



Case Study: 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



Picture: One of PPIMA partners' thematic working groups devising an advocacy roadmap.



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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 mobilising 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. Photo: Courtesy of New Times, 2021.