

Plan International Rwanda

Partnerships for change newsletter | Issue 4

"Together for brighter futures for children, girls, and youth"



Partnerships for change newsletter | April – June 2025

In this edition

→ Kwibuka 31

O Plan International Rwanda staff commemorate the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

→ Youth corner

- O Plan International Rwanda launches Youth Advisory Panel (YAP)
- Youth share their agri-initiatives at the 'Future is Green' project reflection meeting
- Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) attends the 'EAC Policy Review Workshop'
- Olympism 365 Summit: Plan International Rwanda's Country
- Director speaks on the impact of empowering girls & young
 Women
- SOYEE graduation: Empowering youth with vocational skills for a brighter future
- O Gaudance: Growing mushrooms as a thriving business
- O Our 'World Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025' with youth advocates
- O The Bike for Future's cycling team at the Youth Racing Cup 2025

Quarterly partners updates

- O A courtesy visit to the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)
- Reflection Meeting for the Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBCC/N) Project
- o Ambassador of Japan to Rwanda visits the SBCCN Project
- Recap: Project visits by Plan International Rwanda's Country Director to Gatsibo
- O Concluding 'Early Childhood Development (ECD) Week'
- Providing families with essential resources for children's growth
- Launching an Al-driven initiative for child protection and combatting teen pregnancies
- 'RENCP General Assembly' highlights collaboration for improved education outcomes
- O Celebrating the Day of the African Child in Rwanda
- O Honouring Guardian Angels through the Malayika Murinzi Day
- Strengthening child protection through 'Community-Based Parent–Child Rights Clubs'
- o Empowering adolescents through SRHR clubs
- Bridging the gaps: A national dialogue for inclusive SRHR services



Message from the Country Director



Dear all,

As we close the fiscal year 2025 at Plan International Rwanda, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to all our partners, stakeholders and programme participants who have walked alongside Plan International Rwanda in our journey to advance children's rights and equality for girls.

This past year has been marked by meaningful collaboration. Through our joint efforts, we have strengthened systems that protect children, empowered youth with life-changing skills, and amplified the voices of girls and young women. None of this would have been possible without your steadfast commitment and shared vision.

Once again, our quarterly 'Partnerships for Change' newsletter, reflects the very foundation of our work. Our achievements are not ours alone, they are the product of strong, strategic partnerships with government institutions, civil society organisations, youth networks, community members, and donors.

As we look ahead to the new fiscal year starting in July 2025, we remain committed to building on these partnerships, innovating for greater impact. Let us continue to work together to create a world where all children, especially girls, can learn, lead, decide, and thrive.

With sincere gratitude,

Emilie Fernandes, Country Director Plan International Rwanda







Plan International Rwanda staff commemorate the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

Plan International Rwanda staff came together in remembrance as part of the #Kwibuka31 commemoration, honouring the memory of the victims of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

They visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial site in Gisozi, paid their respects, deepened their understanding of Rwanda's history, and reflected on the country's remarkable journey of recovery, resilience, and nation-building.

This memorial is the final resting place for more than 250,000 victims of the Genocide against Tutsi. It is a place of remembrance and learning, offering a powerful experience for visitors, promoting reconciliation and building peace through education.

44

"The genocide memorial stands as a powerful place for remembrance and education, and for recognising the incredible journey of healing, reconciliation, and rebuilding that Rwanda has undertaken. It reminds us of the devastating consequences of hatred, division, and silence. Let us continue to promote values of peace, unity, harmony, and compassion everywhere we are, and ensure that the horrors of the Genocide against the Tutsi are never repeated," remarked Emilie Fernandes, Plan International Rwanda Country Director.

77

The 31st commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi (Kwibuka 31) was organised in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, through the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE).



Youth corner

Plan International Rwanda launches Youth Advisory Panel (YAP)

A five-member youth panel was officially established as Plan International Rwanda's newly formed Youth Advisory Panel (YAP). The panel's core objective is to amplify Plan International's commitment to becoming a youth-centred organisation by creating an enabling environment for youth in all their diversity to meaningfully participate in governance and decision-making spaces within Plan International Rwanda.

The panel members are Gisele Akimana Uwineza (22), Gilbert Mwizerwa (22), Ange Umutoni (22), Christa Vanina Mugisha (25), and Anastase Ndagijimana (30).

