



Norwegian People's Aid
Rwanda



A COMPENDIUM OF STORIES OF CHANGE FOR THE PPIMA PROJECT

30 Stories of Change

May 2020 – May 2022

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Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

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May 2022

30 Stories of Change from the Public Policy Information,
Monitoring and Advocacy (PPIMA) Project

A Compendium of Stories of Change

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MONITORING AND ADVOCACY (PPIMA) PROJECT

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PPIMA PARTNERS

The Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy (PPIMA) project is a civil society support project aimed at strengthening the voice of Rwandan civil society organizations (CSOs) and citizens in public policy affairs. In 2022, the PPIMA Project phase IV has 20 partners.

Transparency International Rwanda Chapter (TI-Rw): Promotes good governance and transparency in Rwanda. Undertakes anti-corruption and anti-injustice initiatives.

Federation of Leagues and Associations for the Defence of Human Rights in Rwanda (CLADHO): Protects and promotes human rights. Monitors and conducts research on public policy issues.

PAX PRESS: Focuses on community-based reporting by training journalists and enabling them to publish through its media partners.

Never Again Rwanda (NAR): Strengthens citizen's capacity to analyse the root causes of conflict and facilitate dialogue among peers in order to generate ideas and activities that work towards sustainable peace and socio-economic development.

Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights and Development (GLIHD): Contributes to the respect and promotion of the rights of individuals and groups. Engages in public interest litigation.

Health Development Initiative-Rwanda (HDI): Strives to improve quality and accessibility of health care for all Rwandans through advocacy, education and training.

Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network (RC-CDN): Mobilises civil society, citizens and government to protect the environment and fight climate change.

HAGURUKA works to defend and promote the rights of women and children.

Center for Rule of Law Rwanda (CERULAR): Strengthening the culture of respect for the rule of law in Rwanda.

We Do Green works to involve youth while leaving no one behind in the works towards the protection of our environment, the adaptation and mitigation to climate change.

Association de la Jeunesse pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme et le Développement (AJPRODHO): Empowers youth to promote human rights through advocacy, research, networking and coalition building.

Imbaraga organisation: Defends and safeguards farmers' interests and promotes their socio-economic rights.

Rwanda Women's Network (RWN): Promotes the socio-economic welfare of women in Rwanda. Its work includes the CSC process and gender mainstreaming.

Tubibe Amahoro (TA): Focuses on the resolution of resource-related conflict, training on human rights, and emphasising the rights of women and youth.

Communauté des Potiers du Rwanda (COPORWA): Strengthens the capacity of the historically marginalised group "Batwa" to actively participate in the country's social, economic and political affairs.

Association Pour Le Developpement De Nyabimata (Adenya): Promotes rural development by helping people improve their living conditions.

Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC): Focuses on the engagement of men in gender equality and combatting GBV. They have integrated citizen participation in decision making processes and the community scorecard into their work.

Action pour le développement du peuple (ADEPE): Promote social protection and conflict resolution in the community and to advocate for human rights.

Faith Victory Association (FVA): Support communities to fight against poverty, primarily targeting women, children and marginalized persons. They work also on civic participation and gender equality, including the CSC process.

Duhozanye: Supports and advocates for the rights of Genocide survivors, civic participation in governance and human rights promotion and social protection especially for genocide survivors and widows of victims of the genocide.

ENABLING CITIZENS TO INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

Supporting citizens to engage in public policy processes has been the primary objective of PPIMA since the start. Among a range of methods developed and used by PPIMA partners to enable citizen engagement, the most prominent tool has been the Community Score Card. The PPIMA IV has initiated strategies to sustain the community score card.

When citizens participate, they benefit but also own the challenges and limits of the processes seeking their participation. PPIMA enables citizens to engage, influence and prioritize recommendations in their best interests as well as recommendations for the best practices for duty bearers and service providers.

Through NPA support, CLADHO and other PPIMA partners have encouraged and supported districts in the use of the CSC as a user-friendly and sustainable tool to improve meaningful citizen participation in district planning and budgeting.

Story of Change 1

Influencing the Government to adopt the Community Scorecard as a tool for improving citizen participation



Civic participation in decision-making processes is an important component of democracy. When citizens participate in the development process of their nation, they not only benefit from it, but also take ownership of the challenges of that process and are able to make recommendations around best practices for the future.

Since 2010, NPA has been supporting local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the promotion and use of the Community Score Card (CSC) model that engages both citizens and Service Providers in a constructive dialogue on community issues. It also facilitates citizen participation in the preparation process of development plans, budgets and performance contracts (Imihigo) at the district level. The CSC is currently operating in 16 districts, and NPA and its partners have been lobbying the Government of Rwanda Stakeholders to take ownership of the CSC as a sustainable tool to improve citizen participation in district planning and budgeting processes, as well as assessing the quality of service delivery.

The Scorecard has gained a reputation in PPIMA supported districts as a reliable and effective tool to promote citizen participation. For example, in Ngororero and Gatsibo districts, the CSC priorities identified during 2020 planning process have been adopted in their district budgets.

As a first substantive step to the institutionalizing of the CSC as a Government owned tool, CLADHO (a PPIMA Partner) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) in September 2021 which will promote and formalize the use of the CSC as a planning and budgeting tool at the district level.

The MoU will also facilitate collaboration, learning and information sharing among the stakeholders including lead sector ministries, district leaderships, CSOs, citizens, councilors, Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) members and Governance Focal Persons (GFPs).

Much work remains, but NPA hopes that with the help of its Partners and the ongoing collaboration with the Government of Rwanda, the ultimate objective of the CSC becoming a mainstreamed tool for citizen participation across the entire country will eventually be realized.

RAISING AWARENESS OF AN ISSUE

Civil society takes a multi-prong approach to drawing the attention of government officials to key issues affecting citizens by advocating at both a local and national level, carrying out specific research on issues affecting citizens and drawing attention to issues of concern through advocacy.

Story of Change 2

Climate change adaptation and mitigation practices through the use of efficient cookstoves as an alternative solution to tree-cutting for firewood.

Rwanda's energy balance shows that about 85 percent of its overall primary energy consumption is based on biomass, (99% of all households use biomass for cooking). Most households (66%) use three-stone cookstoves or traditional cooking stoves with firewood. The average household uses around 1.8 tons of firewood each year to satisfy its cooking needs with this type of cooking stove.

Beyond the availability of firewood and charcoal, the most significant impact of wood and charcoal cooking is the effect on people's health and the environment in general. According to the Ministry of Health, more than three million Rwandans suffer from respiratory problems every year, of which 13 percent are caused by air pollution. In 2017, deaths linked to poor air quality reached 12,000, with over 9,040 deaths out of 12,000 caused by indoor air pollution and 2,960 cause by ambient air pollution. Among the major issues that challenge the environment in Rwanda is the wide use of open firewood stoves for cooking; similarly, the hunting, cutting, fetching, and carrying of tree logs and branches primarily in rural communities have caused increasing deforestation despite the government's forestation and tree planting efforts.

Cooking energy resources have a direct influence on the quality of life of the households' members; the livelihoods of rural communities depend on access, use, and management of such resources. Hence there is an urgent need for suitable and affordable alternatives to firewood.

Tubibe Amahoro demonstrated climate change adaptation and mitigation practices through the use of efficient cookstoves as an alternative and viable solution to tree-cutting for firewood. Piloted in two districts of Rutsiro and Burera, TA installed 5,000 Cooking Stoves in 2,500 Households of people comprised of widows, HMPs, and other vulnerable community members.

These include:

- i. Faster cooking (up to 50% or more sometimes).
- ii. Cleaner cooking (or lower indoor air pollution or kitchen smoke) resulting in better health for family members
- iii. Lower consumption of biomass and therefore reduction of cost: effort on the part of the household which utilizes biomass (e.g. wood, charcoal, etc). This reduction has a positive and direct environmental impact also due to lower consumption of firewood. Improved cookstoves have been designed in such a way that the households can continue using the same biomass so there is minimal impact on cooking practices.



Before Photo: Traditional Inefficient cookstoves (open fire/ 3-stone fire) with increased air pollution.

- iv. Better living conditions – cleaner cooking, better utilization of time due to faster cooking meaning less time spent in the kitchen, thus freeing time for other useful chores.
- v. Safety for women and children who, in most cases, have to travel far and long collecting biomass; household members are using less time to fetch firewood and to cook, directly reducing the workload for children and women.



After photo: Efficient & Improved Biomass cookstoves with reduced emissions.

66 *I was among the lucky families to receive an improved cookstove in June 2021; my life has improved since then, due to this 2-in-1 cookstove, I used to spend 4,000 Rwf per month to buy firewood but now I use a maximum of 1,500 Rwf. Besides, the stove enables me to save on cooking time and do other chores; before I used to remain close to the cooking area in order to keep the light on but now, I light the stove and go to fetch water or do other things.*

- Dusabumuremyi Florence from Rarankuba village, Mageragere Cell in Mushubati Sector, Rutsiro District.



Improved cookstove demonstration in Burera and Rutsiro also prompted TA to commission a research in the 4 districts of Burera, Ngororero, Karongi, and Rutsiro districts. The research aimed at assessing the effects of climate change, and factors contributing to climate change and came up with recommendations on needed actions to develop climate change resilience in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Generally, the use of inefficient cookstoves and traditional charcoal production contribute significantly to the increase in the quantity of firewood for cooking and producing charcoal. 82.75 % of respondents from the study area use three-stone fire/traditional stoves, which are not environmentally friendly. It was discovered that households utilizing improved cooking stoves spend 130 minutes, but those using traditional stoves spend 226 minutes. The time saved can be put to good use in the home.

Households that utilize inefficient cooking technologies and do not own a woodlot spend an average of Rwf 600 (12 kg or 4 pieces of wood x Rwf 150) per day on wood purchases, thus, making Frw 18 000 per month and a rough estimation of annual cost is at Rwf 216,000. The money saved is allocated to other households' needs including payment of mutuelle de sante (health) insurance, scholastic materials, contributions to saving and loans groups at the community level, and purchase of other household items.

The Rwandan Law on Public Procurement is currently sufficiently implemented, due to the systemic changes made based on the evidence gathered under NPA support.

Story of Change 3

Ensuring integrity and transparency in procurement processes in Rwanda.

