



TRANSPARENCY
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PARTNERSHIP FOR
SOCIAL
ACCOUNTABILITY

Empowering Farmers at the District Level through Social Accountability Tools to Improve Performance Contracts “Imihigo” in Rwandan Agricultural Sector

Project Newsletter—Issue N° 5 (July to December 2019)

Objective of the Project: To increase farmers’ participation in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the district performance contract at the district levels in Kayonza and Nyanza and ultimately contribute to improving the effectiveness of public agriculture projects in the targeted districts.

Project duration: 5 years since 2017

Project Partners: Transparency International Rwanda (TI-Rw), in partnership with Imbaraga association and SDA Iriba.

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What farmers say about the project

Jaques Habarurema, President of cooperatives federation/Nyanza

Our three cooperatives were charged heavy tax equivalent to 5.5 million. Through the meeting organized under this project by Transparency International Rwanda, the mayor vowed to solve the issue and did so. We ended up paying less than one million in 5.5 million that we had been charged.



Liziki Nyirahabimana, farmer/Kayonza

As persons with disabilities, we are grateful to this project. This is because it changed our mindsets that we are unable and sensitized us to join cooperatives and groups of other famers. I myself joined a group called Jyambere Muhinzi and have increased my production. In addition, through this group, I have learned other things like the culture of saving.



Silvestre Munyampala, farmer/Nyanza

It was not easy for farmers to go to the district office talking about their needs because they felt their ideas and needs wouldn’t be considered. However, since this project started, farmers are cordially welcome at the district to propose their priority needs. For instance in Nyanza last year, this project helped us to submit 20 priority needs to the district and 16 of them were implemented.



Only 23 % of farmers participate in setting prices of their production—CRC Findings



Farmers have expressed the need to get government subsidy on irrigation machines and pumps as a way to increase their production

Transparency International Rwanda (TI-RW) launched the findings of the survey on farmers' satisfaction with their participation in agriculture projects planned in Imihigo in Nyanza and Kayanza Districts.

The findings were divulged on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 in the stocktaking and forward looking dialogue on agriculture project dubbed “Empowering farmers at the district level through social accountability tools to improve performance contracts “imihigo” in Rwandan agriculture projects”

Dr. Octave Semwaga, the Director General of Planning in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) commended the project for helping to improve farmers' participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of their district's performance contracts “Imihigo”.



Dr. Octave Semwaga, Director General of Planning/ MINAGRI

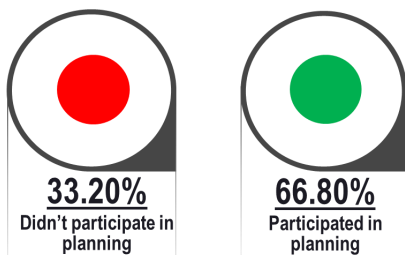
The survey findings show that only 23 % of farmers participate in setting prices of their production, thus low prices cripple them and be in the loss margin.

“Better results come from dialogue and common understanding. That is the reason why more efforts are needed to be done at beneficiary level through engaging citizens from grassroots,” said Winston from World Bank stressing why the dialogue was very crucial to discuss how to leverage on social accountability in agriculture sector.

In this dialogue, stakeholders in agriculture sector underpinned there is a need of creating synergies among all actors to promote social accountability in this sector that employs over 70% of Rwandans and that they should complement one another instead of duplicating data.

Findings of the survey

Farmers Participation in Planning



Only around 18% said they participated in evaluation of the set targets concerning agriculture

In regard to those who participated in planning, 43% of the respondents said they were satisfied with the feedback on all proposed priorities while 52% of farmers were satisfied with how 11 planned priorities were implemented during the fiscal year 2017-2018.

About the channels of communication, farmers acknowledged that they mostly express their views through farmers' cooperatives (73.12%) and community meetings (68.6%).



Participants of the stocktaking and forward looking dialogue

Furthermore, findings notify a high level of farmers' satisfaction (75.0%) with the quality of agriculture seeds and fertilizers compared to their request and more than 80% of farmers appreciated the quality of agriculture inputs and equipment other than irrigation machines.

