ARUWE ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

ARUWE Action For Rural Women's Empowerment
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Greetings to all our partners and various stakeholders, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Action for Rural Women’s Empowerment upon the successful completion of this year 2013/2014. This annual report details ARUWE’s interventions and achievements in the previous year. There have been challenges to ARUWE but at the same time remarkable achievements in the history of ARUWE. ARUWE is greatly humbled by her loyal development partners who have supported us to successfully implement our interventions, projects and programs. The Stephen Lewis Foundation – Canada, Global Fund for Women – USA, Action Water UK, African Women’s Development Fund- Ghana, Swiss Hand, Wheels4life, Ecological christian Organisation Barmherzigkeit Chariteiro Support and Advocates for Coalition Development and Environment for providing the funds to enable us carry out our work. We also thank the various stakeholders including the beneficiary communities, local government. ARUWE also greatly appreciates the dedicated staff who have gone an extra mile to ensure that we achieve our set goals and objectives.

In the last year through the rights-based approach, ARUWE directed its efforts towards strengthening agricultural productivity and income generation among vulnerable women households; empowering communities to manage water, hygiene and sanitation interventions; promoting awareness in reproductive health rights and antenatal services and strengthening organizational capacity to enhance strategic delivery in the beneficiary communities.

Our major concentration in the coming years will focus on promotion of good governance and human rights in all ARUWE’s thematic areas. ARUWE will empower main stream policy advocacy and lobbying in all her thematic areas. The approach will empower grass roots communities to engage, dialogue and demand for qualitative and quantitative strategic deliverables from government and other duty bearers.

We hope you enjoy reading this report.

Executive Director
Elizabeth Nakiboneka
ARUWE PROFILE

Action for Rural Women's Empowerment (ARUWE) is a non-profit NGO working with rural communities especially the marginalized women and children of rural Uganda. ARUWE was established in 2003 as a community based organization and later registered as an NGO in 2008. This annual report gives a detailed account of ARUWE’s interventions in the year 2013/14.

VISION
A world in which communities, especially women and their children, are able to realize their full social, economic, and civic potential.

MISSION
To support and enable communities to have good governance that respects their rights and needs to be able to initiate and manage their socio-economic development processes.

AREAS OF OPERATION
ARUWE operates in Kibiga and Lwamata sub counties in Kiboga district, Mulagi and Gayaza sub counties in Kyankwanzi district, Muduma sub-county in Mpigi district and Nsangi and Busi Sub Counties in Wakiso district. Our core operations are food security, nutrition and income generation; rights awareness and leadership education; water, hygiene and sanitation, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, environmental protection and conservation and promoting access to quality education. ARUWE’s work focuses on participatory, sustainable empowerment projects borne out of the needs and ambitions of the communities. ARUWE also offers financial and technical assistance for rural communities, especially women, with empowerment and training programs that aim at creating social change. Communities are empowered to advocate for their rights in the long-term.

In 2013/14, ARUWE’s focus centered on supporting women to increase food security and nutrition for their households whilst helping them to improve their livelihoods through farming as a business. We worked to ensure availability of clean, safe water to households, schools and communities through construction of water jars, shallow wells and Ferro cement tanks and built the capacity of communities to manage and keep their water facilities. Promotion of reproductive health rights and improved access to services was registered. We also dedicated time to build the capacity of the ARUWE field staff to expand and improve our programme.

Throughout the year, we have taken pride in rights-based approaches to all our interventions. Women’s rights have formed the foundation of all of the year’s activities. Our work with women farmers has tackled issues of land rights and supported women to advocate for them. Working to improve women’s financial standing through income
generating activities has helped to educate our beneficiaries about their right to economic empowerment, and to own and control their assets. Our work to improve access to clean, safe water has promoted children’s right to a quality education and everyone’s right to life free from water-borne disease. Through raising awareness about the availability and importance of reproductive health services, we have helped communities understand their right to health services and to make sure this right is realised.