In order to streamline Rwanda's public procurement system and align it with the fundamental principles of transparency, competition, economy, efficiency, fairness and accountability, the Law on public procurement was enacted in 2007, followed by the Law establishing the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority (RPPA) in December 2007. However, since the enactment of the law, a number of gaps affecting integrity and transparency have been identified in public procurement processes, especially within infrastructural projects in Rwanda.

In 2021, Transparency International Rwanda (TI-Rw), conducted a baseline survey on the Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System in the Infrastructure Sector in Rwanda. The study collected and analyzed data from bidders, public procurement regulators, and other stakeholders, and assessed the status of corruption in the public procurement process, particularly in infrastructure projects. The gaps identified include the law not allowing the involvement of external multi-stakeholders to play an oversight role in public procurement processes considering infrastructure projects use big portions of the national budget. This was one of the major underlying causes of different types of corruption within the sector such as, conflict of interest and nepotism by senior managers and internal tender committee members as well as monetary bribes.

The study estimations showed that the total extrapolated amount paid for corruption in the infrastructure related procurement is worth 14,207,178,842 Rwandan Francs, which corresponds to the cost of 23.2 km of asphalted road of Ngoma – Rwabusoro - Nyanza (TI-Rw; 2021).

Decision makers and other stakeholders consequently built on the recommendations from this study to make a number of commitments and changes. The parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) considered the recommendations while amending the law N°62/2018 of 25/08/2018, governing public procurement in Rwanda, but also engaged other stakeholders in the process as recommended by TI-Rw.

On 6th of September 2021, while launching the Judicial year 2021/2022, the President of Rwanda quoted the evidence presented by TI-Rw, as per the Public Procurement law and systems baseline findings.

Other regulatory bodies are also currently continuing to execute action plans with commitments established based on the recommendations made by TI-Rw, to ensure consistent compliance. These include the Office of the Auditor General, Rwanda Public Procurement Authority (RPPA), and Office of the Ombudsman.

TI-Rw continued with efforts to further increase public awareness and compliance on integrity and perception of corruption in public procurement processes, with a focus on the infrastructure sector.

Story of Change 4

PPIMA as a trusted source of information to curb down bribery and corruption in Rwanda.



Since 2010, NPA has supported data collection basing on experiences and perceptions, which has informed mechanisms for substantially reducing bribery and corruption in Rwanda.

The Ministry of Justice and the justice chain shall continue to build anti-corruption mechanisms and the ministry will not tolerate corruption or any behaviour related to it”,

said the Judicial Spokesperson, during the dissemination of RBI findings for 2021.

Transparency International Rwanda (TI-Rw) conducts an annual citizen perception index on the status of bribery in the country. This is done by highlighting services and institutions prone to bribery, providing the status of reporting on bribery and corruption cases and reasons for not reporting these cases, among others.

The Rwanda Bribery Index (RBI) survey is conducted to determine the prevalence (evidence and perception) of corruption on Rwanda as reported by Rwandan households and identifying institutions and organizations, particularly vulnerable to corruption. The survey also assesses the impact of corruption on service delivery and gathers concrete information on the size of bribes paid by Rwandan citizens while seeking to access a specific service.

The RBI findings have been the benchmark of PPIMA's advocacy activities which are geared towards influencing positive systemic change in the fight against corruption and promotion of good governance in Rwanda. NPA partners have disseminated and used the RBI findings for advocacy through national and provincial dialogue meetings, in which national and local decision makers, institutions and other stakeholders have collectively established action plans with measures and mechanisms for curbing corruption.

There has been a significant increase in responsiveness by Rwanda government and private institutions towards the reduction of bribery and corruption as a result of the decisions made based on RBI findings. This is evident especially through the identified institutions which registered the highest likelihood and prevalence of bribe. For example, the private sector that was registered at 20.40% likelihood and 15.20% of prevalence.

Based on the 2021 RBI evidence, the key Rwandan anti-corruption institutions, such as, National Public Procurement Authority (NPPA), Office of the Ombudsman, Office of the Auditor General and Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB), agreed on a number of commitments that will further reduce bribery and corruption among both government institutions and private sector. Commitments have been made around harmonization of partnerships, availing capacity building and equipment for anti-corruption institutions, strengthening the existing corruption

reporting tools and raising awareness on the whistle-blower's protection law, among others.

The 2021 RBI report also underpins that a low level of reporting bribery and corruption remains among the challenges impeding the fight against corruption, with 89.4% in fear of self-incrimination. It is in this regard that TI-Rw initiated various mechanisms for raising public awareness on the dangers of corruption and channels for reporting bribery and corruption cases. Through the 2021 NPA-supported anti-corruption mechanisms, a total of 129 cases of corruption and bribery were reported. By the end of the year, approximately 65 (50.4%) commitments towards solving them had already been made.

We are receiving more civil registrations to legalize marriage than ever before.

Executive Secretary of a Sector in Rusizi



Photo: Couples during session with Ababibyi b'amahoro in Bugarama sector.



Photo: Husbands during swearing-in ceremony in Bweyeye Sector.



Photo: Wives during a collective swearing in ceremony.

Story of Change 5

Addressing the root causes of family conflicts through NPA-supported strategies.

A family is the foundation of any society. It is an entity that gives real meaning to life and existence.

As such, it constitutes the cornerstone of any social system and the breakdown of the family unit has implications on all aspects of society.

Today's families experience problems such as unfaithfulness, domestic violence, child molestation, separation and divorce. Among the causes of these problems is unlawful marriages and polygamy.

According to a baseline conducted in Rusizi district by PPIMA partner Faith Victory Association (FVA), with the technical and financial support of NPA, there is a large number of unlawful marriages.

53% of respondents in the baseline reported that polygamy constitutes another major issue affecting families in Rusizi district. The polygamy rate is at 1.5% among married men in the age range of 15-49, while about 8% of women in the district have a co-wife. This is in comparison to 9.7% of women in Western province and 8% of women in Rwanda.

After realizing this issue, through 'Ababibyi b'amahoro' (sowers of peace), FVA initiated a mobilization program during citizen meetings and assemblies to encourage people in unlawful marriages to comply with family laws. During this session, Ababibyi b'amahoro reminded people of the negative impact of living illegally.

Local leaders in the area have appreciated the intervention by FVA and committed to prevent unlawful marriages because they are a source of family conflicts. The community has also responded positively to this advocacy for legal marriage.

People have realized that living in an unlawful marriage is costly, as the anti-GBV law stipulates that after a couple has co-habited for more than 6 months, they are entitled to sharing property equally. Even in cases of polygamy, all wives are entitled to equal shares.

As a result, the district has reported an increase in civil registrations for people who want to legalize their marriages. It cannot be said that the issue has completely been resolved, but with more people becoming sensitized to the negative impacts, there is a slow and steady rise in registered civil marriages which is expected to translate into a reduced rate of family conflicts.

Rwandan adolescents to access SRH services and information, as a result of the amendment of the Human Reproductive Health law.

Story of Change 6

PPIMA advocates for Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) in Rwanda.

Sexual and reproductive health is related to multiple human rights, including the right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to health, the right to privacy, the right to education, and the prohibition of discrimination (Reference; UNHR Office of the High Commissioner, 2020). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have both clearly indicated that women's right to health includes their sexual and reproductive health. Although the Rwandan law relating to Human Reproductive Health grants everyone the right to medical services and information, it limited adolescents from deciding for themselves on issues regarding reproductive health.

Before 2020, the Rwandan law on Human Reproductive Health stipulated the requirement for parental consent for adolescents to access Sexual Reproductive Health services and information. This was a violation to adolescents, especially that their rights to access SRH services and information were subjected to third party authorization. Since 2018, Health Development Initiative (HDI) together with other 11 like-minded organizations embarked on an advocacy journey towards removing some of the barriers for accessing SRH services. The focus was mainly on parental consent as a requirement for adolescents to access SRH services and information, which this was the major barrier. Through a policy brief, HDI drew appropriate recommendations and presented them to policy-makers including the Ministry of Health, Members of Parliament, the Office of the Prime Minister and the Law Reform Commission.

Consequently, article 7 of the law No. 21/05/2016 of 20/05/2016 relating to human reproductive health was amended. With this amendment, adolescents will be allowed to access SRH services and information without a parent or guardian's consent. For example, adolescents accessing contraceptives.

Community awareness initiatives by HDI have also largely contributed to reducing cultural and religious challenges in respect to Sexual Reproductive Health rights, especially for adolescents. With access to SRH information and services, risks of teenage pregnancies, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, practicing unsafe abortion, dropping out of school, etc, are expected to significantly reduce among adolescents.

Story of Change 7

Combatting discrimination against the LGBT community in Rwanda.

In 2021, Health Development Initiative (HDI) and the African Population Health Research Centre (APHRC) conducted a study aimed at understanding the lived experiences of LGBT people and the public's perception of LGBT issues.

It explored the contemporary situation of LGBT people, specifically factors contributing to, and the nature and forms of social exclusion they face.

The study highlighted daily experiences of stigma, discrimination, human rights abuse, and the legal framework and well-being of LGBT people.

The respondents were individuals from Kigali City and Southern Province, with 55% from Kigali, 17% from Huye, 15% from Muhanga and 12% from Nyanza.

The average age of the respondents was 26, and 39% identified themselves as gender non-conforming while 32% identified as cisgender males and 11% as cisgender females.

The study used a concurrent equal status mixed-methods approach, comprising a quantitative survey of 499 and 1,243 respondents for the lived experience and public perceptions surveys respectively.

There were also 6 focus group discussions (FGDs) with a total of 59 participants and 16 key informant interviews.

The findings of the study illustrated that two thirds of the survey participants experienced at least one form of discrimination with the highest being when expressing religious beliefs (44.9%), participating in cultural events (41.7%) and when looking for housing (30%).

The data further showed that transgender people experience the most discrimination (70%), followed by lesbian women (67.5%) then gay men (56%).

This evidence will convince the policy makers and the community to be receptive to advocacy for inclusiveness of the LGBT community since their marginalization negatively influences their ability to access housing, employment and utilize basic services like coffee shops.

Moreover, the discrimination also negatively impacts the mental health of LGBT community as the study evidenced issues of anxiety, depression, social isolation and a need to conceal their LGBT identity.

Through NPA's support, HDI will address discrimination against the LGBT community by continuing their advocacy work on the principles of inclusiveness and leaving no one behind.

They will provide training to local authorities on the rights of LGBT in order to reduce violence, arbitrary arrest, harassment and human rights abuses against them.