The survey also indicates that majority of farmers confirmed they don't know how selected targets were achieved in Kayonza and Nyanza. Farmers also lament they don't take part in setting prices of their production. Only 23% said they participated in price regulation process.

On the other hand, although farmers' satisfaction has increased this year, reporting encountered cases of corruption is still low in this sector. 12% of farmers said they perceived corruption practices in process of farming credits, 11.4% perceived corrup-

tion practices in Procurement process of post-harvest and milk collection points construction while corruption perception in purchasing tractors and irrigation machines stands at 9%.

Moreover, 4.5 % of farmers have personally experienced corruption when seeking for agriculture and livestock services and programs in Fiscal Year of 2018-2019.

The level of experienced corruption by farmers when seeking farming services during the fiscal year 2017-18 proves to be at 4.5%. It emerged that 55.6% of respondents who were requested to pay bribe have paid it.

only 3 over 27 farmers who experienced corruption reported their cases

- 2 to Local government
- 1 to TI-RW

Nyanza Community Debate: District Officials Pledged to Engage and Consult Farmers in the Whole Process of Imihigo



The debate made it possible for farmers to interact with district officials who directly provided response to the issues raised



During the community debate held in Busasamana Sector of Nyanza District on July 3, 2019, the participants agreed to jointly solve the challenges affecting farmers which included the delay and price hike of selected seeds and fertilizers, high land lease fees charged cooperatives and delay in paying rice farmers.

The district officials also pledged to engage farmers in the decision making through consulting them in the whole process of the performance contracts “Imihigo”.

In the light of fostering social accounta-

bility in agriculture sector, the debate brought on board over 300 farmers, Rwanda Network for Social Accountability journalists who are part of PAX Press, district officials including Director of Agriculture, district and sectors’ agronomists, representatives from CSOs intervening in agriculture in Nyanza, TI-RW representatives among others.

After having interactive discussions in which the farmers freely spoke out the truth, they commended the project for enabling them to participate in the planning, execution and evaluation of imi-

higo but urged the officials to ease the conditions in which they work. They decried the price hike of selected seeds and fertilizers, delay in payment of their production, few agro-dealers in some sectors and others.

Gustave Nzungize, the Director of Agriculture in Nyanza District vowed to advocate for the increase of agro-dealers in Busoro Sector and in others that may have the same issue, to harness mechanisms that allow the farmers get on time fertilizers and selected seeds and advocate for the on time payment of rice and milk producers.

“We are going to follow up the case of those who delay to pay the farmers and make sure they are paid as soon as possible. It will be easier to identify them because we know all the clients who have signed contracts with the cooperatives,” he underpinned



Gustave Nzungize, Director of Agriculture in Nyanza District

In this debate, the farmers were sensitized to buy selected seeds and fertilizers from registered agro-dealers as the

surefire way to avoid those who cheat on them about the quality and price. However, the farmers stressed that the prices are still high.

“We bought maize seeds at only Rwf290 per 1kg last year but it has doubled up to Rwf590 this season. This is a challenge to many farmers and has made us backtrack and grow traditional seeds because of this hike,” said Veneranda Kanjara, a farmer in Mukingo Sector.

According to Egide Bizimana, the Executive Secretary of Busasamana Sector, the debate was very crucial as they came to be aware of the wishes of the farmers during an open dialogue. “This project has made it possible for us to plan basing on what the citizens need. We do also expect the increase of agricultural production because our farmers have also been trained on what they can do in a bid achieve our aspirations in agriculture sector,” he added.

This community debate funded by Social Accountability Media Initiative (SAMI) was broadcasted live on TV 10, Victory TV, Flash FM and Huguka Radio. It was also covered by different journalists working for online and print newspapers.

In the coming weeks, TI-RW will also follow up on the pricing issues and the commitments taken by the local government.

