

Quarterly report:
Promoting Opportunities for Women's Empowerment and Rights
Project Quarter 4 2020

Period covered by report: October to December 2020

Grant holder: ActionAid UK (AAUK)

Implementing countries: ActionAid Ghana (AAG), ActionAid Rwanda (AAR), ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB)

Project locations: Ghana (Nanumba North and South districts, Talensi, Nabdam, Jirapa, Asutifi South, Tain and Adaklu districts), Rwanda (Nyanza, Gisagara and Nyaruguru districts in the Southern Province, Musanze district in the Northern Province and Karongi district in Western Province), Bangladesh (Gaibandha and Lalmonirhat districts, Dinajpur district).

Implementing partners: Ghana (Songtaba, Bonatadu, Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM), and Social Development and Improvement Agency (SODIA), GLOWA, Rwanda (Duhozanye, Faith Victory Association and Tubibe Amahoro), Bangladesh (SKS Foundation)

Long term objective: To contribute to the increased economic empowerment of women

Specific objective: 19,500 women in Ghana, Rwanda and Bangladesh have increased income and ability to control their income, through practicing agroecology, accessing markets, and reducing, recognising, and redistributing unpaid care work.

Introduction

The period under review saw the POWER project ending. Despite the many challenges faced during 2020, significant progress has been made at country and international level in terms of funds utilisation and completion of planned activities. Several challenges were faced including the far-reaching impact of COVID-19 on all programming as well as impact of flooding in Bangladesh. Women's reflect meetings continued unabated in all countries and discussed key issues including violence against women, unpaid care work and sustainability. Unpaid care work sensitisation and agroecology campaigns continued in Rwanda and Bangladesh with both countries being able to reach more people due to the use of TVs, radios, webinars, and Facebook. In Ghana, the commemoration of the International Rural Women's day attracted several government department representatives such as the Department of food and Agriculture, the Regional Gender Departments, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) and Gender Desk officers of District Assemblies. committed to support the women's groups as well as the budgetary allocation. Similarly, engagements with local authority in Bangladesh on unpaid care work resulted in commitments from members of parliament, Ministry of Planning among others. The report covers the main achievements and sustainability plans under each outcome and ends with challenges faced, project archiving and documentations, and the lessons learnt. At international level, research and policy documents on unpaid care work, agroecology, climate resilience and violence against women, South Asia care policies and the commission on the status of women were done. The end

line evaluation field work and data analysis were completed, and a draft report was submitted in January 2021.

Outcome 1: 19,500 rural women are organized and can demand their rights as farmers and carers and have greater influence in their households and communities

Women's group meetings

A total of 19,500 rural women from Rwanda, Ghana and Bangladesh continued to meet and discuss issues that affect them with strict adherence of the COVID 19 regulations. As usual there was provision of monthly stipends to women's groups facilitators for the ongoing monthly REFLECT circle meetings. Women discussed a wide range of issues including their rights, savings, and collective activity plans. The period under review saw the women's groups also discussing on project closure-out and sustainability plans. As a result of advocacy by rural women 238 women groups in Bangladesh received services from local government institutions like Upazilla Parishad, Union Parishad and other government departments as well as non-government organizations including NGOs. The services received included Vulnerable Group Development and feeding cards, old age and maternity allowance, training on vegetable cultivation, tailoring, beef fattening, ration card service, seed support and other services. Further, a total of 30 meetings were arranged by 12 Unions and 3 Upazilla Federations of Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur district where women discussed on analysis of Human Rights Based Approach, planning and guiding the groups on next course of actions after end of the project. The discussions included group sustainability plan, linkage build-up with different local duty bearers to ensure greater support from them when the POWER project ended in December 2020.

Violence Against Women and girls (VAWG)

In Bangladesh, Ghana and Rwanda, work on violence against women and girls continued this quarter. In Rwanda, a total of 24 couples were trained on matrimonial regimes, inheritance, and succession Law for VAWG prevention and reduction. The trained couples have improved knowledge on gender-based violence prevention and how to access justice. Role model couples are organized in a special group called "IMBARAGA Z' URUKUNDO" Power of Love. *"I am feeling guilty to have been treating my wife badly and from today, I decided to stop it and change my mind for good"* said one participant. In order to combat VAWG, all target women groups were supported with the VAWG digital reporting system with their handsets to ensure privacy in reporting VAWG cases and to break the culture of silence in reporting.

