



TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
RWANDA



ALAC/AJIC IMPACT

ASSESSMENT REPORT

2017



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1. Background

Through the Advocacy and Legal Advices Centers (ALAC), Transparency International Rwanda (TI-Rw) promotes legal aid and assistance to victims or witnesses of corruption through provision of free and confidential advice on corruption cases, advice on formulation, development, presentation and monitoring of corruption-related complaints. TI-Rw undertakes advocacy on a broader anti-corruption reform agenda, enhances institutional capacity building in complaint assessment and enables citizens pursue corruption-related issues and supports the work and sustainability of good governance coalitions in the regions.

On one hand, ALAC is a project that has been initiated by Transparency International in 2003 with the aim of informing citizens about their legal rights and enabling citizens to take action in cases where they are victims or witnesses of corruption. ALAC project in Rwanda started in 2009 by TI-Rw and currently 6 centers are operational in Gasabo, Huye, Kayanza, Musanze, Rubavu and Rusizi districts.

On another hand, through PPIMA¹ project, TI-RW established partnership with other local organizations² that are running four centers providing similar services as ALACs', the Anticorruption, Justice and Information Centers (AJICs). These centers also receive victims of corruption and injustice and provide legal aid or advocate for them towards concerned public institutions.

From 2009 up to the year 2017, around 36,000 clients (25,488 from ALAC and 10,738 from AJICs) have been seeking for advocacy or legal assistance via available centers, volunteers and outreach and legal mobile clinics activities. Most of those requests were successfully closed and complainants were satisfied accordingly. Engagement with local governments to mitigate and solve issues from citizens and scaling up successful concepts to the national level has been success factors and lead to a wide acceptance of ALACs and AJICs. Most important, a step towards better well-being of citizens has been made through ALACs and AJICs, in a small but tangible way.

¹ Public Policy Information Monitoring and Advocacy

² AJIPRODHO, ADENYA, TUBIBE AMAHORO AND IMBARAGA

Among the mechanisms that are put in place to access to legal aid services, TI-RW has set up a toll free telephone line and text message/internet based application where citizens can call or send messages for free. This approach helps citizens who live in remote areas and thus cannot easily access ALACs and AJICs to get the services needed.

Corruption is a misconduct that often happens away from the public eye and behind closed doors. Therefore, it is difficult to find evidence of corrupt behavior. TI-Rw has developed this project with the aim to engage the general public in fighting corruption. Consulting an ALAC or AJIC is a step prior to the submission of a complaint to the government authorities, only the latter one has the mandate to investigate and prosecute. Therefore, an ALAC or AJIC helps clients to develop and articulate their complaints, and on their request, the ALAC or AJIC submits their complaints with relevant institutions. ALACs/AJICs help to ensure that government institutions receive more detailed and elaborated complaints, making their investigation work easier. In this respect, TI-RW approached relevant government institutions such as the Office of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the National Police, to develop working relationships to jointly fight against corruption. These institutions appreciate TI-RW initiative and expressed their readiness to work hand in hand with him through ALACs in the fight against corruption.

Through PPIMA project, with the support of an external consultant, TI-RW undertakes every year ALACs/AJICs impact assessment to monitor the achievements or challenges encountered in the implementation of the two actions and, from the feedback of the project beneficiaries, review the way used to provide legal aid and advocacy for the victims or witnesses of corruption or related bad service delivery to citizens.

2. Objectives

The ALAC/AJIC 2017 impact assessment strived to explore:

- Clients satisfaction with the customer care rendered by ALACs/AJICs staff,
- Clients Satisfaction with legal aid provided in ALACs/AJICs,
- Clients satisfaction with ALACs/AJICs advocacy activities,
- Reactions of clients following the service rendered,
- Clients recommendations on how to improve the legal aid provided by ALACs/AJICs.

3. Methodology

3.1. Method and Approach

While a quantitative approach was used in the previous ALAC/AJIC impact assessment, in 2017, the qualitative method was exclusively applied. It is worth noting that using quantitative approach in impact evaluation is complex and relatively expensive as it requires scientific methods such as experimental designs that are appropriate to test causal relations between the interventions and the expected outcomes. This requires using control and experimental or treatment samples. In other words, experimental methods are known to show what would have resulted with or without the project or program.

However, some evaluators urge that impact evaluation can also be done through qualitative methods, for example, *“establishing ‘what if’ either through examining a group that does not receive treatment (through means other than a controlled ‘experiment’) or through other methods, such as asking experts what would have happened in the absence of the intervention³”*.

Moreover, as Stern (2015)⁴ emphasized, where experimental designs are not possible while conducting an impact evaluation, other designs and methods may be able to show better a causal

³ Jean Ellis, NCVO Charities Evaluation Services associate, 2015: Using qualitative methods to assess impact.

⁴ Stern, E., 2015: Impact Evaluation, Prepared for the Big Lottery Fund, Bond, Comic Relief and the Department of International Development, page 12.

connection. The author highlights that there are two ways of conducting an impact evaluation, 1) focusing on content (qualitative) and 2) on methods⁵.

Therefore, TI-RW chose to use qualitative approach in carrying out this impact evaluation to assess ALAC/AJICs contribution in the fight against corruption in Rwanda. This approach has an advantage of providing substantial evidence or testimonies from clients and partners that would allow decisions to be made about how to work for better quality service delivery and how the ALAC/AJICs effort in preventing and fighting corruption contribute to the desired outcomes of the PPIMA program.

3.2. Scope of the study

The study was conducted in 6 ALACs (Kigali, Musanze, Rubavu, Kayanza, Huye, Rusizi) and 4 AJICs (Gatsibo, Ngororero, Gakenke and Nyaruguru). The qualitative method was conducted through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and in-depth interviews to assess the impact of ALACs and AJICs. This allows capturing personal feelings and success stories from the beneficiaries toward the service rendered to them.

The target respondents include the citizens who visited the centers in the last 12 months to seek for legal advice or advocacy. Moreover, key informant interviews were conducted with local leaders, “Maison d’Access à la Justice” (MAJ), judges, executive secretaries of sectors to assess the extent of partnership between TI-Rw (through ALACs/AJICs) and partners in the fight against corruption.