Meet our Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) members













"The establishment of the Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) is a key step towards ensuring young people's voices are not only heard but also drive lasting change. It reaffirms our commitment at Plan International, to being a truly youth-centred organisation, one where young people are empowered to lead, inspire and create impact."

----- Emilie Fernandes, Country Director.



"I aspire to champion initiatives that provide girls with access to mentorship and leadership opportunities, enabling them to confidently claim their active contribution in society's development and drive positive change. The panel ensures that youth voices shape the programmes and decisions that affect their lives."





This panel forms part of a broader global effort by Plan International to position youth, particularly girls and young women, as active leaders and true partners in shaping a more just and sustainable future.





Youth share their agri-initiatives at the 'Future is Green' project reflection meeting

The reflection meeting of the "Future is Green! Promoting Youth Agri-Preneurship in Rwanda" project took place on June 26. Convening partners and youth agri-preneurs, the meeting aimed to explore the achievements, challenges, key lessons learnt during the implementation phase, and actionable recommendations for future programming.

Implemented by Plan International Rwanda, in partnership with African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) Rwanda and Inkomoko Rwanda, the project's key goal is to empower and economically integrate rural youth, particularly young women, through climate-smart agriculture. Over 3 years, it has reached 1,009 participants, including 569 females and 440 males across Bugesera, Nyaruguru and Gatsibo districts.



During the meeting, project participants who are agri-preneurs showcased a variety of their food harvests as part of the project impact exhibition.



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"Learning climate-smart agriculture gave me the skills to increase my harvest and earn an income. As a young woman who was once unemployed, this knowledge empowered me to take charge of my life. It became the stepping stone to a brighter tomorrow. Today, I am proud to be making a positive difference in my family and community." – Christine, 25 | Young agri-preneur.



"We are grateful for the support for our youth in agri-preneurship, promoting agriculture while taking into consideration climate change and market access. This not only contributes to agriculture promotion, but also extends to social behaviour. Keeping our youth engaged in economic empowerment activities prevents them from falling into bad habits."

— Richard Mutabazi | Mayor of Bugesera District.



"In the communities where we work, we have seen firsthand what becomes possible when we invest in the potential of youth. When we equip them with the right skills, factor in climate adaptation, provide access to finance, and surround them with community support, we do more than change livelihoods, we change lives."

– Emilie Fernandes | Country Director of Plan International Rwanda.





Olympism 365 Summit: Plan International Rwanda's Country Director speaks on the impact of empowering girls & young Women

The Country Director of Plan International Rwanda, Emilie Fernandes, spoke at the first Olympism365 Summit, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, from 3 to 5 June. The summit, themed 'Sport for a Better World', brought together global leaders and stakeholders to explore the role of sport in advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Participation in the summit was supported by Laureus Sport and Agence Française de Développement (AFD), as partners and donors of the Bike for Future project.

During the session on 'Sport, Education and Employment', Emilie shared insights on the transformative impact of the 'Bike for Future' project, which empowers girls and young women through cycling and vocational training. She spoke alongside Ana Baiardi of Agenda CAF, Alejandra Solla of La Liga Iberoamericana, and Félicité Rwemarika of the Organisation of Women in Sports (AKWOS).

44

"Empowering young people, especially girls and young women, is vital for the socio-economic development of society. The Bike for Future project uses cycling, a sport traditionally dominated by men, as a tool to challenge gender norms and as a pathway to economic empowerment through vocational skills that can contribute to job creation."

- Emilie Fernandes.





Over the course of three days, the Olympism365 Summit brought together more than 250 representatives from 100 organisations, including actors from the Olympic Movement, UN agencies, development and financing institutions, civil society, socially driven enterprises, the safe sport community, and IOC Young Leaders. Participants collaborated to promote sustainable development through sport.

Building on the momentum of the Sport for Sustainable Development Summit, held in Paris ahead of the Olympic Games Paris 2024, this invitation-only event celebrated the collective power of sport and community initiatives. It offered a unique platform to strengthen partnerships, mobilise co-investment, and drive joint action, resulting in renewed commitments and tangible steps towards achieving the SDGs through sport.