In Bangladesh, 5,720 women project participants were trained on how to monitor and track incidences of violence against women in their communities. In total, 59 VAW incidences were recorded in this quarter. There were two cases of attempted rape and the perpetrators are being tried in the court of law in Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur districts. In Ghana, during the international rural women's day commemorations, the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police service. Representatives gave assurance to women farmers continuous support to ensure any issue of violence reported to the police will be followed through to its just conclusion. The various Criminal Investigation Departments (CID) and the officer-in-charge of DoVVSU re-kindled their relationships with women group leaders and shared their contacts with these women and urged them to always report cases of violence and abuse in their communities to them or call when the need arises.

Women's participation in leadership and decision making

As the project comes to an end women's participation in leadership has been strengthened. In Bangladesh, through continued advocacy 27 new women leaders joined in different

community structures in three project areas in Bangladesh. As a result of cumulative capacity building, women are now members of different committees including the Union Parishad's Standing Committee on Education, Health and Family Planning, Rural Structure Development and Preservation, Social Welfare and Disaster Management Committee and other local communities committees. Rashida Begum, member of Deep Shikha Women Group joined the standing committee of education, health and family planning of Mogolhat Union Parishad. *"I have joined this committee for the welfare of our community, though it is very crucial time. I believe I will effectively play my role as the committee member and provide the services to the local women,"* said Rashida Begum

During this quarter, the project also trained 245 women on women's leadership and effective participation in Rwanda. *"I feel very confident to be a leader in any position in my community and I am ready to stand for elections in early 2021 to compete for women's positions in the decision-making structures to get an opportunity to influence decisions towards addressing UCW and public financing for Agroecology in the community"* said Mukamuzoni Claire from Sugira Group in Kibirizi community. In Ghana, 30 women lead farmers from the national women farmers movement were trained on feminist leadership, communication, and social media. Topics discussed during the training were gender concepts, feminism, feminist principles, and practical demonstration on how to draft messages and conversations on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter.

Plans for sustainability

In all countries, it was noted that the women's groups would continue after the POWER project ended. Savings groups were also noted to be among the most empowering activities giving women flexibility to save and borrow money as a group and motivation to continue meeting. In Rwanda, the women's groups will sustain the impact of the project on outcome one through strong and effective management of their registered cooperatives and strengthening their collective income generating initiatives. They will also increase quantity and quality of farming produce to ensure enough supply at their community selling points. Women also committed to continue the advocacy for increased public financing for agroecology and interventions which address the effects of UCW and GBV/VAWG on women economic empowerment. Women have already developed strong linkages with local authorities and other women's groups. As part of an ongoing process of women's economic empowerment, women have made a commitment to gradually decrease their economic dependence on their male partners by strengthening and sustaining their money-saving initiatives to ensure increased access to finance to invest or strengthen their businesses.

Outcome 2: By the end of 2020, Women's unpaid care work (UCW) is more highly valued within households, communities, and government, more evenly distributed within households, and hours spent by women on UCW is reduced, resulting in more free time for women to engage in social, economic and political activities

Time diaries research

In all countries time diaries were successfully completed. At international level a feminist analysis of time diaries provided important insights on the impact of POWER project on women's time use and redistribution of unpaid care work. The report on the time diaries covering 2018 to 2020 was completed and AAUK will develop a policy brief which will inform

future advocacy intervention for ActionAid. The research identified the three most time-consuming activities for rural women as: taking care of children, fetching water and collecting firewood. Across Ghana, Rwanda and Bangladesh women spent an average of ten hours per day on these tasks. In Bangladesh, women spent on an average 8.5 hours doing unpaid care and domestic work per day and roughly 1 hour per day on social activities. In Ghana, women spent on an average 8 hours doing unpaid care and domestic work per day and roughly 1-2 hours per day on social activities. In Rwanda, women spent on an average 10 hours doing unpaid care and domestic work per day and roughly 1 hour per day on social activities.¹ Overall, it was found that women generally multitasked throughout the day, with peaks at different times in the morning, afternoon, and evening. The use of time-diaries over a period of two years translated to women understanding their own time use, planning, and managing their days, and also redistributing time savings to income generating activities. According to the report, sadly this did not translate into Unpaid Care and Domestic Work being valued by women or by the community in general which is critical in order to recognise, reduce and redistribute it. Although women engaged in significantly more unpaid care and domestic work compared to men, there was some evidence that men were beginning to help with certain chores. There was a marginal increase in women's time spent on paid work by 15 minutes.