3.2. Data Collection

Only clients who visited ALACs/AJICs were eligible for responding to the questions elaborated for this assessment. The selection of respondent was purposive using the list made available by ALACs/AJICs and according to the complaints lodged to ALAC/AJIC offices. The instruments used included interviews with key informants, FGD which were recorded as to keep the entirety of information collected and to use them for the documentary film production. The key informants were also purposively selected based on their knowledge and position held in

⁵ See further information here: https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Impact_Evaluation_Guide_0515.pdf

their respective working areas to gather their views in the area of service delivery in terms of advocacy or legal aid for injustice faced by citizens in their respective districts.

In each FGD, 12 participants were present, both male and female. FGDs and interviews were facilitated by the researchers (consultant and note taker) who have outstanding experience in conducting qualitative studies. Overall, the information collected was connected to know how customers value the services provided by ALACs and AJICs, to explore how the advice and legal aid rendered by the ALAC/ AJIC projects to clients are satisfactory as far as the categories of complaints are concerned including corruption, jurisdictional issues, land disputes, family conflicts, problems related to execution of judgment, etc.

3.3. Sampling

While the number of FGDs was based on the number of ALACs and AJICs (10 in total), the saturation principle was applied to determine the number of interviews. In this regard, 23 key informant interviews were conducted with anti-corruption stakeholders in the concerned districts as shown in the table below.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by District, Sex and Category in ALAC/AJIC Center

| No | Centre | FGDs | | Interviews with Partners | | Date |
|----|----------------|------|--------|--------------------------|--|------------|
| | | Male | Female | Number of Partners | Category of Partners | |
| 1 | AJIC/Gatsibo | 6 | 6 | 3 | Executive secretary of sector, Good governance and MAJ | 06-11-2017 |
| 2 | ALAC/Musanze | 5 | 7 | 2 | Executive secretary of sector and MAJ | 09-11-2017 |
| 3 | ALAC/Rubavu | 5 | 7 | 1 | MAJ | 09-11-2017 |
| 4 | ALAC/Huye | 8 | 4 | 3 | Executive secretary of sector, Good governance and MAJ | 13-11-2017 |
| 5 | AJIC/Nyaruguru | 7 | 5 | 3 | Executive secretary of sector, Good governance and MAJ | 14-11-2017 |
| 6 | ALAC/Rusizi | 5 | 7 | 3 | Executive secretary of sector, Good governance and MAJ | 15-11-2017 |
| 7 | AJIC/Gakenke | 6 | 6 | 1 | MAJ | 17-11-2017 |
| 8 | AJIC/Ngororero | 6 | 6 | 4 | Executive secretary of sector, Good | 20-11-2017 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|----|----|----|--|------------|
| | | | | | governance, MAJ and DPC (Police) | |
| 9 | ALAC/Kayonza | 5 | 7 | 3 | Executive secretary of sector, Good governance and MAJ | 21-11-2017 |
| 10 | ALAC/Kigali | 6 | 6 | 0 | | 22-11-2017 |
| | Total | 59 | 61 | 23 | | |

3.4. Data analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed by grouping the content of information collected from FGD and interviews. These data were analyzed in accordance with key themes of the study as indicated above. The content analysis methods helped to complement, understand and triangulate information collected from the interviews and focus group discussions. This was essential to ensure that all areas of interest were covered.

4. Presentation of findings

4.1. Awareness of ALACs and AJICs

With its objective on preventing and combating corruption, Transparency International Rwanda in collaboration with AJICs, organize regular anti-corruption education campaigns of the public. This is an integral part of raising awareness of the public to promote and facilitate the culture of reporting corrupt practices and related offenses. This is often done through Radio and TV programs as well as other outreach activities.

Moreover, various channels to get information on ALACs/AJICs are used by clients, including their counterpart or relatives whose cases were brought to these offices in the past. Additionally, Citizens Concerned Committees (CCCs) and paralegals respectively from ALACs and AJICs play an important role in sending complainants to these offices to handle their grievances. A good reputation of TI-Rw also helps to spread the information of ALACS via word-to-mouth. The following testimonies about the medium of contact with ALAC/AJICs were given by clients during the FGD.

During our Focus Group Discussions, one of the participants said: *“one evening I was listening to Nyagatare community Radio; and I heard a publicity indicating the location of AJIC in Gatsibo District and their mission. From that time, I took a decision of reporting our case of a cooperative to that project.”*

Another client from Rusizi district said: *“Someone from our neighborhood came to my home for simple visit and after being informed about my case, he told me about an organization called Transparency International Rwanda which provides free legal assistance to citizens in deprived situation. I immediately went to the ALAC project office for support.”*

In the same vein, a participant in the FGDs in ALAC Musanze revealed that: *“I was not informed about this kind of project which supports citizen from injustice and fortunately, my neighbor who has been assisted by this project advised me to go to ALAC and assured me that I will get support from the ALAC staff. I went to see the concerned staff and was very well received.”*

The above testimonies are also supported by a client from Nyaruguru District who said: *“Someone from our nearest place, who was aware of my problem told me to go and ask for*

advice in an organization called AJIC which deals with the fight against corruption and injustice in our district. Considering the time I spent in local administration without any result, I went to AJIC office where my concern was successfully dealt with.”

4.2. Clients appreciation on services delivery (customer care) provided by ALAC/AJIC staff

Customer care is a responsibility for every organization to sustain the relationship between customers and the organization. According to Ojo (2010), *“to ensure that customer satisfaction level is high, organization must first of all know the expectations of the customers and how they can meet such expectations. Customer satisfaction helps in customer loyalty and retention. It has been discovered that it costs to attract new customer than to retain existing ones. It is also recommended that organizations should welcome suggestions from customers and more programs should be designed to measure service quality and customer satisfaction”*.⁶

In line with the argument above, this evaluation seeks to find out whether ALACs/AJICs clients are satisfied with the customer care upon the first contact with their staff. The extent of client’s appreciation was echoed by a number of participants in FGDs in the 10 districts. Some of the testimonies around this satisfaction are outlined below.

“When I arrived at ALAC Huye office, I was welcomed, I was at ease, and they carefully dealt with my problem; they made a meticulous follow up to the final phase. I did not know that on this planet there are still such good and human agents.”

Another client said: *“They assisted me free of charge, and now I have won; fair justice has been rendered, everything is working well, God bless Transparency International Rwanda. If I can give a mark of appreciation on their services to the community, I will not hesitate to even rate them at 200%,”* testifies a client from Huye District.