GOVERNMENT TAKING ACTIONS BASED ON PPIMA ADVOCACY WORK

The government has been responsive to requests and priorities raised through the community scorecard and other strategies used to collect community issues and priorities. The advocacy based on community issues conducted by CSOs is beneficial to the government since it contributes to address community issues.

Story of Change 8

Advocacy through the Community Scorecard leads to the resolution of floods and mudslides issues.

Introduction:

Although seasonal flooding has always been a common feature, in Rwanda, since records began, the frequency and severity of floods has dramatically increased in the past two decades. (Source: Annual Disaster effect report, 2019. Minema.gov.rw). Its effect on human development, property, infrastructure, and the environment has been significant. Climate change effects continue to be felt particularly in the Northern part of Rwanda, where regular flooding and landslides put local citizens' lives at risk as flood water damages and destroys people's homes and community infrastructure, including schools, clinics and local markets. Additionally, they significantly contribute to the loss of their crops and livestock. Tubibe Amahoro (TA), in collaboration with GFPs facilitated, through the Community Score Card (CSC), advocacy linked to these challenges and in order to deliver change.

Why:

In early 2021, the heavy rains created floods and mudslides affecting communities in Burera District. Loss of lives, crops, and animals was reported amongst many other issues that affected over 1,000 households which were internally displaced and had to temporarily relocate to other areas given the risk of a further loss of life and that basic services like clean water, medical facilities, and electricity were all unavailable.



For a long time, we did not have any hope of producing quality crops, as they would always be damaged during the rainy season, which consequently left behind significant damage to infrastructure and livelihoods. The mudslides and floods have already taken too many lives or put citizens' lives at risk.

Jean Claude Mpagazekubwimana, a community representative serving as the Governance Focal Person (GFP) who facilitates engagement between citizens and their local leaders on community issues.



Following engagement with local residents, Jean Claude started advocating for better flood defence and land management systems in his area. He also acknowledged that the flood was taking its toll on residents' mental wellbeing.

What:

The community scorecard was introduced in Burera District in 2020 by Tubibe Amahoro in collaboration with Governance Focal Persons (GFPs). A series of meetings and advocacy sessions were organised and conducted to identify community priorities and to engage district authorities to act. During these gatherings, citizens consistently raised the flooding issue and the need for Local Government's action. The local government eventually accepted this as a priority and included a flood defence project to build strong infrastructure and buffer zones to protect the lives of local community members within the FY 2020/21 budget.

Result:

In response to GFPs and Tubibe Amahoro's advocacy, three water run-off channels were developed in Muhabura, Mbandama, and Nyarubande. Further works included the provision of three reservoirs to retain water (2 in Karangara) and (1 in Cyahi). These measures have both redirected flood waters away from settlements and farming lands to be safely stored away from mudslide prone areas ensuring roads remain open and disruption to daily life during the rainy season is minimized.



Picture: One of the Check dams constructed at the base of Mount Muhabura. Source : Tubibe Amahoro.

ESSONS LEARNED / ASSESSMENTS:

If well maintained by the community, this infrastructure will serve as a sustainable solution to mitigate future flooding. The mobilization of Burera residents to address flooding was a great example of the value added the Community Scorecard brings, offering a platform to often ignored citizens' issues to bring community level issues and challenges to the attention of decision makers at both the local and national levels.

Story of Change 9

Citizens influencing Prioritization of Community development actions in Gakenke District.

Background

The citizens of Gakenke district, Minazi sector, Munyana cell in Gitwa village had a long-lasting issue of a terrifying bridge that connects two sectors of Minazi and Mataba. Gitwa trail bridge is used by many people from these sectors to transport their agricultural products to the market; students cross the river base every day to go to schools such as Groupe Scolaire Munyana and Groupe Scolaire Mataba. It was particularly frustrating during rainy season when the river base would be flooded and it would be practically impossible to cross it in that bad condition. When it rained heavily, cross-sector trade and other social activities would be affected, with children from the two mentioned schools having to skip their studies for that day. It is even unfortunate that a child slid and fell into this river and died instantly while on his way home from school.

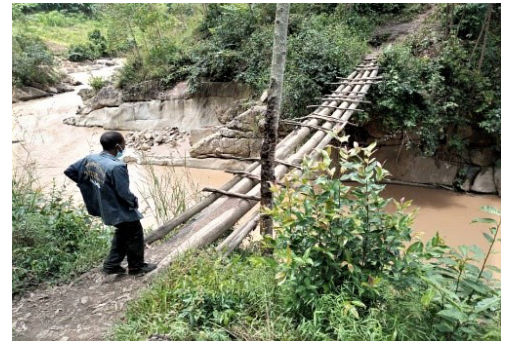
Citizens influencing District Authority to act & Prioritize the trail bridge

After noting the threat of deaths due to the bad conditions of the trail bridge, the citizens of both sectors of Mataba and Minazi made their voices heard by the sector and district officials through PPIMA project implemented by Imbaraga. The issue was raised through the community score card process in 2019, it was elevated by Governance Focal Persons (GFPs), discussed in the interface meetings, sector level, District Dialogue Forum and prioritized it to be incorporated in the District plan and IMIHIGO for 2020-2021.

Gakenke District in collaboration with Bridges to Prosperity agreed to implement the trail bridge construction project. Due to the poor landscape of the first trail bridge that did not allow good leveling of the land, it was necessary to make a deviation of at least 150 meters for a new bridge. A budget of 94,828,181 Rwandan Francs was allocated for Gitwa trail bridge of which Gakenke district contributed 49,023,777 Rwf while Bridges to Prosperity contributed 45,804,404 Rwf. People from the 2 affected sectors were given first priority when it came to job allocation during construction. A strong and sustainable bridge was constructed in 2020 and was finalized and inaugurated in June 2021. This bridge provides safe river crossing to pedestrians, animals, motorbikes and bicycles.

Citizens' appreciation of the new bridge

Local leaders as well as the entire community of Mataba and Minazi are happy with the new suspended bridge.



Before photo of the bridge made of old wood
(Source: Imbaraga)



The photo highlights a big number of people who got jobs during the bridge construction
(Source: Imbaraga).

“

I am relieved that Gitwa Bridge was finally constructed. I was petrified when I heard that a child drowned in river Base while crossing the previous dangerous bridge; this incident should have never happened. I am grateful to the district authorities and all stakeholders for prioritizing this issue among others in the district.

Niyitegeka Pascasie, a resident of Munyana cell, Minazi sector



Completed bridge is in use by pedestrians and cyclists (Source: Imbaraga).

“

During the process of constructing the bridge, many people got jobs. Transporting goods to the markets is quite affordable compared to what we used to pay before. We do not have to worry about our children crossing the new bridge even in the coming rainy season.

Mr. Nsabimana Alexandre, a resident of Gitwa village

Story of Change 10

Fighting Gender - based Corruption

On 2nd June 2020, Madame X (for confidentiality purposes, not her real name) from Gasabo District, called Transparency International Rwanda (TI-Rw), using their toll-free number 2641. She shared with TI-Rw staff that one magistrate of the law courts (whom we shall refer to as Mr. Y) was demanding for sex from her in exchange of ensuring that her pending court case will be ruled in her favour.

Madame X had been sued by her estranged husband who was pursuing a divorce. She had no problem with this (divorce) but insisted that she should be awarded custody of their 4-year-old child.

The next day, 3rd June 2020, Madame X called TI-Rw again, using their toll-free number, and informed the receiver that Mr. Y continued to pressurize her, and this time he suggested that the two of them meet at his residence. TI-Rw asked Madame X to come to their office physically, so that her case may be documented. She obliged and after checking the credibility of her story, TI-Rw decided to forward her dossier to Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB).

RIB conducted a thorough investigation and recorded Madame X's allegations which included that Mr. Y was handling their divorce case and on various occasions between 14th October 2019 and 18th February 2020, he tried to contact Madame X so that they could meet to "fix her case" before the judgement of her case would be passed on 2nd June 2020. The day before that date, Mr. Y called Madame X informing her that due to Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions, no face-to-face court sessions would be held until further notice; he also used this occasion to ask her to lie to her family that she was going for her planned court hearing on 2nd June 2020, then instead proceed to go meet Mr. Y at his home. Madame X did not decline the offer; the next day she appeared at the court premises with her uncle in tow. He (uncle) had been escorting her to all previous court hearings, so it wasn't out of place for him to be there. As expected, Mr. Y in the company of other legal staff, approached the people who had gathered to find out about the fate of their cases and their new hearing dates; Madame X and her uncle sat among them. Mr. Y talked to each person and when he got to Madame X, he informed her that her hearing date will be communicated later. Sitting next to Madame X was her uncle, and when Mr. Y enquired what his issue was, he said he was escorting Madame X. Mr. Y became visibly angry and told off Madame X for bringing her uncle along.

On their back home, Madame X received a call from Mr. Y inviting her to his home the next day, 3rd June 2020, but he insisted that she comes alone. Madame X tried to suggest that she comes with her uncle and they all could meet at a restaurant and talk over a cup of tea. Mr. Y was adamant that they should meet in the privacy of his home, so that they can enjoy intimate moments together. She was assured that if she adhered to his one demand, the court ruling would be done in her favour. The whole telephone conversation took place in the presence of Madame X's uncle, who got so disgusted and swiftly advised her to report this issue to TI-Rw using their toll-free number 2641, which she did. TI-Rw in turn handed this case to RIB on the same day.

Mr. Y called Madame X on 4th June 2020 at around 9 in the morning, to confirm their anxiously awaited "date" for the next day, 5th June 2020. Madame X accepted the offer but when she enquired about the status of her pending divorce case, Mr. Y assured Madame X that they would discuss this at length in their "private meeting", rather than over the phone. She agreed.

On the appointed day, 5th June 2020, Madame X was escorted to Mr. Y's residence, by a team made up of RIB and TI-Rw personnel. RIB had already coached Madame X on what to say and how to behave during her "meeting" with Mr. Y, including when it was appropriate time to alert the team waiting outside. Once Madame X alerted the team, they swooped into Mr. Y's house and caught them red-handed indulging in sexual acts. The two were immediately taken to RIB office where legal documentation was processed and Mr. Y was subsequently produced before the Intermediate Court of Gicumbi, charged with perjury and was sentenced to seven years initially but on appeal, this was reduced to five years.

Story of Change 11

Right to health access for HMPs via Community Health Insurance (“Mutuelle de Santé”).

