

July 2023 - June 2024



LITERALLY TRANSLATED

Agahozo means



Agahozo, meaning a safe and comforting place where your tears will be dried, provides solace and healing." The organization is rooted in the belief that unity makes strength. Only through our combined efforts can we successfully overcome challenges and move towards a brighter future.



OVERVIEW OF THE ORGANIZATION

AVEGA Agahozo Established in Rwanda following the Genocide and legally recognized by the Rwandan government as a non-governmental Organization in 1995, the "Association des Veuves du Genocide" (AVEGA) worked for the entire country to create forums of healing, mutual support, and social-economic development of widows of the Genocide. AVEGA Agahozo is a women-led organization.

Today, we have more than 20,000 widows over 71,000 dependents, and genocide orphans among our members. We started working with young people experiencing transgenerational trauma and with children born to genocide rape, now days we work with the general population. What began as a conversation has grown into a country-wide support network helping people to start businesses, become financially independent, reclaim lost land and property, access health services support, women's rights, and access to Justice to improve people's livelihoods and peace-building initiatives





OUR VISION

AVEGA seeks a nation of optimism where women, children, and families live a dignified life free from all forms of violence.

OUR MISSION



AVEGA works to foster social justice for widows of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi as well as other vulnerable women, children, and families affected by conflicts.We do this through improving access to healthcare, socio-economic opportunities, and access to justice and by enhancing gender equality, equipping members, women, and children to transform and rebuild their lives.

VALUE STATEMENT



We believe in equal opportunity as we are all equally responsible for building a better future. It is only through working together, listening to each other and supporting one another that we will achieve our full potential as human beings.

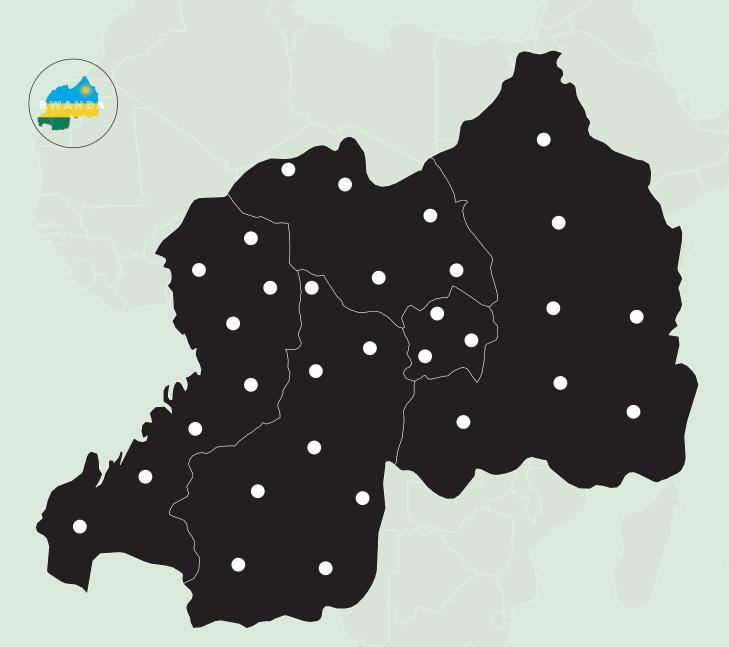


STRATEGY



AVEGA Agahozo, a member-based organization, uses a holistic approach to support its members, beneficiaries and aligned with national priorities. Our strategy includes peace-building and healing through promoting community resilience and social cohesion, providing essential health services and nutrition support, advocating for women's and children's rights and access to justice, empowering women and other vulnerable groups through various initiatives, promoting advocacy, and fostering strategic partnerships to maximize our impact and reach.

OUR PRESENCE



- Nyagatare •
- Gatsibo
- Kayonza
- Kirehe
- Ngoma •
- Rwamagana
- Bugesera •
- Gicumbi
- Burera
- Musanze Gakenke
- Rulindo

- Gasabo
- Nyarugenge
- Kicukiro

- Ruhango Nyanza
 - Huye
 - Gisagara

Kamonyi

Muhanga

- Nyamagabe
- Nyaruguru

- Rubavu
- Nyabivu
- Rutsiro
- Ngororero
 - Karongi
- Nyamasheke
- Rusizi

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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

As we present the annual report for AVEGA Agahozo for the fiscal year 2023-2024, we reflect on a year of significant achievements and commitment to our mission. It is with immense pleasure that we highlight the collective efforts of our dedicated team, partners, and supporters who have worked diligently to advance our vision of a dignified and violence-free life for women, children, and families affected by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and subsequent conflicts.

This year, AVEGA Agahozo has continued to transform lives through our comprehensive programs and initiatives. Our Health and Well-being Program has made prominent steps in providing essential medical care and raising public health awareness, impacting countless lives in our communities. Through our integrated community resilience and economic empowerment programs, we have empowered individuals with the skills and resources needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency and resilience.

We have also made significant progress in advocating for women's rights and access to justice. By providing legal aid, representation, and support for survivors of gender-based violence, we have strengthened our commitment to keeping the rights and dignity of the most vulnerable among us. Our social protection efforts have further contributed to reducing poverty and enhancing the well-being of our members.

In the face of challenges, we have maintained our focus on inclusivity, social justice, and human rights. Our dedication to gender mainstreaming and social inclusion has strengthened our programs and ensured equitable support for all beneficiaries. The impact of our work is a witness to the power of solidarity and collective action.



KAYITESI Immaculee Chairperson, AVEGA Agahozo

This past year has also brought opportunities for reflection and growth. We have navigated through unexpected challenges, from natural disasters to evolving community needs. Yet, we have remained steadfast in our mission, driven by the resilience and determination of our team and the unwavering support of our partners and donors.

As we embark on a new fiscal year, we remain inspired by the progress we have made and the lives we have touched. We are grateful to each of our partners, your support has been instrumental in enabling us to achieve our goals and continue our vital work.

Looking ahead, we are energized by our successes and committed to addressing the evolving needs of our communities. Together, we will continue to build a brighter future, driven by empathy, resilience, and the shared vision of a just and equitable society.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication. Here's to many more achievements and milestones as we strive to make a lasting impact.

ABBREVIATIONS

AVEGA: Association des Veuves du Genocide Agahozo **HIV:** human immunodeficiency virus, **AIDS:** Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome **STIs:** Sexually transmitted infections **TB:** Tuberculosis SRHR: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights **IEC:** Information Education Communication (IEC) FP: Family Planning NCDs: Non-Communicable Diseases **MVO:** Medical Volunteer Organization **PTSD:** Post-traumatic stress disorder **OCD:** Obsessive-compulsive disorder **VSLAs:** Voluntary Savings and Loans Associations **GBV:** Gender-Based Violence **UN:** United Nations **IOSC:** Isange One Stop Center **MAJ:** Marital Art for Justice **MIGEPROF:** The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion **MINIJUST:** Ministry of Justice **MINUBUMWE:** Ministry of National Unity & Civic Engagement **MoH:** Ministry of Health MINALOC: Ministry of Local Government **UN Trust Fund:** United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women **WRI:** World Resource Institute **IISD:** AIDS Healthcare Foundation **AHF:** AIDS Healthcare Foundation

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



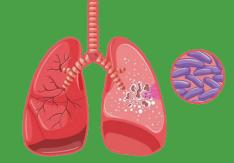
VEGA Agahozo values the importance of health and well-being in our communities. We emphasize on prevention, and treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and provide comprehensive primary health care services, especially for the most vulnerable, including Genocide survivors, widows, and children born out of rape, GBV victims, teen mothers, drug abuse victims, and families of ex-combatants. We actively engage in social mobilization programs to raise public health awareness and deliver important information on various health issues.