Similarly, a client from Kigali argued: *“The services that TI-Rw is rendering to citizens are amazing, I have nothing to say, but I think it is God who brought us this organization. I am sorry*

⁶ The Relationship Between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Telecommunication Industry: Evidence From Nigeria Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49595483_The_Relationship_Between_Service_Quality_and_Customer_Satisfaction_in_the_Telecommunication_Industry_Evidence_From_Nigeria [accessed Nov 22 2017].

not having brought this vehicle here so that you could also see it as a confirmation of my testimony. God bless this organization and its staff.”

Another participant in the FGD in Kigali expressed his satisfaction as follows: *“I would just like to confirm that my case could have not been successful if Transparency International Rwanda had not got involved in the process with commitment and continuous support to us. This shows how Transparency is on the side of the victims of injustice in all its forms.”*

As regard to customer care in AJICs, a participant in a FGD in Nyaruguru District said *“All in all, I am short of words to thank AJIC NYARUGURU, one of the few organizations working with a certain peculiarity when it comes to intervening for a citizen who has been a victim of injustice.”*

4.3. Types of complaints for which clients sought advice at ALAC/ AJIC offices

The majority of Rwandans depend on land, e.g. as collateral or agricultural land. Due to the genocide and its aftermath, property rights became more and more a sector for families ‘conflicts. This is why the anti-corruption agencies are overwhelmed by the issues raised on land. As a matter of facts, according to Transparency International⁷Rwanda, the most frequent complaints addressed to the Ombudsman of Rwanda are related to land disputes, followed by complaints related to court judgments, administrative and labor disputes. Land disputes and complaints related to court judgments are therefore perceived unfair making up around 60% of all cases. This statistic is corroborated by other complaints received by TI-RW through ALACs and AJICs projects. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of the complaints received by TI-RW and its partners under AJICs in 2017:

⁷ Transparency International Rwanda, 2017: Effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies an East Africa Case study: The Office of the Ombudsman in Rwanda, p18.

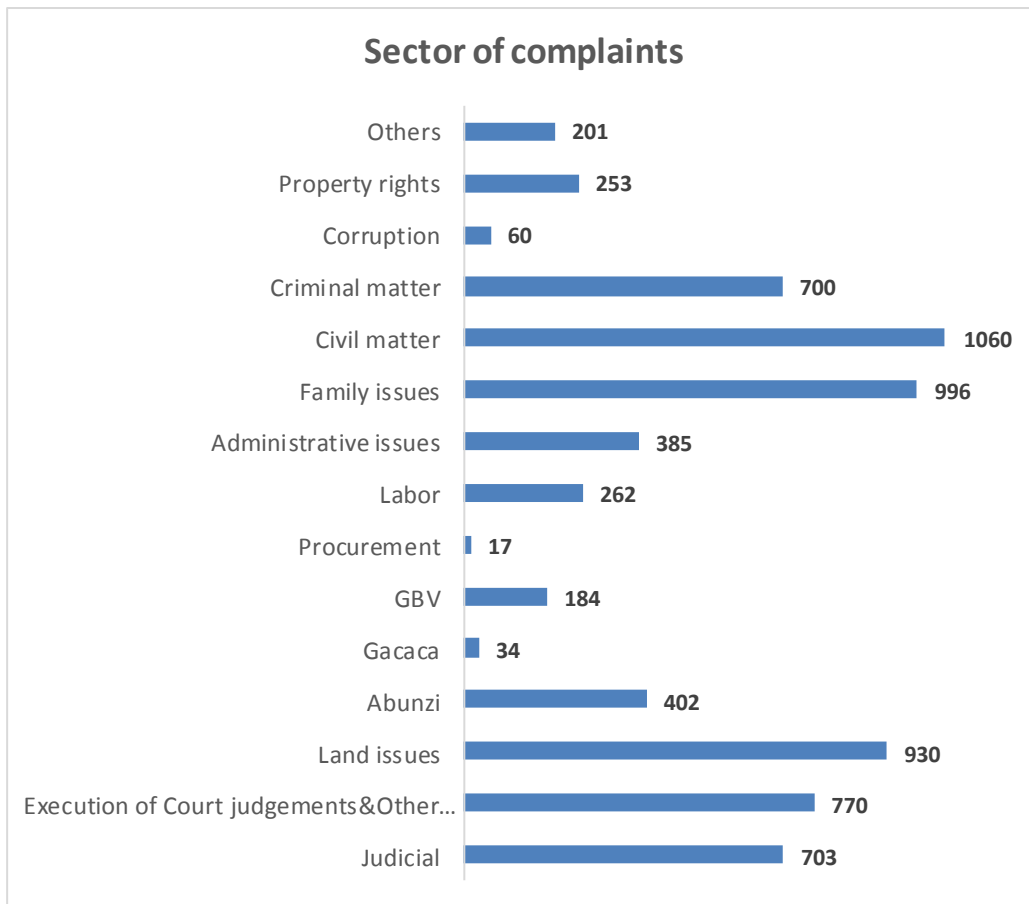


Figure 1 Number of complaints addressed to ALACs/AJICs by type of complaints
Source: ALAC Report 2017

As noted above, civil matters, family and land issues as well as execution of court judgment related complaints are the most frequent cases submitted to ALACs and AJICs for assistance. The section below discusses how well the legal assistance was provided by these centers by providing more details on clients’ testimonies about their victimization and how their cases were handled.

4.4. Client’s satisfaction on legal advice and advocacy provided by ALAC/AJIC staff

Civil Societies in Rwanda are recognized as important stakeholders and key players in the fight against corruption⁸ as one of the anti-corruption advocacy groups that help in raising public awareness and reporting on corruption. As already explained, ALACs advocate for a legislative,

⁸ Ombudsman, 2012: Rwanda Anti-Corruption Policy. Kigali, Rwanda.

institutional, administrative procedural or any other systemic change where it is found that those systems are faulty and may be among the causes that facilitates corruption behaviors⁹. The section below highlights how clients are satisfied with the legal advice provided by both ALACs and AJICs.

To confirm their level of satisfaction on legal advice, the section below describes clients' testimonies on cases that were handled by ALAC and AJIC through legal advice and advocacy.