A total of 600 women-headed households benefited from food security and nutrition program. ARUWE supported 800 women to improve their livelihoods through micro credit and income generating schemes. 547 school children benefitted from ARUWE’s Water, Hygiene and Sanitation Program resulting in a better learning environment. In the period overview, 21 water jars were established for vulnerable grandmother households and 11 shallow wells were constructed benefiting 2377 households.

ARUWE built community capacity to maintain the water facilities. 1000 in-school young people and 358 out-of-school youth benefited from reproductive health education rights and HIV/AIDS trainings. 500 women were made more aware of reproductive health rights and services especially family planning, pre-natal counselling and post natal services ARUWE built capacity of 141 Village Health Team members and Community Health Educators in the rights based approach to health services delivery. For ease of mobility, bicycles were provided to the health team members.

Though the Global Fund for Women, a field van was acquired to facilitate and ease transport during community sensitization and monitoring activities. We strengthened our institutional capacity for strategic delivery in our community interventions through staff development.
PROMOTING FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Six hundred women-headed households were supported in food security and nutrition promotion interventions to gain improved agricultural productivity. Women farmers received training to build their capacity and to empower them with practical knowledge in environmentally friendly agricultural methods. These included soil and water conservation techniques, post harvest handling methods, agro-forestry, crop planting methods, disease and pest control and making organic manure. The training increased farmers’ knowledge and skills in agriculture and the application of this led to increased agricultural productivity.

Women farmers were also supported with improved seed inputs of maize, beans, banana suckers, cassava and vegetables.

ARUWE further built the women’s capacity in advocating for their food rights from government and other duty bearers. Women were trained to voice, engage and demand for agricultural inputs, extension services and other agricultural resources from the district and other duty bearers. This resulted into Agali Awamu women’s group in Gayaza sub county, Kyankwanzi district receiving maize and beans seeds from the agricultural department in Kyankwanzi district.
Mrs Babumba tending to her vegetable garden of nakati.

Through food security and nutrition initiatives, at least 85% of the women houses could afford to have three meals a day.

Joint Vegetable gardens belonging to Bivamuntuuyo women’s group. Above are some of the members.

Nakimera in her banana garden intercropped with beans. This is a major source of food for her family of 18 people.

Esteri and one of her grandchildren with their maize harvest which they used for food.
Thanks to the ARUWE credit arm, 800 women were supported through the revolving credit scheme to improve their household income. Women’s abilities to invest their small loans in profit-making ventures, manage their credit and save money were some of the major areas ARUWE focused on to ensure economic empowerment of women. Women were organized in groups and trained in savings and credit management, business management, record keeping, agribusiness and livestock rearing. With free advisory services offered by ARUWE especially in agribusiness issues like collective marketing to increase bargaining power, post harvest handling and value addition, women’s capacity has been developed to enable them to invest further in their income generation projects. Women were able to invest their loans in agriculture and trade. Women were able to diversify their agricultural activities through growing more crops, further improving their income generation.

The women are further using a collective voice to actively engage community leaders and other duty bearers to support them with a maize milling machine which will result in value addition to their final products.

Real lives

Meet Freda, a very hard working farmer. She was supported with bitter berry seeds that she planted on half an acre. She says that she had started selling them to her community. She plans to expand her garden to at least an acre. She acquired a loan of Ugx 300,000 ($120) which she used for labour to plant her three acre maize garden and to purchase bean seeds which she planted on two acres.
Ninsimo is one of ARUWE’s commercial farmers. She established three acres of maize. Having been supported with maize seeds from ARUWE, Nansimo got a loan of Ugx 300,000 ($120) which she used to purchase fertilizers for her maize garden and expand her Irish potato garden to one acre. In three months’ time when the Irish potatoes are ready, she hopes to save Ugx 500,000 ($200) from earnings, save some for food and also sell some as seeds. She hopes to acquire a bigger loan amount to invest in growing more crops in the future.

Women also used their small loans to invest in trade.

