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Dutch Food Security Programme in Rwanda

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) Data Collection Report

Final Report

FGD Data Collection

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1.0 Introduction

PwC Netherlands and the Amsterdam Institute for International Development (AIID) are carrying out an impact evaluation of the Dutch Food Security Programme in Rwanda, which is implemented through the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Kigali.

Food security is a priority in the Dutch development cooperation policy and was implemented as such in 2011. In the Multi Annual Strategic Plan of EKN the overall objective of the food security programme was described as follows: "more food and nutrition security in Rwanda".

To contribute to this objective, several intermediary outcomes were identified as relevant: post-harvest losses should be reduced, so that more food and food of better quality reaches the consumer ("more efficient markets"). Also, people who grow little or no food need income to buy it and vulnerable groups need enough nutrition ("better access to healthy food"). This is particularly challenging for the "growing number of landless Rwandans that cannot be fully absorbed by growth in the private sector".

It is expected that an improved enabling environment will lead to more and better organized agri-business, especially agro-processing, (commercial) storage and food-related trade. This will increase the likelihood that harvest reaches the consumer. Also, rural people with little or no access to land and unable to grow their own food will have more chance to find a job, gain an income and become food secure. Cooperatives of small farmers are part of the definition of agri-business.

The food security programme of EKN Kigali is presented by the intervention logic as highlighted in the Analysis Plan for the end-line assessment of the programme. The intervention logic consists of 2 parts:

1. Strengthening the agri-business sector:
   - Improved infrastructure in all segments of the food supply chain;
   - Strengthened capacity of all public and private actors involved in the food supply chain;
2. Reducing chronic malnutrition in very young children.

The Dutch food security programme for Rwanda consists of 15 separate projects. However, the programme aims to achieve 3 major outputs namely;

- Improved infrastructure (roads, electricity, land) to produce, process, distribute and prepare food;
- Strengthened capacity of government agencies, private sector, and discussion for a;
- Increased access to healthy food for very young children.

1.1 Preparation for the field visit and Focus group Discussions

As part of the end line phase of the evaluation of the project, PwC Netherlands travelled to Rwanda to assess the development and results of the 15 projects. PwC Netherlands' field visit took place between 2 and 10 March 2016. PwC Netherlands interviewed all the project implementers of the 15 projects. In addition, PwC Netherlands organized focus group discussions (FGDs) for the three projects listed in table 1 below.

In total 8 Focus Group Discussions were conducted. PwC Netherlands led the FGDs for the 2 projects below:

- **25059 –** Consolidation of Marshland Development
- **25457 –** Access to Food for Young Children.

On the other hand, PwC Rwanda led 6 FGDs of the CATALIST2 project:

- **24720 –** CATALIST2.

Also, PwC Rwanda assisted with facilitation and translation on the data collection for the 2 projects that PwC Netherlands led. The first FGDs for Catalist2 Muhanga District were conducted together by PwC Rwanda and

PwC Netherlands to be able to assist and give feedback where needed. The additional 5 FGDs for CATALIST-2 were then conducted by PwC Rwanda.

As indicted in table 1 below, PwC Rwanda provided assistance to the PwC Netherlands team on the following FGDs in Muhanga and Nyanza Districts:

Table 1: Schedule Focus Group Discussions – locations and dates

Project Number	Implementing organization	Project Title	Number of Focus Group Discussion	Location	Date
25059	Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V	Consolidation of Marshland Development	**1**	**Muhanga** district	9 March
25457	UNICEF Rwanda	Access to Food for Young Children	**1**	**Muhanga** district	8 March
24720	CATALIST-2 IFDC Rwanda	Food Security: agribusiness cluster development, market integration and agricultural intensification	**6** (3 per village)	**1. Muhanga** district (Cyeza sector, **Binunga** village) **2. Nyanza** district (Busoro sector, **Masangano** village)	7 March 8 March

1.2 Target groups involved in the FGDs

The Focus Group Discussions included the following organisations and target groups for the selected projects as highlighted in table 2 below:

Table 2: Schedule Focus Group Discussions – target groups and number of participants

Project Number	Implementing organization	Project Title	Target Group	Number of Participants
25059	Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V	Consolidation of Marshland Development	• **Cooperative members** (farmers) • **Users of the erosion protected hillside and bench terrace**	5 cooperative members 5 users
25457	UNICEF Rwanda	Access to Food for Young Children	**Mothers with children under 2 years**: • whose children under 2 years are chronically malnourished • attend at least 4 ANC visits during their most recent pregnancy	8 – 12 mothers

24720	IFDC Rwanda, Ibakwe and Caritas	CATALIST-2 Food Security: agribusiness cluster development, market integration and agricultural intensification	**Per village:** • **FGD 1:** male project participants only • **FGD 2:** female project participants only • **FGD 3:** non-participants, who either own no land of their own, or do own land (less than 2 hectares) on which they grow cassava	8-12 participants per FGD

1.3 General approach to the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The goal of the FGDs was to provide a better understanding of the information that is presented in the reports and also to test whether the findings resonate with the target groups of the selected projects. General issues that were addressed during the discussions included the following:

- ***assessment*** of the theory of change (*did the project contribute to improved food security?)*;
- ***mapping of the observed results*** of the intervention on the direct target group (*what was the impact of the project on the target group? Has their situation changed / improved?)* ;
- ***mapping of the effect*** of the intervention on the indirect target group (*who else has been effected by the project (family members/ neighbors etc.) and in what way? And what was the impact of the project on the indirect beneficiaries?)*;
- ***identification of external factors*** (*what other factors influenced* the project and in what way (lower food prices / weather etc.)?)

1.4 Plan for the Focus Group Discussions

Before the start each FGD, PwC staff would walk around the project location to have a better understanding of each project, the village and the impact of the project on the local people. In addition, the walk around helped the team to have an objective view on the impact of the project and made them not to be dependent on only the information that the project implementers and beneficiaries provided.

For the 3 projects there was a formal moment to interview field staff members of each project to learn from them about the impact of the project on the target group and the community. In the case of Consolidation of Marshlands and Access to Food for Young children, responsible staff members of the Muhanga district were also interviewed. The third stage involved a guided tour by the staff of the project implementers to give the team an opportunity to see the projects. In the case of the CATALIST-2 project, the team conducted brief interviews and guided tours prior to the start of the FGDs in the selected villages. The fourth stage was the actual Focus Group Discussion involving different categories of both project beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

1.5 Characteristics Muhanga & Nyanza districts

The Republic of Rwanda is located in Central East Africa, bordered by Uganda to the North, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the West, Burundi to the South and Tanzania to the East. The capital of Rwanda is Kigali. The Fourth Rwanda Population and Housing Census (RPHC4) conducted in 2012 established the population of Rwanda to be at 10,515,973, of which 52% were women and 48% men. The population of Rwanda is still largely rural, with 83% living in rural areas. The majority of the population of Rwanda lives in private households with an average size of 4.3 persons. Households are a bit smaller in urban areas, with 4.0 persons. The population density in 2012 was 415 inhabitants per square kilometer. Compared to neighbouring countries: Burundi (333), Uganda (173) or Kenya (73), Rwanda is the highest densely populated county in the region. Agriculture is the main economic activity for the people of Rwanda, providing employment to about 86% of the total population. It contributes to 47% of Rwanda's Domestic goods and exports. The total arable land is about 1.4 million hectares, which is 52 % of the total surface area of the country. The country has about 165,000 ha of marshlands.