Case of corruption: *“I had a problem with a man who had raped my little girl. I went to the police and the police put him in jail while they were gathering pieces of evidence in collaboration with the hospital. The hospital's findings confirmed that my daughter had been raped, but after the 30 days of pre-trial detention, the rapist was released without any other form of trial. Meanwhile, I had paid a lawyer to follow up on this case with the primary court. After a few days, the verdict was released; I had lost the case although I had never known the day the trial took place. I understood directly that there is something obscure; meaning corruption. How can a trial take place in the absence of the plaintiff? It is after this step that I decided to visit TI-Rw office for support.*

After I had explained them the reasons for my claim, they immediately called the parties involved in the resolution including the police, the court and the alleged guilty. The call from TI-RW led these bodies to review the situation and I was directly told to re-claim, which I did. Now, I think this time the case is being processed without bias,” testifies a client from Rusizi District.

Case of land disputes (1): a woman testifies how she suffered land connected injustice, after her husband died. *“I had been married for 35 years with my husband before he deceased, leaving me with three children. I directly inherited the plot of land following the word of my father-in-law. Sometime after the death of my husband, our three children also died. I stayed single and childless in our house. A few years later, my husband's brothers came and told me that I was not entitled to this land and that therefore I had to go back to my parents' because I did not have children anymore. I reported my case to the local authorities including the village, but in vain. Then I moved to the sector, to the district for the same complaints, but I could not be heard. Finally, I decided to give up for lack of financial means.*

⁹ <https://tirwanda.org/about-us/activities-and-programs>

As one day I was listening to the radio, I heard of AJIC NYARUGURU as an organization that has been fighting for justice and transparency. From that, I decided to go and see the AJIC project staff; I exposed them my plight. They advised me to file a complaint with the court because, according to them, I was entitled to the property or inheritance left by my husband despite the fact that all my children had died. AJIC intervened further for my case, my brothers-in-law and even the authorities called me for family negotiations and I ended up having my own piece of land because of the intervention from AJIC.”

Case of land disputes (2): *“In 2012, I fell seriously sick. This weakened me, as I had no assistance. I became inactive. This pushed my husband to rush to remarry another woman who already had six children with another man. Seeing this, I begged him to give me part of our property so that I could seek treatment and satisfy other needs. He never listened to me, which pushed me to complain to the competent authorities at our cell level.*

The authorities decided that I should be given only 1 ha out of the three we had, yet I was the man’s legitimate wife. My husband gave the half of our land to his new illegitimate wife without my consent, which further created and intensified the conflict.

When recovered from my illness, he told me to go to rent a house somewhere but I never complied with his order because the house in which we were living was mine. He decided to take me to the police. I was locked in and while I was in prison, my children came to tell me that he had sold the remaining part of our plot of land to a neighbor, unfortunately I could not do anything since I was in prison. Afterwards, the issue was reported to the leaders respectively of our cell, and later to the Sector but unsatisfactorily. At this time, the cell had issued signed documents to grant the land to the purchaser while I was in prison. They put me in jail for a second time because I always refused to have my land sold to someone who has no right to that land. At the same time, I exploited it and sold the harvest that made it easier for me to respond to my family needs since I had no other way to survive. In the end, being unable to dislodge me from my land, the buyer decided that I repay him some of the money he had paid. I told him that I was not immediately able to pay that amount of money. Finally, I paid back the sum and recovered my field.

During a weekly meeting of the population with the administrative authorities, the social affairs officer advised me to go see AJIC/ AJPRODHO for this problem. This suggestion came after my husband had contracted the civil marriage when I was in prison.

And then, she benefited part of our land without determining the portion of my children. It was possible to sell this part without my share while we are not legally divorced.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the AJIC / AJPRODHO project supported me throughout this process, even when I was in jail. I hope the file will be well processed” said a client from Gatsibo District.

Case of land dispute (3): A female participant from Gatsibo district described the situation of her brother who took refuge in Burundi like many other Rwandans during the genocide against the Tutsi of 1994. Unfortunately, after sometime the brother returned back to Rwanda, and was murdered in Gatsata/ Kigali. After the death of their father, the children went to Burundi where their mother had been married to a Burundian. The aunt of these children had kept her brother's land for the entire period of their stay in Burundi.

She said “During the registration of property titles here at home, I requested that the land of my deceased brother be registered in the name of his son who was in South Africa. I was asked for his identity card, but unfortunately I did not have it. I asked him to send it to me here in Rwanda and he said he does not have it. Then I asked him to send me his passport number, but again he told me he did not have any travel document. When I went to the AJIC/ AJPRODHO project office, I was quickly received and given advice and, more specifically, they made a copy of a paper I had on which there was the name and the picture of this child. They told me that they will send this paper to South Africa so that they can easily search for a passport or other documents that may entitle this child to either service in Rwanda. But, at the same time, I asked that the land should be registered in my name, in case the papers are still not found for my nephews. Until now I am still waiting but I hope things will go well testifies” a client from Gatsibo District.

Property issue: Another testimony is connected to the auction of a house in Musanze: *“My daughter was married to a teacher of a secondary school in Nyabihu. She asked me to offer her my house as a mortgage as she wanted to get a loan from her bank. Her request was accepted and she received all the documents related to this mortgage so that they could be presented to*

her bank in order to have this loan. One day, a bank agent came to my home to ask me the reasons why I was not paying the loan. Then, I told him that I mortgaged my house for my daughter and that he had to speak to my daughter and her husband about this issue, and not to me. The bank did not stop pursuing me until they told me that they decided to auction my house. As the situation was becoming very complicated; this pushed me to borrow 250,000 Rwf in order to pay the tardy interest. Realizing that this is too much of injustice, I lodged my complaint to the primary court. The trial took place and the verdict fell to my favor because my daughter was forced to pay the loan including the interest. As they did not have the means to pay this sum, for pity, I gave her a land as a compensation but the bank refused saying that they want my house and I did not want to give up my house because the value of the given land could be enough to supplement the amount that was available and pay the loan without any problem.

As the bank continued to harass me regarding my house, I decided to come here at Transparency International Rwanda to expose my case of the injustice I am undergoing and therefore seek assistance. After I had explained my situation, the ALAC coordinator in Musanze immediately called the bank's agents and the District Executive Secretary to ask them to sue the person who took the loan and not the one who mortgaged the house since the loan receiver was able to pay. So far, there is already a consensus on who owns the bank's debt; today the case looks clearer and I thank Transparency International Rwanda for assisting me.”

