



Contents

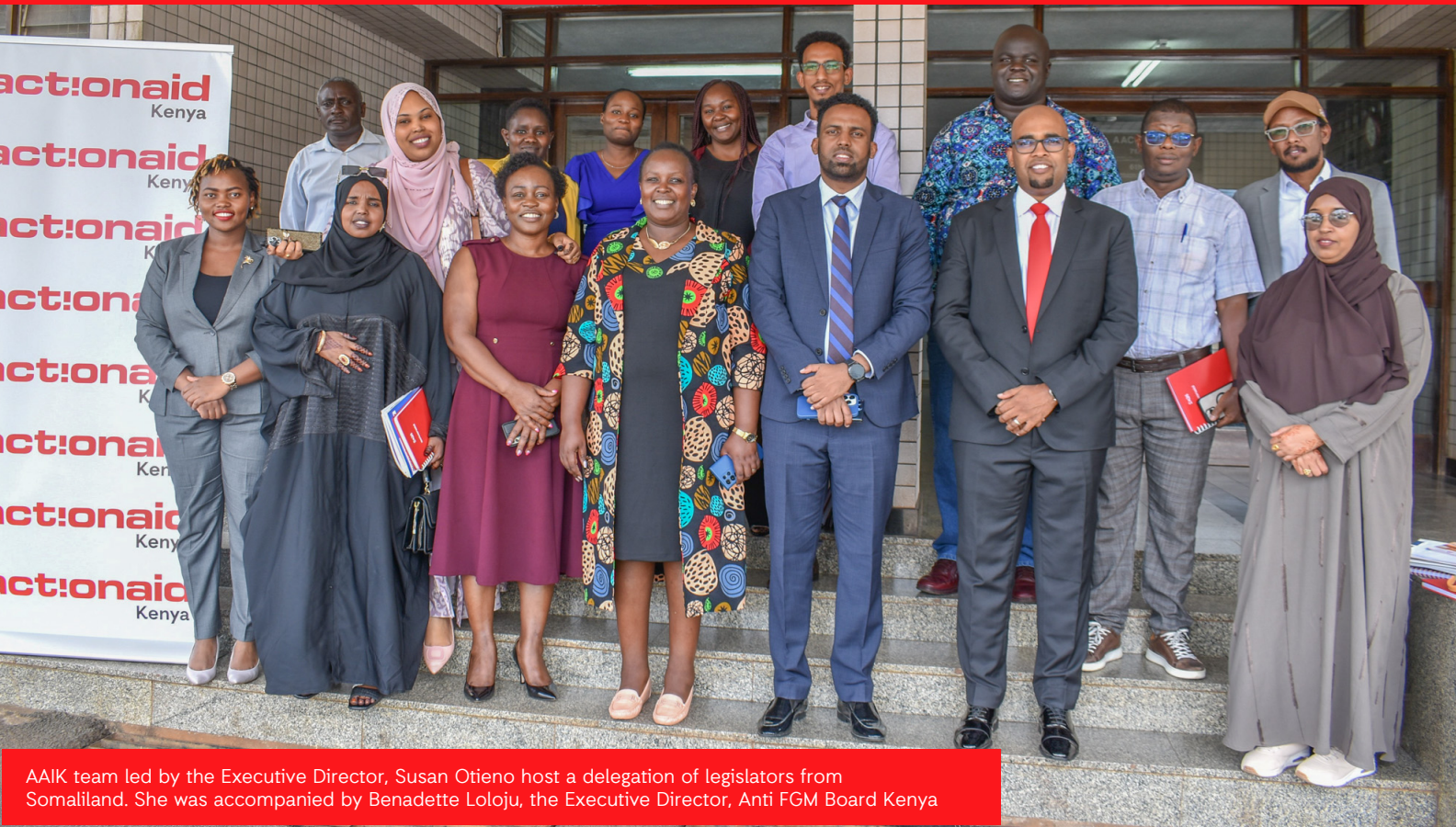
- Collaborative Efforts to Achieve Gender Equality and End FGM/C in Somaliland **3**
- ActionAid Kenya holds Collaborative Dialogue with Murang'a County Government for Sustainable Development **5**
- Advancing Humanitarian Response: Reflecting on Quality and Improvement **7**

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Collaborative Efforts to Achieve Gender Equality and End FGM/C in Somaliland.