Muhanga and Nyanza Districts are two of the 8 Districts of Southern Province in Rwanda.

Muhanga District has 12 Sectors, 63 cells, and 331 villages it covers 647.7km^2. The population of Muhanga District is 318,965 peoples, the households are 69 809, formed by Male 155,193 (49%) and Female 163,772 (51%). The main economic activity in Muhanga is agriculture (78.5% of the active population) coupled with farmers livestock, where 76.9% of households raising livestock. The main crops include coffee, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, maize, banana, soybeans, rice and potatoes. One part of Muhanga District is located in the "central plateau" of the country with topography of hills type. With high and low peaks, this part constitutes one of the best elements of the central "plateau" of the country. The other part of the District is on the high mountains of the Nile-Congo; it has peaks prancing beyond 2000 meters. The District is located in an area well-watered, between 1100 mm and 1200 mm of altitude. This region enjoys a climate of four seasons of which two rainy seasons and two dry seasons: a short rainy season, which extends from October to December, a short dry season that runs from January to February, and a long rainy season from March to June and a long dry season from June to August or early September. The District has the following large rivers: Nyabarongo which makes the District hydrographical belt (it crosses six sectors) and collects alone more than 90% of runoff/small rivers; Its tributaries are Miguramo, Muhanga, Ururumanza, Sagarara, Kiryango, Base, Akabebya, Mukunguri and pours into Akanyaru. The majority of the population of Muhanga District are in agriculture coupled with farmer's livestock.

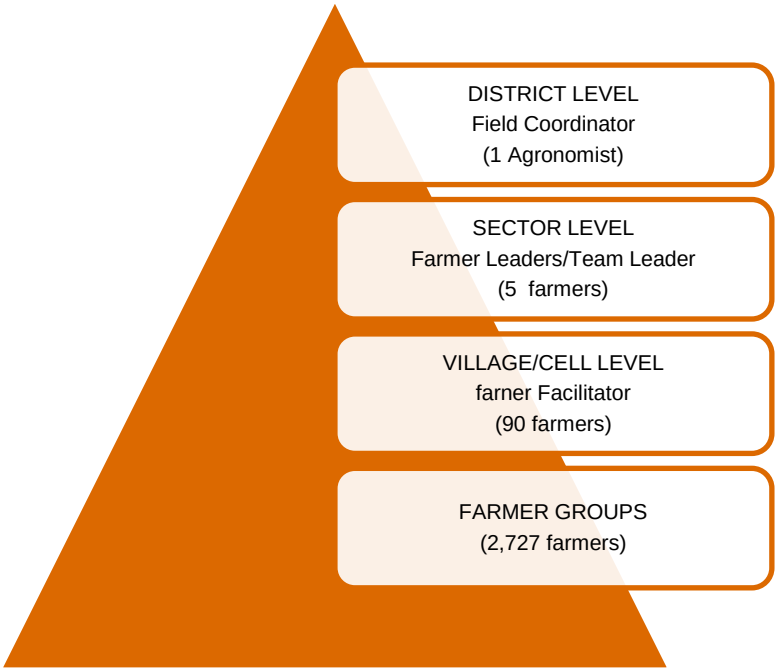
Nyanza District is made up of 10 Sectors which are subdivided into 51 Cells and 420 villages. The total population is 323,388 inhabitants (162 511 females and 160 877 males). Both Nyanza population density (481inh/Km2) and average population growth (3.7%) are above national averages which are respectively 416/Km2 and 2.6%. Nyanza District is located in a wet tropical climate area. This area knows an alternation of two wet seasons and two dry seasons. The western and mountainous part of the District records relatively fresh temperatures and abundant rains compared to the low altitude eastern part whose annual average temperature is 20 C. The hydrographic network includes the most significant rivers of the country, namely the rivers Akanyaru and Mwogo. Nyanza District has a fertile soil especially in Mayaga area where developed the coffee, the cassava etc. The District has several marshland which yield rice and maize. The total area of exploitable marshlands is 10,920ha. Those resources host a high potential for increasing agricultural production and diversifying products. In Nyanza District 69% of all households own some type of livestock compared to 68% of all households in Rwanda. This shows that Nyanza District is above the national average in terms of households raising livestock. About 46% of the households in Nyanza District own cattle and some of them produce milk. There are three milk collection centers in the whole District which are located in three sectors (Rurangazi, Busoro and Muyira).

2.0 Interviews with project staff of Ibakwe, CRS and Welthungerhilfe

During the field data collection exercise, information was collected on organisation details during the key informant interviews conducted with project staff of Ibakwe in Muhanga and Nyanza Districts, Welthungerhilfe in Muhanga District and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Muhanga District. The following are the highlights of the information provided by the field staff from the two projects:

2.1 IBAKWE – CATALIST-2

Ibakwe is one of the three local Implementing Partner organisations that has been part of the CATALIST-2 project that has been supporting farmers in Muhanga and Nyanza districts. In the figure below is the extension model that Ibakwe has been using to reach farmers from the district to the village/ cell level in the two districts:



To ensure effective implementation and realization of the project objectives, Ibakwe used the farmer groups and peer-to-peer training approach with the District Field Coordinators doubling as Agronomists. The project also worked in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture which functioned in elaborating policy. Local authorities were also involved in the project and more specifically in selecting farmer facilitators, coordinating preparation of land for planting and selecting model farm sites

In the picture on the left, the Ibakwe Field Coordinator/ Agronomist (Jeannine Nyiramana – green T-shirt) explains to the members of the Evaluation Team about the new cassava variety planted by farmers in Muhanga District

According to the Field Coordinators, the farmer group and peer-to-peer training approach adopted by the project had the following strengths:

The famers' leaders and facilitators reached several farmers at the same time with minimal resources, farmers reduced the work load of introducing new farming methods by sharing labour, several farmers shared farm implements/planting materials, peers taught and supported each other. The group approach also provided the opportunity to strengthen social ties and allowed members to share ideas, insights and experiences.

The training approach applied Demonstrations Plots/ Model sites and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) - Demonstrations plots were used to show the farmers the benefits of using Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) techniques in farming as opposed to conventional Farmer practice methods of farming. The demonstration plots were powerful tools in persuading farmers to adopt ISFM since the farmers witnessed how the yield had drastically increased with the use of ISFM. This was very successful because many farmers adopted the farming techniques promoted by the project and started focusing more on cassava.

Farmer field days and fairs were organized every planting season. These events provided the project with opportunities to reach as many farmers as possible with improved agricultural practices. Farmers were presented with opportunities to assess newly introduced agricultural technologies. Financing institutions were also invited to participate in the field days.

The project linked farmer to suppliers of farming implements and resources such as suppliers of chemical fertilizers, cuttings, pesticides, tools among other supplies and agricultural inputs. Other interventions by the project included provision of cassava cuttings to farmers, provision of farming tools and implements that included watering cans, hoes and knapsack sprayers for applying pesticides.

Benefits

- Farmers reported increased farm production as a result of the project interventions. It was reported that as a result of the project, farmers had more than tripled their production.

- As a result of increased farm yields, farmers had adequate subsistence food and sold the excess. By this they had improved the household income which enabled many families to meet other family needs such as paying school fees, paying for their health insurance, buying cattle, staring other income generating activities etc.

- Farmers reported that they had started saving and banks were having business as a result of the same.

- The project had created many jobs including business to a cassava processing plant that was almost closing down due to insufficient volumes to process.