The 'Bike for Future' project places a strong emphasis on empowering girls and young women. It is implemented by Learn Work Develop Rwanda and funded by Plan International Belgium, Plan International Rwanda, Kigali Water Limited, Laureus Sport, and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), along with various other partners. The project extends its outreach to local communities in Gatsibo and Bugesera districts



Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) attends the 'EAC Policy Review Workshop'

Members of the Plan International Rwanda Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) participated in the two-days Youth Policy Review and Evaluation held in Kigali, supported by the East African Community (EAC), Plan Middle East, Eastern and Southern Africa (MEESA), SOS Children's Villages, and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) support to EAC.

During the concluding session, Plan International Rwanda's Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Programme Lead, Alice BUMANZI, presented a comprehensive update on the ongoing progress of the East African Community's SRHR Policy, showcasing how Plan Rwanda and regional partners are expanding youth access, engagement, and alignment with EAC standards.

The evaluation underscored the indispensable role of youth voices in shaping regional SRHR frameworks, emphasising that meaningful participation is not only empowering, but also important. The meeting reaffirmed Plan International Rwanda's dedication to ensuring that young people are at the forefront of health policymaking in East Africa.



SOYEE graduation: Empowering youth with vocational skills for a brighter future

In Bugesera District, 35 young people, 60% of whom are girls, graduated from the Skills & Opportunities for Youth. Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE) hub, a six-month vocational training initiative led by Plan International Rwanda in partnership with Dream Village. The programme provided hands-on training in welding, tailoring, and hairdressing, alongside business development and financial literacy sessions.

Among the graduates is Jean Damascene, a young man living with a hand disability, who overcame self-doubt to master welding techniques. "With guidance and daily practice, I transformed. My craftsmanship is widely recognised in my community," he shared.

Jean teamed up with fellow graduates on a practical project to craft a dressing cabinet, a testament to their skills and teamwork. Each graduate received a professional toolkit, equipping them to form cooperatives and offer services in Kamabuye and Ngeruka sectors.

Through the SOYEE programme, the young people are not only breaking the cycle of poverty and challenging gender norms for both boys and girls, but also building brighter futures for themselves and their communities.



Gaudance: Growing mushrooms as a thriving business

Gaudance, a 25-year-old Congolese refugee who has lived in Rwanda for over 10 years, has transformed her life through mushroom farming. Initially, she knew nothing about the importance of mushrooms, taking them for granted - how to grow them, prepare them for nutritious meals, or even their potential as a business opportunity.

It has been a year since Gaudance joined this cooperative, which now has 41 members. Every week, they harvest 20 kilos of mushrooms, selling each kilo for Rwf 2,000 to both refugee and host communities.

" Not only do mushrooms provide nutritious meals to combat malnutrition in our families, but they have also created a life-changing business, something my colleagues and I have come to appreciate. Mushroom farming has also empowered me financially. For instance, I can take out a small loan to support my family during tough times. I also feel confident about starting my own small business, knowing I can access a loan from my cooperative's savings group if needed." Gaudance, 25

The cooperative, established under the Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SB-CC/N) project, funded by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Rwanda across five refugee camps, namely Mugombwa, Kigeme, Kiziba, Nyabiheke, and Mahama, as well as 17 host community villages, owns a space with 2,000 mushroom-growing tubes. To further strengthen its financial stability, the cooperative's savings group has saved Rwf 1,200,000 from its mushroom business.



Our 'World Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025' with youth advocates

In partnership with Plan International Rwanda, Save Generations Organisation (SGO) celebrated World Menstrual Hygiene Day 2025 with a strong call for increased accessibility and affordability of menstrual hygiene products, particularly for girls and women.

As part of the celebration, youth advocates hosted a Space on X (formerly Twitter) titled "Advocacy for Enhancing Access to Menstrual Hygiene Products and Improving Menstrual Hygiene Management in Rwanda." It was a valuable opportunity to come together, raise voices, and advocate for improved menstrual health solutions in our communities.

Youth, especially girls and young women, shared powerful advocacy messages, calling for a safe and inclusive society where all girls and women have equal access to menstrual products and their rights are fully respected.



