

GOOD PRACTICE CASE EXAMPLES –

Farmers Training

NAME OF THE PROJECT	Raising animal welfare awareness for livestock farmers in Musanze District, Rwanda
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Organisation	Rwanda Animal Welfare Organization (RAWO)
Position	Executive Director
Country	Rwanda
Project Period	2021–2023
Budget/ Funding	10.000 Euro granted by Welttierschutzstiftung (WTS)
Short description of Organisation	Rwanda Animal Welfare Organization (RAWO) is an NGO in the Northern Province of Rwanda. RAWO is driven by a vision of a world where animals are treated with respect and compassion. Its mission is to advance animal welfare in Rwanda by improving the well-being of humans and animals. RAWO's objectives include engaging the local community through education and communication on animal welfare, collaborating with key stakeholders to ensure it is prioritized in local, regional, and national decision-making. It contributes to sustainable development by promoting environmental conservation and public health initiatives.
Project location (Country, district/state/province)	Rwanda, Northern Province, Musanze District
Background to the intervention	Rwanda is a small East-Central African country, where agriculture and livestock keeping are the cornerstone of the economy and currently account for 25% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP), for employment (80 %), for 90 % of the country's food requirements and for up 37 % of the value of Rwanda's exports in 2021–2022 ¹ , contributing significantly to reduce poverty. However, there is a notable lack of substantial financial investment and focused attention on the livestock and animal welfare sectors. The priority given to wild animal tourism diverts attention and resources from livestock and domestic animals. Moreover, farmers, often facing extreme poverty, limited education, and resources, lack essential awareness about the fundamental needs of animals. This leads to poor animal management practices and husbandry, poor disease prevention and irresponsible use of antibiotics. On the other hand, public veterinarians lack training and face excessive workloads, which diminish their efforts improve animal welfare.

¹ Ministry of Agriculture of Rwanda (2022). *Rwanda's agriculture sector transformation journey over the last 29 years*. [online] Available at: <https://www.minagri.gov.rw/updates/news-details/rwandas-agriculture-sector-transformation-journey-over-the-last-29-years#:~:text=The%20agricultural%20sector%20currently%20accounts> [Accessed 29 March, 2024].

<p>Objectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise awareness among livestock farmers about the importance of animal welfare and the Five Freedoms of animals and its importance for livestock production. 2. Equip farmers with essential skills and knowledge for responsible animal ownership and effective livestock management. 3. Promote the “One Health Approach,” emphasizing the interconnectedness of animal, human, and environmental health. 4. Encourage the responsible use of antibiotics in livestock to prevent antimicrobial resistance and safeguard public health.
<p>Preparational phase</p>	<p>Development of training materials: training manual (32 pp) translated into local language (Kinyarwanda).</p> <p>Capacity building of the project implementation team (RAWO Staff)</p> <p>Stakeholders’ Meeting: 27 officials from different key Rwandan livestock institutions met to discuss and provide essential and key recommendations for the successful execution of the project activities, through the mobilisation of local leaders and farmers and providing the training venues.</p> <p>Collaboration with local leaders for beneficiaries’ selection: With support of the District Animal Resources Officer (DARO) and Sector Animal Resources Officers (SARO), RAWO staff identified and selected 1,800 livestock farmers from the entire district. In each sector, 120 influential farmers being literate were selected to participate in the training.</p>
<p>Key activity</p>	<p>Training for livestock farmers over 1 year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers groups of around 120 participants were formed attending landscape characteristics, cultural background, livestock keeping systems among other traits. • Each group received 3 trainings per month per sector. • Each training session comprehended a 1-hour theory class and afterwards a practical session (also around 1 hour long) at a nearby farm.
<p>Impact of intervention on animal welfare and livelihoods</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A total of 1,702 livestock farmers (around 84.9 % of target) from all 15 sectors of Musanze district were trained, including beneficiaries from government program called “One Cow per Poor Family” (Girinka program) and local livestock advisors and Community Animal Health Workers. Field training often involved interactions with other farmers in the community, providing opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing. b. The training provided extensive experience to the project staff and strengthened the relationship between RAWO and its key stakeholders. c. RAWO developed comprehensive training materials that will be used in future training projects and by other stakeholders. d. The project strengthened the capacity of RAWO staff in animal welfare, which will help them to undertake future projects. e. RAWO built a strong relationship and collaboration with Musanze district, sector public officials, and key stakeholders in the livestock sector in Rwanda.

<p>Challenges</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Long distance covered by farmers: Some farmers had to travel a long distance to attend the training sessions, causing delay and additional travel costs. b. Farmers expectations: of funding for animal shelter construction, buying animals, feed, water and drugs. They also expected emergency clinical intervention and support and more trainings. c. Lack of farmer's communication platforms which affected farmers associations and cooperatives. d. Transportation means for RAWO staff posed a challenge, as the rough topography required a strong vehicle to access the farmers. e. Lack of smartphones thus sharing of information and skills between trained farmers and other livestock keepers. f. Lack of funds for shelter construction: many farmers have hindered ability to invest in improved shelter infrastructure. g. Shortage of forage: especially during dry seasons or in areas with limited grazing land. h. Living together with animals: due to space constraints or inadequate facilities, affecting health and growth of animals and raises the issue of the transmission of disease to humans. i. Inaccessibility to drinkable water sources: water scarcity forces most of the farmers to water in the streams or untreated rainwater with detrimental effect on animal health and welfare. j. Inadequate veterinary services: far from Musanze city there is inadequate access to veterinary pharmacy and services.
<p>M&E</p>	<p>Following the completion of the training sessions, participants answered a questionnaire designed to evaluate the impact of the intervention.</p> <p>Sampling: The 15 sectors of Musanze District were clustered into three categories based on similar agroecological conditions and total of 135 livestock farmers was selected to participate in the survey.</p> <p>Results: Before training most participants stated they had little or average knowledge about animal welfare related topics. After training participants stated they had more knowledge on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Nutrition (60 %), • Hydration (65 %) • Environment & Housing (for shelter importance 60 % and for hygiene 65 %) • Appropriate health care (60 %) • Proper use of antimicrobials (59 %) • Antimicrobial resistance (63 %) • One Health approach (64 %)

<p>Lessons learned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers and government officials had little basic knowledge of animal welfare, which has affected a lot how animals are treated. Hence, similar projects could be expanded to other districts and provide a refresher. • Most public vets at the sector level are focusing on other tasks rather than animal welfare-related work. • Poverty and lack of skills are the main constraints limiting farmers in the fulfilment of animals’ needs. Farmers gain valuable insights during training sessions with their fellow colleagues, by sharing local experiences and success. Hence, Livestock Farmers Field Schools (LFFS) would enable them to learn from their colleagues. • M&E has shown that there was a change in the behaviour of farmers and government officials towards the needs of animals and this impact indirectly improved animal production and will ultimately support poverty reduction and socio-economic transformation.
<p>Source documents (include reports and/or relevant organisational website if possible)</p>	<p>https://rawo.org.rw/</p>

Success story

During our practical training on animal welfare, we visited a young woman who owned a cow. After emphasizing the importance of the Five Freedoms, particularly the freedom from hunger, thirst, and malnutrition, it was too hot and we observed her cow looking dehydrated without access to water. When questioned, the farmer admitted she hadn’t provided water, ignorant of its critical impact. We quickly gave water to the cow, which drank excitedly. The group of farmers and the cow owner were surprised and grateful, realizing the importance of daily water provision to the cow. This newfound knowledge marked a significant success in our training, as the woman committed to ensuring her cow’s well-being through regular access to clean water.



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