be a human rights violation and general development issue. Gender Based violence in Rwanda became evident by horrific forms of violence particularly against girls and women during the 1994 genocide. Between 250,000 and girls and women were victims of rape by militia-men<sup>3</sup>, and estimates are that up to two thirds of these victims were also infected with HIV by perpetrators carrying the virus<sup>4</sup>. As has been highlighted in many reports since, rape was part of the genocidal plan and part of the systematic degradation of women and of girls.

Thirteen years later, gender based violence as a product of many factors related to HIV/AIDS, cultural negative practices and attitudes, gender stereotype and inequalities, and extreme poverty continues to be a critical human rights and development issue for Rwanda.

#### **2.2.4 Studies and Reports**

Many studies show that women in Rwanda as a group are more likely to get HIV. The most recent studies show that 3% of the population as a whole is HIV infected while the percentage of HIV among women is higher at 3.6%. The link between HIV and rape is clearly illustrated by the percentage of women who contracted HIV through rape in 1994 genocide.

The police records for 2006 also show high rates of Gender based Violence including 321 cases of physical assault, 403 rape cases for women over 18 years of age and 2033 rape cases for children under 18 years.

*"The violence that women suffer during conflict does not solely arise out of the conditions of war; it is directly related to the violence that exists in women's lives during peace times".<sup>5</sup>*

The Eastern province in particular is known for negative cultural practices including forced early marriages for the girl child, which constitutes rape crime. The early marriages for girls also imply that many girls do not go to school as they are prepared for marriage. This has implication on their economic security even as adult women and lack of awareness on their legal rights.

#### **2.2.5 Gender Gap in Sports Participation**

There is also a gender gap in sports participation as women in Rwandan culture were not oriented towards sports and other activities outside the domestic environment.

Sports however has proved to build individual self esteem, confidence, keep people physically and psychologically fit and it also has a strong convening power and these are opportunities that Kigali Association of women in sports would like to exploit in building women's capacity to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence.

The project will take an integrated approach using sports as a social development tool using it as a mobilizing platform and also equipping women with skills in different sports for self confidence, tolerance and realization of women power to challenge the traditional attitudes on limitation of what the girl child and woman are capable and not capable of doing.

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<sup>3</sup>UN Report, January, 29, 1996

<sup>4</sup>AVEGA-AGAHOZA Report, December, 1999

<sup>5</sup>Women War and peace, The independent Experts Assessment , UNIFEM 2002

### **3 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

This section covers the region in which the project is implemented, the reason this region was chosen and identifies those the project aims to assist.

#### **3.1 Regions**

The project shall be implemented in Eastern province in the districts of Nyagatare and Gatsibo in Eastern province. The participants shall be identified through women councils and shall include members of GBV committees and women in associations involved in promotion of women's rights. Nyagatare district has been identified due to the high rates of Gender based violence and Gatsibo has high rates too but took the first initiative to establish GBV committees that need strengthening.

#### **3.2 The Eastern province and Gender-based violence**

The Eastern province is characterized by high rates of gender based violence resulting from different factors including negative cultural practice such as early forced early marriages for girl child, wife beating, high rates of alcohol abuse, High rate of HIV infection. Cases of spouse murder have also been reported in this province. According to 2007 police reports Eastern province had the highest figure of reported rape cases totaling to 796 with Nyagatare district having highest figure of 181, kayonza 136, Gatsibo 119, Rwamagana 105 and Bugesera 94. Many couples living in illegal marriages also characterize the region and this is a high risky factor for domestic violence between couples, which consequently renders children to violence too.

#### **3.3 Target group and Project duration**

The main target group are the women who are members of GBV committees and associations with programs for the promotion of women's rights.

The project shall be implemented in a period of eight months.

### **4 RISK AND SUCCESS FACTORS**

#### **4.1 Risk Factors**

The project realization risky factor is the slow pace of community change of attitude about women's rights as human rights. This is because gender relations are power relations and some men may resist the change. Due to socialization process some women have also been marginalized for long that they take gender based violence as a cultural practice that is unquestionable.

Another risky factor is that some acts of violence do not have legal provisions and this is frustrating for someone after knowing her rights only to find its not covered by law. It should however be noted that changing attitudes is a process and preventing gender based violence requires a multi-sectoral approach by different partners.

#### **4.2 Success Factors**

The project success factors include:

- Existence of associations and GBV committees already involved in GBV prevention and response.

- Availability of coaches for training the sports teams.
- The existence of supportive policies and legal framework for promotion of gender equality and women's rights.
- The project implementing organization partnership with other service providers including police and NGOs for promotion of women's rights and responding to GBV partners is an added value for project implementation.
- Having a team of trainers experienced in women's rights. Training and participatory community dialogue techniques.

## **5 EXPECTED RESULTS AND PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY**

### **5.1 Expected Results**

We expect the following results from this project, namely:

- Increased women's awareness on their legal rights.
- Women take a more active role in preventing and responding to sexual and gender based violence.
- A team of sports trainers established in different fields.
- Women have more positive image and self worth and ready to protect their rights.
- Women are more informed of Gender Based Violence service providers and ready to report GBV cases and seek other support services.
- Formation of grassroots community based GBV action groups established.

### **5.2 Project Sustainability**

The training of participants on their legal rights, sexual and Gender based violence and training of trainers in sports is an assured way for women to campaign against gender-based violence and report cases of gender based violence having known their rights. The increased knowledge on legal rights and service providers also opens long term benefits to women for responding to gender based violence.

The existence of GBV structure in form of committees and associations gives opportunity for formation of women community-based initiatives to prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence.

The formation of sports teams will create future strong platform for continued sensitizations on Gender based violence since sports is popular and many people attend function integrated within sports activities. The implementation of a plan of action to be developed after the training would get support from the local leadership since preventing and responding to gender based violence is one of their performance rates. Promotion of sports at community level is also one of the components for social development. The project implementation therefore fits well within the national development vision and has high level of political support.