Bike for Future cyclists shine in the 'Rwanda Youth Racing Cup 2025'

Girls and young women from the Bike for Future cycling team are making waves on Rwanda's racing circuits as they continue to demonstrate talent, determination, and resilience. Competing in the Rwanda Youth Racing Cup 2025, a cycling competition organised by the Rwanda Cycling Federation (FERWACY) in collaboration with various partners, these rising stars have shown that the future of cycling in Rwanda is indeed bright and inclusive.

It was a moment of triumph and pride as three team members clinched stage victories in their respective categories.

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In May 2025, the team took on the 5th Episode of the Cup, held at the scenic Fields of Dreams in Bugesera:

Amina: Winner of the second stage in the Cadet category

Emelyne: Winner of the third stage in the Minimes category

Akaliza: Winner of the third stage in the Benjamins category

In June 2025, during the 6th Episode in Rwamagana:

Akaliza: Winner of the third stage in the Benjamins category

Emelyne: Winner of the third stage in the Minimes category



The 'Bike for Future' project is implemented by Learn Work Develop Rwanda and funded by Plan International Belgium, Plan International Rwanda, Kigali Water Limited, Laureus Sport, and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), along with various other partners. The project extends its outreach to local communities in Gatsibo and Bugesera districts.

Quarterly partners updates

A courtesy visit to the Minister of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF)



The Honorable Minister of Gender and Family Promotion, Uwimana Consolée, welcomed Ms. Emilie Fernandes, Country Director of Plan International Rwanda, to discuss avenues for enhanced collaboration. The meeting focused on reinforcing existing partnerships and exploring new strategies to promote gender equality, empower women, and create employment opportunities for youth across Rwanda.

This engagement aligns with Rwanda's ongoing commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, as evidenced by initiatives such as the launch of the first-ever National Gender Standards in Africa. These standards provide guidance for organizations to adopt gender-sensitive policies, fostering inclusivity and equity in all sectors of society. During the meeting, they also discussed partnerships in programmes related to Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the pilot AI project aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies, implemented through the National Child Development Agency (NCDA).



Reflection Meeting for the Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBCC/N) Project



Plan International Rwanda, WFP Rwanda, and partners convened a reflection meeting for the Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBC-C/N) project, funded by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Rwanda, across five refugee camps and 17 host villages.

The project's overarching goal is to improve nutrition among women, adolescents, and refugee children under the age of five, through climate-smart agriculture and behaviour change interventions.

During the meeting, partners shared key successes and challenges encountered throughout implementation. A project impact exhibition showcased tangible results: peppers grown in greenhouses, vegetables cultivated in home gardens, maize on terraces, mushrooms and fish from diversified sources, and hydroponic grass for livestock. These innovative approaches have helped refugee and host families increase food production, diversify their diets, and combat malnutrition.

This reflection meeting reaffirmed the partners' commitment to scaling up effective strategies, driven by evidence, community insights, and best practices, to build healthier refugee and host communities. The project serves as a key pilot for the graduation strategy.



Ambassador of Japan to Rwanda visits the SBCCN Project

Plan International Rwanda's Country Director, Emilie Fernandes, World Food Programme (WFP) in Rwanda Country Director, Andrea Bagnoli, and Kirehe District's Mayor, Bruno Rangira, welcomed Ambassador of Japan to Rwanda, Fukushima, during his visit to the Social Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBCCN) project at Mahama refugee camp.

The visit's highlights focused on:

- Small livestock including 88 pigs through three associations with 29 members, and 21 rabbits through a 13-member association. These initiatives contribute to income generation and self-reliance.
- A 20-member association is practising greenhouse farming using climate-smart agriculture to increase income through high-value crops, starting with an initial harvest of yellow peppers. Additionally, a pig-rearing association has created a multiplier effect, leading to the formation of a second association.



The SBCCN project empowers both refugee and host communities, promoting innovative livelihoods and sustainable nutrition solutions. Plan International Rwanda, in partnership with the World Food Programme in Rwanda, implements the 'Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBC-C/N)' project across 5 refugee camps, namely Mugombwa, Kigeme, Kiziba, Nyabiheke, and Mahama, as well as 17 host community villages.

Recap: Project visits by Plan International Rwanda's Country Director to Gatsibo

Plan International Rwanda's Country Director, Emilie Fernandes, conducted a three-day visit to Gatsibo District, which included courtesy visits to the Mayor, Richard Gasana, and the Eastern Province Governor, Pudence Rubingisa.