Advocacy for Farmers Led to Reduction of Land Lease Fees



The federation of three cooperatives in Nyanza paid Rwf692,000 while they had been charged 5.5 million

Since the beginning of 2019, most of Nyanza cooperatives lamented to have been charged unprecedented land lease fees. Transparency International Rwanda (TI-RW), through this project, advocated for the normalization of the fees as some cooperatives were supposed to pay for the extra hectares that they do not own while others had to pay up to 10 times of the real fees.

One of the instances of the seemingly impossible happened when the federation of cooperatives in Busasamana Sector was charged the fees equivalent to Rwf5.5 million. This federation is made of three cooperatives namely Ubushakebwiza, Abatanyuranyimihigo and Dufatanyumurimo, all of which claimed to have been shocked by the hike of the fees while they had expected to pay at least one tenth of it.

“Through the meeting organized by Transparency International Rwanda that brought together different district’s partners, the mayor vowed to sort the problem out and now the issue was solved. We ended up paying only Rwf692 thousand out of 5.5 mil-

lion we had been charged,” said Jacques Habarurema, President of the federation.

“We are happy that the project empowered the farmers. We met with grassroots leaders to whom we presented our views including farmer’s aspirations and the challenges that we face,” added Habarurema.

In the community debate held in Nyanza on 3rd July 2019, other many agricultural cooperatives claimed the district had increased the land lease fees up to Rwf100,000 per hectare in 2019 from Rwf15,000 in 2018 while the Presidential Order states that the fees should not exceed Rwf4,000/ha per year.

Gustave Nzungize, the district’s Director of Agriculture and Natural Resources assured the farmers of the changes that could be endorsed in the district’s advisory council scheduled to be held a few days after the debate. “We are advocating for reducing the land lease at the district’s advisory council which decides the lease. We are sure of lower lease fees in this 2019/2020 fiscal year,” he said.

TI-RW Collected and Submitted Farmer's Priority Needs to the Districts



Photo: Farmers in Kayonza and Nyanza during the collection of their priority needs

From 24th October to 15th November 2019, Transparency International Rwanda with implementing partners Imbaraga in Kayonza and SDA Iriba in Nyanza, collected farmers' priority needs to be considered in districts' performance contracts "Imihigo" of 2020-2021 fiscal year.

The collection was conducted through farmer's networks created by TI-RW and focus group discussions that embedded different groups and cooperatives of farmers in both districts. The needs collected were submitted to the district for validation.

Farmers' needs included availing on time and reduction of prices for selected seeds and fertilizers, increase of storage facilities and price for milk, easing the provision bank loans and insurances on agricultural projects, government subsidy on tanks to keep rain water, animal medication and other livestock services, etc

Farmers' priority needs validation meeting in Kayonza



The validation meeting held on December 14th, 2019, brought together district officials including the Director of Agriculture Unity, District Agronomist, District Veterinary among others, CSOs intervening in Agriculture in Kayonza, and Farmers representatives from 12 sectors of Kayonza District.

10 farmers' needs were deeply discussed and analyzed and 8 farmers priority needs were validated as the most urgent needs to be considered for 2020/2021 fiscal year.

Some urgent farmer's priority needs validated

- ♦ To reduce the high cost of seeds and fertilizers
- ♦ Government subsidy (Nkunganire) on Animal medication and other livestock services
- ♦ Availability of Post-harvest facilities
- ♦ Government subsidy (Nkunganire) on tanks for rain water

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Participants of the social Accountability Symposium hosted in Kigali by Transparency International sRwanda (TI-RW) on 26-27th September, 2019



From Left: Rueben Lifuka, Vice chairperson of Transparency International; Ingabire Marie Marie Immaculee TI-RW Chairperson and Prof. Shyaka Anastase, Minister of Local Government



Farmers who attended the community debate held in Nyanza on July 3, 2019



Participants in this project's Stocktaking and Forward Looking Dialogue on Social Accountability in Agriculture



Collection of farmer's priority needs: From 24th October to 15th November 2019, farmers' priority needs were collected and submitted to the districts to be considered in 2020-2021 Imihigo