Time saving interventions

Most of the interventions on unpaid care work and energy saving continued to reduce the burden of unpaid care work. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the day care centres have been closed since April 2020, hence some women expressed less satisfaction as the childcare time has increased. From the women's advocacy meetings, Union Parishads and Upazila Parishad officials in Bangladesh agreed to continue to support efforts to reduce the burden of unpaid care work in three districts. In Rwanda, the POWER project supported 692 women with improved energy saving cooking stoves. These stoves were distributed together with a container that keeps food warm for at least 7 hours. This stove will also contribute to the protection of the environment because it reduces fuelwood at 80% and emits less smoke. *"I am so happy with this stove. It reduces my workload of unpaid care work,"* said Beatrice Nyirampakaniye member of Abahujimbaraga Group in Muganza Sector. The time diaries research showed that women with access to water tanks reported spending 25 minutes less time collecting water as compared to women with no access to water tanks. Women with access to these time saving interventions had reported, on average, less time spent on cooking and, at the same time, reported more time spent on paid work.

Awareness raising on unpaid care work

The awareness on unpaid care work was conducted though there were limitation on public gatherings due to COVID 19. This was due to quick adaptation of teams and use of media and online platforms. For example, in Bangladesh, the media continued to be involved in awareness raising with a total of 30 senior journalists, participating in a webinar on UCW that was organized in collaboration with Press Institute Bangladesh (PIB), AAB and SKS Foundation. Furthermore, five journalists also participated in the media fellowship and published 16 reports on UCW engaging policy makers and civil society members for its recognition, reduction, redistribution in electronic and print media platforms. In these reports, the policy makers reiterated the need to address UCW in national policies and initiate an accounting system that captures value. Similarly, in Rwanda virtual sensitizations on UCW were held through TV and radio talk shows on the impact of unpaid care work on women's empowerment. These involved the participation of government officials who further committed to interventions that reduce the burden on unpaid care work. The media engagements have paid well, and estimates suggest that 45,472 people viewed a short film and documentary on market access, UCW, VAW and Agroecology through local dish channel. Monitoring data

¹ A quantitative and qualitative analysis of time diaries by IDS 2020

shows that these awareness raising activities have created a positive outlook in the community on UCW.

Local authority engagement

In Ghana, engagement meetings were held in eighteen communities (18) where childcare centers have been provided for rural women. An estimated number of 500 women and 700 children benefited from these centres. This has called for the need for a dual approach to building sustainability for the centers, thus community level engagements and meetings with district assemblies level stakeholders to ensure community private management as well as district level support from government. The overarching goals for these actions were to renew commitments from community members, parents and traditional leaders and push for the inclusion of childcare givers stipends to government. Across all the districts in Ghana 2,500 participants comprising 1,500 women and 1,000 men attended all the meetings towards renewing the commitment of their communities to effectively manage the centres. Ten (10) groups from 8 communities from Jirapa Municipal indicated they needed water harvesting containers to help them store water for easy collection for processing of their shea butter and domestic use. In view of this, 10 poly tanks have been purchased for distribution to these groups as part of the repurposed activities recently approved by the donor.

Sustainability

The outcomes are sustainable as the information and skills gained through training and awareness raised with project participants and communities will remain after the project has ended. The level of awareness on unpaid care in the POWER implementing communities is now very high. Among all implementing countries ActionAid project team will continue to use the studies for advocacy and learning. The studies were approved and will be made available on public platforms.

In all countries the childcare centers will be locally managed by committees which were set by communities with support from project local implementing partners and other stakeholders in each district. In Ghana, the local authorities in all countries committed to support the payment of stipends by posting caregivers to centres that do not have the required number of caregivers. For instance, in Adaklu and other districts in Ghana an MoU has been drafted to be signed as part of the commitment processes towards the management and sustainability of the childcare centres. In Bangladesh all day care centres will be run by Union Women Federations and Upazila Women Federation will provide supervisory support to the Union Federation. A sustainability plan of all day care centres with the Federations has been drawn up and the project has signed an MoU with every Federation including day care responsibilities. In Rwanda, the local authorities and parents in all countries committed to take up responsibility to support and manage the established childcare centres.

