Africa Women in Climate Change Award Project / Quarterly Progress Report July–September 2025

"First Quarterly Progress Report for the Africa Women Award in Climate Change. A project by the Center for Economic and Policy Priorities (CEPP) August 28th 2025."

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1. Project Description

The Center for Economic and Policy Priorities (CEPP), , under funding of the Australian Government through their cooperation agency NAIR of the Australian High Commission in Nairobi , agreed on jointly implementing the African Women Award in Climate change project in Rwanda , with an ambition to expand in in other countries of Africa , aiming at encouraging rural women cooperatives working in the field of climate change and agriculture , and advocating of their access to climate change funding which often stuck in capital cities where these women cannot access .

It preempted that this project will lift up the visibility and expose the role of rural women's cooperatives in climate change adaptation and mitigations, as well as linking them to potential institutions from the private sector, governments as well as other multilateral institutions such as the United Nation agencies dealing with climate change and other issues related to women empowerment and women rights promotion

This project is expected to increase:

- The financial capabilities of women of the rural areas in the five district of Rwanda namely, Bugesera, Gisagara, Kicukiro, Musanze and Nyamasheke.
- To support climate change action for women cooperatives and networks of the rural areas.
- Their chances to access support funds will be higher.
- The AWCA will attract so many people especially rural women to get involved in climate change and environment protection work.

2. Project and Country Context

The Center for Economic and Policy Priorities though about this project when Rwanda is leading and championing the work on the climate change adaptation globally and continentally. From the Kigali signing of the amendment of the Montreal Protocol, the International agreement that adds hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) to the list of substances regulated by the Montreal Protocol aiming at phasing down HFCs production and consumption and mitigating their high global warming potential . This amendment seeks to avoid up to 0.5°C of warming by the end of the century, building on the success of the original Montreal Protocol, which phased out ozone-depleting substances

On the rural women side , this project came when Rwanda continue to be among global leaders that are championing global gender equality agenda such as the He or She campaign , the women peace and security action plans as well as being part of nations that are promoting women empowerment globally . on this particular pace, Rwanda is leading globally with 63% of women representatives in the parliament and 42% in other leadership making decision position in the leadership of Rwanda

Both the 2026, Kigali amendment of the Montreal protocol as well as the country commitment to gender equality and empowerment, brought the center for Economic and Policy priorities to think about such African Women Award in Climate Change project, to voice up and consistently support rural women cooperatives and networks efforts in climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as enhancing their chances to access finance for their activities in the area.

3. Project Timeline

As per the contract between the Australian Government via its cooperation agency (NAIR) and the Center for Economic and Policy Priorities (CEPP), the project was supposed to start in APRIL 2025, but started in July after revision of the project roadmap activities and other adjustments on the project.

Even though we revised the implementation plan based on the delay made in fund disbursement and kicking off activities, planned activities were not affected and the project progress trajectory doesn't predict delay in project implementation and timeline of the project life span.

4. Activities Implementation

As per the revised project implementation plan, two activities were planned between July and end August 2025.
The first activity was the identification process of rural women cooperatives and networks working in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation as well in environment protection in the five districts of Rwanda such as Bugesera, Gisagara, Kicukiro, Musanze and Ntamasheke.

The Second activity was to gather expertise from various experts in climate change and environment protection from within Rwanda and regionally. The gathered team was supposed to lead the identification process of the rural women cooperatives and networks in afore said five districts in the country and their profiling based on criteria's pre-established by the expert team.

The third activity and which is crosscutting during the entire project lifetime is the one of supporting logistically the implementation of activities of the project.

4.1. Identification process of rural women cooperatives and networks working in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation as well in environment protection in the five districts of Rwanda such as Bugesera, Gisagara, Kicukiro, Musanze and Ntamasheke.

On this particular activity, all needed preparations and logistics were provided timely for its full realization. Despite some changes in appointments fixed to meet cooperatives and some rescheduled meeting with in charge of cooperatives in the five districts, CEPP managed visiting and interacting with cooperatives from their field of work. In total 10 cooperatives were visited and assessed successfully by CEPP in partnership with the team of experts.

Under this same activity of identifying rural women cooperatives, we did the project launch which took place in Bugesera District.