Our program encompasses:



HIV/AIDS,



STIs, and TB Prevention,



Testing, and Treatment



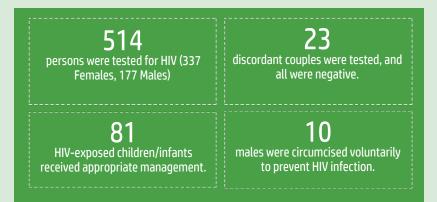
HIV/AIDS Prevention, Testing, and Treatment



In our effort to tackle HIV/AIDS, we have raised awareness, promoted safe practices, and offered support to those impacted by the disease. Throughout the reporting period, we have achieved tremendous progress in different areas;

- Provide HIV Testing Services to Clients offering and administering HIV tests to all clients. The goal is to ensure that all individuals who are at risk or could benefit from knowing their HIV status are tested and receive appropriate follow-up care based on their test results.
- Manage HIV-Exposed infants/children per National Guidelines by providing comprehensive care and management for infants exposed to HIV, following national guidelines. And ensure that HIV-exposed infants receive timely and appropriate interventions to reduce the risk of HIV transmission and promote their health and well-being.
- Care for Partners in Discordant Couples, Adolescent Girls, and Young Women by reducing the risk of HIV transmission and ensuring these groups receive comprehensive prevention, treatment, and support services as per the national guidelines.
- Prevent HIV Infection in Clients Accidentally Exposed providing immediate and effective interventions to prevent HIV infection in individuals who have been accidentally exposed to HIV, by reducing the risk of HIV transmission through timely medical treatment, education, and support services.
- Create saving groups exclusively for HIV-positive people to offer emotional and financial support to individuals affected by this disease. Creating such groups increases a sense of belonging, minimizes stigma, and assists individuals in handling the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS.

IMPACT NUMBERS



To reduce morbidity and mortality among people living with HIV (PLWHIV), 95% of HIV-positive adults and children are on ART, with the number increasing from 1168 to 1189. Retention rates in the program stand at 85%, while 98% of clients have been reached by peer educators to improve adherence and retention. The integration of HIV testing into other clinical services is at 85%. Additionally, 98% of clients received biological exams as per national guidelines, ensuring a comprehensive follow-up for PLWHIV. These achievements reflect the project's success in enhancing clinical services and supporting individuals affected by HIV.

STIs prevention, testing, and treatment



During the fiscal year 2023-2024, AVEGA implemented comprehensive STI prevention, testing, and treatment initiatives. Through targeted community awareness campaigns, AVEGA reached approximately 20,000 people with information on STI prevention, emphasizing the importance of safe sex practices, regular testing, and early treatment. At AVEGA health facilities, 5,000 people experienced STI testing, ensuring timely diagnosis and treatment. Among those tested, 1,200 People who tested positive for STIs received appropriate treatment and counseling at these facilities. This initiative not only improved community awareness but also facilitated access to essential health services, contributing to better sexual health results and reducing the spread of STIs.



TB Prevention, testing, and treatment



Another component of our interventions has been the prevention, detection, and treatment of tuberculosis (TB). During this reporting period, AVEGA conducted extensive EIC sessions at its health facilities, focusing on educating the community about TB prevention. 70 individuals were tested to identify potential TB cases. These educational sessions contributed to raising awareness about TB symptoms, the importance of early detection, and the available treatment services.

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Based on the test results, we successfully referred 10 patients to the District Hospitals for further evaluation and treatment. Prompt identification and referral of these individuals have been crucial in reducing the spread of tuberculosis and improving the health and well-being of those infected. This initiative highlights our commitment to preventing TB and ensuring that affected individuals receive timely and appropriate care, thereby contributing to the overall health and well-being of the community.



Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

The organization focuses to advocate for sexual reproductive health rights, maternal and gynecological health, and provide comprehensive sexual education.

AVEGA worked with media outlets and platforms to guarantee that accurate information on SRHR was accessible. Through these partnerships, men, women, and adolescents were given information about SRHR, and awareness was increased. The partnerships between AVEGA facilitated SRHR data access for people living in remote areas or without internet access. The organization received questions from the community through its toll-free number 7494 and most of the topics that were covered originated from these inquiries. Additionally, AVEGA collaborated with public health facilities in villages with populations at risk to guarantee access to SRHR services. In ten districts throughout Rwanda, AVEGA carried out 118 outreach programs in 2023–2024 to stop the spread of HIV. AVEGA also established a hotline where AVEGA staff provided free HIV and STI counseling and referral services to community members.

To increase awareness of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), the organization significantly enhances individuals' understanding of their sexual and reproductive health, rights, and available services, leading to better-informed health decisions through organizing different trainings. In total, 975 community members were trained on SRHR, this increased awareness encourages community members to seek and use SRHR services, such as contraception, maternal health care, and safe abortion services, resulting in improved health results and reduced rates of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These trainings also helped to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with sexual and reproductive health issues, promoting a more supportive environment for individuals to seek help.



Furthermore, AVEGA organized community awareness campaigns targeting parents, youth, and adolescent mothers to address the increasing prevalence of HIV infections among these groups. To ensure a successful campaign, several strategies were used to attract youth, including airing a radio drama series, producing inclusive IEC materials, and providing supervision and mentorship to ensure ARV treatment continuity. Additionally, a football game was held between secondary schools, during which commentators disseminated messages on HIV prevention, safe sex practices, condom use, prevention of unwanted pregnancies, and the utilization of prevention services at health centers. These campaigns successfully reached approximately 17,885 people, significantly raising awareness and knowledge about HIV prevention and reproductive health. The use of engaging and youth-friendly methods, such as sports events and media, proved effective in disseminating critical health information and encouraging positive health behaviors among the target populations.

Maternal and gynecological health

We are committed to promoting the health and well-being of women and children, focusing on the following areas:

Maternal, New-born, and Reproductive Health:

Increase in Antenatal Care (ANC) Visits: We are delighted to report that more pregnant women are visiting our health facilities for the four ANC routine visits, as advised. This indicates that access to and use of maternal healthcare has significantly improved. Our goal is to promote women's and children's health and wellbeing, focusing particular attention on the following areas:



Male Accompaniment during ANC Visits:

The fact that 78% of men accompany their partners to medical facilities during antenatal care visits is an impressive achievement. Fathers' positive involvement promotes better maternal support and family engagement in maternal health.

