



Marie Josée Niragira

## Burundian women entering politics

**Armed with training in political participation together with a good portion of confidence, Burundian women are entering a new arena: local politics.**

*By Jean Baptiste Nimubona, Advocacy Advisor (GLAI Focal Person), CARE Burundi*

37 years old and mother of five children, Marie Josée Niragira from Ngozi Province, decided to engage in politics. In the past, women did not have the right to speak, were discriminated against and their ideas were not taken into consideration regarding life in her commune. When community meetings were convened, men were the ones who attended with the exception of a few educated women. This has triggered Marie Josée to advocate for women.

### CARE training sessions

Training sessions on the political participation of women provided by CARE Burundi in the solidarity groups, encouraged Marie Josée to run for elections. "In the past I was not interested in politics but gradually I became more involved. I learned how to speak up and advocate for others, especially GBV survivors, and how not to be afraid to express my ideas in front of others and feeling that I was capable of becoming a candidate in elections", says Marie Josée.

### Spokesperson for women

Marie Josée became a member of a political party and president of a women's organisation in her municipality. In May she decided registered as a candidate for the local elections and today Marie she is one of the fifteen elected representatives that will run the Gashikanwa commune for the next five years. "I will be a spokesperson for women, particularly when it concerns health issues. Even women that have been raped are not receiving medical care due to the lack of adequate services. Another thing I will fight for is for women to be hired in projects carried out in our commune. Earlier there were very few women in construction work, but now I will advocate for women to find employment in for example road rehabilitation and construction of schools," says Marie Josée.

### Supportive husband

According to Marie Josée, women are better positioned than men to reach the most vulnerable population although they often face challenges. Many women cannot engage in politics because their husbands refuse them to, thinking that women are made to carry out household activities. Lack of family planning and poverty are other obstacles to participation as

political commitment requires time and resources. Luckily Marie Josée's husband, Charles Bayizere, is proud and supportive of his wife's engagement, recognising the importance of participation of women in politics. "At critical moments of the various crises that have succeeded in our country when men were killed, it is women who has managed community and household affairs; hence women must be empowered," says Bayizere.

## This issue:

### Profiling an activist:

Burundian women entering politics

### Country updates:

Rwanda - Development of an organisational GBV advocacy strategy for CARE Rwanda

Burundi – Learning and expanding our reach with more activists

Uganda – Scaling up advocacy efforts

### International:

New CARE Report on participation of women in peacebuilding

### Coming up:

GLAI Planning Workshop for 2011

### Read up:

UNFPA State of the World Population 2010: From Conflict and Crisis to renewal: generations of change.

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## COUNTRY UPDATE

### Rwanda: Development of an organisational GBV advocacy strategy for CARE Rwanda

By Olive Uwamariya, Policy and Advocacy Manager, and Maimouna Toliver, Gender Mainstreaming Specialist



Advocacy workshop participants

### Cross-country and community perspectives

In August, CARE-Rwanda organized a 3-day workshop for the purpose of developing an organizational GBV advocacy strategy. The workshop was facilitated by CI-UK Campaigns Manager, Lee Webster. Participants included representatives from partner organizations FACT (Forum for Activists against Torture), RWN (Rwanda Women's Network), UNIFEM, and ActionAid. Fellow colleagues from GLAI-implementing country offices CARE-Uganda and CARE-Burundi were also in attendance and shared their context-specific experiences with the implementation of GLAI. The workshop was also greatly informed by the active participation of 2 of CARE-Rwanda's current Case Managers who enriched the workshop with their community perspective.

### Long-term advocacy goal

The workshop was focused on developing a long-term GBV advocacy strategy for CARE Rwanda and its local partners. Significant outputs from the workshop included the formulation of a draft impact goal and corresponding outcomes. CARE-Rwanda's advocacy strategy will aim at the "reduction in women's and girls' vulnerability to GBV, through the protection of their basic rights, and the improvement of policies and legal frameworks"; our advocacy efforts will aim at the following key outcomes: (1) improved access, availability, and quality of services for GBV victims; (2) existence of a functional legal system that protects vulnerable women and girls from GBV at all levels; and (3) existence of a strategic and operational coalition of civil society actors aimed at national advocacy for the prevention of GBV and improved legal frameworks.