World Health Organisation (WHO) defines Universal Health Coverage as “ensuring that all people receive needed promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services of sufficient quality without suffering financial hardship”. Rwanda is internationally recognized for its success in offering universal access to healthcare, with over 84% of Rwandans insured through the community health insurance commonly known as mutuelle de santé, and citizens, including historically marginalised people (HMP), having access to primary health care. Mutuelle de santé is a medical insurance scheme catering for the health care service needs of poor families and vulnerable groups. The Covid-19 pandemic-related lockdowns and movement restrictions weighed down on people’s incomes, thus, also relegating mutuelle de santé contributions to the backseat with food issues naturally being prioritised.

The government of Rwanda currently operates a well-functioning, decentralized healthcare public service system comprising 1,700 health posts, 500 health centers, 42 district hospitals, and five national referral hospitals. The mutuelle de santé scheme is widely utilised in these facilities.

The recently concluded Ubudehe categorization into five categories consisting of households with the highest income to those that are the most vulnerable in the society, had some errors. For example, 8 HMP households from Remera Cell, Gasaka Sector in Nyamagabe District were placed in the wrong category which made it extremely difficult for them to access health services, such as birth control, vaccination, and medication when sick because they didn’t have enough money to pay for their 15% contribution to health services.

COPORWA held several discussions, on this issue, with the local leadership of Nyamagabe district since health and social securities are considered as human rights and indispensable prerequisites for poverty reduction, economic growth, and development. This culminated in their categories being revised, thus, them qualifying for the much-needed government support to obtain mutuelle de santé.

Improving access to health care for HMP communities of Nyamagabe District went a long way in boosting their self-esteem and their realization that they are worthy citizens just like the rest of the district population. Whereas COPORWA strives to support the HMP community to promote the respect of their rights, their social and economic integration within the Rwandan society will only take place if fundamental issues such as their access to health care, are addressed thus enabling them to cater for their households’ and family members’ wellbeing. COPORWA continues to play a key role in advocating for HMPs issues as well as mobilizing duty bearers for action.



Before the advocacy work by ADENYA (an NPA partner), I was stratified in the wrong ‘Ubudehe’ category (social stratification), which automatically increased our local health insurance costs and services, despite our low incomes. ADENYA successfully influenced the revision of our categories and as a result our costs through the local insurance scheme have reduced tremendously and the services we receive have improved too.

Caritas Muhawenimana, Nyamagabe District.



Story of Change 12

Access to land: An essential ingredient for HMPs' empowerment, dignity, and inclusion in society

This case study focuses on 30 HMP households from Rugasa and Gihira Cells in Rutsiro district.

Government taking actions based on partners' advocacy work to provide land for exploitation to 30 HMP families.

Introduction:

The Batwa, commonly known as Historically Marginalized People (HMPs) are indigenous people living in Rwanda and across other neighboring countries like Uganda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Historically HMPs lived in the forest, hunting wild animals and gathering wild fruits and roots. Forests are now gazetted for tourism and environmental protection purposes only. HMPs continue to face many challenges linked to their socio-economic integration including persistent poverty, hunger, and the loss of their native lands. The Public Policy Monitoring and Advocacy Programme (PPIMA) project has supported the upholding of HMP's land rights as an essential asset for empowerment, dignity, and inclusion in Rwandan society.

Why:

The survey conducted by one of NPA's Partners - COPORWA - in 2021 through PPIMA support revealed that 87.6% HMPs do not have access to land, while the remaining 12.4% are unable to generate incomes due to the fact that they are allocated small scale farms. For this reason, about 95% HMPs are involved in pottery with clay extracted from marshlands. From 2018, these sites are no longer accessible and cannot be exploited as the marshland policy does not allow clay mining. HMPs are also suffering from persistent poverty and hunger due to the lack of land in general, as captured in both roll-outs of the Community Score Card under the PPIMA project implemented by COPORWA in partnership with NPA in Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru and Rutsiro Districts. Inability to access and own land 2018 remains a significant barrier to their inclusion in their communities since land is understood as essential to overcoming competitive material disadvantages, while the inability to own land is strongly associated with the status attributed to HMPs.

What:

During the facilitation of the Community Scorecard supported by PPIMA in the Rutsiro district in 2021, the lack of access to land for HMPs topped the list of priorities presented to local leaders during engagement and advocacy meetings. As a result of COPORWA and GFPs' advocacy, local leaders committed to solving the issue of HMPs' lack of access to land for agricultural purposes. These 30 households were offered one hectare of marshland for their collective agricultural use. They immediately started working on the land, planted Irish potatoes with an expectation of approximately 3 tons of harvest. A significant portion of this harvest will be sold and distributed in 3 ways: each of the 30 households will receive an equal amount of cash, and they will be left to decide on what they would like to spend it on (collective decision-making); some money will be kept in a joint bank account for future refinancing of their agricultural activities and the remaining portion will be injected into the establishment of their own cooperative for income-generating purposes. This positive reaction from sector and district officials motivated community representatives (GFPs) to seek more opportunities for influencing and ensuring that issues raised through the CSC process are resolved and addressed.

Result:

Though meaningful change might take a long time, COPORWA and HMP representatives' advocacy have registered early success by allocating one hectare of land to 30 HMPs families. Rutsiro District local leaders have assured the HMPs that they will continue to access this land for as long as they can productively utilize it to improve their living conditions. The Ruhango sector administration availed a written directive from the Prime Minister's office to support this claim.

The 30 HMP households now already feel accepted by other community members. This is the initial ingredient for equality, empowerment, and social inclusion. Community members living around the HMP households have been accepting of them and are working closely together with them in the marshland.



“Without COPORWA's advocacy and engagement with our local leaders, we would have remained caught up in the poverty cycle and other issues that HMPs struggle with. We have now harvested our first crop (Irish potatoes), and we are assured of our survival at least for the foreseeable future.

Sekadunduli Celestin and Rubanda Jacqueline, Rutsiro District, February 2022



HMPs tending to their Irish potatoes in the marshland

Story of Change 13

NPA-supported advocacy impacting livelihoods of the Historically Marginalized People (HMPs).

NPA-supported initiatives in Nyaruguru District have resulted in increased responsiveness of decision makers to HMP issues. For example, the noticeable increased response by decision makers to COPORWA-initiated dialogue platforms to discuss HMP-related issues in the district.

For the last 11 years, NPA through its partner, COPORWA, has supported the PPIMA programme in Nyaruguru District, especially with the Community Scorecard (CSC). COPORWA's mission as an organization is to promote the socio-economic integration of the community of potters, who have been historically marginalized by the previous regimes. The CSC conducted under COPORWA has had a specific focus on issues and concerns affecting the HMP communities in Nyaruguru District since 2010. The CSC tool has been a platform for increasing inclusivity of different marginalized and vulnerable groups whose interests would otherwise be neglected, such as, HMPs, People with disabilities, youth, among others.

The CSC has facilitated the identification of priorities for HMPs in Nyaruguru District, many of which have been incorporated in district plans and budgets and others resolved at cell, sector, even at national level. This has resulted into numerous changes that have benefited the HMP communities.

Presently, the integration of HMPs' priorities in district plans and budgets as well as the attention given to their concerns has increased. For instance, while tackling the issue of increased HMP school drop-outs as presented by COPORWA, the district conducted an exercise to identify all HMP households with school drop-outs as a starting point to offer appropriate support.

“

My family and I never believed that any of our family members could actually go to school and complete primary level of education. But I'm glad that I have now completed primary and secondary level education, with the support (materials and school fees) of the district, due to the advocacy work done by COPORWA in 2011", says David Bihoyiki, who just completed his education at Marie Reine Secondary school in Nyaruguru District.

Using the 2021/2022 fiscal year as an example, out of the 162 HMP priorities, 65 (40%) were incorporated in Nyaruguru District plans and budget, which is a significant change compared to previous years. Similarly, using the CSC findings, the district was able to identify and support HMPs who had improper housing conditions and living in high risk zones and resettled them in the already-established "Umudugudu" (village) sites which have access to the necessary facilities.

Through COPORWA, the CSC and other NPA-supported initiatives have led to significant change in mindset and reduced self-censorship of HMPs, as evidenced by their current active engagement and dialogue with decision makers while presenting their concerns. COPORWA has established strong HMP community volunteer structures and built their capacities in different areas, such as, understanding their rights for their meaningful participation in development processes, facilitation skills, how to handle GBV issues and domestic violence, among others. As a sustainability strategy, 'Ihaniro' Youth Group is one of the community volunteer structures established by COPORWA, whose role is to sensitize communities, especially the youth, on GBV and domestic violence prevention and their mobilization in citizen participation processes.



Picture: Nyaruguru District Vice Mayor and a COPORWA staff during a district dialogue forum while discussing issues affecting HMPs as presented through CSC findings. Source : COPORWA, 2021.

Story of Change 14

NPA supporting People with Disabilities in Inclusive Development Processes and Accessing Resources.

Availing assistive devices in recognition of PWDs' rights.

Since 2020, over 78 PWDs in Rulindo District have been supported with shelter and assistive devices which have enabled them with optimum functioning, especially in accessing natural resources and other services. For example, mobility aids, hearing aids, among others.

The Community Scorecard (CSC) tool supported by NPA Rwanda has largely provided an inclusive opportunity for marginalized and vulnerable groups of people in facilitating them to access resources and meaningfully participate in development processes. The CSC which is a community driven process enables citizens to engage with decision makers in constructive dialogues regarding issues that concern them.

In principle, the CSC stage of 'Community issue prioritization'

gives the first opportunity to priorities and concerns that uniquely affect marginalized and vulnerable people, including; People with Disabilities (PWDs), the elderly, youth, among others. Over the years, NPA Rwanda's partners have through the CSC successfully advocated for disability-friendly environment and facilities, including, disability-friendly public buildings, public buses, among others.

Through the CSC cycle of 2021 supported by NPA under its partner RWAMREC in Rulindo District, several issues affecting People with Disabilities were identified and advocated for. These issues and priorities revolved mostly around lack of assistive devices and shelter for the PWDs, who include children and adults with physical and mental disabilities. The lack of mobility assistive devices hinders PWDs from accessing some of the essential natural resources and services, especially due to Rulindo District's topography which is characterized by numerous hills. For example, accessing water points, health facilities, market places, education facilities, among others.

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RWAMREC, facilitated the 213 well capacitated programme community volunteers (Governance Focal Persons-GFPs) who were able to elevate these issues to different district and sub-district decision makers for advocacy.