Promotion of Delivering at Health Facilities:

Our extensive sensitization campaigns targeted towards pregnant women and were conducted out at healthcare centers as well as in the community. These efforts aimed to decrease home deliveries while emphasizing the importance of giving birth in medical facilities. 20 meetings were held in all, and as a result, there has been a significant shift toward facility-based delivery.

Increased Facility-based Deliveries:

Our outreach efforts and adhering to the national protocol led to a significant increase in the number of deliveries happening in health facilities. In particular, 68% of pregnant women decided to give birth at our health facilities, guaranteeing a more secure and closely monitored childbirth experience.

Postnatal Consultations:

Being committed to comprehensive care goes beyond giving birth. It gives us great pleasure to state that 72% of women consulted a postnatal doctor between 1 and 42 days after giving birth. This illustrates how postpartum care has improved and shows how successful our outreach programs have been.



Promoting Child Immunization: The organization conducted community-wide awareness campaigns to inform parents of the value of immunizing children. Our objective was to ensure that children received their immunizations on time, with an emphasis on following the national immunization protocol. We generated outstanding outcomes. The achievement of 100% vaccination coverage among all children in the community was a resounding success. This result demonstrates our dedication to protecting children's health and stopping the spread of illnesses that can be prevented by vaccination.

Major improvements in maternity, neonatal, and reproductive health were made in 2023. We enhanced the standard of maternal care and guaranteed safer childbirth experiences by encouraging facility-based deliveries, increasing ANC visits, and having male companions during ANC. Our commitment to postnatal consultations also resulted in improved postpartum care. Additionally, all children received their vaccinations on schedule as a result of our effective community sensitization campaigns. These successes demonstrate our dedication to offering complete healthcare services and advancing the health of women and children in our neighbourhood.

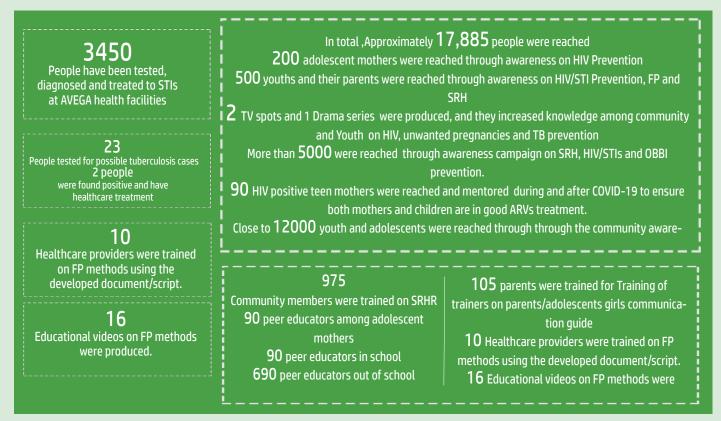
Enhance the knowledge of health facilities clients and service providers on family planning (FP) methods

The initiative to enhance knowledge of family planning (FP) methods among health facilities' clients and service providers has achieved significant success. By creating comprehensive scripts, training healthcare workers, and producing educational videos in both English and Kinyarwanda, AVEGA has improved the accessibility and understanding of FP methods. These efforts have equipped providers with the necessary skills to deliver accurate FP services and information to the community.

Additionally, 10 healthcare providers, including nurses and gynecologists, were trained on FP methods to enhance their knowledge and skills in offering accurate information, counseling, and services. Moreover, the organization has produced 16 educational videos on family planning, complete with subtitles in both languages. As a result of these initiatives increased awareness and use of family planning methods, leading to better reproductive health and more informed family planning decisions in the community



IMPACT NUMBERS



Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) prevention and treatment

In Recognition of the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and to mitigate the health effects of HIV/AIDS, AVEGA extended its services in 2020 to include the prevention, early detection, and treatment of NCDs such as kidney diseases, blood pressure, eye impairment, diabetes, cervical cancer, breast cancer, and Hepatitis. AVEGA organized medical outreach programs as NCDs are rapidly increasing the country's death rates. The following NCDs were prevented, tested, and treated:





Cervical Cancer and Breast Cancer



AVEGA conducted screenings for cervical and breast cancer as part of its awareness campaign and outreach program. A total of 96 people were screened for cervical cancer, resulting in 8 number positive cases. Additionally, 27 people underwent breast cancer screenings, with 2 number positive cases also are referred to hospitals. Regular screenings are important for sexually active individuals, as Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a major risk factor for cervical cancer. Early detection through these screenings allows for timely treatment and significantly reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer, while also helping manage HPV infections and mitigate potential complications.

Eye impairment

During the reporting period, AVEGA aimed to identify and treat individuals with vision problems to improve their visual health. The health facilities' ophthalmologist conducted screenings and provided interventions such as prescription medications, surgery referrals, and assistance with obtaining eyeglasses. During the screening process, elderly widows underwent examinations to identify visual impairments and determine necessary treatments. The results showed that widow individuals received prescription medications tailored to their specific eye conditions and were scheduled for regular checkups to monitor progress. Additionally, for the enhancing Vision and Empowering Elderly Genocide Widows through Eyeglass Provision, during this year, AVEGA supported 159 elderly vulnerable Genocide widows with eye diseases by providing them with eyeglasses in collaboration with the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement. This initiative significantly improved the vision for the beneficiaries, enhancing their daily living conditions and overall quality of life, which contributed a lot not only to addressing a critical health need but also to fostering greater independence and dignity among these elderly women, strengthening their ability to participate more actively in community life



Diabetes

The initiative to reduce the incidence of diabetes in the general population has shown promising results. Health facilities conducted diabetes screenings for all eligible clients and prescribed necessary anti-diabetic medications. Through these efforts, 284 individuals were screened and informed about their diabetes status. Among those screened, 5 were newly diagnosed with diabetes and received immediate attention. Additionally, 130 individuals with pre-existing diabetes participated in counseling sessions and were referred to health facilities for further management. These measures have ensured that both new and existing diabetic patients receive the necessary support and treatment, contributing to better diabetes management within the community.





Kidney diseases

During the reporting period, AVEGA's initiative for the prevention, detection, and treatment of kidney disease made significant progress. Through a series of targeted outreach programs and screenings, a total of 150 people were tested for kidney disease. Among these, 20 people were diagnosed with various stages of kidney disease and received appropriate medical treatment, including medication management and referrals for specialized care when necessary.



The screenings and subsequent treatments were crucial in identifying early-stage kidney disease, allowing for timely interventions that can slow disease progression and improve quality of life. This comprehensive approach ensured that individuals with kidney disease received the necessary care and support, underscoring AVEGA's commitment to addressing the growing burden of non-communicable diseases.

Blood Pressure/Hypertension

The organization aims at reducing the incidence of hypertension in the general population and has achieved significant progress. Health facilities provided hypertension screenings to all eligible clients and prescribed appropriate antihypertensive medications as needed. At AVEGA CLINIC, 1569 clients were screened, resulting in 34 new diagnoses of hypertension. These newly diagnosed individuals were informed of their condition and began receiving necessary medical attention.