Case related to land expropriation: *“My land got damaged when WASAC agents were doing their installations. The land was not exploitable anymore due to this damage. This pushed me to take my claims to WASAC office and finally they agreed to pay me the compensation. After this promise, I gave them everything that was required, such as my files and all necessary contact information. They told me to wait and that my money would be transferred to my account at BPR (Bank Populaire of Rwanda). A few weeks later, I went to the bank just for a simple check, but couldn't find the money. I had to wait for another week, but in vain. This caused me to return to WASAC. When I got there, they sent me back to the BPR, and then the latter sent me back again to WASAC. When I arrived there, WASAC sent me to the (National Bank of Rwanda) BNR and the latter told me that my money had already been transferred to the account of MINECOFIN and that BNR would ask WASAC this money to MINECOFIN in writing so that they could correct this error. I went to MINECOFIN a few days later and I was shown who was in charge of the file. This person in charge of the file told me to wait for some time. After some time, I went*

back there, but unfortunately I was told to wait forever. I could not know until when I had to wait. It is for this reason that I came to TI-RW so that they can assist me. ALAC staff in Kigali advocated for my case towards WASAC as to correct the misposting error. They also made a close follow-up in MINECOFIN to ensure that the money is transferred to my account. Without delay, the money was put on my account and I am very grateful for the assistance got from TI-RW.”

Court judgment decision: *“I was doing my business at Nyabugogo and it was very productive, which made me apply for a loan from KCB Bank. I asked for 30,000,000 Rwf, the bank did its investigations to confirm my ability to repay them their credit; they ended up giving me only 28,000,000 Rwf, I just started to build my house until the final phase and I even added extensions; and at the same time, I was paying back 547,250 Rwf on monthly basis.*

After a while, the Kigali City Council decided to evacuate any kind of construction in high-risk area but with a grace period in order to get housing areas that fulfil the needed criteria in a different place. Given this unpredictable situation, I decided to negotiate with the bank on the repayment modalities, and the bank accepted my request to pay within the next three months. Curiously, the bank went to ask my documents to RDB, and went to auction my house without informing me. The bank pretended to warn us but the normal procedures had been seriously violated because the local leaders and I were not informed ahead of time; this happened without any registration of the sale in a newspaper, without prior expertise, etc.

On hearing this, I rushed to court in order to suspend the auction as it did not follow the rules in force by the Bank, but the trial was rendered to our disadvantage pointing out that the subject of the request was not reasonable. We lodged the appeal in another legal instance and while the lawsuit was in Nyamirambo, a neighbor called me to tell me that the bank and the bailiff were at my home for the proceedings of the auction of my house. Surprised by the bailiff's and the Bank's actions, the Judge suspended the trial but wanted to wait for the bank's decision, as it had never followed the normal procedures of the Rwandan legal instances by appearing in court for a controversial sale and at the same time the auction was taking place, the Lawyer reacted. After having collected some pieces of information about the place and how the context in which the sale was made (in a bar), the RDB challenged this practice in writing.

Three days later, the committee that was on the ground produced a report that valued the house for 23,000,000 Rwf. The report was rejected by the local authority who would normally had been invited to this auction procedure. Thus, he made his own report to RDB and other instances that were involved in this shameful practice. Curiously, three days later, the same RDB that was against this wrong way of doing, sent a letter to the bank pointing out that the sale had complied with the procedures in force.

It was at this stage that I came to Transparency International Rwanda to seek assistance, especially since my lawyer had just discouraged me saying that the one who bought my house is someone of high rank in national security and therefore I would never win the lawsuit. In some way, I personally, was somehow convinced because they came with a protected team of policemen to dislodge me for the first time.

With the advice of Transparency International Rwanda, I finally got a lawyer. Waiting for the trial, the usher and the messengers of the buyer returned a second time to dislodge me and this time they demolished everything, the doors, windows and other property. They eventually tied us up and took us to jail as they had taken everything away without any worries before our neighbors but we were released from the police two days later. I returned to TI Rw; they called the usher for negotiation on the fee that I had to pay him equivalent to 700,000 Rwf but after the intervention that TI Rw conducted, I only paid 300,000 Rwf. We continued the trial in court and in the end, we were successful as the verdict was finally pronounced for our advantage. I would just like to confirm that this could have not been successful if Transparency International Rwanda had never involved in the process with commitment and continuous support to us.”

Issues related to non-execution of court. A participant who is a member of a cooperative said: *“Our cooperative opened its doors in 2013 and afterwards its members realized that the previous executive committee (president, vice-president, accountant and secretary) had embezzled the cooperative’s funds in 2015. The new team brought the case to the court but nothing was done to ensure that the money was repaid. Based on the information they had regarding AJIC / AJPRODHO in Gatsibo, they went to the office of this organization to seek support.*

Upon arrival, we were well received by the project staff and exposed our problem regarding how the judgement of our case had never been executed for a long period. During our discussions,

AJIC project staff advised us to resort to justice, i.e. in court, and supported us throughout the trial process. We started the whole legal process and we happily won the case.

Afterwards, we had to know who should be in charge of the follow-up of the file until the payment phase after the cooperative had won the case. We went to see the Executive Secretary of the sector and he led us to the bailiff and with the latter, we signed a contract for the follow-up of the file.

The problem of the embezzlement of funds from the cooperative that took more than a year without any direction but in less than three weeks, we are on the right way thanks to the intervention from the AJIC / AJPRODHO staff. I could not afford to pay 50,000 Rfw to a lawyer, but the project took over the case and I only paid the consignment fee”, said a participant from Gatsibo District.

Family issue (1): *“I got married but unfortunately I could not have children with this woman. This has been the main cause of our misunderstandings, and that culminated into divorce. After we had divorced, she remarried another man and they had children. This could not upset me because I also already had children when I remarried. A few years later, she came to ask me for a share of one of her children that she had registered as mine without telling me. I told her that this was impossible considering the long period we had been separated. We had to go to justice, and I sought assistance with Transparency International Rwanda at ALAC Huye. They prepared the entire file and introduced it to justice bodies. I thank TI-Rw for their moral and material support that they always provide to citizens in a situation of weakness”* told a participant from Nyaruguru District.