### Emphasising strategic partnerships

The current draft strategy has a strong focus on local partnership and coalition building for effective grassroots and national-level advocacy. In the initial stages of the strategy, GLAI will serve as the platform through which grassroots evidence on GBV is collected for the purpose of informing national-level advocacy efforts of the organization

### Next steps

Next steps include finalising and disseminating the strategy document, and further exploring the roles of Case Managers and Activists, and creating strategic linkages between the two.

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## COUNTRY UPDATE

### Uganda: Scaling up advocacy efforts

*By Prudence Komujinya, Advocacy & Information Coordinator Roco Kwo Programme (GLAI Focal Person), CARE Uganda*

#### Formation of advocacy forums

Quarter 4 of GLAI in Uganda mainly focused on formation and training of advocacy forums both at sub-county and district level on basic advocacy and GBV. These advocacy forums are critical in voicing GBV related prevention and response issues to the duty bearers who have the mandate to formulate by-laws at local government level. It is also anticipated that the advocacy forums will be a voice for the voiceless on GBV issues at national level. At the national level, the Government of Uganda has ratified yet another international instrument the Maputo Protocol, which addresses forms of gender inequalities. Below a brief on the same is provided for.

#### Uganda ratifies the Maputo Protocol

During the AU summit on "Maternal, Infant and Child Health and Development in Africa" held in Uganda in July this year, Uganda became the 28th AU member to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa commonly known as the Maputo Protocol. The Maputo Protocol provides a legal framework for addressing gender inequality and the underlying aspects that perpetuate women's disadvantaged subordinate social position. Earlier on, the protocol had faced stiff opposition and attracted controversy regarding women's abortion rights. While Uganda has ratified several international instruments like CEDAW, UDHR, UNSCR 1325 and 1820 that ideally promote and protect women's rights, in practice many Ugandan women have not enjoyed this protection. For example, according to the recently concluded Roco Kwo baseline survey, a good number of the northern Ugandan population regards GBV against women as an acceptable cultural phenomenon. Although many aspects of the protocol strengthen the struggle for gender equality by expanding women's rights, the protocol alone may not dramatically transform the lives of many ordinary Ugandan women if discriminatory cultural practices are not brought in tandem with the protocol's provisions. Behavioural change campaigns aimed at changing attitudes, behaviours, customs and traditions that rob women of their human dignity and perpetuate violence against women could contribute to women's empowerment and ensure that all men and women live productive and dignified lives.

#### Fostering partnerships and coalitions for advocacy

CARE Uganda is working with national level advocacy partners Icon Women & Young People's Leadership Academy and Uganda Women Organisations' Network to support grass root women activists to participate in the upcoming AU African Women's Decade (AWD) launch in Nairobi 10 -15 October 2010. The overall purpose of AWD is to review and celebrate progress made towards gender equality and women's empowerment and to articulate concrete actions that should be taken to accelerate momentum in implementation. The AWD conference will also provide an opportunity for grassroots women to share experiences and foster coalition building on common advocacy issues.



CARE Uganda hosted the GLAI Learning Workshop from 20-23 September. Here the CARE Uganda Team is pictured in conversation with consultant Rebecca Arnold

#### Post conflict rehabilitation and development in Northern Uganda

Northern Uganda has continued to enjoy relative peace despite the aborted Juba peace talks and no evidence of the peace-talks agreement. The Government of Uganda, development partners and civil society are now focusing their efforts on post conflict rehabilitation and development. Through the Roco Kwo women empowerment programme, CARE is one of the key INGOs spearheading the development of post conflict northern Uganda. CARE is cognizant of the need to address the underlying causes of poverty and the social injustices affecting the people of northern Uganda; particularly women, in order to achieve transformative social change. The GLAI advocacy component of Roco Kwo programme aims at promoting citizen participation and collective responsibility through evidence based grass root GBV advocacy that will ensure the protection of women and girls from GBV. This will promote social harmony, enhance women's participation in decision making at various levels in society and foster sustainable development.