Additionally, 236 clients with previously diagnosed hypertension received counseling sessions and were referred to health facilities for further management. These efforts have ensured that both newly diagnosed and existing hypertensive patients receive the necessary support and treatment, contributing to better management and reduction of hypertension within the community.

Hepatitis

Our effort to reduce the widespread distribution of Hepatitis B and C in the general population has made significant progress. Health facilities provided Hepatitis B and C testing services to eligible clients, with 880 individuals tested for each type. Among these, 11 tested positive for Hepatitis B and 5 for Hepatitis C. Additionally, 1602 clients were vaccinated against Hepatitis B, including 869 newly vaccinated individuals and 733 receiving their second and third doses. These efforts have greatly increased awareness and prevention of Hepatitis B and C in the community.

To reduce morbidity and mortality among people living with Hepatitis B and C, the project ensured that all eligible patients received appropriate treatment. Out of the 11 Hepatitis B-positive clients, 7 were eligible and started treatment. For Hepatitis C, 2 out of the 5 positive clients were eligible and began treatment. Currently, 14 clients are receiving treatment for Hepatitis B, with 5 having an HIV-Hepatitis B co-infection, and 9 having only Hepatitis B. Additionally, 2 clients are undergoing treatment for Hepatitis C. These targeted interventions have improved the health outcomes for individuals affected by Hepatitis B and C, demonstrating the project's impact on managing and treating these infections.

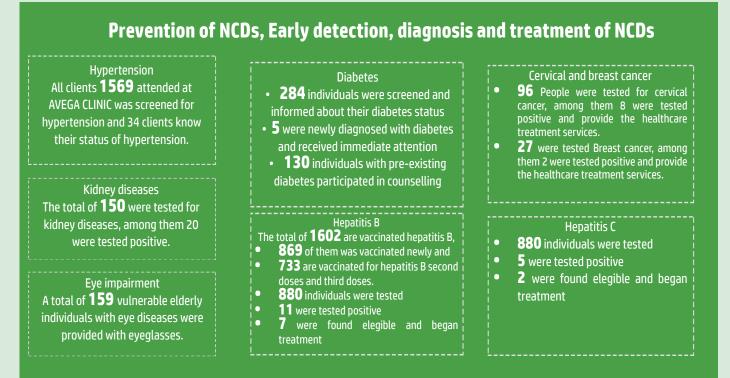
In addition to screenings, we have actively raised awareness about hepatitis, its transmission, and prevention methods. We have made efforts to reduce the stigma related to hepatitis by providing information through various methods and encouraging people to seek testing and treatment.



Medical outreach activities

Through 2023, AVEGA organized medical outreach programs in Rusizi and Kigali, Rwanda, in partnership with MVO, the King Faisal Hospital Foundation, and other partners, with the goal of providing specialized medical healthcare services to underprivileged community members. For those without access to regular healthcare services, these events offered free medical consultations, screenings, and treatments. The medical teams, consisting of physicians, nurses, and support personnel, performed routine physical examinations, treated common illnesses, and offered preventive care. They also provided health education on disease prevention and the delivery of high-quality, affordable healthcare services to the general public and medical professionals. 898 patients were treated, and 25 were referred to referral hospitals for additional care.

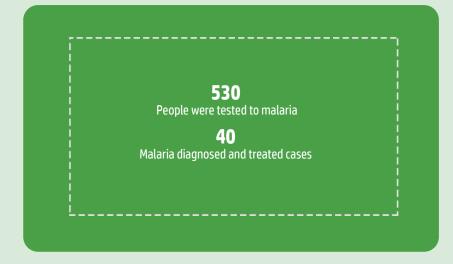
IMPACT NUMBERS



Malaria Prevention and Treatment

One of the organization's main focuses has been to prevent and control malaria. The initiatives we have undertaken have resulted in outstanding progress in this area, malaria test done is 530, and while malaria diagnosed and treated cases is 40. In addition, we have carried out significant educational campaigns to promote awareness about malaria prevention and control measures. These campaigns targeted populations in our catchment areas, giving them critical information on how to prevent malaria successfully. We have mobilized a large number of people, and our efforts have resulted in greater participation and awareness in malaria prevention practices.

IMPACT NUMBERS



Mental health

The Mental Health sub-program is dedicated to providing comprehensive support through a multifaceted approach, encompassing psycho-education, diagnosis, treatment, and psychosocial rehabilitation. We conduct community awareness campaigns using various media channels, including radio and TV talk shows, videos, photo quotes, and social media platforms, to disseminate information on mental health. The trauma-informed leadership programs are designed to empower leaders with the skills needed to support individuals affected by trauma. We offer individual and group psychotherapy, as well as psychiatric diagnostic and treatment services, ensuring a holistic approach to mental health care. Our psychosocial rehabilitation efforts focus on advocacy and trauma and crisis intervention, particularly during and after the commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsis. Additionally, we provide continuous follow-up for trauma cases, ensuring long-term support and recovery for survivors. This comprehensive sub-program aims to address mental health issues at various levels, promoting healing, resilience, and well-being within the community





Mental Health Awareness Campaign

to raise awareness about mental health disorders, combat stigma and discrimination, and address human rights violations associated with mental illness. The campaign educated the community on the potential causes and consequences of mental health disorders and provided information on how and where to seek help from both community resources and professionals. Raise mental health awareness through different channels by organizing and implementing various activities and strategies to educate the public, reduce stigma, and promote mental health well-being. In the past fiscal year, AVEGA conducted different community mental health awareness sessions across various districts in Rwanda, reaching 5200 participants (3662 females and 1538 males). This initiative aimed to prevent mental health issues and raise awareness about common conditions, including depression, PTSD, anxiety, OCD, drug abuse and addiction, panic disorder, phobia disorders, epilepsy, and schizophrenia. Sessions provided information on recognizing symptoms, conducting mental health screenings, and connecting individuals with mental health professionals or community healing spaces supported by trained facilitators. These sessions were delivered through community meetings, evening family gatherings, public sports events, and schools. This comprehensive approach significantly enhanced mental health awareness and support at the community level.

Mental health screening

During the community mental health awareness campaigns, the organization identified individuals who presented the symptoms of mental health-related issues and linked them with other mental health service providers (Health centers and District hospitals). 328 people were screened and referred to the nearest health facilities.

<image>

National TV and Radio Program Talk Show on Mental Health

AVEGA staff, in collaboration with other stakeholders, conducted 5 radio and 5 TV talk shows to raise awareness about mental health-related issues across Rwanda. The primary aims were to prevent mental health problems, increase awareness, and encourage the Rwandan community to seek help when needed. The broadcasts provided information on recognizing symptoms of mental health issues and where to find support. As a result, the initiative reached a broad audience, significantly increasing public understanding and promoting proactive mental health care. This program fostered a culture of openness and support, contributing to the community's overall well-being.