Family issue (2): Case of injustice related to unplanned pregnancy, explained by a woman from Rusizi District: *“I was a housewife in a family. There was a police officer who used to come to this family. We familiarized at the point that we involved in intimate relationships, which caused me become pregnant. Despite the long discussions I had with this policeman, he has never recognized to be the father. This pushed me to accuse him to the police but this has never been successful. Having noticed this, I was obliged to take the case to other judiciary instances. The latter have never listened to my complaint, but they rather wanted me to negotiate with him when he had categorically denied to have made me pregnant. Troubled by lack of support, I finally met someone who advised me to go to the prosecutor's office. I agreed to go, and I filed my complaint*

as usual. Later on, I saw that the day of the hearing had been posted, the judgment took place and I ended up winning the trial. Curiously, the officer never respected the judge's decisions. Due to this, I went to the agents of ALAC; they immediately called the gentleman and asked him to respect the judge's decisions or face additional fines. Since this call from ALAC, the officer agreed to be depositing a sum of money to my account progressively until today” expressed a participant from Rusizi District.

Case of arbitrary detention (1): *“My brother used to work at the District of Ngororero, and he was a youth officer. He was locked in at the police station for 11 days without being notified of the reason for his imprisonment. When I went to visit him, the police told me that he was accused of public funds embezzlement. I wondered how someone accused of embezzlement could spend more than 10 days without being brought before competent courts to try him, as it is stipulated by the ordinary judicial procedures. Personally, I thought this practice was against the current law in Rwanda.*

A few days later, I was notified that he was detained at the transit center for offenders. I was shocked because there is no relationship between delinquency and misappropriation that was the main reason for his arrest. Before this ambiguous situation, I found a way to Transparency International Rwanda through their office of ALAC in RUBAVU district. I exposed my case straight to the Coordinator of the project. After he had carefully listened to me, he told me he was surprised it was happening this way. He immediately called the District Police Commander (DPC) to tell him about my case and he connected me with the commander who told me to call him the same day in the evening.

As agreed, I called him the same evening. Eventually, he told me that my brother had to return back home the following day, which also happened. All in all, if TI-Rw had not intervened, my brother would have spent many days in jail without any real cause, which would generate more socio-economic problems to his family” said a client from Rubavu District.

Case of injustice related to the payment of final settlement: *“I was working in the former commune of Nyaruguru, while a new administrative reform (District) took place. I was illegally dismissed by the District without paying me my final settlement. I went to claim at the district but the authorities told me to wait. I waited for more than a year, without a response. I started wondering what would happen next to my case as the authorities seemed to neglect my concern.*

So someone who was aware of my problem told me to go and ask for advice in an organization called Transparency International Rwanda through its AJIC project that deals with the fight against corruption and injustice in our district.

After getting this piece of advice, I went directly to the office of this project. I was well welcomed and exposed my situation. Not only they started analyzing the file more deeply in order to help me build the case because it had to be relayed to the district authorities but also helped me by using other channels of communication, with the different authorities who were involved in the case. Thanks to this intervention from the AJIC project, my situation was very soon settled, because the District Finance Department was given my bank account number to pay me through and I was informed that the payment procedures were in progress. All in all, I am short of words to thank Transparency International Rwanda, one of the few organizations working with a certain peculiarity when it comes to intervening for a citizen who has been a victim of injustice” said a participant from Nyaruguru District.

Case of injustice at workplace: *“I worked in a private company owned by a foreigner (Indian). This Indian is someone who had clashes with his staff every time. He never wanted anyone to oppose his opinion or suggestion. One day, during a meeting, I gave a proposal that could benefit for both the employer and the employees. Two days later, he called me in his office and I met him already writing on a piece of paper. When I glanced at it, I saw that it was my final count of 115,000 Rwf. Afterwards, he told me to sign the paper, I kindly asked him to read it for me before I could sign it. He categorically refused. He insisted but I could not accept. Then he called his secretary for rescue. The secretary supported this Indian saying that I would have serious problems if I refused to sign the document. Finally, I decided to leave his office. In the evening, that secretary called me and asked me to come to the office in the morning in order to fix this issue.*

When I reported to the office in the morning, the boss called the accountant in his office, he came with an amount of 115,000 Rwf that I had exactly seen on the document. I reacted directly and told them that they miscalculated my account given my nine-year seniority in the company. I was forced to take this money, but by signing on the paper, I mentioned that I would appeal to appropriate instances. The boss was not pleased to hear that; so he followed me in the stairs and

wanted to forcibly rob me certain documents I had he thought would endanger him. With his secretary, they managed to take them off me. They immediately tore them in my presence.

As I was well aware of the assistance that Transparency International Rwanda gives to victims of injustice, I rushed there for support. I met a lady who received me very well. I immediately presented my case to her and was listening to me carefully. After I had told her everything, she asked me the telephone number of my former employer and then she directly called the boss. She introduced herself to him and suggested him to respect the labor law in Rwanda. She told my boss that someone with a 9-year seniority in a given service is entitled to a final two-month settlement, which equates to 230,000 Rwf for a case like mine. The boss did not immediately accept, but after a few hours of separation with this TI Rw agent, I received a phone call asking me to just go to the office at 3 pm because the boss had now agreed to pay the remaining due amount.

The next day, I showed up at the TI Rw office just at 3pm. Unfortunately, the gentleman had not come but he called saying that he will be ready at 8am the next day and finally he came that morning himself with the 115,000 Rwf. After receiving this money, I went home to Kicukiro and started an income-generating activity that is making me survive until today thanks to this money I was paid as it helped me start this activity.

Frankly, I am short of specific words to you to express my gratitude to this organization and its staff for their charitable acts. In a word, God bless and support their commitments declared a client from City of Kigali.”

4.5. Institutions or government bodies to which clients reported their claims before lodging their cases to ALAC/AJIC

The assessment sought to investigate the institutions or government bodies to which clients reported their claims before lodging their cases to ALAC/AJIC offices to find out whether their cases have been successfully handled by the latter after experiencing dissatisfaction of service from the first resort. The client’s testimonies on the matter are presented below.