Meet Lovinca. She is a farmer and also owns a salon. She dedicates the first part of her day to farming while the afternoon and the rest of the evening is spent working in her beauty salon. With a loan of Ugx 300,000 ($120), she purchased hair weaves and other items which helped her meet the needs of her clients. In a day, she is able to make a profit of Ugx 10,000 ($4).
Women tending to their pigs, one of their income generating activities. Piggery was integrated with crop growing whereby farmers were able to use droppings as organic manure to fertilise soils which improved productivity.

Meet Bilizika, a commercial farmer who has benefited from ARUWE agribusiness training in value addition, post harvest handling, proper farming planning, work planning, income projection, costing and pricing. She grows ground nuts, maize, bananas and cassava. She hopes to get 500kgs of ground nuts for her harvest. She predicts that she will sell a kilogram at Ugx 4,000 ($1.60) making a total amount of Ugx 2,000,000 ($800) which she will use to reinvest in her agricultural activities, meet her household needs and also save. She hopes to make good returns from her maize and banana sales.
Meet 73 year old grandmother Ndagire Gertrude, living with seven grandchildren in Gayaza village. She has managed to harvest approximately 2,000kgs of maize and 150kgs of beans. She has been able to feed her household members three times a day, and have extra to give her other family members. She expects to sell her maize corn at Ugx 650 per kilo, this would give her an income of Ugx 1,300,000 ($520). She will save 20% in her group circle, using the rest to expand her garden from two acres to five acres, establish a one acre garden for beans and an acre garden of pineapple. Realizing the existing market potential for the three crops beans, maize and pineapples, Gertrude decided to put emphasis on these for better outputs. She was so grateful that through the training in agriculture and post harvest handling, agribusiness and seed inputs she managed to have a better harvest which provided them with enough food and some for income. With this motivation she has committed to work even harder to improve her household livelihood. Her neighbors too were enthusiastic to learn the farming practices to also increase their farm output.

“We with this motivation I am committed to work even harder to improve my household livelihood”, she said.
The women are further using a collective voice to actively engage community leaders and other duty bearers to support them with a maize milling machine which will result in value addition to their final products.

Women and some of the husbands who are actively involved in the households projects after training in agribusiness.

Women ready to be transported in the van after training.
Due to persistent demand and need for clean and safe water in most of ARUWE’s areas of operation, ARUWE introduced the right to safe water. The targeted communities were introduced to the application of the right awareness based approach to service delivery. Besides construction of wells, water jars and tanks, ARUWE trained 102 people in Mulagi Sub County, Kyankwanzi district to identify, prioritize and forward community needs to Government and other duty bearers. More emphasis was put on training Water User Committees to advocate for the right to safe water in their communities. They were equipped with skills and knowledge in voicing, engaging and demanding for safe water facilities from Government and other duty bearers. Further, ARUWE advocates for gender equality and equal representation of women and men on the Water User Committees. ARUWE is optimistic that the community it serves is transforming from service delivery to demand driven approach. With regard to improving access to clean and safe water, ARUWE constructed 11 shallow wells for 2,377 households, 21 water jars in the most vulnerable grandmothers’ households and 2 Ferro cement tanks in two schools increasing access to clean and safe water for 547 school children.

Community participation right from needs assessment to identification of the most needy villages, construction of the shallow wells and the operation and maintenance of the facilities contributed to the success of these activities.

**Issues emphasized through the WASH interventions included:**

**Community management:** To develop, implement and maintain community-managed, sustainable water and sanitation facilities.

**Community ownership:** To involve communities in all processes right from decisions and the construction and maintenance of the water supply and sanitation systems.

**Community learning:** To increase community knowledge and practice of proper hygiene and sanitation through participatory learning practices, for local water and sanitation committees.