- **For Bugesera District, CEPP and experts identified two cooperatives such as:**

1. **Kaju Cooperative**

   - ✓ **Location:** Juru Sector, Rwinume Cell
   - ✓ **Activity Focus:** Tree nursery production for reforestation and agroforestry
   - ✓ **Observations:** This cooperative has a functioning tree nursery that supplies seedlings to nearby communities. Members are highly engaged in environmental awareness and need support to improve seedling quality and access water for irrigation.

2. **KOTMR Cooperative**

   - ✓ **Location:** Ririma Sector, Kimaranzara Cell, Amizero Village
   - ✓ **Activity Focus:** Tree seedling production
   - ✓ **Observations:** KOTMR Cooperative focuses on growing a variety of indigenous and exotic tree species. It plays a key role in supporting household-level tree planting initiatives and combating land degradation. The cooperative needs technical training on pest control and nursery infrastructure improvement.

- **For Gisagara District, CEPP and experts identified two cooperatives such as:**

1. **Tuganeheza Cooperative**

   - ✓ **Location:** Muganza Sector, Cyumba Cell, Byiza Village
   - ✓ **Membership:** 30 women
   - ✓ **Activities:** Agroforestry—multiplication of grevillea, papaya, and avocado trees
   - ✓ **Observations:** The cooperative has an organized tree nursery and collaborates with local farmers to promote agroforestry. Their activities support soil fertility, biodiversity restoration, and fruit production. They requested capacity building in tree management, marketing, and climate-smart agriculture.

2. **Dufatanye Cooperative**

   - ✓ **Location:** Muganza Sector, Muganza Cell, Agaseke Village
   - ✓ **Activities:** Crop production and edible tree cultivation.

Observations: This group integrates food production with environmental goals by planting fruit-bearing trees and practicing mixed farming. They face challenges related to pest control and water scarcity and asked for training on climate-smart irrigation methods.



- **For Kicukiro District, CEPP and experts identified two cooperatives such as:**

1. Kicukiro Female Ex-Combatants Cooperative

This is a cooperative formed by women who previously served in the national armed forces and later reintegrated into civilian life. They joined efforts to establish a cooperative that specializes in tree nursery production in Kigali City. Through this initiative, the members contribute to environmental restoration, urban greening, and climate resilience, while also creating a sustainable source of income for their families. The cooperative not only empowers these women economically but also serves as a symbol of transformation, showing how former combatants can actively participate in building peaceful and productive communities.

2. Ururabo Niboye Cooperative

Ururabo Cooperative is composed of women from Niboye Sector in Kicukiro District. The cooperative engages in flower cultivation, producing different varieties that are sold in Kigali City. These flowers are primarily used for urban beautification, helping to enhance the city's image and environment. In addition, the cooperative supplies flowers to individual buyers who wish to plant them in their households and gardens. Through this activity, the women generate income, promote green living, and contribute to making Kigali a more vibrant and eco-friendly city.



MUSANZE DISTRICT

- **For musanze District, CEPP and experts identified two cooperatives such as:**

1. Sane Environment Deals and Skills (SEDS)

The Sane Environment Deals and Skills (SEDS) cooperative is located in Muhoza Sector and is actively engaged in the conservation of the Musanze caves, environmental education, and the promotion of eco-tourism. Through its work, the cooperative plays a crucial role in protecting biodiversity and preserving cultural heritage by safeguarding this unique natural site. By offering eco-tourism as an alternative livelihood, SEDS also helps reduce environmentally exploitative practices, positioning itself as a model for sustainable and community-based climate action.

2. Iwacuheza Cooperative

The Iwacuheza Cooperative, based in Cyabagarura Cell, is primarily involved in tree nursery development and reforestation activities. The cooperative contributes to climate change adaptation by promoting reforestation and soil conservation through the production and distribution of climate-resilient tree seedlings. Their efforts play a vital role in restoring degraded land, preventing erosion, and enhancing local biodiversity.



NYAMASHEKE DISTRICT

- **For Nyamasheke District, CEPP and experts identified two cooperatives such as**

1. Duhagurukire Umurimo Gihombo

The Duhagurukire Umurimo Gihombo Cooperative, based in Gihombo Sector, focuses on the production of charcoal from biodegradable waste. This innovative approach offers a sustainable alternative to traditional wood-based charcoal, thereby contributing to the reduction of deforestation and promoting environmentally friendly energy practices. By transforming agricultural and household waste into usable fuel, the cooperative addresses both environmental and energy challenges in the community.