"Before arriving at ALAC, I was about going crazy because of my problem” testified a client from Huye District. “I had a serious issue that I had even exposed to local authorities but they never made any follow up. I thought I would commit suicide, but the way the officers at ALAC

greeted me, listened to me with affection, comfort, counsel, support, and the way they followed my case, all these made me more hopeful and strong.”

Another participant who experienced a family related conflict said: “There was a disagreement between my husband and myself until it turned into an open conflict. During this period of misunderstanding, my husband arranged to sell our plot located in the city of Rusizi. The plot of land was sold to a senior officer in the National Army. When I asked him why he sold it, he told me that he has the full right to do what he wants. I could not fight, but I rather reported the issue to the sector. We were called for giving more insights to this case. Since then, I had been waiting for the answer, but in vain. Subsequently, I went to the District with the hope that I could get support and justice, but nothing was done. After that, someone advised me to file a complaint with the Supreme Court. I followed this advice and the case was transmitted to this instance. Curiously the case took long and never brought any positive solution.

Considering the time I had used, the money and the energy spent, I thought that we should not stop at this level; I had to go to the Ombudsman’s and to the Office of the President of the Republic. As I could not even get an answer at these levels, the case came back to the prosecution. It was now the prosecution that had to decide that the children must be under guardianship of their father as they were no longer adolescents. However, the children did not agree to live with their father because, according to them, his presence was too irregular. The children believed that such irregularity at home would translate a social disadvantage (lose patent). Given such a situation, the husband went to Uganda, unfortunately, leaving all the land’s records to his second wife's father-in-law. This man also generated a monthly income as he was exploiting the land without paying anything to my family, yet I was living with the children. Without being discouraged by my commitment to this file for a period of more than five years, I decided to reach out to ALAC / TI-Rw because I had been informed about the assistance that the project provides to the needy.

When I arrived, I explained my case and the staff listened to me attentively. Then, they asked me some questions and I answered them. They told me they would intervene using possible means at their possession to make sure the case ends to my advantage considering the state of the problem right after its analysis. After this step, they started intervening in almost all the instances and finally things got a little clearer. After a while, I won the trial thanks to the intervention of the

ALAC project, and so I was given all the papers related to our land. Frankly, I regret to have known Transparency International Rwanda late, because I would not have been victim of all this harassment in different local and judicial bodies. I thank the organization very much for helping me by restoring my rights for which I had been deprived,” stated a client from Rusizi District.

In the same vein, a participant from Nyarugenge district explained: “we had a vehicle since 2010; in 2013, my husband became ill and eventually died during that same period. While he was sick, I hired a driver whom I paid a certain amount at the end of each day. After his death, the driver disappeared; so I was assisted by friends and neighbors to find the vehicle, but in vain. Some people informed me that they saw him at Nyabugogo one day, but I never found him when I went there. Another day, I received a masked call telling me that the vehicle was in Rusororo and that I had to go to get it back. I hesitated to go, but I went to the police station in Rwezamenyo, District of Nyarugenge. At that time, the police launched a search notice and the vehicle was found in a short time in RUSIZI, Western Province. I went there and it was after two days that the police told me to wait a few days and came back to Kigali.

I waited for more than a week without any follow-up, which made me come back to the Rwezamenyo police station where the staff asked me for all the documents proving that the vehicle was exactly mine. Afterwards, the police sent me back to Rwandan Revenue Authority for further clarification. When I came back with the official document from RRA, the police recommended me to go to court in Nyamirambo again. When I got there, I found the vehicle in the parking lot of the court. We had started the trial, unfortunately I was told that the vehicle was sold by my husband to a certain Mohamed before he died and that he had to return to the one who held it and who was paying up to date taxes. This decision of the police shocked me more, as my husband had already died, for not having means to feed my children and ultimately losing my own vehicle. After all the hassle of going back and forth to the police, the prosecution / court, I had become like crazy, so one of my neighbors told me that there was a non-governmental organization that was assisting people in a situation of injustice in all its forms.

This is how I came to TI Rwanda. There I was well received and allowed to present my problem. Given the seriousness of the problem, the president of Transparency International Rwanda seized the case and intervened together with the authorities that had my file, including the police, the court and the alleged buyer

Since the vehicle was already in Nyamirambo from Cyangugu, I went to see it to confirm this information by myself. When I arrived, the policeman who brought it called me and said, “here is your car key, your yellow card and other important papers for your car, other files and here is also the report presented to the Nyamirambo police staff but not to us to immediately give you back your vehicle, so you will have to wait.” One month, two months without follow-up, and I always went back and forth to court to see if the vehicle had been there. After I had spent a long period waiting for the car, I became hopeless. One evening, I heard a phone call and it was from Transparency International Rwanda. They said “Ma’am, could you avail yourself tomorrow morning so that we can go to the court of Nyamirambo?”

I spoke to myself that God had just made a miracle with Transparency International, I said yes, I'm ready. Then, we went to Nyamirambo and without delay the judge gave the verdict and gave us the vehicle and all its parts, I returned back home with my vehicle immediately.”

Similarly, a participant from Rusizi district testified: *“My son and I were at home when a policeman came early in the afternoon and directly arrested my son without telling us the reason for this arrest. I was expecting him to come back in the evening, or the next day but in vain.*

The following day, I went to the police station just to check on the issue. When I reached the police station, the commander told me that he was not there. I had to check elsewhere but I explained to the police that my son was arrested by a police officer from his station and that he must necessarily be locked in there. This confused us and then we had to use other means, including classical research but also releases on the radio and all this in vain. We spent two weeks without any information regarding whether our son was dead or alive; this totally upset us. It is by good luck that someone from our neighborhood came to my home and informed us about an organization called Transparency International Rwanda through its ALAC project whose mission is to assist citizens in similar situations. I hurried immediately to the ALAC office. There I was welcomed and I courageously exposed my problem. After this step, TI-Rw directly began their interventions by calling the commander of the nearest station so that they could inquire the situation. I could not get a favorable result, except that the police informed us that our son was locked up in Kigali. On hearing this, I asked the ALAC project staff to help me write a letter to the police chief in Kacyiru / Kigali and send it with copies for information to other institutions. A few days later after this search, I received a call from the police asking me to go

to Kigali. I went there and they immediately released my son and we returned back home together the same day, stated a client from Rusizi District.”