Outcome 3: By the end of 2020, 21,000 rural women have more secure and sustainable access to markets and productive resources leading to increased income

Agroecology practices implementation

In Rwanda, as part of the implementation of agroecology practices, so far, women groups already organized in cooperatives are practicing agroecology on 79.1 hectares of land. The cooperatives are in Nyanza, Musanze, Ruheru, Kibilizi, Gitesi and Murindi communities. Women groups from Kibilizi community organized in Koabikigi cooperative are engaged in sustainable vegetables production operating in Duwane marshland given by District of Gisagara in response to their request of land. In partnership with ActionAid and POWER project implementing partner in Gisagara District (Duhozanye), the district authority is also supporting women vegetable producers in the mentioned marshland with solar-powered irrigation scheme as part of promoting agroecology technologies. Similarly, women groups

from other communities are also engaged in agroecological production of different food crops mainly vegetables and fruits especially tree tomatoes and passion fruits. *“I was so happy when I were selected as the best model woman farmer in the Ruheru community in agroecologically producing healthy tree tomatoes as I can harvest more than 35 kg of Tree tomato fruits per week, and I sell at 1,000 RWF (\$1) per Kg”* said by Niragire Elevantie member of Terimbere Mugore Group / Ruheru community in Nyaruguru District. In Bangladesh 1,715 farmers of whom 1,300 project participants and 415 community farmers had accessed seed banks which improved their resilience during the flooding.

Access to markets

The project has improved market information for women through the Esoko market platform as well as the e-market system in Rwanda and Ghana. In Ghana, the quarter saw a strong engagement with access to market information through engagement of the Esoko market platform. The overall objective of the engagement with Esoko was to send voice SMS on technologies for climate resilience agriculture and market information to 5,000 smallholder farmers involved in production of maize, pepper, millet, cassava, and groundnut. Within the period, 4,705 price alert messages were delivered, 45,025 messages on weather alerts, agroecology tips were 11,673. Use of all centres was dominated by agroecology tips with 93%, 5% weather alerts, and 2% market information. Although COVID-19 had an overall negative effect on the economy, in Ghana, at UI-Kpong, Mwofo and Nindor-wala communities, the groups reported increased sales in their soap making business because of increased demand for soap for hand washing due to COVID-19 pandemic. There was also a surge on demand for vegetables from community gardens because of COVID-19 pandemic. In Rwanda, the project set up an E-market system that will enable women producers to e-market and e-sell their agroecological products. The POWER project also supported women farmers with additional eco-friendly postharvest facilities by equipping the selling points with cooling room powered by solar panels and hermetic storage materials such metal and plastic silos and plastic sacks to ensure clean and health products that increases bargaining power and good prices for women farmers.

Capacity building on entrepreneurship

In Bangladesh, 6,151 women farmers received refreshers training on entrepreneurship skill development, food and non-food items, processing packaging in three working areas. It refreshed and enhanced their knowledge on how to access markets and to be conversant with market related information. Monitoring data shows that, after the training 62% of the women project participants reported to have improved knowledge about accessing market and market related information. They are now confident and more familiar about how to strengthen a business, access to market, pricing of the product and business promotions. Purnima Rani, the member of Surjer Alo women group at Gaibandha district stated that, *“I did know about the pricing of product and marketing but through this refresher training I recalled about markets and products which is helping me a lot.”* Further, *“I learnt from this training- how to weigh and scale goods when I am purchasing and packaging raw materials and products. Now shop keeper will be able to cheat on us”* said Dipty Begum of Shukh Women Group, Lalmonirhat. As a part of awareness raising and change the norms towards increasing women access to market, the project showcased fiction stories, documentaries and animations². The audio visuals were aired through local and national television channels.

² This included 1. The fiction story titled “Bulbulir Haat” and newly produced audio-visuals on access to market; 2. The documentary on access to markets; 3. The animation on community seed banks; and 4. The documentary on CRSA practices and demand of specialized agriculture institution for women farmers.