- Many farmers acquired financial literacy.

Challenges

- There was an outbreak of Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) which resulted in great farm losses in cassava. The disease being viral could not be managed and the only option was to bring in new cassava variety which could resist the virus. The new cassava variety from Uganda was still under trial in the model farms and how it performs in the districts will be determined after observing for several seasons.

- As a result of the losses occasioned by CBSD, some farmers who had taken loans with the expectation of paying back with proceeds from sale of their farm produce struggled to pay their loans.

- The supply of cassava cuttings did not meet the demand. Many farmers did not get adequate cuttings to plant since it was reported that the sites for multiplying the cassava cuttings were not many.

- Despite Farmers facilitator willingness to train other farmers, it was observed that they were not very motivated to do so and prioritized their own activities other the project activities because they were working as volunteers.

2.2 Welthungerhilfe – Consolidation of Marshland Development

The Consolidation of Marshland Development Program implemented by Welthungerhilfe started in 2004 and has been implemented for 10 years. It is relevant because at the time it began, the following issues had been identified which were negatively affecting the communities around the marshlands:

1. Flooding was very common in Marshlands and damaged many crops. Potatoes were the most preferred crops grown in the marshland and were mostly affected by the flooding.

2. Land for cultivation was not adequate and yet there were marshlands that were not adequately exploited.

3. There was a lot of soil erosion since many farmers did not utilize any soil conservation measures in their farms.

4. Effects of climate warming were beginning to be felt by farmers as raining patterns began to change.

5. There was a lot of cutting down of trees and other vegetation. This was further compounding soil degradation as many acres of land were left bare leading to loss of soil and nutrient s from the soils.

6. Poverty was rampant as a result of reduced food production by farmers which is their main source of livelihood.

It was against this background that the project was designed to address the issues listed above with the aim of establishing a system of resource utilization in a sustainable way mainly in the Marshlands in Muhanga District.

Part of the Rugeramigozi II Water Dam (part of the Marshland Consolidation Development Project)

A female farmer working in her rice field/ garden which is a part of the Rugeramigozi Marshland Consolidation Development Project

Some of key components of the project were capacity building, provision of inputs and raising gender awareness.

- Under capacity building, several groups were formed including Water User Organizations, Cooperatives, Women groups and hillside associations. They were further trained on group management, by-laws and given relevant technical training on farming. In addition, they were given incentives such as farming tools (e.g. wheelbarrows) and animals (e.g. pigs, goats).

- The project encouraged farmers to construct anti-erosion trenches and terraces on hill-sides which resulted in over 1,000 hectares protected. The farmers were urged to plant trees and shrubs which further helped in soil conservation. The project helped with the development of the marshlands and introduced intensification in the growing of maize, beans, rice and potatoes.

  As the project progressed, rice became the most preferred crop grown in the marshland as a result of the project which was promoting its adoption. As the production of rice increased, the need for adding value to the crop was high which resulted in a Public Private Partnership by the Government and the farmers to put up a rice milling factory in the area with the Government contributing 60% and the farmers 40% of the cost.

- Another activity undertaken by the project was the construction and rehabilitation of feeder roads within the farming communities.

Achievements:

1. The project helped establish 12 farmer cooperatives and 6 Water Users Organizations. These organizations have legal status and are running. In essence, the design of the project ensured there was sustainability as farmers continue to enjoy the benefits of the project after project closure. The Water User Organizations are able to finance repairs

2. There is over 600 hectares of land under rice cultivation. The average productivity of rice was improved to 4-5 tonnes/ha/season.

3. Farmers now produce sufficient food for subsistence and for sale. This has improved food security of the people as well as increased their incomes. This has consequently improved the standards of living for the farmers.

4. An unexpected outcome of the project is fish farming which has been carried out in the dams. The farmer groups introduced fingerlings in the dam for the group. The proceeds from sale of fish are put in the group's account which is used for care and maintenance of the group's resources.

Interview with Muhanga District Agronomist

Name of agronomist – Damien Felix – sector agronomist (represented the district agronomist who was not available)

In the period before the project by Welthungerhilfe, the communities around Muhanga district used to grow potatoes and different crops including beans, soya and local maize varieties as their main crops. When Welthungerhilfe came to the area, it promoted the growing of rice because from its assessment, the area was conducive for the production of rice because of its valleys and marshlands. Also, rice fetched better income in the market compared to the crops they were growing and could be grown in two season in a year, where it previously used to be once a year. The project provided numerous trainings on rice farming and worked with

the farmers to consolidate the marshlands. Part of the activities that the project carried out included taking farmers and some of their leaders to other provinces on educational trips where they learned from other farmers who were already producing rice.

As the farmers began growing rice, the first two years were not very productive owing to a number of things:

- The farmers were still learning how to grow rice
- The marshlands were not yet well consolidated. The agronomist stated that it usually takes almost six (6) seasons or three years of growing rice for the production to increase to an optimum level.
- Only some farmers did have fertilizers

In the first year, the average production was at 2.5 tonnes/hectare but had since improved to 3.8 tonnes/hectare per season. The project aims at reaching 6.0 tonnes/hectare per season in the coming years.

The project was not only teaching farmers how to grow rice, but was also promoting appropriate farming techniques for growing maize and beans on the hillsides along the valleys. The project chose to focus on maize and beans as these are the crops prioritized for production in Muhanga district. The farmers were taught and guided in constructing soil conservation structures to address the problem of erosion in the area. The focus was mostly on the use of terraces which covered an approximated area of 40 hectares. In the first year, the production of maize and beans was not very good because the soil had been destabilized but after it stabilized, the production improved to 4.2 ton/ha up from 3.5 ton/ha

Role of the District Office

The agronomist reported that the District had a role of ensuring sustainability of the infrastructure in the marshlands. The District monitors cooperatives to ensure that they perform their functions as expected. It was reported that the maintenance of the infrastructure function was done in collaboration with farmers, the district and Welthungerhilfe. In addition, the district and the farmers through their own initiative without Welthungerhilfe involvement were growing more agro-forestry trees. Already they had planted 15, 482 trees in 1 sector out of three (3) sectors. The motivation to grow such trees was informed by the need to:

- Protect soil from erosion
- Protect crops that are being grown – part of the trees were growing alongside beans

Benefits

It was reported that the project improved subsistence farming. Part of the rice production was taken home to feed the families while another part was sold to the market through the cooperative. The farmers would then plough back part of this income into rice production and save the other part.

For maize, all the produce was taken to the cooperative which sold it to the suppliers on behalf of the farmers who would then sell to the market. The proceeds from the sale would then be paid to farmers and a portion of it allocated to the cooperatives for running its activities. For beans, farmers took all the production for use at the household level.

According to the agronomist, Welthungerhilfe had achieved its goal by 100% that of increasing production among the farmers. Before the project, potatoes were the main crops produced and did not have a ready market where they could be sold but with rice, the farmers got a ready market and as a result their incomes improved. The marshlands were also consolidated and put into productive use.

Water Users Organizations

Rice needs water from the beginning up to the end i.e. from when it is grown until it is ready for harvest. It therefore beckons, the need to ensure water is managed properly to ensure that the crop does not lack water at

any stage that it requires. This was the reason that Water User Organizations were formed. The WUOs control the use of the dam water and ensure the dam infrastructure is maintained. The WUOs were working closely with the Cooperatives. The cooperatives allocated part of the farmers' incomes to WUOs to facilitate them in performing their functions. The WUOs have staff that they have employed who oversee irrigation and maintenance of the irrigation infrastructure.