**Capacity Building:** To strengthen the community’s capacity to administer community development projects.
Increased water provision has tremendously contributed toward reduction of water born diseases. The time and effort spent collecting water by women and school children reduced, allowing children to spend more time in school and women to engage in income generating activities, or to spend time with their children.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Sara Zabakiliho, a local farmer in Gayaza Sub County had this to say, “For so many years we have demanded for provision of safe and clean water but only end up with empty promises, whoever brought ARUWE in our areas has increased our life span for more years. It is a dream that has come true”.
Kasigwa Innocent, a community Voluntary Health Team member and the newly elected Water User Committee chairperson in Kikuubya village declared that he was very happy about the new safe water facility established for the community. He said that the high population of 412 households with an average of five members, adding up to 2,060 people, had suffered with the limited access to safe water. It had also put a lot of demand on health services in the community dealing with more cases of diarrhoea, stomach complications, skin diseases, typhoid and cholera among other water related diseases. With a newly established shallow well facility people’s health would improve, adding that he did not expect to have to treat such illnesses frequently in future. Thanks to ARUWE and Action Water for changing our lives of him and our community for the better.
ARUWE built the capacity of both public and private health service providers including Village Health Teams (VHTs); Youth Peer Educators (YPEs); school health clubs and community leaders in the participatory and Rights Based Approaches to health services provision. ARUWE further empowered communities in the processes, procedures and mechanisms used to voice, engage and demand for their health rights from duty bearers. This was done through workshops, dialogue sessions, interface meetings between service providers and users, radio talk shows. The purpose was to create awareness and introduce communities to effective policy advocacy methodologies to service delivery among the marginalized rural communities especially women and youth in Kyankwanzi and Mpigi districts. ARUWE’s monitoring systems reflect improved maternal and child health services at Nalinya Health Centre III in Mulagi Sub County, Kyankwanzi district; better adolescent reproductive health services at Muduma health centre III, Mpigi district besides, improved relationships between health workers and patients at Kiyuni Health Centre III, Gayaza Sub County, Kyankwanzi district.

Communities watching an educative film

Girls during one of the peer talks held in schools

Community health trainers getting bicycles to facilitate their movement during home visits. ARUWE received fund from Wheels4life to support 144 beneficiaries with bicycles to ease their movements while carrying out their community work.
Other community benefits include; better understanding of sexually transmitted infections and how they are transmitted, better understanding of sexually transmitted infections and how they were transmitted and treated. Awareness of HIV/AIDS was increased, in particular among those who had previously relied upon traditional diagnoses and remedies for their illnesses, for example belief in witchcraft. Male attitudes towards family planning improved, in particular among male health workers and educators, who are able to share their knowledge with the community. Lack of understanding and incorrect use of family planning methods had led many community members to abandon them altogether, however through the awareness interventions, participants learnt the importance of correct usage and consulting medical personnel in order to select the right method for them, as well as learning about methods such as moon beads which are easy to use and have no side effects.

As a result of the program, ARUWE has learnt to integrate men in all reproductive health related programmes. The interventions revealed that including men in reproductive health programmes encouraged them to share the responsibility of sexually transmitted infection prevention as well as the risks and benefits of contraception. Further still, ARUWE has adopted the practice of engaging religious and cultural leaders in disseminating RH information to communities. The aim was to reach out to people who do not attend community meetings but attend religious or cultural meetings.

Reduction in teenage pregnancies especially for those still in school where ARUWE has carried out the awareness programs has been registered, an increase in the number of pregnant women who attend antenatal and post natal services as shown by the records of the health centers, and an improvement in the quality of reproductive health services provided by both private and public health care providers.

However there is still limited access to reproductive health services especially for women and youth hence the need to strengthen the already existing community structures to spear head the advocacy processes.

**What the community said:**

In a community dialogue held at Kiwaguzi trading centre, Ms. Nanyondo one of the community members admitted that because of the educative programs, she now understood and appreciated the relevance of child spacing in relation to not only giving a better life to children and their overall development but also the health of the mother.

Ms. Jane Namakula from Kigando said that the efforts to educate the public on family planning enabled her to consider better management of her family in order to secure enough resources for her children. Village Health Team member Edward Kisembo noted that community members were enlightened about sexually transmitted infections and that not all STIs were referred to as syphilis as previously believed. They were willing to go to health centres for proper medical check-ups and diagnosis rather than self-medicate due to the fear of stigma attached to STIs.
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff Capacity development

Two staff members from ARUWE were invited by Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF) to visit Bharatpur, India, where they were exposed to a range of green technologies popularized by Women’s Action for Development (WAFD) in conjunction with Integrated Sustainable Energy and Ecological Development Association (INSEDA). The technologies included bio-gas plants, solar dryers, water harvesting tanks, water heaters and composting baskets. Others were poly greenhouses, low cost toilets and charcoal briquettes. Developed over time in a participatory way with experts and communities, all the technologies were culturally appropriate to the community and used locally available materials particularly bamboo to make them cheaper and more accessible to the poorest households.