2. Abahujumugambi Kilimbi

The Abahujumugambi Kilimbi Cooperative, located in Kilimbi Sector, is actively involved in agroforestry and erosion control initiatives. The cooperative leads efforts in reforestation and conducts community awareness campaigns, employing both indigenous knowledge and modern techniques to address the problem of soil erosion. Their work not only restores degraded land but also strengthens local capacity for sustainable land and forest management.



4.2 Lesson learnt from the identification mission

The field identification mission offered deep insights into both the potential and the limitations facing rural women-led cooperatives in their efforts to combat climate change and protect the environment. Through direct engagement with cooperative members, district authorities, and field realities, several important lessons emerged that are vital for shaping the next phases of the AWCC project:

1. **Rural Women Are Already Leading Climate Action But Invisibly:** One of the most powerful lessons was that rural women are not merely passive victims of climate change; they are already implementing locally relevant solutions—from reforestation and erosion control to eco-charcoal production and biodiversity preservation. However, their work is largely informal, under-documented, and not reflected in national environmental strategies or resource allocation mechanisms. Recognizing and elevating their contributions is a critical step toward inclusive climate policy.

2. **Community-Based Cooperatives Offer Scalable Models:** The mission revealed that cooperatives are structured platforms that can drive climate action at the grassroots level. These women's groups are already organized, have defined leadership, and are embedded in their communities. With proper support, their models are highly scalable. What they lack is not commitment, but rather training, tools, and exposure to good practices from other regions.

3. **There Is Strong Demand for Technical and Institutional Capacity Building:** Nearly all cooperatives expressed a desire for training in areas such as:

    - Climate-smart agriculture
    - Tree nursery management
    - Waste processing and safe eco-charcoal production
    - Cooperative governance and record keeping.

In addition to technical skills, many groups lack knowledge on cooperative registration, resource mobilization, and compliance with environmental standards, which limits their growth and funding opportunities.

4.3 Identification Mission Recommendations

- ✓ Develop targeted training modules on climate change adaptation, sustainable agriculture, tree nursery management, and cooperative governance.
- ✓ Provide tools and resources such as nursery equipment, improved seeds, and safety gear for processing.
- ✓ Strengthen district-level collaboration for monitoring and supporting women-led climate initiatives.
- ✓ Create a platform for visibility and recognition of rural women cooperatives at national and policy levels.
- ✓ Support access to markets and networks to promote sustainability of cooperative initiatives.
- ✓ Include women cooperatives in national climate action frameworks and programs.

4.4 Launch of the project in BUGESERA District

The main objective of the mission was to officially launch the **"*African Women in Climate Change Project*"** in Juru Sector, Bugesera District. The launch aimed to introduce the project to stakeholders and beneficiaries, highlight its objectives, and mobilize support and ownership among the participating cooperatives and communities. Specifically, the mission sought to:

- Present the vision and objectives of the project to local authorities, civil society organizations, and beneficiaries.
- Encourage women cooperatives to take ownership of climate change interventions.
- Strengthening collaboration between government institutions, development partners, and grassroots organizations in addressing climate change.
- Emphasize the link between gender equality and climate action.

The launch event was held in Juru Sector, Bugesera District. It gathered government representatives from the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), local authorities including the Mayor of Bugesera, civil society actors such as Benimpuhwe Organization, USADEC and the Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network (RCCDN), as well as cooperative representatives and project beneficiaries from Musanze, Nyamasheke, Kicukiro, and Gisagara Districts.


Australian Aid
African Women in Climate Change (AWCA) Project
Project Goal:
Encouraging rural women networks and cooperatives to get involved in climate change and environment actions, as well as supporting them to increase their knowledge and capacity in to the sector
LOCATION:
Kicukiro
Bugesera
Nyamasheke
Gisagara
Musanze
Launching for " The African Women in Climate Change Award " Project
Bugesera District
August 14, 2025
HUGO


Australian Aid
Launching for " The African Women in Climate Change Award " Project
HUGO



Above said pictures testifies the warmest launch of the project African Women Award in Climate Change, which took place in Bugesera District on August 14th 2025.