Job Creation

As a result of the project, a number of jobs were created and income generated. These include:

- Rice production – 2 seasons per year. The average income varied from farmer to farmer depending on the size of land and the productivity. On average, each farmer got RwF 80,000 per season after the cooperatives deductions.
- Cooperatives were paid by farmers
- WUOs were being paid by cooperatives
- Other income: tourism - people take picture during weddings and pay RwF 10,000
- The WUOs also explored avenues for income generation on behalf of the farmers. In one of the dams, an entrepreneur had leased the dam water to do fish farming from which he paid the farmers.

Women Involvement

There were more women participants in the project than men. In 2015, there were 400 women compared to 360 men. The women were involved in most of the farming activities including land preparation, crops husbandry, harvesting and post harvesting handling.

Sustainability

The project benefits accruing from the project are bound to continue to past the project period. This can be supported by the following points. That:

- Farmers are very motivated to go to the valley to cultivate, this means they have ownership of the project and will continue to farm after Welthungerhilfe has left the project area.
- The farmers learned a lot during the project period through educational trips and other learning methods which impacted their attitudes and practice in farming from land preparation to post harvest handling and storage.
- Administrators and others in leadership understand the importance of farming and are motivated to grow rice even as they motivate the farmers. District staff went for field studies with WHH to learn how farming was practiced in other areas.
- The Sector agronomist and sector cooperatives are in-charge of monitoring the development and these will continue to support the farmers.
- Welthungerhilfe put some additional money in this project to work with a local NGO (Duhamic Adri) in order to help the farmers achieve their new target of 7 ton/ha.
- In addition, a local NGO (Duhamic Adri) in the area has taken up to continue with activities which build on what WHH had started. The NGO has been reiterating the need to protect the dam water, the dam infrastructure, use the water in a responsible way and has also taught farmers how to locally make fertilizers.

Food security

The food security situation has improved as a result of the project. Before the project was initiated, the farmers were mainly growing potatoes. The production of these potatoes was in excess because everybody in the area was growing potatoes and as a result did not have a market. Therefore, the farmers did not have adequate income to take care of their food needs. However, as a result of the improvement in farming of rice, maize and

beans, the farmers have increased farm yields and consequently increase in incomes which meant they could afford other foods that they did not produce such as vegetables and meat.

Challenges

According to the district agronomist the project did not face many challenges. However, there were farmers who did not understand the value of collective bargaining and were hesitant to sell their produce through the cooperatives. Instead, some of them opted to take the whole production home for themselves, for consumption and also sell by themselves. The cooperatives engaged them in different ways to change their minds and allow the cooperative to sell on their behalf the farm produce. As an extra action, the cooperative assigned day and night guards in the consolidated marshlands to inhibit farmers from taking their harvests at home.

Recommendations

The agronomist pointed out the following improvements for future programming.

- Dam protection. The dams were not secured to prevent unauthorized access by people and livestock. Without perimeter fences, the dams posed a hazard especially to young children. In future, dams should be well protected.
- Storage of produce. The project did not have adequate storage facilities for the produce without which the farmers faced a risk of losing their produce to poor handling of the produce. Although the project provided drying areas for the produce, these were not sufficient and in future more facilities should be provided.

2.3 CRS-Rwanda – Access to food for young children

About the Project

This section of the report captures the discussions the evaluation team had with a team of five staff members comprising the Catholic Relief Services EKN Project Director, the Director of Caritas/Kabgayi, EKN Project Coordinator, EKN Project Nutritionist and the EKN Project Agronomist.

According to the staff the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is supporting the government's efforts to reduce malnutrition in the first 1,000 days of a baby's life through this project. The project targets pregnant women, lactating women and children under the age of two. CRS targets 331 villages, where 20 to 30 people are involved per village. The target group involves 9,930 households. CRS is contributing to the reduction of stunting rates of children under five years in Rwanda from 44% in 2010 to 24.5% by 2017 by supporting the implementation of the Karongi and Muhanga districts' plan to eliminate malnutrition. From the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey 2014/2015 "overall stunting dropped from 44.2% to 37.9% between 2010 and 2013/14".

CRS Rwanda implements multisector community-based nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions through a combination of 4 strategies, namely:

1. An integrated approach

This is implemented through village nutrition schools (VNS) which is aimed at promoting improved nutrition and hygiene at community and household level. Through this interview, we learnt that this approach combines:

- Nutrition Education: This is mainly education on nutrition, health and sanitation, cooking demonstration sessions, recuperative feeding and growth monitoring of beneficiary children under 2 years as well as sensitization sessions on the nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Ante-natal Sensitization – The project taught the importance of antenatal care and more specifically urged pregnant women to attend antenatal clinic at least four times before the birth of their babies. It also stressed the need for male involvement. In the CRS operated ante-natal clinics, women who came with their male counterparts were given priority in being attended to.
- Saving/lending activities which the beneficiaries entirely own. They raise a base amount that is supposed to be contributed by each one of them. They then use these savings to lend money to each other to use it to buy livestock, farming, school fees, in case of illness of for social events. The loans advance to members are paid back with no interest.
- Improved household agriculture techniques where beneficiaries are taught better and improved ways of farming, which also includes and not limited to use of fertilizers in their farms as well as promoting the planting of vegetables and fruits.

2. Building strong, healthy communities

The village nutrition schools through the local structures and in collaboration with district authorities, also yields social benefits. As they work together through nutrition groups, and bio-intensive agriculture groups promoting improved nutrition, community members improve their sense of community and collective efficacy.

3. Strengthening nutrition systems and structures

CRS and partner staff from Caritas strengthen the capacity of health care providers and also strengthen their connections to community groups through trainings, dissemination of sensitization materials and support of health centre staff in various activities including nutrition assessments and joint counselling. The project also

helps strengthen the capacity of district staff to manage multisector interventions towards achieving national objectives on the eradication of malnutrition.

4. Nutrition as an integrated approach

The integrated services provided by CRS and partners work alongside agricultural and economic strengthening activities by:

- Promoting food security through Farmer Field Learning School (FFLS) and Bio-Intensive Agriculture Techniques.
- Promoting economic resilience by a sustainable, grassroots microfinance through saving and internal Lending Groups that build upon and reinforce social bonds among community members.

CHALLENGES FACED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

- Malnutrition is not visible from the outside, which makes it difficult to identify it. That is why community workers measure it monthly.

- The project focuses on reducing stunting, while the EKN project description is focusing on reducing severe malnutrition. For CRS malnutrition is part of the reduction of stunting. Stunting is a form of malnutrition that cannot be easily reduced, it takes time to reduce stunting and this needs medical treatment. It is a process to realize behavioural change.

SUSTAINABILITY

The experience CRS has from this project as well as other similar projects it has implemented have shown that the approach it uses to fight malnutrition provide an entry point for other interventions geared towards eliminating malnutrition. Therefore, it is committed to continue expanding its integrated approach to promote healthy families and communities.

Interview with Muhanga District Staff - Sosthene UMUTONIWASE KAMANA, Health promotion and disease prevention officer

The District of Muhanga implements Malnutrition elimination projects in line with the country national policy. Players that are supporting the district to eliminate malnutrition are Caritas, UNICEF,CRS and EKN.