“

Before the introduction of the CSC in my village, I was so worried that my daughter Honorine would never be able to go to school because of the disability on both her hands. However, with the introduction of the CSC, her issue was finally recognized and given due consideration. With the collaboration between the Sector and Burehe Parish, my daughter was eventually provided with a hand assistive device.

Evariste Hakizimana, the father of Honorine Uwimana.

“

Despite being stigmatized as a child, I'm currently happy that I'm able to write and execute some chores, especially around the kitchen with the help of this hand assistive device. I'm now in senior 3, of my secondary school education. This device enables me to write with ease.

Honorine Uwimana is a 16-year old girl whose both hands have a disability



Story of Change 15

Advocating for the Right to access Education within a reasonable distance led to the construction of a TVET school in Nyamagabe district

Lack of a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) school in Byimana Cell, Buruhukiro sector in Nyamagabe district has been a barrier to education for many youths in the area. Youth from Buruhukiro and other neighbouring sectors would have to travel 23 km to Kaduha sector or 34 km to Gasaka sector to attend TVET school. As a result of the long commute, they could not perform as well as they wished.

It was not until NPA partner ADENYA began implementing the PPIMA project in the area that it received attention. Through the Community Score Card (CSC) the issue was presented in the Sector level meeting and was validated by the Sector Executive Secretary. During the interface meeting of March 2019, service providers promised the community to partner with ADENYA in advocating for this issue to be addressed. ADENYA played their part by presenting this issue in the District Level Meeting, where the Director of Education in Nyamagabe District accepted to jointly work with the Planning Unit to construct a TVET school in G.S Bishyiga in Byimana Cell.

In July 2019, Sector authorities and ADENYA went on a field visit to identify where the school should be constructed. During a live District Dialogue Forum (DDF) in November 2019, Nyamagabe district officially announced the construction of the school. However, due to budget constraints, the construction was pushed to 2020/2021. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), Nyamagabe District began constructing the school in May 2021. The school was completed just in time for the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year, and began operating in October 2021.

Six classrooms and 12 toilets were constructed in G.S. Bishyiga, Gakangaga village for youth to have access to vocational education. Currently the TVET school has 41 students enrolled with 23 of them (3 females and 20 males) studying mechanics and 18 (6 females and 12 males) studying construction. This change would not be possible without the technical and financial support of NPA to ADENYA and it is contributing to the fulfilment of Rwanda's decentralization policy which stipulates that everyone should have access to education within reasonable distance.

There has also been a community mindset change as community members are now willing to send their children to school on time, whereas previously, time was not an important factor to them.



“ Over the years, our sector (Buruhukiro Sector in Nyamagabe District) has not had a school that offers technical and vocational education and training (TVET), until 2021. The existing TVET schools in the district were too far, which made it costly and impossible for me as a student from Buruhukiro to attend. But I am currently glad that through the CSC work, ADENYA organization successfully engaged the district officials and a TVET school was eventually established.

Cyprien Musabirema, a student of G.S. Bishyiga TVET school, Nyamagabe District.

Story of Change 16

Citizens prioritize the construction of a Technical School through the Community Scorecard

Through the Community Scorecard, citizens of Ntarabana sector successfully advocated for the construction of a technical school.

Construction site of the technical school



Technical Vocational Training Schools (TVET) were introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2010 to increase the number of school leavers with technical and vocational skills and thus improve their employment opportunities. PPIMA was introduced in Rulindo District in 2020 and our Partner – RWAMREC - soon became aware of the absence of a technical school in Ntarabana Sector; one of the more remote areas of the district. This absence of a technical school was having an adversely negative effect on the future livelihood opportunities of youth in the community. And most notably it was imposing a financial burden on students and their families as they had to pay daily transport fees to commute to other sectors to attend technical school. Those who could not afford transport fees were unable to attend classes; this included teenage mothers whose opportunities for economic empowerment were already limited. Through the Community Scorecard process facilitated by RWAMREC, Ntarabana Sector residents identified the lack of a Technical School as a challenge and the issue was prioritised for action and brought before District Authorities through Governance Focal Persons (GFPs) representing the Sector. In response, The District mobilised existing re-

sources and those obtained through advocacy and financial support from the World Bank to construct the school. The school is due to open in January 2022 and initially will teach two technical subjects, namely tailoring and carpentry and will provide local youths with skills they can utilise in the Rwandan job market where Youth Unemployment rates are above 30%. Through PPIMA support, RWAMREC will continue to advocate for the expansion of these school in Rulindo District, including further support and expansion of this school in Ntarabana Sector from World Bank funds. It will also continue to promote priorities identified in the District through the Community Scorecard process.

“Our children will no longer go to school outside of our sector. This technical school will also help children from neighboring areas, as each course can accommodate 50 students. We are really happy and thankful to the community scorecard.”

Twahirwa Narcisse (GFP from Ntarabana Sector, Rulindo District).



Students of the technical school
(photo by RWAMREC)

Story of Change 17

Advocating for inclusion marginalize and vulnerable groups

Introduction

At the end of 2020, the rates of school dropouts in Rwanda stood at 8%, with 7.8% in primary schools and 8.2% in secondary schools. Comparatively, in 2013, the statistics of school dropouts in Rwanda generally stood at 15.6% in primary schools and 20.9% at secondary school.

Over the years, the high rate of school dropouts specifically in communities of the Historically Marginalized People (HMP) has been a persistent issue in Rwanda. One of the underlying drivers of school dropout in HMP households in Rwanda is poor living conditions due to resource constraints and little or no interest from parents, who are also uneducated. However, limited efforts from the local leaders and decision makers has also partly contributed to the persistent issue.

High rate of HMP dropouts in Rutsiro District:

Like many other districts in Rwanda with HMP communities, Rutsiro District is faced with a high rate of HMP school dropouts. Findings of the Community Scorecard (CSC) organized specifically by HMP communities from 5 sectors of Nyabirasi, Kigeyo, Ruhango, Gihango and Mukura, evidenced this as a persistent issue in those 5 sectors.

Previously, the issue was given more attention due to the increased capacity and knowledge of the HMP community volunteers (Governance Focal Persons-GFPs), who have highlighted and elevated the issue to the relevant local leaders at both cell and sector levels. PPIMA has supported the building of capacity, coaching and mentoring of 225 HMP community volunteers from Rutsiro, Nyamagabe and Nyaruguru districts. PPIMA has also supported mobilization and awareness creation among 3 youth groups ('Ihaniro' Youth Groups) in the 3 districts, of which 50 out of 90 youths are HMPs.

Decision makers responsive to HMP issues:

Through the facilitation of the CSC process, HMP Governance Focal Persons together with the 'Ihaniro' youth groups under COPORWA collected and consolidated HMP-related issues. Among other issues that were presented to the district, 98 youths were identified as school dropouts. The cause for most of the identified dropouts was mostly due to limited resources (poverty) of these households.

Rutsiro District has been responsive towards the resolving of the issue. The district and sectors have mobilized resources and subsequently supported 24 students to return to primary and secondary school. Additionally, a total of 69 students (including teenage mothers) have been supported to join Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for tailoring courses.

Lesson learnt:

The 'Ihaniro' youth groups and the HMP Governance Focal Persons structures are playing an important role of creating awareness among HMPs, which is enabling them to equally engage and actively participate in civic participation platforms with the rest of the population. Self-stigmatization is one of the underlying causes of limited or no participation of HMPs in community development initiatives.

Story of Change 18

Institutionalizing Capacity building of elected Local Leaders in Rwanda.

Introduction

The level of capacity among elected local leaders immensely affects participatory governance approaches in planning, monitoring and evaluation practices for their communities. Therefore, there is need to establish competencies among elected local leaders that will enable effective governance through good leadership, strategic management, good service provision thus allowing meaningful community participation. This can only be achieved through innovative capacity development initiatives.

The lack of systematic capacity building initiatives for lower administrative entities in Rwanda is partly caused by the ambiguous status of sectoral decentralization. It is also due to limited or non-existent capacity building coordination mechanisms among responsible institutions and their partners.

In the National Decentralization Policy framework, it's clearly evidenced that many sectors have transferred and devolved a number of functional responsibilities to different layers of administration. However, this has been without matching and regularly capacitating the technical staff that drive the implementation of sectoral policies and programs at local level to allow institutional competence. For example, the cell level which is considered to be key for local service delivery has only 2 staff members. At many cell offices, there's usually only one staff due to high turnover and delays in staff replacement. All this negatively impacts effective service delivery and leads to limited citizen engagement.

It's from the above-mentioned gaps that PPIMA supported a research on local leaders' capacity needs in participatory governance. This was in addition to the Community Scorecard (CSC) findings which also showed this as a persistent issue in many districts.

Influencing the Local government Capacity Building strategy:

Through the support of PPIMA, the partner Never Again Rwanda (NAR) presented the CSC findings and key recommendations from the research to the Ministry of local government (MINALOC).

The engagement between the two parties focused and emphasized on the urgent need for institutionalizing capacity building of elected local leaders as a strategy for strengthening inclusive citizen participation. This will foster effectiveness in implementing government policies and programs, enhancing citizen participation as well as improving the quality of service delivery at local level, specifically at the cell level.

Consequently, MINALOC has considered several inputs of PPIMA's study in the recently approved Local Government Capacity Development (LGCD) Strategy for 2020-2024. For example, coordinating and guiding the implementation of local government capacity development initiatives, was one of the key recommendations.

The strategy details the responsibilities of different government institutions, private sector and civil society organizations as well as the coordination mechanisms. All planned efforts and initiatives aim at improving the capacities of local leaders, especially at cell level. Additionally, MINALOC's 2021-2022 budget includes funds to increase staffing at the cell level by adding 2 extra staff members to improve the quality of services and boost citizen consideration potentials.

Long-term effects of the LGCD Strategy:

The strategy seems and is expected to be a long-term response to the identified existing capacity gaps for elected local leaders. This is mostly because it was developed through a participatory process and was informed by strong evidence from research and inputs on the subject from a coalition of 17 PPIMA partners. Examples of the considered recommendations include among others:

- Regular capacity assessments among local government.
- A coordination mechanism for institutions implementing the capacity building programs for local government to minimize duplication and increase synergies.

The PPIMA recommendations have also been considered by MINALOC as crucial inputs to the Ministry's ongoing review of the decentralization policy and NAR will use that opportunity to advocate for the institutionalization of the Community score Card.