Another participant who experienced a case of injustice at workplace said: *“For a long period, I worked for APRODESEC Nemba primary school, located in Gakenke District. There was a time when we spent a long period without being paid our salaries. This delay in paying us our salaries and arrears resulted in that I was dismissed because I had been claiming for payment though the headmaster repeatedly told me that the money was not available.*

As I had no more hope with the Director, I decided to accuse him to the Sector and District authorities, but also this has never been successful just as the previous instance. Since there was no evolution, I decided to take the case to AJIC GAKENKE. After exposing my case, they asked me for the school principal's phone number. The project officer called and they discussed about my case. They ended up agreeing to pay me all the money they owed me and today I am delighted to have been paid thanks to AJIC,” told a participant from Gakenke District.

4.6. Partners` satisfaction on the achievements of ALACs/AJICs

The partnership between state and non-state actors in the fight against corruption remains fundamental in the enforcement of the existing Anti-Corruption Policy in Rwanda. Furthermore, increased citizen’s demand for accountability and reporting corruption and related offenses is of paramount importance in this endeavor. Therefore, Transparency International Rwanda through ALACs and AJICs, provide legal assistance and advocacy where necessary to promote integrity in the Rwandan society and increase effective service delivery and accountability among the civil servants. This section intends to examine local partners’ views on the achievements of ALAC/AJIC in the fight against corruption and related injustice. Some testimonies collected through interviews are illustrated below.

One of the coordinators in charge of MAJ in Ngororero District confirms the success of the good partnership with AJIC / Tubibamahoro saying that: *“I am delighted with the way this organization intervenes for the benefit of the poor by offering them access to justice, especially in relation to their rights. Moreover, in our outreach activities when we need to meet citizens in their respective sectors, we invite the AJIC project staff to help us mobilize and raise citizens’ awareness on corruption, injustice, property laws, violence and other forms of violence. They facilitate our task in the sense that, the more citizens understand their rights, the more they make*

accountable various service providers which contribute to reduce our usual workload in providing legal assistance to citizens.”

The appreciation of good partnership was also confirmed by the Good Governance Officer in the same district where, according to him, AJIC intervenes by giving legal advice to citizens free of charge. He found this intervention to be socially and economically profitable, for both MAJ and citizens, simply because some of their claims are resolved even before they reach the district level. This was again supported by a staff from MAJ in Nyaruguru District.

Another testimony confirming the fruitful partnership between MAJ and TI-Rw came from one of the MAJ staff in Rusizi arguing that *“Transparency International Rwanda is among the few Rwandan civil societies with which we have signed a Protocol of Partnership in the fight against corruption and related offenses. TI-Rw holds the position of the Vice-Chair in the District Committee of Lawyers. We collaborate on daily basis and we sometimes call ALAC staff to discuss about sensitive cases and make a joint decision. In some circumstances it happens that we recommend our clients to go to see ALAC staff.”* In Musanze District, the MAJ coordinator also mentioned that: *“there is a committee conducting the analysis of issues related to justice and good governance, here the coordinator of TI-Rw at district level is an active member. It is within this framework that we work on a daily basis with ALAC in order to respond to the various problems arising from our community and we appreciate this kind of partnership because every time we go to the field, we invite them so that they give advice on laws, the protection of crimes, the fight against corruption, visits to prisons etc. Finally, the work from ALAC facilitates us in the realization of our objectives by raising awareness and mobilizing citizens about their rights and duties and this reduces the number of complaints that would come to MAJ office.”*

The same appreciation was extended to the district administration staff whereby the Director of Good Governance in Kayonza District said *“TI-Rw's services are really important in our daily activities for the service of the community; we work together in partnership. We receive recommendations and pieces of advice from them regarding the improvement of services in some areas. The pieces of advice provided by ALAC facilitate us as they advise the public on how to have access to justice. Thanks to ALAC, the community is regaining confidence. We receive information about the quality of agents' services, about corruption and violence, through the collaboration with TI-Rw »*. This confirms the opinion from the Mayor of Rusizi District arguing

that *“The results of TI-Rw's work serves us as a self-assessment and introspection tool regarding improvement and change toward our responsibilities, in particular for the community and in general for the country. We sincerely appreciate the way TI-Rw interacts and intervenes with the population. This makes the bond of our partnership be unequivocal as we refer to the performance that we make thanks to its contribution and we too much recognize their services”*.

Local partners in the fight against corruption also admire the work done by AJIC in this end as testified by the Good Governance Officer in Gatsibo district. He said *“When the AJIC project staff go to the field or when there is an information on a specific case from a citizen, this helps us to react directly to the question for the benefit of the concerned citizen. We have noted that AJIC/ AJPRODHO project interventions are very remarkable even in terms of the District's performance in general, because complaints from the community are decreasing in the sectors where AJIC intervenes. We have statistics showing that there are fewer complaints for the five sectors in which the AJIC project intervenes compared to the nine remaining ones, which clearly show that this organization is making a positive impact as far as quality service delivery is concerned.”* This was supported by the Executive Secretary of Ngororero district as follows: *”Our partnership with AJIC project is very instrumental by the fact that it enables us to improve the level of service delivery in different respects and thus contribute to realize our performance contract in the governance component”*.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This assessment report was meant to explore client’s satisfaction with legal aid, and advocacy activities provided by ALAC/AJIC and to suggest recommendations on how to improve the services rendered in this area. FGDs and interviews with clients were conducted to collect views from direct beneficiaries and local partners involved in this endeavor. Through testimonies, the report showed that the work done by ALACs/AJICs is very commendable to the broader community in general and the anti-corruption partner organizations in particular. The following recommendations were formulated in the framework of improving the intervention done by ALACs/AJICs.

- Transparency International Rwanda in collaboration with AJIC should strive to double their effort to reach out the grassroots level by increasing the number of legal advisers/

staff in remote areas, if possible one per sector in the district of their operation and open additional centres in district where they are not developed or active so far

- To extend their outreach and interventions among the Rwandan community; Transparency International Rwanda and AJICs should increase their awareness campaign strategies so that their services get known by a large number of citizens
- ALAC/AJIC staff should have the prerogatives or mandate to intervene in legal proceedings on behalf of the citizens
- Transparency International Rwanda should, as far as possible, make advocacy with regard to the law enforcement by private sector employers, as the labor regulations in Rwanda are not respected in particular by some foreign employers