Training of Trainers for AVEGA Staff on "Trauma-Informed Leadership

The "Training of Trainers on Trauma-Informed Leadership" equipped AVEGA staff with the skills to recognize and respond to trauma in the Rwandan community, creating safe environments that foster healing and resilience. Participants delved into Rwanda's complex trauma history, including the genocide, and learned to address mental health issues and gender-based trauma, enhancing their empathetic leadership capabilities, this training ensures AVEGA staff can effectively disseminate trauma-informed approaches, improving overall outcomes and well-being within the organization and community.



Training of Local leaders on trauma-informed leadership

To enhance the capacity of local leaders to improve service delivery by incorporating trauma-informed leadership practices, acknowledging the historical trauma experienced by Rwanda's population.





Diagnosis, treatment, and psychosocial rehabilitation Provide counseling by offering professional support and guidance to individuals or groups to help them cope with

emotional, psychological, and behavioural issues. This activity, specifically focused on trauma survivors, encompasses individual sessions, group sessions, and online counseling via a toll-free service.

Trauma, crisis intervention, and case follow-up During and after the 30th Commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsis, Additionally, AVEGA provides continuous follow-up for trauma cases, ensuring long-term support and recovery for survivors. This comprehensive sub-program aims to address mental health issues at various levels, promoting healing, resilience, and well-being within the community. 131 People re-experienced with trauma cases were supported at the community level during the commemoration period.

IMPACT NUMBERS

In total 11200 were reached through awareness campaigns • 5200 (3662 Females ,1538 Males), were reached through community mental health awareness • 6000 were reached through through	60 Mental health professionals were trained	20 (13 Females, 7 Males) AVEGA Staff were given a Training of Trainers on Trauma informed leader- ship
total 3449 Have been provided counseling	298 Community volunteers were trained on mental health first aid	350 (149 Females, 201 Males) Local leaders were trained on Trauma informed leadership
36(28 Females, 8 Males) Genocide survivors have been offered individual counselling sessions 2440(1590 Females, 850 Males) commu- nity members have been offered group counselling sessions 973(801 Females, 17 Males) have have been offered counselling online via toll free	328 People were screened and referred to the nearest health facilities	131 People re-experienced with trauma cases were supported at the communi- ty level during the commemoration period

AVEGA AGAHOZO ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



PEACE BUILDING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION



he Peace Building and Conflict Management program aims to promote social cohesion and restore hope, tolerance, and dignity within the Rwandan community that endured the aftermath of the genocide. Our program targets women, youth, genocide survivors, ex-combatants,children born of rape, and families of convicted Genocide perpetrators, Our approach enhances community resilience and social cohesion through mental health education, trauma prevention, and healing, community dialogues, conflict transformation, sport therapy "Horana Ubuzima Bwiza", Umugoroba w'ubudaheranwa, remote online

counseling (Toll-free: 7494), trauma-informed leadership, honoring the memory of victims of genocide and documenting the experiences of our members and other survivors, psychosocial support: For survivors and other groups in need of protection, all while emphasizing genocide prevention.

PROMOTING SOCIAL HEALING, SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT

In November 2022, AVEGA Agahozo in partnership with the Ministry of National Unit and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE) launched a project to address the psychosocial needs of the people affected directly or indirectly by the painful divisive history particularly the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 as well as to foster resilience among all categories of Rwandans. The project's overall goal is to strengthen the community's resilience and build trust and tolerance in the Rwandan Community. The project is implementing in 3 Districts namely: Rusizi, Nyamasheke, and Rutsiro.

Under this program, this year AVEGA Agahozo implemented the following activities:

- Mapping of stakeholders in social healing, social cohesion, and community resilience to identify, analyze, and document all relevant stakeholders involved in the project thematic areas of interventions. As well as the identification of patients with mental health disorders who require referral to a mental health professional for further assistance.
- Integrated Community Resilience and Economic Empowerment Program, during the fiscal year 2023-2024, AVEGA implemented an integrated program to enhance community resilience and socio-economic development. This initiative provided comprehensive training for community facilitators and Community Resource Persons (CRPs) in mental health support, including first aid, crisis intervention, and trauma management, while also equipping them to conduct community dialogues and identify individuals needing advanced mental health care. Simultaneously, capacity-building activities for community development agents focused on entrepreneurship, business plan development, and financial literacy, aiming to establish Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and promote economic self-sufficiency. This holistic approach combined mental health support with business development to promote a more resilient and economically empowered community.



 Capacity building for mental health professionals to enhance the skills, knowledge, and capacities of mental health professionals to effectively address the mental health needs of communities and strengthen collaboration and referral system

• Creation, Management, and Phase-Out of Healing Spaces

VEGA established and managed 276 spaces for peace across Rwamagana, Nyagatare, Ngoma, Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Rutsiro and Karongi to facilitate community discussions on societal and personal issues. Following the rollout of these spaces, a Result Assessment Survey (RAS) was conducted to evaluate their impact on mental health, social cohesion, and livelihoods. The survey informed the phase-out process of 85 spaces for peace, which included a closing event to celebrate the participants' contributions to mental health and community development.



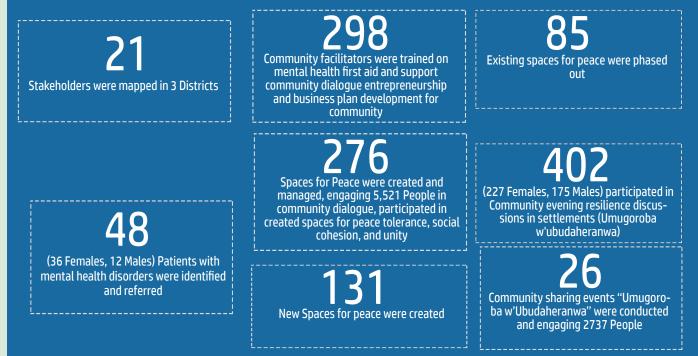
 Community sharing events "Umugoroba w'ubudaheranwa" Umugoroba w`Ubudaheranwa events aimed to reinforce solidarity and conflict resolutions and raise awareness of mental health, good parenting, and skills development. Furthermore, Umugoroba w`ubudaheranwa events are organized by AVEGA representatives in their community, in collaboration with local government entities and survivors' organizations attended by the general community members. They discussed different topics related to Rwanda's history and the 1994 Genocide against Tutsi and its impact on the mental health-related issues presented in their villages.



Provide economic support to Voluntary Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) for socio-economic development

By strengthening VSLAs, this initiative will contribute to the overall socio-economic development, increasing their lending rate and self-sufficiency of community members, fostering a more resilient and economically stable environment. Preliminary, the organization conducted the readiness and maturity assessment of these VSLAs.