“This process will focus on different improvements in local entities regarding their institutional capabilities. Equally, the Ministry was very receptive of the proposed recommendations from research and CSC analysis.

Dr Nkurunziza, NAR Executive Secretary.

Story of Change 19

PPIMA supporting Communities to influence Government priorities in Nyamagabe District.

Background

Lack of access to an electricity supply for over 189 households of Twiya Cell in Nkomane Sector, Nyamagabe District, had been a long-standing community issue for many years. From 2017, the citizens of Twiya Cell through the Community Scorecard (CSC) process supported by PPIMA and through our Partner ADENYA repeatedly raised the issue as a Community priority because the lack of electricity supply hampered the socio-economic development of the cell in areas like education, health and livelihoods.

Since 2016 PPIMA through ADENYA trained 276 Governance Focal Persons (GFPs), who have through the past five years continued to advocate for community priorities in Nyamagabe District. And members of the Community continue to acknowledge and appreciate the positive role PPIMA plays in improving civic participation, particularly the GFPs facilitation role in the district's planning and budgeting processes who now facilitate community led discourses in all 17 sectors of the district.

Extension of electricity supply in Twiye Cell as a result of PPIMA advocacy work:

responding to Community demands, the GFPs elevated the issue to the district level. Through a PPIMA-funded advocacy platform (District Dialogue Forum), the GFPs presented the issue to the district decision makers during the planning and budgeting process for the 2020/2021 fiscal year. As a result of these efforts, the District allocated a budget of approximately Rwandan Francs (RWF) 960,936,93 allocated to the electricity extension project for the cells of both Nkomane and Mugano Sectors, including Twiye Cell. An electricity power supply line was started in January and completed in March 2021. Since then, the livelihoods of Twiye Cell citizens have transformed, especially through job-creation initiatives, with multiple small businesses starting up from metal workshops to hair salons. While the impact electricity has had on both the health and education sectors has been transformative.

PPIMA's well trained community facilitators (GFPs) are continuing to facilitate the collection and elevation of community priorities and service delivery issues in their respective constituencies despite Covid-19, through an adaptive strategy ('Amasibo'). The GFPs through the CSC not only advocate for citizens' priorities and concerns, but also serve as a feedback channel for both decision makers and citizens.



Theogene Bimenyimana, a new hair-cut saloon owner (Source: Nyamagabe District).



The role of the GFPs for supporting civic participation in our district has been of paramount importance and continues to be. With their advocacy the very remote sectors of the district have now electricity and the livelihood of the citizens has much improved.

Asserted by the Vice Mayor in charge of Economic Development, Nyamagabe District..

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS FOR EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Collective efforts are important for the kind of work that PPIMA does for effective advocacy. PPIMA partners have been able to seek and/or initiate collaborative advocacy actions that have led to positive change around specific topics and bring in relevant expertise from within or outside PPIMA. Collective efforts offer a better chance to push an agenda than working in isolation.

Story of Change 20

PPIMA Partner Coalition advocates for land for public cemeteries.

Advocacy efforts by PPIMA partners on the lack of public burial space or cemeteries gained traction among Central Government Decision Makers.

In late 2018 the issue of lack of space for public cemeteries emerged as one of the most pressing challenges raised through Community Scorecard (CSC) processes in 9 districts. The major underlying causes include the shortage of land demarcated for public cemeteries by districts authorities, the absence of cremation facilities and the high costs for burial in the available cemeteries, which remain unaffordable and a burden to many.

Through a coalition of 18 PPIMA partners, the problem was prioritised as an urgent topic to be advocated at the national level. As a consequence, a series of consultations and dialogue sessions were facilitated by PPIMA partners targeting decision-makers in central government and districts

planning officials while a policy brief to advance alternative solutions which was produced and presented during a national level dialogue and through different media outlets.

The outcome of these sessions triggered the revision of the law governing public cemeteries by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Affairs. And the same Committee requested a comprehensive assessment on the reasons why the implementation of Cremation law enacted in 2012 had not happened.

Interim solution: Zoning and Purchasing Land for Public Cemeteries

Following the evidence and recommendations provided by PPIMA partners to the Government of Rwanda, the Ministry of Local Government (Minaloc) has laid out a plan that will serve as a reference for districts as they revise their respective zoning plans for cemeteries. This will also include mobilizing resources for the purchase of additional land for cemeteries in every district. The Ministry is also working with districts in efforts to review the existing funeral fees. In addition, Minaloc has undertaken to work with other stakeholders in order to review the existing law on organisation and operation of cemeteries in Rwanda which is hoped will lead to the adoption by citizens of new burial methods and will help address the shortage of land for cemeteries.



Graves at Rusororo cemetery that sits on 12 hectares of land in Gasabo District.

Story of Change 21

Improved working conditions for miners

Working conditions of miners begin to improve as a result of NPA partner's advocacy efforts.

Mining is Rwanda's second-largest source of export revenues after tourism. It is a vital strategic sector that is intended to help the government achieve its Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (IGF, 2017). The Rwandan government has designated the mining sector as one of the priority sectors for driving economic growth, job creation, poverty reduction, and social well-being of Rwandans (Sida & UNESCO, 2017).

Mining, on the other hand, faces significant obstacles that impede its performance, particularly in terms of transparency and compliance. Integrity and transparency initiatives set a standard for open and accountable management of mineral resources and making the mining operations transparent. The new law governing mining and quarry operations, which was published in August 2018, aims to promote professionalism and growth in the mining sector. It also aims to address miners' health and safety issues, environmental compliance, increased productivity, and gender equality. However, despite the existence of this law, there remain gaps in the mining sector, particularly in terms of compliance and transparency.

Through a baseline study conducted and awareness creation initiatives, some of the challenges identified include: miners who do not have employment contracts, lack of appropriate medical attention for miners with occupational illnesses, and illegal dismissal. According to the Rwanda Extractive Industry Workers Union (REWU), increasing the knowledge of miners and the use of modern equipment is the key to increasing mining output, where both the employer and the employee benefit as per their expectations. However, the miners through their union have in the past claimed that there is still a gap in the mining sector, particularly in terms of compliance (<https://rewu.org.rw>).

Similarly, as revealed in the report by the National Institute of Statistics (NISR, 2019), Rwanda's mining sector still faces challenges, which include: lack of management of topsoil left over from mining operations, lack of erosion control plans of mine sites, deforestation, mining undertaken in rivers and wetlands, lack of adequate facilities to capture wastewater from washing minerals and tailings, and lack of dust control to protect workers and surrounding communities.

Transparency International Rwanda (TI-Rw), an NPA partner, advocated for these issues by presenting the study findings to national level decision makers and relevant stakeholders through various high-level advocacy engagements. Consequently, this has triggered a number of positive changes within the mining sector, such as, contractual agreements between miners and their employers, provision of medical insurance for miners, provision of gear for safety and securing conditions through establishment of Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities, among others. Most of all, the more than 100,000 miners across the country, now have a good understanding of their labour rights and how to claim them.

“Of late, the mining company has started providing us with medical insurance. We also currently have periodic contracts for at least one month. Even the casual laborers now earn between 1,200 and 1,500 Rwandan Francs per day, regardless of the mined quantity. This has facilitated us to access loans from different financial institutions.”

Mr. Safari John, a mine worker in Ngororero District



Story of Change 22

National level elevation of community issues through PPIMA's Community Score Card (CSC) and alliance building.

Through NPA support, a PPIMA Partners coalition has influenced MINEDUC and MINALOC on the provision of limited playgrounds in schools/communities, an issue identified through the Community Score Card (CSC) process and elevated to the national level.

During the course of 2021 PPIMA partner Never Again Rwanda (NAR) used coalition-building to elevate community-based issues identified through the Community Score Card (CSC) to influence high level decision makers and deliver policy change. NAR and coalition members (AJPRODHO, RCCDN, PAX Press, COPORWA, CLADHO, RWN and HDI) engaged the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) on the issue of limited playground space for children in schools/communities and this engagement resulted in tangible outcomes.

Sport in Rwanda is supported by the Rwandan Government's Sports Development Policy of October 2012. This policy correctly states that sport has a number of benefits, including bringing people together and improving health. The policy highlights priorities for the development

of sport including improving infrastructures and the financing of sports activities. Rwanda also set a target to become a leading sports hub in Africa with a higher percentage of the population playing a sport than in any other African nation by the end of 2020. This target is yet to be achieved partly because COVID 19 slowed down progress.

Following a number of discussions with stakeholders, MINEDUC committed to recruiting teachers in charge of sports in each school in the 2022 fiscal year. Equally, following engagement with MINALOC a meeting with the Ministry of Sports, City of Kigali, Governors and District Mayors was held on 4th August 2021 to discuss the issue of limited playground space and how it could be resolved. Through this meeting, the following decisions were made:

- Each district should have a plan to promote sports among citizens
- Each cell will demarcate space for playground and cell team
- Each district will have a talent detection and development plan for youth
- Each district will mobilise partners/stakeholders in promoting sports and organizing different sports competitions

There is of course a long way to go before these undertakings become reality. And PPIMA partners are being increasingly encouraged to pursue accountability and ensure commitments are implemented. That said, PPIMA partners are demonstrating through coalitions improved capacity to analyse and document issues from the CSC and deliver joint advocacy activities.

“With this advocacy roadmap we jointly composed in this coalition meeting, it is now clear who will do what, when, with whom and how. This will be a guiding tool for coalition members about their roles in joint advocacy efforts.

A CSO representative following the thematic coalition meeting, 4th June 2021.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF STAKEHOLDERS

PPIMA has learnt the value of strengthening the capacity of target stakeholders. To ensure sustainability, the program has invested in strengthening the capacity of local structures, local councillors and leaders at cell, sector and District level. Community volunteers, Governance focal persons and paralegals and women safe space facilitators continue to be empowered to ensure the knowledge and structures remain within the communities.

Story of Change 23

GBV Prevention through Ishuri ry'Umuryango Mwiza (IUM) in Gatsibo District.

Networking through empowerment and social inclusion events expands the possibilities for a woman leader.

Rwanda Women's Network (RWN), a PPIMA partner, recognises the importance of strengthening gender mainstreaming, women empowerment, Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention, citizen participation and ensuring inclusion in Rwanda. The organisation that has been of service to Rwandans for 24 years, believes that a gender equal society is achieved when both female and male local leaders advocate for less gender discrimination in their communities. The idea is that equipping women, men, girls and boys with knowledge of and prevention of gender discrimination will allow for positive changes in society.