AAIK team led by the Executive Director, Susan Otieno host a delegation of legislators from Somaliland. She was accompanied by Benadette Loloju, the Executive Director, Anti FGM Board Kenya

In a landmark move towards gender equality and the eradication of Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C), a delegation from Somaliland recently visited Kenya to garner support and insights. Led by Hon. Amina Elmi Farid, the only woman member of parliament in Somaliland, the delegation engaged with various stakeholders, including the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) and the Anti-FGM Board, to strategize on ways to address these critical issues in their region.

The commitment displayed by the Kenyan counterparts, particularly the Kenya Women Senators Association and the Anti-FGM Board, underscores the importance of regional collaboration in tackling gender disparities and harmful traditional practices.

Senator Hamida Kibwana's assertion that progress in gender equality cannot be achieved in isolation is a poignant reminder of the interconnectedness of the struggle for women's rights across borders. "It's disheartening that we still only have one woman serving in parliament in Somaliland. As Kenya Women Senators, we are committed to supporting our sister, Hon. Amina Elmi Farid, in her efforts to lobby for increased female representation in parliament, mirroring the progress we've made in Kenya." stated Hamida.

The journey towards gender equality is like watching a baby learn to crawl before they walk; it takes time and effort. But here we are, ready to advocate and lobby tirelessly for the women of Somaliland. We're even prepared to extend our efforts beyond borders to mobilize women and amplify their voices in the legislative assembly." said Hamida

Somaliland, like many other regions, faces significant challenges in achieving gender equality, with only one woman serving in its parliament. However, the determination expressed by Hon. Amina and her delegation to introduce policies aimed at promoting gender equality and ending FGM/C signals a positive step towards change. By leveraging the experiences and successes of countries like Kenya, Somaliland aims to accelerate its progress in this regard.

"After my enlightening visit to Kenya, I've gained invaluable insights, chief among them being the urgent need to introduce the two-thirds gender rule and establish a dedicated directorate to combat gender-based violence, particularly the menace of Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting (FGM/C). I extend my gratitude to the Kenyan women parliamentarians for their invaluable insights and their promise to support Somaliland in embarking on the journey towards gender equality. The Kenyan government has been exceptionally resourceful during our visit, and for that, I am sincerely thankful." - Amina Elmi Farid



Somaliland legislator Hon. Amina Elmi Farid (L), with ActionAid International Kenya's executive director Susan Otieno (C) and Muna Isse Mahad (R) pose for a photo after a meeting on February 29, 2024, in Nairobi.

The prevalence of FGM/C in Somaliland reported at an alarming 98%, underscores the urgency of concerted action to address this harmful practice. While Kenya has made commendable strides in reducing new FGM/C cases, cross-border FGM/C remains a concerning trend. The commitment of leaders like Hon. Umulkheir Kassim, Women Rep, Mandera County to support Somaliland in combating FGM/C highlights the importance of solidarity in ending this human rights violation.

"My community shares many cultural and experiential similarities with Somaliland, and unfortunately, FGM/C is one of them. We stand in solidarity with you to commence the journey toward ending FGM/C. There is no justification for this practice, as it constitutes a severe violation of women's rights." stated Umulkheir