These partners work hand in hand with the district by training the district health officer, the person in charge of social development at the sector level, the community health workers and agriculture promoters at the village level the different aspects of fighting/elimination of malnutrition. These officers then go back to the district, sector and villages and train the beneficiaries the same aspects.

Activities involved in the Malnutrition elimination at the district include;

1. Growth monitoring for all children below 5 years by the community health workers.
2. Farmer Field Schools for pregnant and lactating women in the 1,000 days plus program which is mainly run by Caritas and CRS.
3. Sensitization of communities to join saving and lending groups.

As a way of monitoring and follow up of these activities, the districts holds monthly meetings with district officers in charge of health at both sector and cell levels to track the progress of the different activities. These meeting are fully supported by the partners mentioned above.

In terms of sustainability, volunteers from different sectors and villages within Muhanga are being trained about all aspects of malnutrition elimination and the plan is that in case the EKN project stops, these volunteers are equipped enough to train other people in their respective villages and cells.

2.4 Observations

One of the techniques used for the evaluation was observation. The evaluation team conducted guided tours by project staff and walked around the project sites. The following are the observations made by the team per project.

CATALIST-2

The evaluation team visited the Muhanga Model Farm and saw the demonstrations the project was making. At the model farm there were different sections that had crops planted using conventional farming methods and other sections that had employed the Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) methods promoted by the project. The differences between the sections using ISFM with and those that use conventional farming practices was quite observable. Cassava and maize grown using ISFM looked healthier, had greener leaves, maize had larger maize cobs, the plants were larger and had wider stems compared to those grown the conventional way (see picture below). The differences could be attributed to the improved farming techniques from which the individual farmers could learn and adopt in their own farms. On one section of the farm were banana plants that were looking healthy.

The evaluation team was not able to visit any farms in Nyanza due to the rains which continued to pour for the entire period the team was in Nyanza. Further, the rains rendered the roads to the farms inaccessible as they were muddy. However, the farms that the team saw on the way to Nyanza were not very different from the ones they saw in Muhanga. It was observed by the evaluation team along the main road to Nyanza that farmers in Nyanza planted rice, maize, cassava, bananas and rice among other crops.

Model farm Muhanga district with maize, on the left with ISFM, on the right without ISFM techniques.

Consolidation of Marshlands

The evaluation team visited two consolidated marshlands in Muhanga in the morning and in the afternoon. It was observed that there were many people working on the rice puddles in the morning than in the afternoon. The majority were women. On the lands adjacent to the marshlands, there were observable soil and water conservation activities taking place that included terraces and agro-forestry. Different tree species with a majority of grevillea trees were planted on the edges of the terraces to hold the soil firmly in place. On the

terraces the farmers had grown maize and beans and other legumes. On the upper sides of the consolidated marshlands were dams. The dams were large enough to supply water downstream throughout the year. The water gates and channels for distributing water looked well maintained. However, it was noted that the fence around the dam embankment was missing and only metal pipes stood as evidence of there having been a fence. People and animals access to the dam was therefore not well controlled.

One of the project interventions was to rehabilitate feeder roads around the project areas. The feeder roads that the evaluation team used were not tarmacked and showed signs of surface water run-offs that had resulted in small galleys that made the road a bit bumpy in some sections. This is a common problem with dry-weather-only roads during the rainy season.

Access to food for young children

The team that visited this project did not have a chance to tour the field and see how the group members were doing their farming activities due to strong rain. However, during the interaction with the women before the start of the FGD, a few observations were made. One such observation was that although the women said that malnutrition was no longer a problem, their children looked a bit malnourished. According to the evaluation team that was with this group of mothers, there was need for more interventions to assist them curb malnutrition.

3.0 Focus Group Discussions Data

Focus Group Discussions data in Muhanga and Nyanza Districts was collected from the groups of men alone, women alone, men and women together, as well from groups of men and women who did not participate in the project in both districts. Below are the findings from the FGDs for the various categories of project beneficiaries (participants) and non-participants in the CATALIST2 and other projects.

3.1 CATALIST-2 - Muhanga District Project Participants – Men Focus Group Discussion

Introduction

The focus group discussion conducted on the 7th March 2016 at ADC Church, in Cyeza Sector, Binuga village in Muhanga District. The FGD targeted men who had benefitted from the interventions implemented through the CATALIST2 Programme through Ibakwe, a local Rwanda based organization.

The focus group discussion sought to generate qualitative data from the male participants with regard to their involvement in the project. Information was also sought on the benefits derived by the men from the project, their opinions on project implementation, sustainability of the project and how similar future projects can be improved.

FGD Participants Information

As indicated in the table below, the FGD involved 10 male beneficiaries selected from among the cooperatives benefitting from the project in Cyeza Sector in Muhanga District:

Project Name		CATALIST-2
District		Muhanga
Sector		Cyeza
Village		Binunga
Venue of FGD		ADC Church
Number of FGD participants		10
Gender	Male	10
	Female	0
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Household Size		8
Average number of children per household		3.3

Average number of Women per household		1[1]
Average number of girls per household		2.3
Average size of land per household		2.3 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		1.4 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		**Cassava**
		Maize
		Beans
Domestic Animals kept	Cows	8/10
	Pigs	9/10
	Goats	1/10
	Chicken	3/10

Findings from FGD

The main goal of the project according to the men in the FGD was to assist farmers get out of poverty by assisting them to increase their farm production. They all confirmed their participation in the project activities and more specifically in trainings giving the following as the key topics taught:

- Land preparation
- Crop rotation
- Use of improved seeds
- Use of fertilizers
- Use of pesticides

They were provided with farming tools but said the tools were not enough for everyone and were mostly given to team leaders. These included watering cans, hoes and knapsack sprayers.

The farmers said that they had put into use the skills acquired through Ibakwe. They felt that they were more food secure as a result of the project which had taught them better farming methods which had greatly increased their farms productivity. The increased production had also led to increased incomes for the families enabling them to cater for other family needs such as buying clothes, paying school fees, buying food that they did not produce, buying or leasing more land for agriculture, buying bicycles, had connected water and electricity in their homes among others.

The farmers reported that it was common for people in the area to have only two meals a day but children had three meals. The FGD participants mentioned that this is now slowly changing as a result because they are now able to produce enough food.

They said that their neighbours and friends had indirectly benefitted for the project as they shared some of the seeds and cuttings issued by the project. They said it was important to share with their neighbours because if their neighbours continued planting poor varieties of crops, they were prone to get diseases which could easily spread to their farms.

They felt that the project had positively impacted their lives and that their families were living better lives compared to the period before the project. They further recommended that the project be replicated in other regions so that other people can benefit the way they had benefited in that the 4 years the project was in their area.