Training workshops are to be organized in one of the communities where ARUWE works to introduce and market these technologies to the community and to further develop the technologies to best suit the local environmental, social and economic context for the benefit of the community and the nation at large.

ARUWE facilitated two staff members being inducted and oriented in to Uganda’s cooperative movement. They were further trained in coffee growing including quality control, processing and marketing. This was aimed at enhancing staff capacity to work with women farmers in coffee growing.

ARUWE was supported with more trainings in reproductive health rights and approaches. she was also exposed to available policies and guidelines relating to the world health organisation and the ministry of health.

New faces

ARUWE welcomed Joram Titibya as the new agriculture officer and Freda Nanyanzi and Goretti Basemera as credit officers. This has helped ARUWE to further improve her service delivery in the community.

Volunteers

In November 2013 ARUWE welcomed Sian Wynne, a volunteer from the UK, to work on organisational development. Sian previously worked as a project manager in a UK-based charity. Since arriving, she has supported report writing, funding applications and the
redesign of the ARUWE website among other tasks. ARUWE also recruited Faith Namalwa a new graduate from Makerere University Kampala as a volunteer to work in the Monitoring and Evaluation department.

**Review of ARUWE’s policies**

To be more relevant in our work and widen our scope to include current trends in the development world, ARUWE BOD reviewed ARUWE constitution and improved policies on the human resource and finance policies. The aim was to streamline ARUWE operations in a guided direction.

**Issues that need more thoughts**

Working with community structures and active involvement of local leaders to create community ownership. We have learnt that seeking the support and approval of local government officers and leadership political systems greatly increases the likelihood of an intervention success. By using the influence of these leaders to promote our work and sensitize communities, a formidable groundwork for our interventions is established.

*A consultative meeting held with the local leaders at Kyankwanzi district*
Supporting women in coffee growing.

Coffee growing has proved to be a profitable and effective farming activity and in the future we aim to promote it as an income generating activity for the women we work with. This will involve training them in best practice in coffee growing including the entire coffee processing cycle, value addition, packaging and collective marketing.

Innovations

By building the capacity of farmers to work together in collective marketing and form a co-operative model, ARUWE has supported farmers to sell their grains at a better price, make strong links with their peers and improve their business skills.

ARUWE adopted a working model that further increased capacity of farming communities to carry out profitable agribusiness. This was done by offering free advisory services and extending small loans to the farmers to enable them to invest in their agricultural activities. Furthermore, by re-branding our micro-credit arm as Community Fund, ARUWE has made it more accessible to the most vulnerable communities, many of whom are wary of banks or financial institutions. Community Fund’s accessibility and use of every day language aims to offer an inclusive service that reaches those who need it most.

Challenges / gaps

ARUWE seeks to further strengthen grassroots communities in policy making, Governance and human rights awareness issues are key for community to engage their leaders to lobby and advocate for better service delivery. We work with rural communities that are often denied their right to most essential services such as health care, proper roads, access to clean and safe water, access to markets for agricultural produce and proper education facilities for the children, to mention but a few.

There is a high demand for our support and services, which we have been unable to meet with our resource envelope this year. Despite our achievements in our target districts, more families and communities need our help, and we are often asked to work with new families and communities to improve livelihoods, offer health training and provide safe, clean water sources. ARUWE has been careful not to expand any how.

Transport in remote rural areas continues to be a challenge, with women farmers struggling to transport their produce to market. Many women asked to be supported with bicycles to ease their movements to the respective markets. ARUWE has provided a few and more are needed.