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## COUNTRY UPDATE

### Burundi: Learning and expanding our reach with more activists

*By Jean Baptiste Nimubona, Advocacy Advisor (GLAI Focal Person), CARE Burundi*



Burundian activists completing group reflection on the profile of an activist

### Engaging in Reflection on the Learning Agenda

From August 16th to 20th, activists from the various communes where CARE-Burundi has been implementing GLAI, were gathered together to reflect on some key questions from the regional GLAI learning agenda. Reflections centred on the 'profile of an activist' and the 'challenges and benefits of being an activist'

### Recruitment and training of new activists

Over August and September, 110 new activists were recruited. The new activists have been distributed across the provinces of Bubanza, Bujumbura, Gitega, Ngozi, Kayanza, Muyinga and Kirundo. They received training to build their capacity for grassroots advocacy work. The trainings were aimed at increasing their understanding of notions of gender and the different forms of GBV. The trainings also included a focus on counseling and listening skills, and on the orientation of GBV victims to appropriate services. A core component of CARE-Burundi's GBV advocacy strategy is the increase in women's participation in decision-making structures. As part of its efforts to increase women's participation in decision-making structures, CARE-Burundi has been actively involved in the 2010 elections including participating in the revision of legal texts, voter registration, and the overall electoral process. From December 2009 to January 2010, CARE-Burundi worked with 3,193 women members of solidarity groups to increase their knowledge of electoral processes and the role of women both as voters and candidates.

### GLAI builds capacities of women to run for local elections

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Women members of solidarity groups from Ngozi province participating in a two-day workshop on electoral campaigning

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## INTERNATIONAL: New CARE Report on participation of women in peacebuilding

**Ten years after the passage of UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, women are still largely absent from peace negotiations, says new CARE report.**

UNSCR 1325, passed October 31, 2000, calls for the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence during conflict, an increase in women's participation in conflict resolution and peace processes, and the inclusion of a gender perspective in peace-building and UN peacekeeping operations.

CARE's report "From Resolution to Reality: Lessons learned from Afghanistan, Nepal and Uganda on women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict governance" highlights experiences where women have managed to change the agenda and focus attention on root causes and legacies of the violence in their country. Examples include the success of grassroots women advocating for the implementation of legislation on gender-based violence in Uganda (i.e. passing of Domestic Violence Act in March 2010).

However, the original idea behind the resolution, which was involving women in peace building, has gained little traction. Intimidation and violence against women is one of the major barriers; without protection, participation is unsustainable and may do more harm than good. And without access to education, health care and livelihoods, women are not well-placed to participate on a large scale in peacebuilding efforts.

"The passing of UNSCR 1325 was seen as a milestone for women's rights, when in fact it is a statement of the obvious: women – as well as men- must be involved in peacebuilding efforts," said Robert Glasser, Secretary General of CARE International. "But in the past 25 years, only one in 40 peace accord signatories have been women. Across the world in conflict countries women are working in their communities for peace, but they are excluded from peace negotiations."

The report is available online to download on:

<https://www.careinternational.org.uk/news-and-press/latest-press-releases/1554-no-peace-without-women-care-report>



CARE report

### Key recommendations from the CARE Report to the international community:

- Step up efforts to protect women from violence.
- Fund long-term, multi-sectoral strategies that enable women to participate in the peacebuilding process.
- Connect grassroots peacebuilding to national and international peacebuilding efforts. Extensive peacebuilding work is underway by grassroots women groups but their expertise is not included or considered in debates at the national level.

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## Read Up!

UNFPA State of the World Population 2010: From Conflict and Crisis to renewal: generations of change.

The release of *The State of the World Population 2010* coincides with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UNSCR 1325. The 2010 edition of *The State of the World Population* is for the first time on the reports from the field in a sample of countries that have experienced conflicts or disasters and are on the road to recovery. The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/sitemap/swp2010#reports> or contact Eva for a copy.

## Coming Up

### GLAI Planning Workshop

The second phase of GLAI will be starting in December 2010. A planning workshop for 2011 is scheduled for the week 13-17 December. More information will follow.

## Contacts

If you want more information about GLAI, please contact the focal persons below:

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### CAREs Great Lakes Advocacy Initiative (GLAI)

*The Great Lakes Advocacy Initiative (GLAI) is a three-year initiative against gender-based violence in Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, supporting victims in the community, and using grassroots activism and evidence-based activism to influence attitudes, policies and behaviour.*