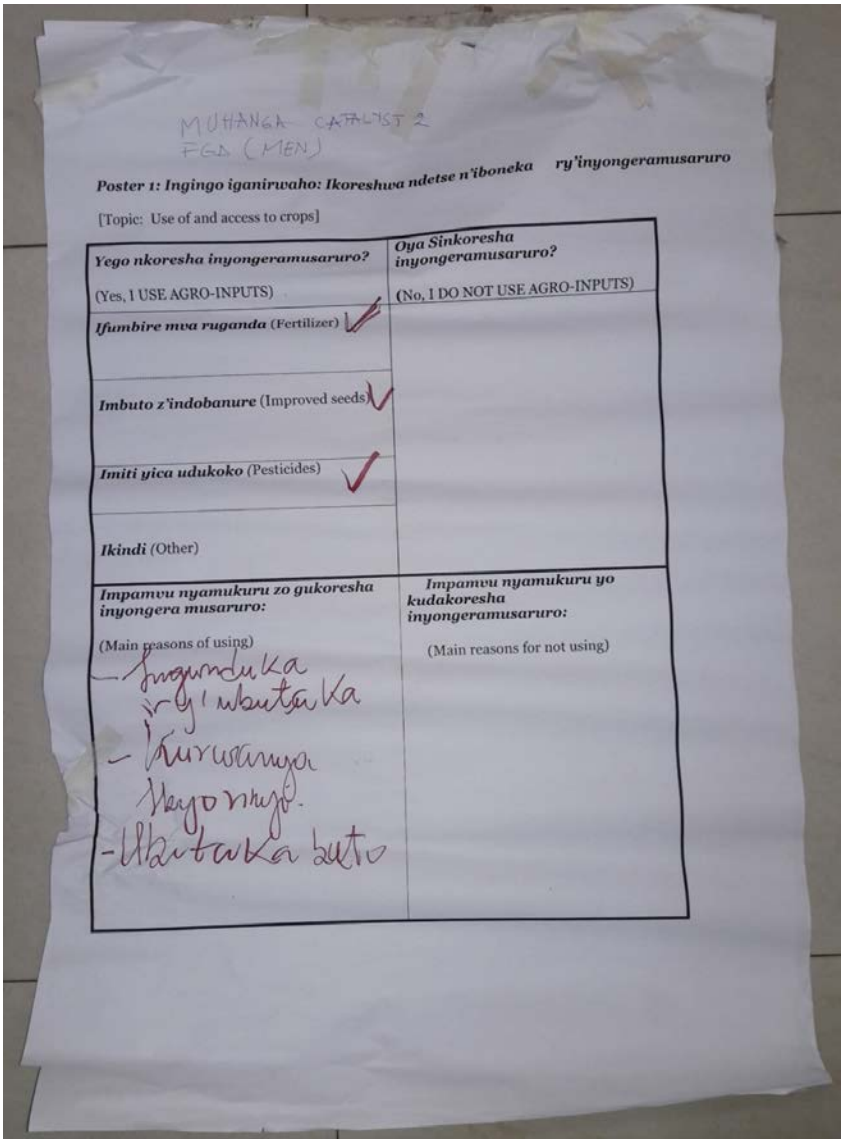
Challenges

Below are main challenges that the farmers who participated in the CATALIST2 project mentioned:

[1] The one woman per household in this case was understood by the respondents to mean the "woman of the home" meaning the wife or wives

1. The Cassava Brown Streak Disease CBSD) had negatively reduced their food production. The disease affected the tuber, the stems and the leaves. The tubers were particularly damaged with some cases resulting in tuber rot of the whole root system. The project had made effort to overcome this challenge by introducing a different cassava variety from Uganda which was claimed to be resistant to the virus causing CBSD. As at the time of the evaluation, the project was testing the new cassava variety in the model farms to gauge its performance.
2. The weather was unpredictable as rains became intermittent. Although the overall land production in the land had increased, the farmers felt it would have even been higher were rains more reliable.
3. The farmers felt that it would be difficult for them to access improved seeds and cuttings without the assistance of the project.
4. Loan payment was difficult for farmers who had lost most of their crop to CBSD.

Details Posters



Summary Interpretation of Table Above
The men said they use agro-inputs for the following reasons:
-For maximum benefit out of the land
-To fight pests that attack crops
-To benefit more from the small pieces of land they own.

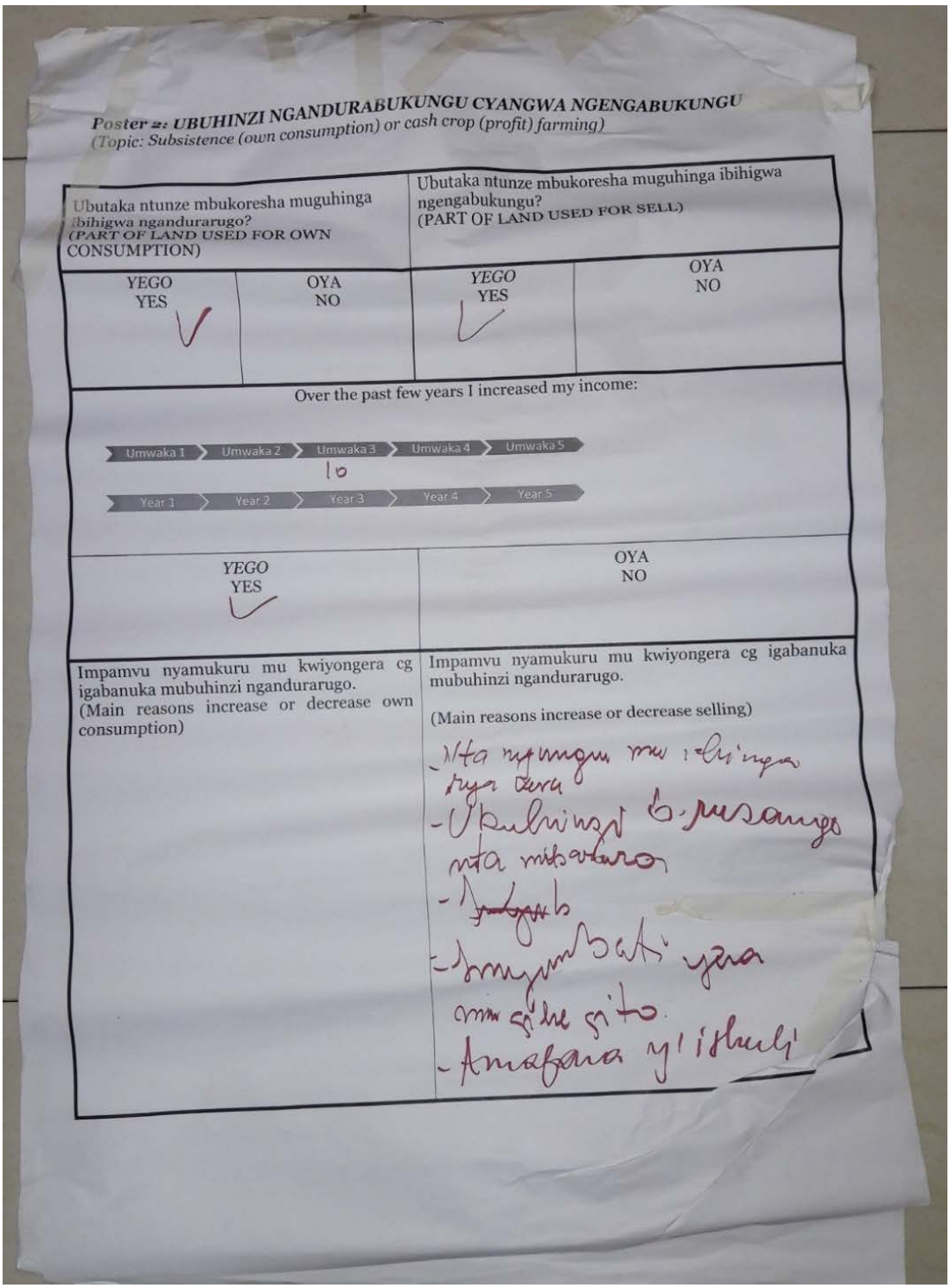
From the FGD with the male farmers, the main reasons for using agro-inputs include the following:

- Climatic changes which have reduced the rainy seasons for instance from two to one. It was noted that sometimes the rains even fall for a very short period of time e.g. one month instead of 3-4 months as it used to be in the past.