IMPACT NUMBERS



5 GENDER EQUALITY

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAM



As a women-founded and led organization, AVEGA is dedicated to promoting and advocating for women's rights, respect, protection, women's participation in decision-making and fulfillment. The program focuses on five thematic areas:

- GBV Prevention, detection, and response interventions;
- Legal education and representation;
- Socio-economic empowerment;
- Addressing climate change;
- Evidence-based advocacy on the rights issues of women.

ccording to the UN, gender equality, especially women's rights, is crucial for tackling many global challenges. Women play a key role in alleviating economic crises, improving healthcare, addressing climate change, and combating domestic violence. Holding women back implies holding back our world. This program emphasizes AVEGA's commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women to drive positive change in their communities



GBV PREVENTION, DETECTION AND RESPONSE INTERVENTIONS • RAISING AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY ON GBV PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Through community outreach sessions and mass campaigns, we targeted community members, including youth in and out of schools and teen mothers, to raise awareness of GBV prevention and response. We equipped 14 health centers (e.g., Kayanga HC, Masaka) with Smart LED TVs displaying GBV prevention messages for education and communication, specifically addressing the needs of women and girls, including those with disabilities, who are survivors or at heightened risk of GBV.

Advocacy activities included writing briefs and meeting with key stakeholders at district and national levels. AVEGA held advocacy meetings with journalists, CSOs, and decision-makers, and disseminated GBV prevention and response messages via social media. As a result, over 30,671 people were reached with these messages, enhancing the awareness and responsiveness of service providers, actors, and duty bearers in GBV prevention and response services



GBV DETECTION

To strengthen Gender-Based Violence Response and Prevention in Health Service Delivery, the organization addressed the issue of undetected and unreported GBV incidents during medical diagnostics, by working with 16 public health facilities, including Kiyondo, Rurenge, Ngarama, Gitoki, Muyumbu, Karenge, Mwogo, Gakurazo, Gahanga, Masaka, Mwendo, Kayanga, Nduba, Butamwa, Ntarama, and AVEGA Rwamagana Health Center. The aim was to enhance the capacity of these facilities to detect GBV cases, provide comprehensive health services to GBV victims, and improve prevention efforts. Health service delivery settings offer a key opportunity for detecting, responding to, and preventing GBV issues.

The knowledge and skills for GBV response and prevention in health facilities were significantly strengthened. Additionally, there was increased satisfaction among GBV Victims within the project catchment area regarding the services provided. These achievements mark a vital step towards more effective GBV detection and response in health service delivery

GBV RESPONSE SAFE SPACE FOR GBV VICTIMS

n this fiscal year, the Organization we have dedicated to the follow-up and monitoring of 553 safe spaces established in the previous year across the districts of Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Rwamagana, Bugesera, Nyarugenge, Kicukiro, and Gasabo. These spaces, including 521 for women and 32 for teen mothers, have become essential hubs for 11,870 women and girls, including 656 teen mothers, to gather, share experiences, and seek solutions related to GBV. The initiative has impacted the community by raising awareness and understanding of GBV, empowering victims with key knowledge and resources, and promoting solidarity. Although challenges such as accessibility and stigma, effective engagement of safe spaces, awareness campaigns, and partnerships with local organizations have mitigated these issues. Future plans involve preparing for the phase-out and graduation of safe spaces with local leaders and stakeholders, enhancing training programs, continue implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, and strengthening partnerships with both governmental and non-governmental organizations to ensure ongoing support for GBV victims.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR GBV VICTIMS TO ACCESS SPECIALIST HEALTH SERVICES

nder the DELIVER Project, AVEGA provided financial support to women and girls who are victims of GBV, assisting them to access specialist health services at the Isange One Stop Center (IOSC) at the District Hospital level by providing them with transport fees. At IOSC, they received comprehensive medical care from specialized doctors to address the health consequences of GBV. This care included screening for gynecological issues, chronic health conditions, and sexually transmitted infections such as HIV. Additionally, they received sexual and reproductive health information, education, and services, including pregnancy testing.

Furthermore, the beneficiaries participated in psychotherapy sessions aimed at supporting their healing and recovery from mental health challenges resulting from their traumatic experiences. These sessions focused on helping them develop safety plans and coping strategies to manage triggers, anxiety, and other challenges that may arise following GBV incidents.

As an immediate result, the target health centers have become more friendly and supportive environments for women and girls who are victims of GBV or at heightened risk, providing the necessary care and resources to address their needs.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE COMPONENT

he organization provided comprehensive legal aid and advocacy to protect the rights of vulnerable widows, ensuring their access to justice. AVEGA assisted eighteen Genocide widows by offering legal representation, counseling, and support in accessing and process of legal systems. By addressing property disputes, inheritance claims, and other legal challenges, the organization enhanced its legal protection and social empowerment.





Through referrals to the Legal Aid Forum, members received free legal services, ensuring appropriate support for their cases. The organization represented these members in court proceedings, ensuring a fair chance to present their arguments. Paralegals provided mediation assistance and referrals to MAJ and AVEGA.

The organization also facilitated the drafting of wills for three elderly childless widows who lost their families during the genocide. This enabled them to legally express their demands regarding asset distribution, protecting their interests in the event of their passing.

Additionally, six GBV survivors were supported in accessing legal aid and justice, including covering court and bailiff fees, technical expertise of property fees, and legal representation fees, legal advice, mediation, and orientation, ensuring comprehensive legal support for GBV survivors.

LEGAL EDUCATION ON RADIOS

he organization conducted two legal education programs via radio broadcasts, aiming to provide legal information and raise public awareness about their rights, responsibilities, and available legal remedies. Utilizing radio as a medium allowed the organization to reach a broad audience, including individuals who may have limited access to other sources of legal information. These efforts significantly impacted access to justice by educating the general public.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

To ensure comprehensive support for women and girls affected by, and those at heightened risk of, GBV, a total of 1065 people have been engaged in capacity development activities for a comprehensive and effective response to GBV.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAM

The organization has trained 600 Community Facilitators. These facilitators intervene in assisting victims, including mental health aid, raising awareness about gender equality, promoting financial literacy, and facilitating entrepreneurship opportunities. During the training, they covered essential topics such as gender equality, women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), GBV prevention and response mechanisms, relevant laws and policies, and effective communication skills which improved their skills, abilities, and capacity to conduct safe space activities as they gain experience.

In addition to this, the organization conducted specific training for young adolescents among teen mothers on sexual and reproductive health (SRH), HIV and STI prevention, GBV, life skills, interpersonal communication, and referral processes for HIV testing and voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC). As a result, 90 adolescent mothers, 90 peer educators in, and 90 out of school were trained, leading to increased awareness and referrals of peers to health centers, as well as a remarkable increase in confidence to utilize HIV prevention services and family planning services.



The training also extended to parents, with 105 parents receiving education on effective communication with adolescents regarding SRH, HIV, mental health, and conflict resolution. This initiative improved communication between parents and their children and raised awareness about HIV, TB prevention, and mental health issues within families. Sensitization efforts were carried out to further educate parents and their adolescents on these critical topics.