The visit also featured engagements with the Programme Unit (PU) staff, communities, and partner-led initiatives, such as:

- O Teacher Training College Kabarore school, constructed by Plan International Rwanda to support quality education.
- Family Care for Children's (FCC) child rights protection project.

- O Rural Development Initiative's (RDI) modern agricultural activities empowering young people.
- O Learn Work Develop's (LWD) Bike for Future shop, training girls and young women in bicycle mechanics.
- O Association des Guides du Rwanda's (AGR) girls' initiatives promoting sexual and reproductive health rights to combat teenage pregnancies.
- O Imbaraga Farmers Organisation's new greenhouse for climate-resilient agriculture.
- A visit to Nyabiheke Refugee Camp for the Social and Behaviour Change Communication for Nutrition (SBCC/N) project, funded by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Rwanda.
- Engagement with community volunteers and sponsored families to assess progress towards meeting sponsorship targets for the socio-economic development of vulnerable households.



Concluding 'Early Childhood Development (ECD) Week'

Caritas Rwanda, through its ECD Project funded by Plan International Rwanda, partnered with Bugesera District to conclude ECD Week under the theme: "Isibo, the solid foundation of early childhood development."

The celebration coincided with the International Day of Families, highlighting the theme: "Family-Oriented Policies for Sustainable Development."

Throughout the week, a range of activities took place, including measuring children's weight and height, promoting hygiene and sanitation practices, educating parents on preparing balanced meals, and raising awareness about the importance of early childhood development.



The closing ceremony honoured the dedication of caregivers, with awards presented to 25 outstanding individuals at the sector level and 5 at the district level. Children also received nutritious meals, reinforcing the commitment to their health and well-being.

Providing families with essential resources for children's growth

Caritas Rwanda, with funding from Plan International Rwanda, has made significant strides in enhancing early childhood development (ECD) by equipping 96 Home-Based Early Childhood Development centres (HBECDs) across Gatsibo, Bugesera, and Nyaruguru districts with essential resources.

This initiative aimed to strengthen the six pillars of ECD: Nutrition, Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Parenting Education, School Readiness, and Child Protection. The distributed materials included water tanks, ceramic water filters, modern stoves, handwashing equipment, and porridge flour.





The provision of water tanks and ceramic filters addressed the critical need for clean drinking water, reducing the risk of waterborne diseases among children. Modern stoves improved cooking efficiency and reduced indoor air pollution, creating a healthier environment for both children and caregivers. Handwashing stations promoted hygiene practices essential for preventing illness, while the supply of porridge flour ensured that children received nutritious meals vital for their growth and development.

Launching an Al-driven initiative for child protection and combatting teen pregnancies

Plan International Rwanda has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with TecGrw to implement an innovative pilot initiative titled "Al-Driven Solutions to Strengthen Child Protection and Reduce Teenage Pregnancy in Rwanda.

This collaborative effort, in partnership with the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), will be rolled out in Bugesera and Gatsibo Districts.

The initiative aims to leverage artificial intelligence to enhance child protection mechanisms and address the pressing issue of teenage pregnancies. Through this collaboration, Plan International Rwanda and TecGrw are committed to harnessing the power of technology to create safer, healthier futures for children and girls in Rwanda.



'RENCP General Assembly' highlights collaboration for improved education outcomes



Key stakeholders in Rwanda's education sector convened for the first Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform (RENCP) General Assembly of the year. Held twice annually, the assembly serves as a vital forum for knowledge sharing, collaboration, and joint efforts to enhance education outcomes across the country.

The event brought together representatives from various non-governmental organisations working in the education sector. It was graced by the Country Director of Right To Play Rwanda, who currently chairs the RENCP platform, with Plan International Rwanda serving as co-chair.

One of the key highlights of the assembly was the presentation of findings from a research study conducted by Education Development Center (EDC) in partnership with Three Stones International, LLC. The study explored the integration of Learning Through Play and Technology, sharing insights from the Plug-In-Play Evaluation, a project implemented by Right To Play Rwanda.

The discussions sparked by this presentation reflected the sector's continued commitment to evidence-based approaches that improve learning outcomes for children and young people in Rwanda.