Agroecology farmer field schools

A total of five agroecology farmer field schools (FFS) were established in Rwanda with one site per district which serve as learning sites for all target communities. The schools were well supported, for example, one agroecology FFS of vegetables established in Duwane village marshland located in Kibilizi community in Gisagara District was scaled up by district through the Department of Agriculture and natural resources with around 100,000 USD. The costs were used to establish solar powered irrigation system. This irrigation system enables target women farmers to produce vegetables throughout the whole year without disturbance caused by dry spells and erratic rainfalls. In Bangladesh, the Agroecology School has so far trained 5,226 farmers in this quarter on issues like flood situation, diverse methods of vegetable cultivation, importance of organic fertilizer, soil health. The school has taken initiatives to conduct research on fall armyworm prevention biologically and also disseminate knowledge and experiences on various methods of CRSA practices and soil health among farmers. Meanwhile, the school has started to develop a website³ and it will be completed soon.



Figure 1: Women's solar powered irrigation of vegetables in Rwanda

Agro processing

The POWER project also supported women farmers with additional eco-friendly postharvest facilities by equipping the selling points with cooling room powered by solar panels and hermetic storage materials such metal and plastic silos and plastic sacks to ensure clean and health products that increases bargaining power and good prices for women farmers. In Ghana 31 women groups were trained and provided soap processing materials and equipment for processing. A total of 992 women benefited from this initiative.



Figure 2: A woman farmer in solar powered cooling room Kibirizi community in Gisagara district

In Rwanda, 893 poultry were provided to the women's cooperatives Nyanza, Musanze, and Nyaruguru districts. The provided poultry will support women to recover from COVID-19 shocks through selling some eggs and using manure to increase soil fertility and farm productivity. Eggs will also help women to improve nutrition in their family especially women who have children under 5 years old.

Archiving, research, and documentation

In Rwanda, the POWER project documented interventions of Agroecology for lessons sharing and to influence scale up and sustainability by stakeholders. The documentations were produced in the forms of booklet,⁴ brochure⁵ and video documentary.⁶ An agroecology handbook and an Access to Market manual were also developed at international level to support women farmers as the project comes to an end. The manuals are simplified and will provide a good guidance to farmers on access to markets and agroecology. A study was also commissioned on climate change and resilience under the title '*Agroecology and Resilience*

³ www.agroecologyschool-bd.org

⁴ [ActionAid_Power_AgroEcology22.pdf - Google Drive](#)

⁵ [Agroecology brochure last version.pdf](#)

⁶ [Agroecology Documentary Film Dec 2020.mp4](#)

Building in the Context of Climate Change: Lessons Learned from the POWER Project to support advocacy work and as a way of sharing the lessons learnt from the project.

Provision of tricycles and participation in national exhibition in Ghana



Figure 4: Women farmers at National Exhibition in Ghana

ActionAid Ghana provided seven tricycles to support women farmers in transporting their farm produce to ease the burden and time spent in transporting goods to the markets for sale as part of the repurposed activities. Seven women groups comprising 227 women directly benefited from the tricycles. Ten women groups were supported to attend the National Farmers Day in Techiman, the middle belt of Ghana to show case and exhibit their products.

Sustainability

In regard to sustainability in Rwanda, 245 women's groups are officially registered as farmer cooperatives and these cooperatives have also formed a women farmers' network to strengthen advocacy for public financing for agroecology. As a way to diversify income, these women groups are also engaged in different off-farm businesses such as renting wedding and ceremonial clothes, making handcrafts, small trading of goods at the established selling points, selling fresh and grilled meat, pottery or ornamentals and dishes, among others. Women in Bangladesh have strong commitment from local authorities to support seedbanks and build off the skills they have learnt on agroecology, which will continue to help them adapt to climate resilience particularly flooding. In Ghana, women have been trained on seed preservation. The project has also created a body of knowledge on agroecology and climate resilience. The farmers handbooks which have been developed will be used as reference documents to sustain POWER impact and for future engagements and programming.