In October 2020, RWN trained 30 women leaders from all sectors (14) in Gatsibo District, under the theme: "Facilitating Women Participation in Leadership Positions", with topics including women leadership, power relations, GBV prevention and response. The training enabled them to effectively assess the current GBV situation in the district, map out the different relevant actors for GBV prevention and response, and eventually identified the missing links.

Subsequently, this triggered the initiative of establishing 'Ishuri ry'Umuryango Mwiza' or 'School for Good Family' in each administrative sector of the district. This was an initiative that the trained women leaders believed could be a practical solution to reduce GBV and domestic violence in the district.

Ishuri ry'Umuryango Mwiza is being used as a safe space for:

- Mediation of conflicting couples to avoid domestic violence;
- Identifying teen mothers and referring them to the right institutions, including re-enrollment to school;
- Identifying GBV victims and referring them to competent institutions for justice (including advocacy);
- Provision of information regarding Family Law to couples before legal marriage;
- Motivating and encouraging legal marriage to couples that are illegally married.

The training brought to light some lessons and recommendations such as:

- Increased responsiveness towards resolving community issues can be triggered by building capacities of all programme stakeholders (local leaders and decision makers);
- When men comprehend the importance of gender equality and the beneficial sides of positive masculinity, they embrace gender equality and hence work as agents for change and therefore reach a larger audience with more sustainable change;
- Mapping of and networking with all anti-GBV actors and joint planning is leading to suitable solutions towards reduced GBV and domestic violence in communities;

Going forward, RWN will continue facilitating opportunities and space through which the relevant stakeholders (Parents' Evening Forums, women leaders, anti-GBV committees, etc.) can meet and discuss practical solutions, to prevent and respond to GBV, as well as motivate women at all levels to participate in decision making leadership positions.



Picture taken by Rwanda Women's Network
Women Leaders in Gatsibo District during
the launch of one of the "Ishuri ry'Umuryango
Mwiza"

“ I want to contribute to women empowerment through my time and workers' association in my own district, inspire women where I live, and work more closely with community leaders so that someday they will make changes.

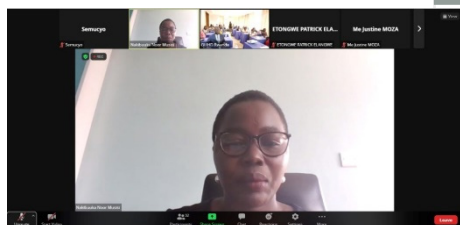
Umulisa Theresa, Gatsibo District. October
2020

While pleading before courts of law, women lawyers have started using the Maputo Protocol as an international legal instrument that was ratified by Rwanda while advocating for women's rights

Celine Karugu (Women Lawyers Forum rep.)



Closeup of one of the women lawyers attending GLIHD's training.
(Photo credit: GLIHD)



Virtual regional women lawyer's workshop on implementing PIL.
(Photo credit: GLIHD)

Story of Change 24

PPIMA Interventions strengthen the Women Lawyers' Forum in Rwanda

Women play a great role in Rwanda's justice system. A considerable number of women are enrolled in the Bar Association, while others occupy benches in different courts in the country, including the Supreme Court.

However, despite the high number of Bar-registered women lawyers, few of them have taken up cases around women's rights. The few that do, do not apply the Maputo Protocol and other similar legal instruments due to challenges like a lack of awareness and capacity.

In response to this gap, with the technical and financial support of NPA, Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights and Development (GLIHD) began training women lawyers in Rwanda on women's rights and using the Maputo Protocol and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

As a result of these trainings, GLIHD is witnessing a rise in Public Interest Litigation (PIL) cases and training on women's rights conducted by Women Lawyers.

Subsequently, Rwandan courts have seen an increase in the use of the African Women's Protocol in courts to defend women's rights.

For instance, six members of the Forum litigated cases using the Maputo Protocol, led the process of drafting the new family law and initiated a radio talk show on the implementation of the African Women's Protocol.

Beyond borders, GLIHD has been at the forefront of pioneering this initiative which has also gained traction in the East African region.

In March 2022, they hosted and participated in a regional women lawyer's workshop on implementing PIL, which brought together women from across the region to learn and share experiences.

Women from Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, and other regional countries shared different cases they litigated that were health-related, human rights, gender-based violence and other public interest areas.

Looking forward, women's rights cases in Rwanda will receive the needed attention and will be handled by women lawyers who are fully equipped with instruments like the Maputo Protocol, CEDAW, and the African Women's Protocol.

This further builds on NPA's impact as it continuously supports Rwandan CSOs in gender and strengthening of the promotion of women's rights in Rwanda.

Story of Change 25

Impact of HDI advocacy training



**HDI Advocacy
training changed
my career path.**

At 17, Sandrine Muhimpundu had a clear plan of what her future would look like. A student in Form Three at Groupe Scolaire Mayange A in Mayange Sector, Bugesera District, Eastern Province, Muhimpundu knew that as soon as she completed her O'Levels, she would join the national army. However, in 2020, Muhimpundu, who was the Secretary of 'Let It Shine' talent club at her school, was one of the 20 adolescents chosen in her district to begin training with Health Development Initiative (HDI) under their 'adolescent empowerment program'.

She explains that she was given training on issues related to advocacy, child rights, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and how all these interconnects to provide full access to youth friendly SRHR information and services. She explains that by the end of the third training session, she was beginning to think of changing her career path.

“The plan was to join the army to serve my country. However, as the training progressed and as I heard the challenges that young people are facing including issues around teenage pregnancies, I started thinking about serving my country but in a different way, she said

As a result, Muhimpundu quit 'Let It Shine' Club and started 'Baho Neza Mwana W'uRwanda' Club. 'Baho Neza Mwana W'uRwanda' Club was primarily aimed at encouraging a 'savings' culture within the student community at her school but with what she had learnt in her training, she added the component of SRHR where she was the focal person for her peers on any information on any of these topics. The club is composed of slightly over 120 students.

The Challenges

Muhimpundu says that although there are some improvements, there is still a mindset issue where talking about subjects like family planning, condom use, safe abortion is still viewed as 'promotion of promiscuity' by some. She also appealed for follow-up sessions where the trainees are consulted on their progress, challenges and where both the trainers and trainees design solutions together. She also called for support in acquiring materials that are required to make their work with their peers easier. Here, she said that there should be banners, items like contraceptives, condoms etc.

“If I am talking about the use of condoms, I need to elaborate how to wear them because some young people don't know how to. When I start a conversation on menstruation, I need to be trained on the use of cycle beads and I need to have them with me in case a student asks, she said

Planning for the Future

She says that the confidence coupled with the skills to do advocacy that she gained from the training has been instrumental in encouraging her to talk to local authorities to take what she learnt beyond her school.

“I recently wrote to the Executive Secretary of the Kirenga Cell requesting them to grant me an opportunity to share what I learnt on child rights, SRHR and advocacy. They have called to ask follow-up questions and I am currently waiting for their response, she said

Granted the permission to give these talks, she says that she plans to target adolescents, who have dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancies, offer advice and point them to the direction of where they can seek further help to continue living normal lives and avoid the repeat of their experiences.

Story of Change 26

PPIMA's impact Governance Focal Persons

Bee Keeping Enterprise: In Nyagihanga Sector GFPs (NYABEKE-CO) in Gatsibo District; GFPs started a bee keeping project an initial capital of 800,000Rwf in 2013. Currently, the cooperative fixed and movable assets worth approximately 4,000,000Rwf, which include; the cooperative's office building that sits on a plot of land worth 1 million francs, a forest with 47 beehives and 6 dairy cows.

Banana Plantation: Cooperative Twuzuzanye of Murambi Sector in Gatsibo District; which started a profit-oriented banana plantation enterprise with an initial capital of 1,000,000Rwf. The cooperative currently owns a banana plantation worth approximately 3,000,000Rwf.

Enterprise for buying and selling of crop seeds:

Coko Sector Governance Focal Persons (GFPs) are well known in Gakenke District for buying and reselling of maize, beans and Irish potatoes. This has earned the group significant profits over the years.

SACCO loan committee chairperson:

MBANJINEZA Pascal, a former GFP of Gatare Sector in Gakenke District, became well known as an opinion leader especially through PPIMA initiatives. He was elected to be the chairperson of the Loan committee for the Gatare Sector SACCO. He gets satisfactory monthly allowances.

Elected community representative to VUP:

Minani Evariste, former GFP of Kivu Sector in Nyaruguru District, gained popularity as his community's advocate. Eventually, the community members elected him again to represent them in the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP), specifically in the terrace construction and feeder road maintenance activities. He is paid a salary of 90,000Rwf.

Elected motorcyclists' cooperative chairperson: Nkurikiyimana Pacique, a former GFP of Ngera Sector in Nyaruguru District, became well known by his constituency for his excellent leadership skills, as displayed through Community Scorecard forums. Due to these skills, he was elected to be the chairperson of the district cooperative of 400 motorcyclists and capital worth 6 million Rwandan francs.

Elected sector council secretary: The former GFP of Mbazi Sector in Nyaruguru District, Ndagijimana Emmanuel, was elected as the sector council secretary in Mbazi Sector. This is largely attributed to the facilitation and leadership gained from the capacity building and guidance offered by PPIMA over the years. Additionally, he gained vast experience through leading CSC activities that he leverages in engaging with various local leaders and decision makers.

Former GFP recruited as Sector Executive Secretary:

A former Muyongwe Sector Governance Focal Person (GFP) is now a Sector Executive secretary of Ruli Sector in Gakenke District.

Enterprise for buying and selling of crop seeds: Gashenyi Sector cooperative; buys and resells food crops and seeds with 1.5 million francs worth of capital and their own built establishment.

GFP recruited as a sector official:

One of Muyongwe Sector GFPs in Gakenke District was recruited to be the Sector Economic Development Officers. Recognition of his capacities by the sector is attributed to his leadership skills and knowledge shown during his role as a GFP under PPIMA. He was trained by PPIMA from which he gained knowledge and skills in various areas.

Merry-go-round savings:

The 12-member GFP cooperative of Kamubuga Sector currently has 1,700,000Rwf worth of savings on their bank account. They started the initiative after being brought together as GFPs. From the profits they make, they buy crop seeds and resell them to maximise profits which they share afterwards. This is an initiative that will keep them together even after programme phase-out.