- Fighting against diseases was also cited as the reason for using pesticides. Diseases such as the Cassava Brown Streak Disease have negatively affected the farmers' produce. For example in 2014, the farmers lost most of the cassava crops to this disease. They are now trying to control it by introducing more disease-resistant varieties which are changed every after 4-5 years.

> "*In 2014, our cassava garden was attacked by a strange disease which almost finished off the whole garden and we did not harvest enough for our use and for sale to other people*" **FGD Men, Cyeza Sector, Muhanga District**

- The farmers also cited the challenge of small sizes of land as a key reason for using agro-inputs. The need to increase yields per acreage is what is driving the farmers to apply fertilizers and use the pesticides so as to increase production.



Poster 2: UBUHINZI NGANDURABUKUNGU CYANGWA NGENGABUKUNGU
(Topic: Subsistence (own consumption) or cash crop (profit) farming)

Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngandurarugo? (PART OF LAND USED FOR OWN CONSUMPTION)		Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngengabukungu? (PART OF LAND USED FOR SELL)	
YEGO YES ✓	OYA NO	YEGO YES ✓	OYA NO

Over the past few years I increased my income:

Umwaka 1 > Umwaka 2 > Umwaka 3 > Umwaka 4 > Umwaka 5

lo

Year 1 > Year 2 > Year 3 > Year 4 > Year 5

YEGO YES ✓	OYA NO
Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease own consumption)	Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease selling) - Nta ngungu mu [illegible] - Ubuhinzi bw'musango nta mbaraga - [illegible] - Amyumbati yaa [illegible] - Amafaraa y'ishuri

Summary Interpretation of Table Above
Reduced Sales
-The last year (Fifth year) didn't have a lot of harvest so used most of the produce for own consumption.
Increased Sales
-We needed money for school fees and selling what we have harvested is the only way we get that money

The farmers who participated in this FGD were also able to point out the reasons for an increase with regard to their ability to sell a part of the produce from their gardens:

- The farmers pointed out that the traditional methods of farming were no longer profitable for them as the yields would be very low to allow for any surplus for sale to generate household income.

- The farmers also noted that crops such as cassava grow faster when compared to the other traditional cash crops such as coffee. Therefore they now prefer to grow cassava which matures faster for them to have something to sell on the market on a more regular basis.

- The need to generate money to be able to pay for the children's school fees was noted as one of the driving factors for selling the extra produce from cassava and other crops grown by the farmers who participated in this FGD and the CATALIST-2 project in Muhanga district.

- It was also noted that the demand for food has tremendously increased in Rwanda as a result of population growth. This therefore calls for higher yielding crops which can produce enough food for home consumption and sale of the surplus to those who need the food.

Project Effectiveness

According to feedback from the 10 farmers who participated in this FGD, the effectiveness of the CATALIST2 programme is reflected in the following:

- Increased use of modern farming methods including knowledge and skills in controlling diseases and soil erosion;

- Increase in agricultural yields due to increased use of agro-inputs (chemical fertilizers/ manual fertilizers, pesticides, improved seeds) which are coupled with improved/ better farming methods;

- Improvement/ increment in household incomes as a result of the farmers being able to sell the extra produce to generate income;

> *"Before the project came to help us, my annual income used to be RwF 70,000 but now it has increased to RwF 200,000"*
> **Farmer, FGD Male Beneficiaries, Cyeza Sector, Muhanga District**

- Farmers noted that they now have ability to meet their basic household needs such as paying for utilities e.g. mutualle de sante (***health insurance***), buying household needs, paying school fee for their children and being able to afford better feeding;

- Food security was also mentioned as one of the ways the project has been effective in the sense that the farmers/ households are now food secure unlike before the project;

- Acquisition of additional assets. Half of farmers in this FGD (**5/10**) reported that they have been able to acquire additional assets which they did not have before the project. Some of the farmers have bought animals such as cows, goats, pigs, chicken which they sell to supplement their incomes. Other farmers noted that they have been able to buy pieces of land, bicycles, motor cycles and roofing materials such as iron sheets for their houses; and,

- Capacity building was also mentioned as one of the key areas in which the project has been effective as the farmers have been equipped with knowledge and skills in modern farming, using small pieces of land to generate more yields, how to control diseases, and how to use fertilizers to increase yields among other skill areas.

As indicated above, all the farmers (**10/10**) acknowledged that the project has impacted their livelihoods positively.

Sustainability of the Programme

The farmers who participated in the FGD were asked about the issue of sustainability of the progamme. All the participants responded that sustainability of the programme was possible because the farmers felt that they had been equipped with knowledge and skills that they could continue to use even beyond the project period.

The farmers specifically mentioned the following as some of the sustainability measures they are adopting:

- The strategy of using improved seeds from the harvest from season A for season B. The farmers are using the strategy of conserving the improved seeds so that they can be used over time even after project has stopped;
- They noted that the changes to agricultural production are sustainable because the project has helped to learn how to utilize fertilizers to preserve the fertility of the lands for future production;
- The farmers have also been equipped with skills on how to conserve land on the hill-sides by building terraces to contain soil erosion. They are planting trees on the hill-sides which have the capacity to grow with crops;
- The farmers also pointed that they have been taught how to generate enough manual fertilizers which can be used especially by those who are not able to afford the chemical fertilizers; and,
- The farmers have also adopted a strategy of sharing some of the improved seeds with other farmers who are non-participants in the project. This was particularly cited as a way of fighting diseases which otherwise would come from crops of the non-participants that have gardens adjacent to those of the project beneficiaries. They noted that this is a good way to prevent disease from attacking their plants.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

From the FGD for men at Binuga village, Cyeza Sector in Muhanga District, all the participants (**10/10**) noted that the one unplanned positive aspect of the programme is that it has facilitated the farmers to come together into cooperatives which have enabled them to have a voice that helps them to collectively bargain for better prices and to market their agricultural produce.

> *"Before I joined this group and the project, the people buying our crops would pay us low prices. Now our Chairman and the members negotiate for prices for us"* **Participant Male FGD, Muhanga District**

As reflected in the comment above, the farmers' cooperatives have helped to empower the farmers in the way they deal with the traders who buy their produce.

3.2 CATALIST-2 – Muhanga District Project Participants – Women FGD

Introduction

On the 7th March, 2016, a second FGD was conducted at ADC Church in Cyeza Sector, Muhanga District. This FGD involved women who had benefitted from the interventions of the CATALIST-2 Programme through Ibakwe. This FGD also sought to obtain qualitative information from the female participants. Information was sought from them with regard to their involvement in the project, the achievements/ benefits realised from the project, its implementation and how they thought the project could be made sustainable as well as ways to improve future similar projects.