Outcome 4: Greater visibility of intersections of CRSA, women's UCW, and women's economic participation lead to changes in policy and practice by sub-national, national, regional, and international stakeholders by 2020

Advocacy networking and alliance building

Active networking and alliance building continued during the period under review. In Bangladesh, the quarterly monitoring data showed that 78% of women gained confidence on advocacy, networking and alliance building. In Bangladesh, 20 group members participated in online talk shows and webinar meetings and were covered in news reports in national television channels. The women group members raised their voice for the recognition, redistribution and reduction of UCW and promotion of agroecology. A total of 24 women shared their contribution in the domain of economic empowerment, addressing VAW and supporting the community during COVID-19 = in a talk show broadcasted at a local community radio 'Radio Sarabela'.⁷ At national level in Bangladesh, POWER project organized campaign programs on the issue of UCW and agroecology. Under the unpaid care work, campaign talk shows were organized at national television channel and webinars organized at national daily newspapers' online platforms. In association with the media partners, these virtual advocacy events reached distinguished panellist and ensured presence of the policy makers,

⁷The titles were:

October: A conversation with women living in Rural areas on Women economics empowerment; poverty and unpaid care work

November: The impact of the Biennial Review Reports of the African Union Commission on food security

December: Women's Economic Empowerment; and Young women speak out on gender-based violence

government representatives, economists, academicians, celebrity artist, activists among others. The Senior Secretary of Planning Commission expressed his willingness to work on recognising the monetary value of UCW and these events also informed the discussion on the 8th Five-year Plan of Bangladesh, which will be finalized shortly. A Member of Parliament also committed to discuss on the 3Rs issue of UCW to be incorporate in 8th Five-Year Plan in next parliamentary standing committee meeting. Under the agroecology campaign talk shows, a round table with national daily newspaper and a TV webinar were successfully organized with the presence of policy makers including the Member, Parliamentary Standing Committees, Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Agriculture.

At the Africa regional level, a three-month digital campaign series was launched in collaboration with the Gender is my Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) under the themes *Women's rights are human rights: A conversation with women living in Rural areas on women's economic empowerment*, poverty and unpaid care work, the impact of the Biennial Review Reports of the African Union Commission on food security and women's economic empowerment; and *Young women speak out on gender-based violence*. The campaign attracted a number of high-level guests including the Senior Programme Officer on Nutrition and Food Safety, AUDA-NEPAD, Senior Gender Officer, Regional Office for Africa, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the African Union Goodwill Ambassador on ending child marriage. The issues raised are now being considered for inclusion for recommendations to the AU heads of state in the AU summit 2021. On Facebook, the network social media activity was able to reach 253 people who live streamed, majority of these were young women drawn from the age of 17-31 years old. The page received 1,234 new unique visits translating to 34 new followers. On Twitter, the central platform of the campaign, the network registered an overall impression of 3,200,000 people, with posts reaching 670,000 people. These translated to direct total engagement of 5,000 people during the report period of the campaign. The network tweets were retweeted 345 times translating to 70 new followers.

Capacity building

Refresher trainings were conducted in late December 2020 on networking and alliance building for 1,245 lead women farmers to facilitate linkages to other groups for advocacy after the exit of the project. This was meant to reinvigorate the need for continuous networking and alliance building after the project and sustain the gains they have made in connecting to local authorities and other NGOs. Refresher trainings were also conducted on land rights for rural women in Adaklu District and Upper East Region and dissemination of the analysis of the findings of political parties manifestoes in Ghana. A training on participatory video recording for AAG staff, women farmers, community facilitators and partners was held and a roll out of participatory video training with communities – with a video produced in Adaklu district.

As part of long term and sustainable learning legacy an online course was built by the various teams, based on the POWER project implementing teams' most important lessons from the project. The course draws upon the case studies, research reports, evaluation, and project tools. The course covers unpaid care work, violence against women, agroecology and policy issues and is designed for people who are joining ActionAid, external people such as project managers, academia, media, local and international decision makers. Though the course has been set up it will be launched in February 2021 when most people are back from the annual break.

Policy briefs and research

The project also conducted research at national and international level. AAB launched the policy brief on *Family Farming and Sustainable Agriculture in Bangladesh* and published a supplementary on it in the national Daily Prothom Alo. Further, commitments were made by policy makers to set up a separate Institute for Women in Agriculture in the Parliamentary Standing Committee and they also acknowledged having learnt from the policy briefs provided by the project. According to Mr. Balai Krishna Hazra, Director General, Seed Wing, Ministry of Agriculture *“From the discussion I’ve learnt about the challenge for women on getting access to market. We have to promote the issue and work on itwomen have major contributions in seed preservation. Government is taking initiative to develop capacity of equal number of women and men farmers on seed preservation and exchange”*. More than 14 success stories, news reports or news placement have been published and on-aired by the media partners, which elevated the discussions at all levels. These campaigns also received good media coverage and public response.