Honey Processing Plant:

IMBAKA group was formed by 15 Karambo sector GFPs who are currently well known in Gakenke District for honey production. From their own savings after getting together as GFPs, they were able to buy 40 traditional and modern beehives from which they are getting significant amounts of honey for sell. They also actually now own 80% (worth 25,000,000Rwf) of the shares of the honey processing plant they belong to and intend to buy the remaining 20% from the other members.

LEARNING AND ADAPTATION

The 2020 – 2024 programme benefits from considerable Learning and reflection from recent years. It also continues to apply an iterative learning approach across the programme – capturing key stakeholders' insights on changes attributable to the programme, identifying, analysing and seizing opportunities for improvement and sustainability of outcomes.

Story of Change 27

Community volunteer structures for sustainability of PPIMA outcomes.

Over 4,431 Governance Focal Persons capacitated through NPA-support to facilitate and sustain Citizen Participation processes in districts.



The GFPs designed and bought their own t-shirts for easy visibility when carrying out their work in the communities.

Photo by AJPRODHO

In the PPIMA programme, community volunteers or Governance Focal Persons (GFPs) play a very fundamental role in citizen participation processes. A GFP is a citizen with integrity and spirit of volunteerism elected by community members at Cell level; in order to facilitate more citizen engagement in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of government programs and plans through the Community Scorecard (CSC) process. GFPs have a potentially challenging, but crucial role of facilitating Citizen participation processes, which requires a range of organizational, facilitation and communication skills, an open-mind, energy and motivation.

Sustainability of the Community scorecard in districts as a tool for facilitating citizen participation processes is fundamentally built on the continued existence and strength of GFP structures. As of 2022, PPIMA programme has built capacity of over 4,431 GFPs who are currently facilitating the CSC processes in 19 districts. In order to sustain PPIMA outcomes in districts, it is important to ensure continued togetherness between GFPs even after project phase out. It is in this respect that GFP groups came up with different initiatives that would increase their solidarity, such as: income generating activities and saving groups.

In 2021, the 195 GFPs from Ngoma District formed 14 saving and loan groups, from which they have gained start-up capital to invest in a number of incomes generating enterprises. Each saving and loan group consists between 14 and 18 GFPs. With an intention of not only making profits but also maintaining their unity, the Ngoma District GFPs have invested in food-crop and animal farming enterprises, trading initiatives, among others. These groups enable GFPs to secure affordable loans compared to seeking loans from banks and other financial institutions.

Through these loans and profits, the GFPs have been able to improve their livelihoods, including: purchasing domestic animals (livestock), paying school fees for their children, medical insurance with ease, etc., unlike in the previous years.



All the 195 GFPs in Ngoma District bought and planted 576 fruit tree seedlings, including avocados and papaya, in an effort to fight malnutrition amongst their families. In the sectors of Remera, Kazo and Zaza, the GFPs have saved over 1,632,000 Rwandan francs, which has facilitated them to start up different small enterprises and loans that have improved their welfare.

Story of Change 28

NPA using existing structures as an adaptive measure for continued citizen participation in local planning processes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

NPA through its partners facilitated GFPs to collaborate with "Amasibo" members who consequently consolidated citizens' priorities that informed district budgets and plans for the fiscal year 2021/2022



Picture: A planning meeting between "Amasibo" leaders and GFPs, to consolidate citizens' priorities in Nyagihanga Sector, Gatsibo District.

Increased citizen participation and engagement in development is one of the key priorities under the Transformational governance pillar for the 7-year National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) in Rwanda. The government has put in place some mechanisms that can avail space for citizens to participate in development processes, such as, a Cell Assembly which is an interactive government-created space for citizens and decision makers, councils as well as "Amasibo" (community-based governance structure), among other decentralized mechanisms.

Since 2010, NPA through its partners' endeavours to facilitate increased citizen participation processes, empowerment, accountability, inclusiveness and improved service delivery, as one of its key objectives, has been using the Community Scorecard (CSC) to attain this. At the centre of the CSC are well-trained PPIMA community volunteers (Governance Focal Persons-GFPs), who facilitate citizen participation processes.

As a strategy for effectively using the existing space and sustaining the CSC, NPA partners have been taking advantage of the existing government-created spaces and governance structures, specifically councils and Cell Assemblies, especially during the local planning and budgeting processes. However, with the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, the government's directives put a halt to mass gatherings, including Cell Assemblies, through which they presented their priorities to inform district plans and budgets.

As an adaptive response to Covid-19 challenges, NPA partners facilitated 2,166 GFPs to collaborate with approximately 39,088 "Amasibo" leaders in order to collect, consolidate and elevate citizens' priorities that informed district plans and budgets for the fiscal year 2021/2022. The "Amasibo" members were well-positioned for this situation and exercise since they operate at village level. Consequently, amidst the lockdown in 9 districts, the "Amasibo" in collaboration with GFPs were able to influence the uptake of 1,087 priorities (18%) out of the 5,970 citizen priorities collected.

Story of Change 29

Gatsibo District readiness to sustain PPIMA project outcomes for sustainability of PPIMA outcomes.

Since 2010, Rwanda Women's Network in partnership with Norwegian People's Aid and Gatsibo District has contributed to the improvement of service delivery and citizen's participation through implementation of the Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy (PPIMA) project aimed at strengthening the voice of citizens and civil society organizations in Rwanda. The partnership introduced also the Ending Gender and Domestic Violence (EDV) component in Gatsibo and later shifted to Nyarugenge District. After implementation of PPIMA Project and EDV until end 2019 that resulted in citizens' awareness on their rights and responsibilities, accountability of local leaders and creation of anti GBV forum in Nyarugenge District, Rwanda Women's Network is currently implementing a Public Policy Information, Monitoring and Advocacy Programme in Gatsibo and Kayanza Districts.

The introduction of Community Scorecard implementation in government created spaces especially in cell assemblies and its alignment to local Government planning calendar was in preparation of sustaining the project outcomes upon phase out. The sustainability of project outcomes and readiness of Gatsibo District including community volunteers (Women Space Facilitators, Governance Focal Persons and Trained Women Leaders) for PPIMA project phase out by the end of 2021 was discussed in different fora including a courtesy visit to Gatsibo District on 16th September 2021 and officially during the reflective workshop on sustainability of PPIMA project outcomes that took place on 29th September 2021 at INFINITY Center Gatsibo District where both community volunteers and leaders of Gatsibo District appreciated the contribution of the project and are ready to sustain the outcomes.

The community volunteers, District and Sector Officials, acknowledged the project achievements since 2010 especially the strong partnership built between citizens and duty bearers for improved services, accountability and sustainable development based on increased citizen engagement and participation, GBV prevention through Women Safe Spaces and Ishuri ry'Umuryango mwiza as well as promotion of women's active participation in decision making processes. They also acknowledged the active participation of citizens and community volunteers in decision making processes especially the planning and budgeting processes since 2018 when the project implementation area was scaled up from 20 cells to all 69 cells of Gatsibo District and the community scorecard implementation was adopted by Gatsibo District as one of planning and budgeting tools to collect citizens' priorities as stipulated in 2018-2019 Gatsibo District Performance Contract (Performance Contract nr 64).

Community women and women leaders trained by Rwanda Women's Network contributed significantly to GBV prevention through Women Safe Spaces and Ishuri ry'Umuryango Mwiza scaled up at Cell level. Citizens appreciated the mediation, counselling and referral as well as the accountability of anti GBV actors provided by the above-mentioned community volunteers. The women empowerment program was welcomed by women in leadership positions trained by Rwanda Women's Network and scaled the skills to cell level and to grassroots women mobilizing them to take leadership positions. During the reflective workshop on sustainability of PPIMA project outcomes, the community volunteers requested the district to support them to continue their volunteerism while RWN was asked to strengthen their capacities.

2021 was the year for PPIMA project phase out in Gatsibo District, for a successful PPIMA project phase out, the readiness of the project stakeholders on sustaining the outcomes was ensured through joint planning and eventual signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

The lack of District budget to sustain PPIMA project outcomes as well as the district staff turnover are challenges towards successful sustainability. An advocacy is underway for the district to allocate a budget to sustain PPIMA project outcomes and the capacity building for the District and Sector staff to coordinate the sustainability will overcome the above challenges. The project community volunteers also expressed the need for visibility kits (badge, uniform) to ease recognition.

An MoU defining the future partnership between Gatsibo District and RWN was developed and signed on 27th December 2021.

Story of Change 30

Gender Champions' Forum as a Gender Mainstreaming Sustainability Strategy.

NPA is an organisation whose goal is centered on human worth and equal rights for all and strives globally to promote the values of solidarity, unity, equality, human rights and democracy. NPA supports civil society organisations and citizens in Rwanda to participate in and contribute to the formulation and implementation of national and local policymaking, planning and governance.

NPA ensures that the needs of women and men from a range of social groups are considered, that effective participation is promoted at all levels and that gender equality and social inclusion are mainstreamed across all interventions.

The establishment of the Gender Champions' Forum came as a response to gender mainstreaming as well as a sustainability strategy towards gender equality. Each of the 20 partner CSOs nominated 2 staff, one male and one female, as representatives to this Forum.

The aim of this Forum is to "Keep GENDER on the Agenda" as we lead the way to Gender Equality in Rwanda and beyond. This Forum is also a platform for networking purposes including sharing and learning.

To date, Gender Champions have participated in several awareness sessions, received capacity building as well as tools such as the gender awareness handbook and flipchart to support them in their work as master trainers.

In April 2022, the Gender Champions formed teams that went on to conduct Gender Audits across all 20 partner organisations. To facilitate them while carrying out this exercise, a Gender Audit Guide/Checklist and a Gender Audit Report were developed. Audit findings and recommendations are being compiled and will be shared in May 2022. From there, each organisation will be required to develop their own Action Plans to address the identified gaps.

Gender Champions' Forum as a Gender Mainstreaming Sustainability Strategy

- Forum for sharing various best practices and lessons learned in their efforts to mainstream gender into their diverse sectors and areas of expertise = meets once a quarter
- Capacity building platform (TOTs)
- Walk the Talk = role models in their organisations
- Develop gender strategies and policies for their organisations accompanied by Action Plans with concrete targets, indicators and monitoring mechanisms
- Pool of gender experts who can be called upon to provide consultancies in different gender related issues, including conducting Gender Audits for partner organisations on a biannual basis.



COMPENDIUM OF STORIES OF CHANGE FOR THE PPIMA PROJECT

MAY 2020 - MAY 2022