

# Scaling Gender Transformation

## Adapting a Gender Transformative Approach from Bangladesh to Burundi

### Introduction

Gender Transformative change is what happens when women can claim their rights, get support from their community, and overcome the inequality they face. One tool that helps achieve this is CARE's EKATA model. The Empowerment, Knowledge, and Transformative Action (EKATA) model started in Bangladesh to support women's and girls' empowerment so that they are able to engage those in power to act on issues that affect them. It is blazing a new trail in gender transformative programming.

A project participant woman in Burundi says: "I am an empowered woman because if I have difficulties in my household, I am able to resolve them effectively. I am empowered, and I am intelligent. With EKATA, I got rid of fear and learned to do business. Before, I could not even put a foot where there are people."

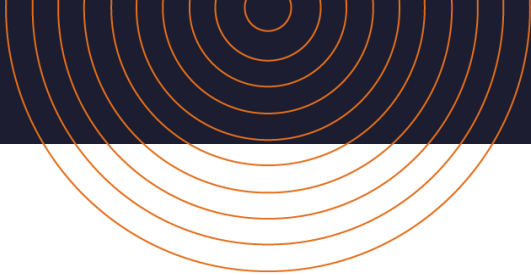
**"With EKATA, I got rid of fear and learned to do business. Before, I could not even put a foot where there are people."**



*Photo Caption text*

### Origins of EKATA

The EKATA model originated in Bangladesh to promote education, empowerment, and social transformation to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality, economic well-being, and food and nutrition security. EKATA grows from ActionAid's Reflect approach, inspired by Paul Freire. His writings emphasize the significance of helping oppressed people gain the necessary skills and critical consciousness to challenge current power disparities, push social change and assert their basic rights. In Bangladesh EKATA was part of the USAID funded SHOUHARDO (Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities) project, focused on food security and child nutrition. The EKATA model used a rights-based livelihood approach to address a variety of structural causes that were specific to the community being assessed.



The SHOUHARDO project utilized the key aspects targeted by the EKATA model to affect the change in malnutrition rates in children. By the end of the project there was a 4.5% reduction rate in stunting annually due also to the techniques utilized in the EKATA groups. The successful implementation of EKATA in Bangladesh made it a good choice to adapt in Burundi with Win-Win for Gender, Agriculture and Nutrition: Testing a Gender-Transformative Approach from Asia in Africa project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

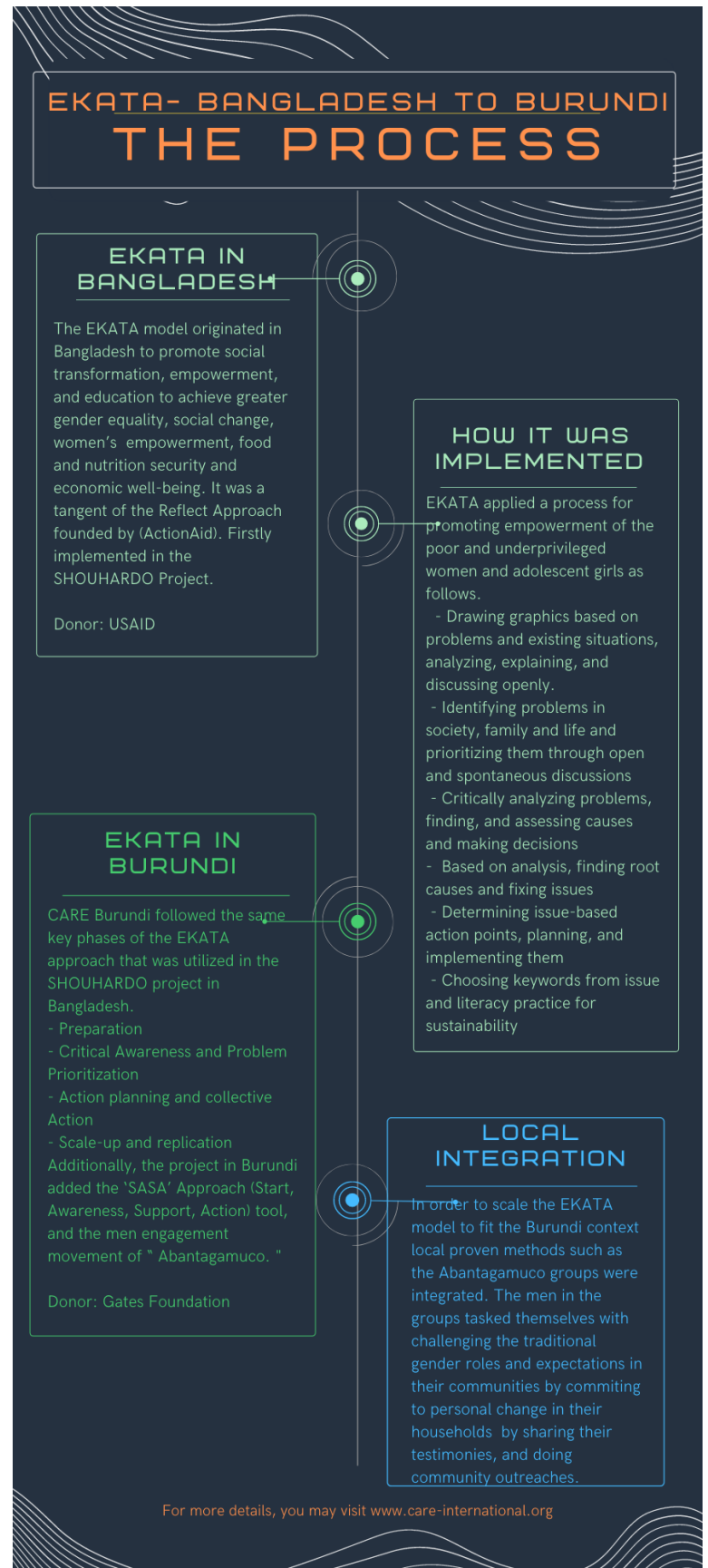
### Why EKATA?

