



Empowering farmers through social accountability tools to improve performance contracts in the agricultural sector

## Project Newsletter - Issue No 3 (August - December 2018)

### Content of the third project newsletter (August - December 2018)

- The Community Debate: creating a forum for farmers, local officials and media practitioners to discuss challenges of local agricultural practices.
- What farmers think about the project? The impact achieved so far on improved participation in local performance contracts - the farmers perspective.
- TI-Rwanda awarded media practitioners in social accountability for the first time.
- Pictorial story.

Thanks to their needs submitted to the District after the project collection of farmers needs, a farmer in Kayonza can now use a water pump provided by the District!

*Photo credit: Hitayezu Christophe*



### Voices about the project

“The research of this project helped us to know the problems we face in agriculture. Before, it was not easy to know every problem of the 1300 farmers in our sector!”

Nyamirama Sector Agronomist in Kayonza District

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## The Community Debate

TI-Rwanda has received a grant from Social Accountability Media Initiative (SAMI), a project of the Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media & Communications in Nairobi.

The project has implemented different activities in line with the GPSA funded project which are but not limited to the building a Rwanda Social Accountability Media Network, workshops and field visits for local and community radio journalists, Award of media practitioners in social Accountability, mentoring journalists and guiding development of stories during and after the field visits, among others. The project is being implemented in collaboration with Pax Press, a non governmental organisation for media professionalism. As mentioned, in 2018, a media network on social accountability has been set up and 20 media journalists are actively participating in GPSA project awareness and project implementation. A crucial element of this media initiative is facilitating field visits by journalists to meet farmers, cooperative leaders, partner NGOs, and government officials to gauge the impact of social accountability efforts.

Community Debates were held on 22nd August, 2018 in Mwili and Nyamiramba Sectors, Kayonza District, and on 17th October, 2018 in Muyira Sector, Nyanza District. Both districts are the pilot districts of TI-RW's social accountability projects.

### The purpose of the Community Debate

- Engage the local community in addressing issues crucial to their livelihoods.
- Bring local officials into direct dialogue with citizens.
- Allow media practitioners to witness the debate and gain opportunities to interview citizens, officials, and CSO representatives.
- Facilitate high-quality independent reporting that raises citizens voices and offers evidence-based solutions to issues they identify.



Photo: credit TR  
Lansner, AKU-GSMC



Photo credit: TR  
Lansner, AKU-GSMC



### FACTS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY DEBATE

- The debate was broadcasted live on community radio Izuba Radio in Eastern Province and nationwide on Flash-FM radio and TV 10.
- Around 400 people attended the debate in each community.
- Citizens raised key challenges in the farming sector. One example: Performance of the local cassava processing cooperative was hotly debated.
- Media coverage of the community debate on agriculture practices helped broaden the impact of the pilot project, making citizens and the government more aware of issues that affect farmers across Rwanda.
- Several local officials joined the debate in response to the citizens statements.
- 13 members of Rwanda Media Network on Social Accountability and five other journalists attended the Debate.

### OUTCOME

- The mayor of Nyanza Mr Erasmus Ntazinda who attended the community debate, promised to bargain markets for cassava and banana, as farmers declared losses.
- Recently, the new governor of southern province, CG Gasana proposed cassava collection center as a bridge between farmers and Kinazi cassava plant. Apart from that, Urugangazi local plant that collapsed three years ago, is in reopening process, and this will help cassava farmers.

## What farmers say about the TI-RW implemented GPSA project?



As part of the assessment of the immediate outcome of the project, in terms of raising farmers awareness on the process of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Imihigo at the district level, we selected and interviewed farmers. We randomly selected two farmers in each district (Kayonza and Nyanza) and wanted to know their opinion about improvements but also challenges experienced through the project. Below we share the responses from Mrs Uwiz-eye Jacqueline and Mr Munyampara Sylvestre.

**Q: Before this project started, were you aware of the process of planning for district Imihigo and action planning?**

The two farmers interviewed in Nyanza district confirmed that they were not aware of the planning process of district Imihigo and action plan. Local Officials used to inform citizens what they have to implement without involving them in the planning process. In some cases, citizens at the cell level were informed by Social Economic Development Officer (SEDO) during meetings at the village, and cell level.