In their remarks, the Director General in the Ministry of environment of Rwanda ,the Director general in the Ministry of Gender and Family promotion in Rwanda , and the Mayor of the District of Bugesera (the host of the event); they welcomed the idea of amplifying the voice of rural women cooperatives in the field of climate change as well as the advocacy work that is being done by the Center for Economic and Policy Priorities with its partners to put the rural women at the center of the climate change journey that Rwanda embarked on since 2016 .



Mayor of Bugesera District Richard Mutabazi

From his speech as the host of the CEPP launch event in his district, the Mayor welcomed the initiative of the CEPP to bring the launch of such a great project idea in his district, he also recognized the donor, the Australian Government through his development agency NAIR, to have facilitated the funding of the African Women Award in climate change project, which is being implemented by the Center for Economic and Policy Priorities CEPP in his District of Bugesera. He also welcomed and acknowledged the Ministry of environment as well as the Ministry of Gender and Family promotion whom represented their ministries and the Government of Rwanda, to cement the Government of Rwanda commitment to support rural women cooperatives and advancing the government of Rwanda agenda to the Climate Change.



Director General in the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion Mr. Silas NGAYABOSHA

The Director General in the Ministry of Gender and Family promotion commended the Center for Economic and Policy Priorities and the Australian Government to have thought about women especially rural women cooperatives working in the areas of climate change. the DG also emphasized on the needs of rural women cooperatives in general and especially on these working in sensitive sectors such as climate change , environment and agriculture in general . he concluded his remarks by asking CEPP and the Australian Government to multiply their funding efforts and at least extend this activity in all 30 districts of Rwanda , and making this exercise an annual event to be able contributing to the National Action plan of the Ministry of gender and family promotion which goes up to 2029 .



Director General in the Ministry of Environment Mr Thaddee TWAGIRIMANA

As the Guest of honor in the launching event of the African Women Award in Climate Change , implementing by the Center for Economic and Policy Priorities under funding of the Australian Government and his cooperation Agency NAIR , the Director General commended the work being performed by these agencies in support the country agenda on climate change and climate resilience agenda . The DG added that such kind of project are not common in their line ministry, where by a partner comes to strengthen one of the most vulnerable areas of their strategic plan which is increasing the number of actors in the climate adaptation and mitigation. On behalf on his Minister, he reiterated his appreciation to the CEPP and the Australian Government, and promise the total support of his ministry in the implementation process of the AWAC Project

4.5.THE TEAM OF EXPERTS IN ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

This was a second activity to be performed, and it went well, we connected with climate experts companies locally and regionally to groom people with expertise to assess rural women cooperatives and networks which are versed in real climate change and environment protection activities , as well as making a good profiling of the rural women cooperatives . Basing also of the country procurement policy, we recruited a local firm which had regional partners and who performed a very nice and interesting work. This team of experts will keep supporting the implementation of the project till its closing early next year.

4.6. LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF THE PROJECT

The third activity which is a crosscutting activity in the entire project lifetime, is the one of supporting logistically the implementation of activities of the project. BY this the Center for Economic and Policy Priorities (CEPP) managed all the funds and keep insuring that every activity is given all resources and support needed to be well implemented. At this point, all needed logistical support was provided timely and efficiently.

5. ATTAINED GOALS AND MILESTONES

Under this framework, all project activities and milestones for this period were attained successfully and reached the expected goals as per the project implementation plan.

6. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Challenges encountered during this project implementation period were not many , a part of the address of the kick off of the project through the revision of the implementation plan , the other encountered challenge which resulted even in the delay to submit the first quarterly progress report on time, is the organization of the project launch .

This activity delayed based on finding an agreed on date for both the ministry of environment and the Ministry of Gender and Family promotion which were key for the launch of the African Women Award in climate Change.

Hence their presence was paramount in the launch of the project, we pushed back the official launch date for two times and finally found an agreed on date which was the August 14th 2025.

This was the only challenge encountered in this quarterly period

7. RECOMMANDATIONS

It is very hard to formulate recommendations at this early phase of the project implementation, but all we have already seen in a huge amount of untapped problems and challenges that rural women cooperatives and network have in this field on climate change. Among others are issues related to capacity building that need address , poor and traditional equipment used in the sector, lack of support and coordination by local authorities and the linkage between them and their line ministries such as the Ministry of gender and family promotion and the Ministry of Environment .