Celebrating the Day of the African Child in Rwanda

On 16 June, Plan International Rwanda joined children, parents, and leaders from various sectors to commemorate the Day of the African Child 2025 in Rusizi District. The celebration was held under the theme "Ndera Neza, Nkure Nemye", which emphasised the importance of positive parenting in protecting children from violence and abuse.

Speaking on behalf of the partners of the National Child Development Agency (NCDA), Emilie Fernandes, Country Director of Plan International Rwanda, highlighted the vital role of positive parenting in nurturing children and shaping the nation's future:

"Positive parenting is a key approach to enhancing intergenerational relationships and ensuring the best possible development for children. The way we raise our children shapes not only their future, but the future of our country. Together, let us raise our children with kindness, love, care, support, and hope. To our children here today and across the nation: we see you, we hear you, and we are here with you and for you."

- Emilie Fernandes



The event served as a powerful reminder that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, supportive, and loving environment.



Honouring Guardian Angels through the Malayika Murinzi Day

Plan International Rwanda's Country Director, Emilie Fernandes, joined in commemorating Malayika Murinzi Da, also known as Guardian Angels Day, under the theme "Fata Umwana Wese Nkuwawe", or "Treat Every Child as Your Own."

The Malayika Murinzi campaign in Rwanda honours individuals who have demonstrated exceptional compassion and selflessness by adopting, caring for, and protecting vulnerable children within their communities. These everyday heroes play a vital role in ensuring that every child grows up in a safe, loving, and nurturing environment.



Strengthening child protection through 'Community-Based Parent-Child Rights Clubs'

Plan International Rwanda, in partnership with the Youth Mentoring Agents for Development Organisation (YOMADO), has launched community-based parent—child rights clubs in Bugesera District to strengthen child protection at home. These clubs aim to raise awareness of children's rights among families and communities, encourage open dialogue between parents and children, and foster a society free from rights violations.





A key aspect of the initiative is promoting a culture of saving for the future by supporting parents to better provide for their children's essential needs. By integrating child protection into everyday family life, these clubs help create safer and more supportive environments where children feel heard and respected.

Through regular meetings, discussions, and activities, Plan International Rwanda and YOMADO support 12 community-based parent—child rights clubs, comprising 316 members, 196 females and 120 males. Club members work together to turn awareness into action, ensuring that parental responsibility and children's rights are respected, starting within families.

Empowering adolescents through SRHR clubs

The Association des Guides du Rwanda (AGR), in partnership with Plan International Rwanda, celebrated the graduation of 1,750 adolescents from 35 Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) clubs in Nyaruguru and Gatsibo districts. The programme provided essential SRHR education and life skills, including financial literacy and a culture of saving.

Through comprehensive SRHR education, adolescents learned about consent, hygiene, contraception, and how to navigate relationships with confidence. They also developed practical life skills, such as financial planning and saving. One club member shared how peer support and mentorship empowered them to make informed decisions about their bodies and futures.



These graduates now carry life-changing knowledge, resilient, empowered, and ready to contribute to healthier communities. The SRHR clubs continue their mission of nurturing adolescents into informed, confident young adults by combining health education, practical skills, and a supportive community network.

Bridging the gaps: A national dialogue for inclusive SRHR services



On 10th June 2025, Save Generations Organisation (SGO), in partnership with Plan International Rwanda, convened a National Dialogue on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Budget Advocacy and Inclusive Health Services. The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders, from government institutions and civil society to youth representatives and disability rights advocates.

At the heart of the discussion was the urgent need to address existing gaps in SRHR services for all, including persons with disabilities, particularly the lack of inclusivity in health systems. Participants emphasised the importance of integrating sign language into health service delivery and strengthening budget allocations that support inclusive SRHR programmes.

The dialogue was a powerful step towards collective action. The rich insights and recommendations shared during the session will inform the development of a joint position paper aimed at influencing policy reforms and driving more inclusive and responsive budgetary decisions.



We send a big thank you to all our partners!

































































About Plan International Rwanda

We are an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights & equality for girls. We've been operating in Rwanda since 2007.

Working together with children, young people, supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges girls and vulnerable children face.

We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and we enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity.

We are present at national and local levels with a focus on the districts of Bugesera, Gatsibo and Nyaruguru. We also work in 6 refugee camps across the country.

We won't stop until we are all equal.

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