**Q: Where do you think was the problem which caused the lack of citizen/farmers' participation in the planning process of Imihigo at the district level?**

Citizens revealed that they think the problem was at the local administration level. However, local leaders have started consulting citizens on Imihigo through community meetings and by distributing brochures assisting them to elaborate Imihigo.



**Are you now informed about farmers' priorities which are well incorporated in Imihigo and action plan of the district for the fiscal year 2018/2019, how were you informed about them?**

As revealed by interviewed farmers, now the Imihigo of the district are posted at the cell level and this has enabled farmers and citizens in general, to know its contents. In addition, farmers benefited from the projects feedback strategy which facilitated the dissemination of district imihigo, action plan especially those related to agriculture.

**In summary, what do you think you have gained from this project in terms of collaborating with local administration, your collaboration with project staff and collaboration between farmers?**

- The project has increased collaboration between farmers and exchange on priority issues that needs to be included in Imihigo and action plan of the district.
- The project has increased farmers participation in the imihigo process and the interactions between farmers and local government officials to discuss on farmers priority needs and validate together what should be included in Imihigo and action plan of the district.
- The project has increased the level of awareness of farmers about the Imihigo and action plan of the district through feedback mechanisms put in place.
- Farmers are satisfied that they have been given a platform to express their needs and also get an opportunity to exchange with local officials on priority needs in the sector of agriculture.

## TI-Rwanda awarded media practitioners in social accountability



On December 29th, 2018, TI-Rwanda hosted a Social Responsibility Reporting Ceremony. During the event, four journalists among the 20 members of the Rwanda media network on social accountability were awarded as best journalists. The first journalist received 600,000 rwf award, the other two journalists received 400,000 Rwandan francs, and the third received a prize of 300,000 Rwandan francs.

According to Jean Bosco Rushingabigwi, the chairperson of the jury, they received 12 entries. Among them, four pieces were selected. These include 3 radio shows and one TV show.

### What were the stories awarded at the first and the third position about?

#### First position :

Farmers show how their participation in budgeting is still low especially in agriculture and livestock. They expressed that the District of Kayonza and other key partners are empowering them on how to overcome lack of production by involving them in looking for solutions which one of them is irrigation machine. The

farmers emphasized that if they get irrigation machines. They will be no more lack of production.

#### Third Position :

Rice farmers at Mwiri sector in Kayonza district had a problem of having only one buyer for their harvest and he took their harvest (rice) and after 2 months he brought back the rice to farmers saying that it was in a bad condition. The farmers claimed a big loss in the farming process and says that the buyer appreciated their products because it is the only one at the market. In addition to that, they tried to report the case to the district authority but they were disappointed by the authority because they were told that the investor is the only one who has the right to buy their products.

Farmers say if they were given a chance to have competitors to buy their harvest, they could be the wealthiest people in the sector.



## Meet the winners of the first Rwandan Social Accountability Media Award



**HABIMANA Jean Claude**, Agricultural Journalist at Radio Salus, University of Rwanda radio station. First Position



**Fidel Twir- ingiyimana**, Journalist Radio and TV 1. Second Position

“I am honored to have been chosen for the first position in Rwandan Social Accountability Award. My story tackled on the role of small holder farmers in Kayonza District in planning and implementing District’s budget. “

“I am very happy that my work was recognized and appreciated This is very encouraging, I will try to do much better by conducting advocacy through social accountability stories.



**Malachie hakizimana**:, Second Position



**Regine Gacinya** from Izuba radio. of eastern province. Third Position .

“We thank people who organized the awards because it is a way of honoring our work.”

“I was delighted and overwhelmed by the award it will be a motivation in my work as a journalist in reporting social accountability stories.”



# PICTORIAL



**Network members share key lessons from field visits to Nyanza and Kayonza with officials. On first photo from left: Director of Planning in Ministry of Agriculture, TI-Rwanda Executive Director; Director General of Research, Rwanda Governance Board, The second picture: Rogers Kayihura, Communications & External Relations Officer, World Bank Rwanda,**



**National dialogue on social accountability. The event brought together 50 participants from government institutions, development partners, civil society organizations and media.**

**Pax Press National Coordinator Albert-Baudouin Twizeyimana and Social Accountability Media Initiative Director Thomas R Lansner at Pax Press office, Kigali.**

**Finalizing Field Visit Plans**