To promote economic empowerment among GBV survivors, we selected and trained 60 local business coaches from Nyarugenge, Gasabo, and Kicukiro Districts. These coaches have been trained in business promotion to mentor women and girls survivors and those at risk of GBV. They have started mentoring our project beneficiaries from their localities, resulting in 45 women and girls survivors of GBV running their own income-generating activities. This initiative is expected to continue in other districts, further increasing the number of women and girls engaging in business activities.

Lastly, community facilitators were trained on the SASA! Methodology to enhance their understanding and application of this model in addressing GBV within communities. This training empowered facilitators to promote behavioral change and address the misuse of power, thereby preventing GBV. The facilitators have pledged to disseminate the SASA! Model knowledge throughout their communities, aiming to create a widespread and lasting impact.



These activities, implemented across various districts including Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Rwamagana, Bugesera, Nyarugenge, Kicukiro, and Gasabo, have significantly contributed to the development and capacity-building efforts, ensuring a comprehensive and effective response to GBV.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

uring the fiscal year 2023-2024, AVEGA successfully organized and implemented 829 savings and loan groups, providing a platform for women to support each other in their economic activities. These groups consist of 17,403 members. Through their participation, AVEGA members collectively saved an impressive RWF 159,578,600. These savings demonstrate the commitment and dedication of the members toward building financial resilience and improving their economic well-being.

OUTCOMES/ RESULTS

Financial Inclusion

829 The establishment of saving and loan groups allowed women from diverse backgrounds to access financial services and participate actively in economic activities. This inclusion helps reduce gender disparities in financial access and enhances women's economic independence

Economic Stability

The savings accumulated by the members of AVEGA contribute to their overall economic stability. This financial cushion enables them to overcome unforeseen challenges, invest in income-generating activities, and provide for their families

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Through the saving and loan association groups, women had opportunities to enhance their financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and business management capabilities. These skills are essential for their long-term economic growth and sustainable

Empowerment and Confidence:

By actively participating in the economic empowerment program, women gained confidence in their financial decision-making abilities. This newfound empowerment positively impacts their overall self-esteem, and assertiveness, and enhances their financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and business management capabilities. These skills are essential for their long-term economic growth and leadership potential.

IMPACT NUMBERS

065 People has been

engaged in capacity development activities on comprehensive & effective response to GBV (Adolescents, their

parents, safe spaces facilitators)

In total,

2 In total, **30,671** People were reached VSLAs were created and still functionin outreach session on raising awareness legal education programs were ing with 17,043 members at the conducted via radio broadcasts on GBV prevention and response 54 159,578,600 RWF Total amount of collected savings in GBV Cases were detected by the trained health center staff In total 11,870 Women and Girls were supported through the created 553 8 safe spaces at the community level AVEGA members provide free comprehensive legal aid and representation small income generating activities started running by AVEGA members

> 1 saving groups of AVEGA Beneficiaries provided financial support to strengthen their ledding

2

AVEGA members 'cooperatives provided financial support

829

community level

VLSAs

319

and beneficiaries

SOCIAL PROTECTION

2 ZERO HUNGER



Il social protection program activities were intended to empower beneficiaries by preventing, managing, and resolving adverse circumstances that could compromise their well-being. The program's activities were centered around seven main areas: hardship allowance, nutrition, and home appliances support, funeral support, medical health insurance support (Mutuelle de Sante), contributing to the management of the retirement house for the elderly (Impinganzima), shelter support, environment protection, and livelihood improvement. The primary goal was to reduce poverty, vulnerability, and exposure to risks among the members and other beneficiaries.

Hardship Allowance

Financial support was given to widows going through tough circumstances in partnership with our supporters, which included the Rwanda Bar Association, PSF, NCDA, Survivors Fund, and Jewish Helping Hands. The allowance was intended to reduce subjective financial stress, material hardship, and income poverty. This assistance was given to 1,162 members in total. The hardship allowance effectively provided widows with financial relief, easing the weight of income poverty and financial stress and assisting them in coping with challenging circumstances.

Nutrition and Home Appliances Support

By collaborating with multiple donors and utilizing AVEGA's own revenue, the program provided food supplies to 41 members (38 females and 3 males) to help them maintain balanced meals. Ensuring access to nutritious foods and addressing nutritional deficiencies, the support improved the beneficiaries' dietary consumption and overall health through both nutrition and home appliances assistance.

Funeral Support

AVEGA provided funeral support to 71 widows (68 females and 3 males) who passed away, covering the cost of coffins and related services. This assistance ensured dignified funerals for the deceased and alleviated the financial burden on their families during a difficult time, offering practical support with funeral arrangements and financial assistance during bereavement.

Mutuelle de Sante (MUSA)

Through collaboration with various contributors, AVEGA supported 532 members (260 females, 272 Males) from Gatsibo District and Rwamagana District providing their annual health insurance, or Mutuelle de Sante. The objective of this initiative was to guarantee that those who were financially disadvantaged could access necessary healthcare services. AVEGA assisted in improving the overall standard of living and well-being of these people and their families by paying for their health insurance.



In order to provide shelter to widows and widowers who lost their whole family during the 1994 Tutsi Genocide, AVEGA and its partners developed the Impinganzima Hostels. In addition to accommodation, these hostels offer various kinds of facilities and support services. AVEGA visited the residents of these hostels, offering comfort and companionship during the commemoration period. In order to address the specific needs and challenges faced by the residents, AVEGA also contributed to the provision of specialized medical services and psychotherapy. The organization also supported the general management of the hostels, ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for the residents.

Shelter Assistance

AVEGA undertook a significant initiative to construct and renovate housing for its members, focusing on improving living conditions and providing stability. The organization assisted 8 widowers from the Gasabo, Bugesera, Kamonyi and Rwamagana districts. The initiative involved assessing the current state of the beneficiaries' homes, planning and executing necessary renovations, and, where required, constructing new housing units. These efforts aimed to create safe, comfortable, and sustainable living environments for the widowers.



By addressing the housing needs of these members, AVEGA significantly enhanced their quality of life. The improved living conditions not only provided physical safety and comfort but also contributed to the emotional and psychological well-being of the beneficiaries. The stability offered by secure housing enabled these widowers to focus on other aspects of their lives, such as health, social integration, and economic activities, thereby fostering a sense of community and resilience.

Legal Assistance

VEGA provided legal aid and advocacy to protect the rights of vulnerable widows, ensuring their access to justice. This initiative assisted 18 vulnerable widows by offering legal representation, counselling, and support in navigating legal systems. By addressing issues such as property disputes, inheritance claims, and other legal challenges, AVEGA's efforts ensured that these widows could assert their rights and achieve fair outcomes, thereby enhancing their legal protection and social empowerment.

Medical services

AVEGA provided comprehensive medical services, including screening and treatment, to a total of 656 individuals (511 females and 145 males) across the Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Kicukiro, and Bugesera districts. This initiative specifically targeted widows and other vulnerable groups, offering essential health services to address their medical needs. By conducting thorough medical screenings, AVEGA identified health issues early and provided appropriate treatments, significantly improving the overall health outcomes of the beneficiaries.