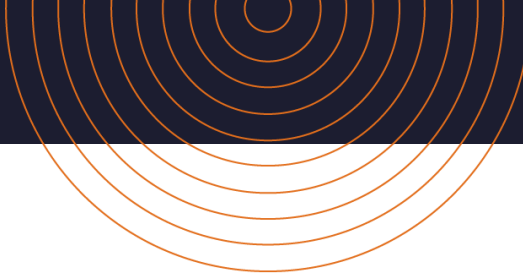
Burundi's Win-Win project team believed that an explicit and more intensive focus on gender equality can improve both gender justice and agriculture productivity, income, and food security. EKATA was selected as it was found flexible to scale and implement in new contexts. The approach focuses on the philosophical aspects of gender equality and not just the structures; such as governmental and community institutions that hinder gender equality.

### Adapting EKATA

EKATA in Burundi combined approaches proven effective and useful in Burundi. CARE Burundi followed the same key phases from the SHOUHARDO project.

In Bangladesh, EKATA focused primarily to empowerment for poor and underprivileged women and adolescent girls. The major adaptation from Bangladesh to Burundi involves the decision by the CARE Burundi team to engage men. The team believed that to thoroughly deal with gender equality and impact the women involved in the EKATA groups, men also had to be involved in the process. This resulted in integrating "Abantagamuco" male champions into the project.





The name Abatangamuco means ‘those who shine light’, and men involved in the movement see themselves as individuals who have realized the errors of their old ways, have ‘seen the light’ in terms of how they ought to live, and wish to spread this knowledge and outlook to as many others as possible. The main task these men have set themselves is to challenge traditional gender-roles and expectations in their communities through personal change, testimonies, and local community outreach activities.

### Results

- **More food:** 166.5% increase of rice sold, mainly due to greater production.
- **Better nutrition:** highest proportion of households (62%) within acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS) range.
- **Women’s empowerment:** the highest women’s empowerment Pro-WEiA score of 0.65, showing an 84% increase from baseline to end-line.
- **More wealth:** EKATA women were more likely (12.8 percentage points) to have moved to first quintile, meaning improved wealth, as well as the largest decline in those in the third quintile (a reduction of 13.8%).
- **Increased women’s empowerment:** Women in EKATA saw the highest Pro-WEiA score of 0.65, showing an 84% increase from baseline to end-line.



- **Women improved participation:** decision making rose from 25.7% to 34.5% at end line.
- **Gender parity:** improved by 51%
- **Higher benefit to cost ratio:** 5:1 compared to 3:1 for gender light approaches

Such results were due to the explicit and more intensive focus on gender in the agriculture sector by scaling the proven EKATA approach from Bangladesh to Burundi. Key takeaway from EKATA implementation in Burundi is the importance of accessing the community’s needs and understanding the social dynamics before implementing approaches. The EKATA model was a great success in Burundi because proven approaches as the movement of “Abatangamuco” were integrated into the model.

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