There is a need to invest more in education and skills development for the girl child especially those out of school, to enable them find employment or start income generating activities to improve their livelihoods in to adulthood.
Lessons

We have learnt the value of empowering communities to demand for services deliverables they need as opposed to waiting for 'hand-outs'. By educating communities about the services that are available and how to advocate for their them, ARUWE will continue to apply the Rights Awareness Based Approach to build community skills and knowledge to demand and engage government and other duty bearers.

From our work with women farmers, we have learnt that men can be a reliable source of support to the women if actively involved in women-centered interventions. Husbands, family members and local community leaders are all key stakeholders in women’s development and their involvement in and understanding of our interventions helped women to participate more and have more success.

Using community resources such as Community Agricultural Trainers, Village Health Teams, youth peer educators, and community health personnel during project implementation fostered community participation and ownership and put the community in a better position to demand accountability and advocate for better services.

Engaging youth, school clubs and peers in reproductive health education, HIV/AIDS awareness and hygiene trainings enabled youth active participation which would not have been the case if only adults had been used.
ARUWE has learnt that grass root advocacy is an important approach in empowering rural communities to improve their lively hoods

**Case Study**

ARUWE partnered with grandmother groups and other community structures such as women paralegals to advocate for better housing facilities for the grandmothers. This effort resulted from a request that was made to ARUWE by a group of 150 grandmothers to improve their accommodation facilities which were dilapidated. ARUWE in partnership with Center for Human Rights, Health and Development (CEHURD) sensitized grandmothers and women paralegals in human rights; the human rights based approach to service delivery, good governance and community participation in demanding for better service delivery and equipped them with skills to engage duty bearers in improving service delivery.

A request from the grandmothers and paralegals was forwarded to the Kyankwanzi district Chief Administrative Officer and District planner demanding for improved accommodation facilities for the grandmothers. The CAO responded with a pledge to include repairs of some of the grandmothers’ houses in the district plan and budget for the next financial year 2014/2015.

Grandmother Namusisi’s dilapidated house

Namusisi’s newly constructed house
By creating links within and between communities, ARUWE has learnt the importance of peer learning, informal mentorship, partnership and word of mouth in promoting the importance of development activities and the difference that can be made to a household’s livelihood.

BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO CAUSE A GREATER IMPACT

ARUWE continues to work with and seek partners who share our vision for a better future for the women and children of rural Uganda. By joining forces with organizations who understand the challenges that our beneficiaries face, possible mitigation measures as well as those who bring new expertise or knowledge to our programs, ARUWE is growing stronger every year.

Carmen from Wheels4life handing over a bicycle to one of the Village Health Team members, Mr. Kasirye, during her visit to ARUWE in May 2013 where she gave out 50 more bicycles to the Village Health Team members in Mulagi Sub County.
In December 2013, we welcomed Armin from Swiss Hand, who supports Community Fund. He was interested in seeing the impact that our micro-credit lending was having on the beneficiaries in Mulagi Sub County in Kyankwanzi district with a view to extending his support to Gayaza. As a result of this visit, Community Fund has now successfully launched in Gayaza Sub County.
## Annual income for 2013/14

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<th>30-Apr-14</th>
<th>30-Apr-13</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Receipt (Donations)</strong></td>
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<td>Action Water</td>
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<td>Advocates Coalition For Development</td>
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<td>AWDF (African Women Development Fund)</td>
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<td>Ecological Christian Organisation</td>
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<td>Kitchen Tables Charities Trust</td>
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<td>Virginia Gilder Sleeve(VGIF)</td>
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<td>Wheels 4 Life</td>
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<td><strong>905,177,990</strong></td>
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## Expenditure 2013/14

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<td>1</td>
<td>Water, Hygiene and Sanitation</td>
<td>188,744,290</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Reproductive health rights and HIV/AIDS Awareness</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Food security and nutrition</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Economic empowerment and livelihood</td>
<td>415,624,400</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>905,177,990</td>
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</table>

ORGANIZATION EXPENDITURE

- Water, Hygiene and Sanitation: 24%
- Reproductive health rights and HIV/AIDS Awareness: 13%
- Economic empowerment and livelihood: 46%
- Food security and nutrition: 17%