In Rwanda, an assessment on the status of unpaid care work and its effects on women’s economic participation was conducted. The research was conducted in rural, suburbs and cities and also assessed Rwanda policy provisions and gaps in regard to unpaid care work recognition, redistribution, reduction, representation and reward. See the research full report⁸ and summary report⁹. This research launched through live TV and radio talk shows through the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA) with high-ranking officers including the Chief Gender Monitor of National Gender Monitoring Office, and senior Lecturers from University of Rwanda in attendance. There was also a full recorded TV talk show¹⁰. The panel requested the Government to bridge the policy gaps on UCW, especially around limited implementation of policy commitments on care centers, water and cooking energy sources and to increase efforts on the sensitization of citizens to recognize, redistribute and reduce the burden of UCW as well as consideration of UCW in the national accounts. The Chief Gender Monitor of Rwanda Gender Monitoring Office committed to scale up dialogues on UCW in the government platforms and pledged more policy support towards addressing UCW in Rwanda. Shortly after, the Rwanda Senate requested AAR to share the research summary which was then discussed as part of proposals for policy changes. At the South Asia level, a study was done titled: *A Study of Regional and National Policies: Unpaid care work in South Asia* which will be used to engage regional members and inform future advocacy work for ActionAid. Ahead of CSW ActionAid has produced a background paper which will guide engagement. A study and video documentary were also done on violence against women and unpaid care work.

In Ghana, a gender audit of the political parties manifestoes was done. This audit analysed the manifesto of the two major parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP), in relation to: women’s access to Information Technology, gender budgeting and infrastructure; affirmative action policy appropriateness for achieving gender equality in Ghana; care and labour interventions that promotes gender equality and inclusiveness; time saving agricultural technologies for women; and how resilient policies and interventions are to women and young people. The report has since been finalized and disseminated at the national level and in Adaklu District.

Media engagement

Three TV talk shows and five short films on unpaid care work have been broadcasted at national TV channels. ActionAid Bangladesh has also initiated the process for a campaign and

⁸  [UCW National level Research Final full report - January 18, 2021.doc](#)

⁹  [UCW National level Research Summary - January 18, 2021.doc](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzqOWeL4UNo&t=37s>

photography competition on UCW titled '*Different Images of Men*' to influence policy makers for the recognition, redistribution and reduction of UCW. Based on the competition, a social media campaign also launched in September 2020 and reached 723,354 people, including policy makers from different government Ministries.

In Rwanda, due to the cancellation of advocacy events at national, regional, and global levels to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the POWER project produced five TV and radio sketch series as part of virtual measures to raise awareness on effects of UCW on women economic participation and to influence support for addressing women's empowerment and rights. All five produced episodes focused on UCW recognition, redistribution, reduction, representation and reward. The produced UCW dramas were aired on prominent TV and radio stations.¹¹

Documentary screening

A documentary on the POWER project was screened with key ActionAid stakeholders and donors, with introductory speeches and a panel event including the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, and a panel including the International Project Manager, Ghana Project Manager and a representative from one of the women's groups in Ghana.

End line evaluation

The end line evaluation is being finalized, and a draft report has been submitted and is being finalised. The dissemination plan of the end line evaluation is also planned to take place by second week of February 2020. The findings will be disseminated through webinar and posters translated in local languages which will be put up in the project areas.

Challenges faced

The COVID-19 situation affected the pre-set timeline for project completion and resulted in an increased burden for the project teams for implementation due to restrictions on movements and gatherings.

In Bangladesh, risks faced in third quarter including floods in Gaibadha and Lalmonirhat and the staff of POWER in Lalmonirhat were infected by COVID-19. This incident eventually had adverse impact on the continuation of work for this quarter. Further, a second wave of COVID-19 in Bangladesh affected planned advocacy activities. It was challenging to coordinate with government officials and elected citizens as public gatherings are still prohibited at the field level. The end line evaluation methodology also had to be changed and was conducted using online platform and telephone. Therefore, reaching the respondents was quite challenging as some of the phone numbers found switched off.

¹¹ EPISODE 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgPeTmkJxQI&t=40s>
EPISODE 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOlrcIWdXhE>
EPISODE 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=APNXB2Ci39k>
EPISODE 4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmxqrWjxfdA>
EPISODE 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0-mdpeipUA>