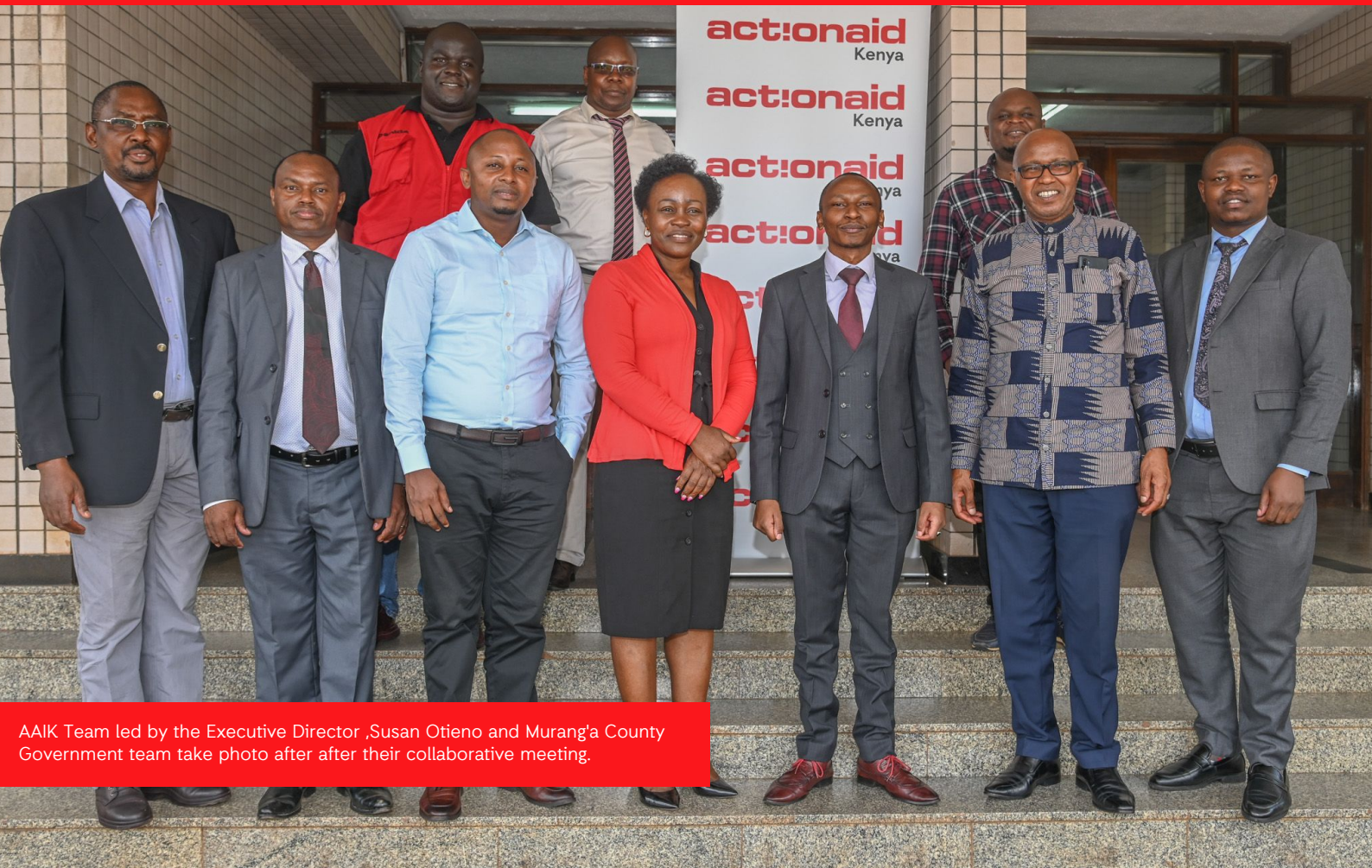
Furthermore, the collaborative efforts between Somaliland and Kenya extend beyond parliamentary support to include technical assistance and knowledge-sharing in policy development and implementation. The engagement with organizations such as ActionAid International Kenya and ActionAid International Somaliland, under The Girl Generation project, underscores the significance of partnerships in driving change at the grassroots level.

"I urge our esteemed women legislators and the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action to seize this moment and fortify the nascent bonds between our nations. Let us harness these connections to propel forward in our collective pursuit of implementing the two-thirds gender rule and eradicating FGM in the Horn of Africa." Susan Otieno, Executive Director, ActionAid International Kenya

As the delegation from Somaliland returns home with newfound insights and support, the journey towards gender equality and the eradication of FGM/C continues. The commitment of both countries to work together in this endeavor is a testament to the power of collective action in advancing women's rights and social justice.

In conclusion, the collaboration between Kenya and Somaliland offers a beacon of hope for the millions of women and girls affected by gender inequality and FGM/C in the Horn of Africa. By uniting efforts, sharing resources, and advocating for policy reforms, these nations pave the way for a future where all individuals, regardless of gender, can live free from discrimination and violence.

ActionAid Kenya holds Collaborative Dialogue with Murang'a County Government for Sustainable Development



AAIK Team led by the Executive Director, Susan Otieno and Murang'a County Government team take photo after their collaborative meeting.

ActionAid Kenya, a leading non-profit organization dedicated to social justice and community empowerment, recently welcomed a delegation from the County Government of Murang'a, led by the esteemed Deputy Governor, H.E. Stephen Munania. The meeting, characterized by a spirit of partnership and innovation, marked a significant milestone in the pursuit of shared goals for community welfare and development.