The initiative not only facilitated timely medical interventions but also contributed to the broader goal of enhancing health and well-being within these communities. Through this support, AVEGA helped alleviate health disparities, provided vital care, and empowered individuals to maintain better health, ultimately fostering a more resilient and healthier population.

Livelihood improvement



AVEGA facilitated financial empowerment through the establishment of of saving groups which collectively engaged 4,571 members (2,371 females and 2,200 males). These groups were instrumental in promoting economic stability and self-reliance by providing members with access to savings and loan opportunities. The total capital accumulated by these saving groups was [amount], which enabled many participants to manage their finances effectively and invest in small income-generating activities. Specifically, group members utilized these resources to start and sustain small businesses, enhancing their economic stability and self-sufficiency.



In addition to financial support, AVEGA distributed domestic small livestock to 21 members (16 females and 5 males), further advancing livelihood improvement. This initiative provided valuable resources that contributed to the beneficiaries' agricultural productivity and economic growth. By combining financial tools with practical assets like livestock, AVEGA effectively supported immediate and long-term livelihood enhancement, fostering increased self-reliance and sustainable development within the community.

Enhancing Vision and Empowering Elderly Genocide Widows through Eyeglass Provision

During this year, under the social protection program, AVEGA supported 154 elderly vulnerable Genocide widows with eye diseases by providing them with eyeglasses in collaboration with the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement. This initiative significantly improved the vision for the beneficiaries, enhancing their daily living conditions and overall quality of life, which contributed a lot not only to addressing a critical health need but also to fostering greater independence and dignity among these elderly women, strengthening their ability to participate more actively in community life

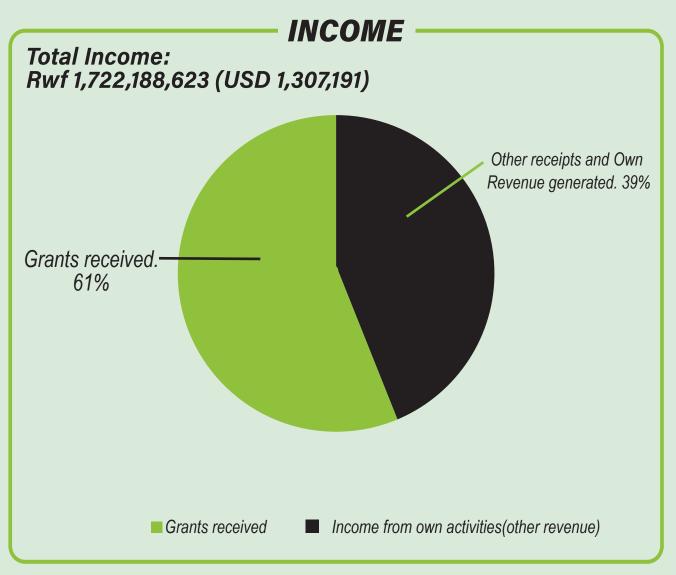
IMPACT NUMBERS





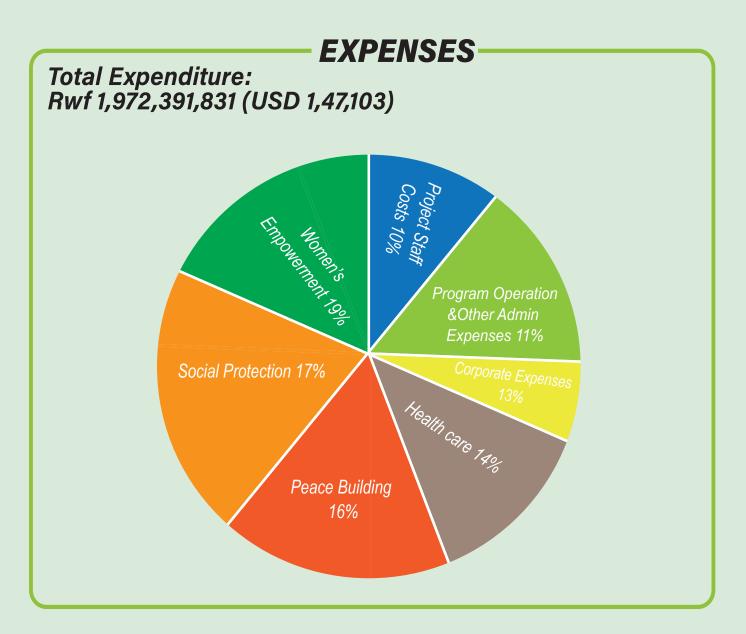
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FINANCIAL REPORT





FINANCIAL REPORT





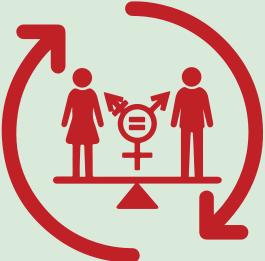


CROSSCUTTING ISSUES



GENDER MAINSTREAMING

t AVEGA Agahozo, we recognize the significant influence of gender dynamics on the advancement of equality and the elimination of discrimination. Gender contributes a lot to the success of our programs, and we are committed to strengthening measures for the prevention and response to Gender-Based Violence (GBV).In our programs, we prioritize the inclusion of both women and men but mostly women, furthermore, collection of gender-disaggregated data, thus supporting gender equality by empowering women as a central and overarching theme.



Our approach ensured that lots of female survivors of Gender-Based Violence received equitable support to recover and reintegrate into society more than men due to social norms that place women in positions of lower social economic, and political power compared to men. Nevertheless, more importantly, our interventions largely contributed to the socio-empowerment of women and girls, especially those who are most vulnerable.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

AVEGA Agahozo prioritizes advancing social justice for vulnerable and marginalized communities. Our commitment extends to enhancing their access to socio-economic opportunities, promoting non-discrimination, fostering participation and engagement, ensuring access to services, fostering social cohesion, and providing healthcare services—all while promoting gender equality. We are dedicated to addressing the enduring consequences of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. Our efforts include empowering ex-perpetrators, historically marginalized individuals, and people with disabilities, and advocating for the youth. Our goal is to enable them to live with dignity, and free from conflicts and any form of human rights violations.

HUMAN RIGHTS

AVEGA Agahozo is dedicated to tackling human rights violations by placing a strong emphasis on fostering social justice for vulnerable and marginalized groups. Our primary focus involves enhancing access to health-care and socio-economic opportunities, while concurrently striving to promote gender parity. Through our multifaceted approach, we ensure that every action and project intervention align with the principles of dignity, equality, and non-discrimination.

We aim to create a more equitable and inclusive society where all individuals, irrespective of their background or circumstances, have the chance to lead healthy, prosperous lives. By addressing human rights concerns and working towards a fair distribution of resources and opportunities, AVEGA Agahozo is committed to making a lasting impact on well-being and rights.



OUR PARTNERS



OUR DONORS





KG 201 Street, PO Box 1535 Kigali-Rwanda, EMAIL: avegaagahozo@gmail.com PHONE:(+250) 788520122/788520115 WEB: www.avega-agahozo.org



Avega Agahozo