From innovative projects to strategic partnerships, the dialogue centered on harnessing collective efforts to address pressing challenges and unlock opportunities for positive change to combat climate change underscores the pivotal role they play in shaping a resilient response to environmental challenges.

During the engaging discussion, representatives from ActionAid Kenya and the Murang'a County Government explored various avenues for collaboration aimed at amplifying the impact of initiatives within the county.



Collaborative dialogue between ActionAid Kenya and Murang'a County Government at AAIK Offices

"We are honored to host Deputy Governor H.E. Stephen Munania and the esteemed delegation from the County Government of Murang'a," remarked Susan Otieno, ActionAid Kenya's Executive Director. "This partnership underscores our mutual commitment to advancing community welfare and driving sustainable development in Murang'a County."

The discussions revolved around key thematic areas including healthcare, education, gender equality, environmental conservation, and economic empowerment. Both parties expressed enthusiasm about the potential synergies and opportunities that lie ahead, emphasizing the importance of inclusive, participatory approaches in decision-making and implementation.

Deputy Governor H.E. Stephen Munania lauded the collaborative spirit demonstrated by ActionAid Kenya, stating, "By joining forces with organizations like ActionAid Kenya, we can leverage resources, expertise, and networks to create lasting impact and improve the lives of our residents."

As the partnership unfolds, stakeholders are poised to embark on a journey marked by innovation, inclusivity, and community engagement.

Advancing Humanitarian Response: Reflecting on Quality and Improvement



ActionAid Kenya team and IHART (International Humanitarian and Resilience Team) engage community members in Kishushe, Taita Taveta County.

On the 26th to 28th of February 2024, ActionAid Kenya and its partners in Taita Taveta County embarked on a pivotal journey, delving deep into the latest trends in humanitarian response. In a collaborative effort, they scrutinized the quality of their interventions during various crises, seeking avenues for enhancement, and reaffirming their commitment to delivering timely and effective aid to those most affected.

Humanitarian crises, whether sparked by natural disasters or conflict, often thrust communities into states of vulnerability and distress. The response they receive during such dire circumstances can make all the difference in their ability to recover and rebuild their lives. Recognizing this, ActionAid Kenya and its allies are dedicated to continual learning and improvement in their programmatic approach to humanitarian assistance.



Hachangu Hakalima, IHART (International Humanitarian and Resilience Team) PQMEL Coordinator makes a presentation during the IHART PQMEAL workshop in Voi, Taita Taveta County.

Furthermore, the quality of response extends beyond the tangible outcomes to encompass the dignity and agency of the affected individuals. Humanitarian aid should not merely be a handout but a means of restoring people's sense of autonomy and self-worth. ActionAid Kenya and its collaborators are committed to fostering community participation and decision-making throughout the response process, ensuring that the voices of those impacted are heard and respected.

ActionAid Kenya and its partners are not content with merely identifying areas for improvement. They are dedicated to translating these insights into concrete actions that will elevate the standard of humanitarian response in Taita Taveta County and beyond. Through innovation, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to humanitarian principles, they strive to ensure that no one is left behind in times of crisis.

At the heart of this endeavor lies a commitment to reflection. By critically examining past responses, these organizations can identify areas of success and areas for growth. They scrutinized not only the efficacy of their interventions but also their adherence to humanitarian principles, such as impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Through this introspection, they aim to ensure that their actions align with the needs and rights of the affected populations.

One key aspect under the spotlight is the timeliness of response. In the wake of a crisis, every moment counts. Delays in delivering aid can exacerbate suffering and prolong recovery. Thus, ActionAid Kenya and its partners explored strategies to streamline their processes, ensuring that assistance reaches those in need with greater speed and efficiency.

Equally important is the effectiveness of the aid provided. Beyond just delivering relief goods, there is a growing emphasis on building resilience within communities, empowering them to withstand future shocks. To this end, organizations are integrating measures for capacity-building and long-term sustainable development into their humanitarian efforts.



Esther Sharara Regional Humanitarian Advisor Southern Africa, IHART (International Humanitarian and Resilience Team) engages ActionAid Kenya partners during the IHART PQMEAL workshop in Voi, Taita Taveta County

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