FGD Participants Information

This FGD included 16 women who were selected from among the female beneficiaries of the project in Cyeza and in the table below is the detailed information on the female FGD participants at Binuga village:

Project Name		CATALIST-2
District		Muhanga
Sector		Cyeza
Village		Binunga
Venue of FGD		ADPR Church
Number of FGD participants		16
Gender	Male	0
	Female	16
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Household Size		5.9
Average number of children per household		2.7
Average number of Women per household		1
Average number of girls per household		2.3
Average size of land per household		1.2 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		1 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		**Cassava**
		Maize
		Beans
		Soya
		Rice
Domestic	Pigs	3/16

Animals kept	Cows	8/16
	Chicken	7/16
	Goats	4/16

Findings from FGD

With regard to knowledge of the project and its interventions, all the participants (**16/16**) knew about the CATALIST-2 programme. They mentioned that Ibakwe field staff (CATALIST-2) came to the village, enrolled them and taught them a lot of things that included but not limited to:

- Techniques of how to use a small piece of land to grow and harvest more produce
- How to get loans from financial institutions for purposes of expanding their farms.
- How to use improved seeds as well as different kinds of fertilizers depending on the crops and the types of land the farmers were using.
- Ibakwe also put these farmers in touch with chains of markets where they sell their produce.
- They were taught how to fight different crop diseases with locally manufactured pesticides.
- Taught them how to prepare the land after the harvest to ensure that the land was ready for planting before the onset of the next rain y season.

They also noted that the Ibakwe staff followed them up to see how their farms are progressing and to also find out if any of the participants is facing any kinds of challenges.

Experience with the project

The women reported that they had learnt a lot through the project. They made friends with their farmers who have participated in the project and that this improved their social lives.

It was noted that before the project, access to enough food in this area was a problem. The women noted that with the unpredictable seasonal changes, they were always uncertain of how much produce they would harvest, but because of the different modern farming techniques they have learnt during the Catalist2 project, they are now able to get more food, not enough but at least more than what they used to harvest without the project's interventions.

They also mentioned that their participation in the project has given them more information and courage to obtain loans from the banks. When they get these loans they use some of the money to rent fields and grow more crops. Most of the farmers in this group said they do not own more than 3 hectares of land, so this money helps them rent more land. After the harvest, they use part of the harvest for home consumption and sell extra produce. Part of this money is used to pay back loans and also help cater for different other household needs.

Participation in project

The FGD participants had positive feedback about their participation in the project which included the following:

- The women have been able to start farming for both home consumption and for sale which has led to an increase in their household incomes;

- The women in this FGD also noted that this project made them more independent of their husbands since they can now keep their own money to cater for their needs and those of the family. This was not the case before the project started;

- The women also reported that they can now afford to pay for their children's school fees. They said they do this sometimes through the loans they acquire from the financial institutions in case they have not yet harvested or from the sale of their produce.

Impact on the livelihood

When asked what impact the project had in their lives, the women had the following comments:

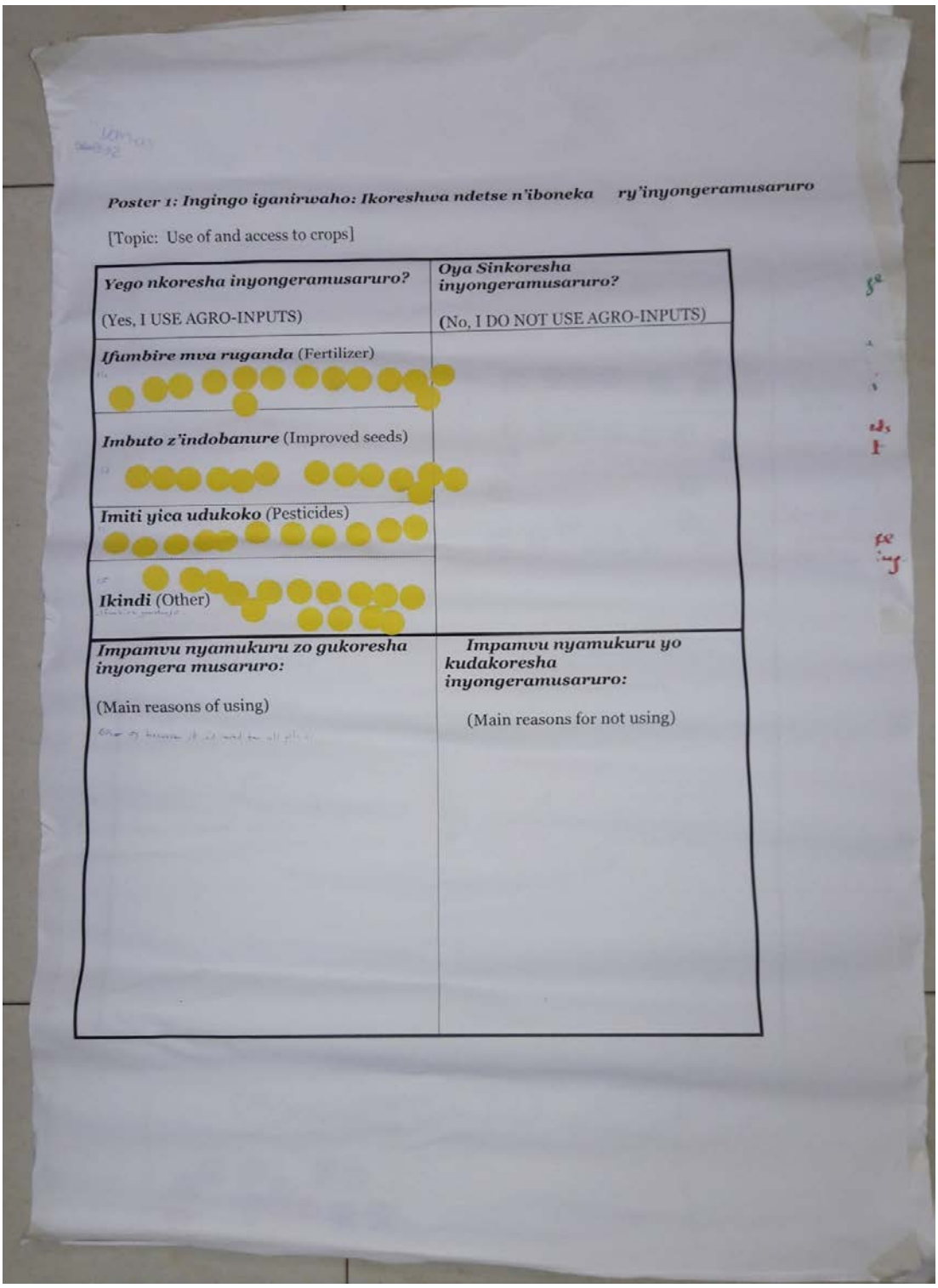
- The project had greatly increased their yields to a level where they had enough food for subsistence and excess for sale which resulted in increased household income.
- The women said that that they now had more income at their disposal which they did not have in the period prior to the project and as a result were now more independent of their husbands in meeting household needs.
- They were now able to access loans from financial institutions which helped them meet additional farming and household needs such as payment of school fees for their children.
- Socially, the women had made many friends in the group. They said this was very important to them as it allowed them to talk about and address women issues among themselves.

Details Posters

The information captured from the women who have benefited from the project in Muhanga District as indicated on the posters below shows that the participants (**16/16**) were using agro-inputs (*i.e. use of fertilizers, improved seeds, pesticides and application of new farming techniques*) in their areas. The main reason for this is to ensure increased productivity from the limited arable land available.

With regard to using part of the land to grow food for own consumption, the findings indicated that all the women (**16/16**) do so whereas half the number **9/16** use the land to grow food for sell.

When the women were asked whether their income has increased over the years, 8/16 women agreed while 4/16 did not agree. The reason given for this was that the crops (cassava) was affected by diseases especially in 2014 and the harvests for most farmers in Muhanga District were not good.

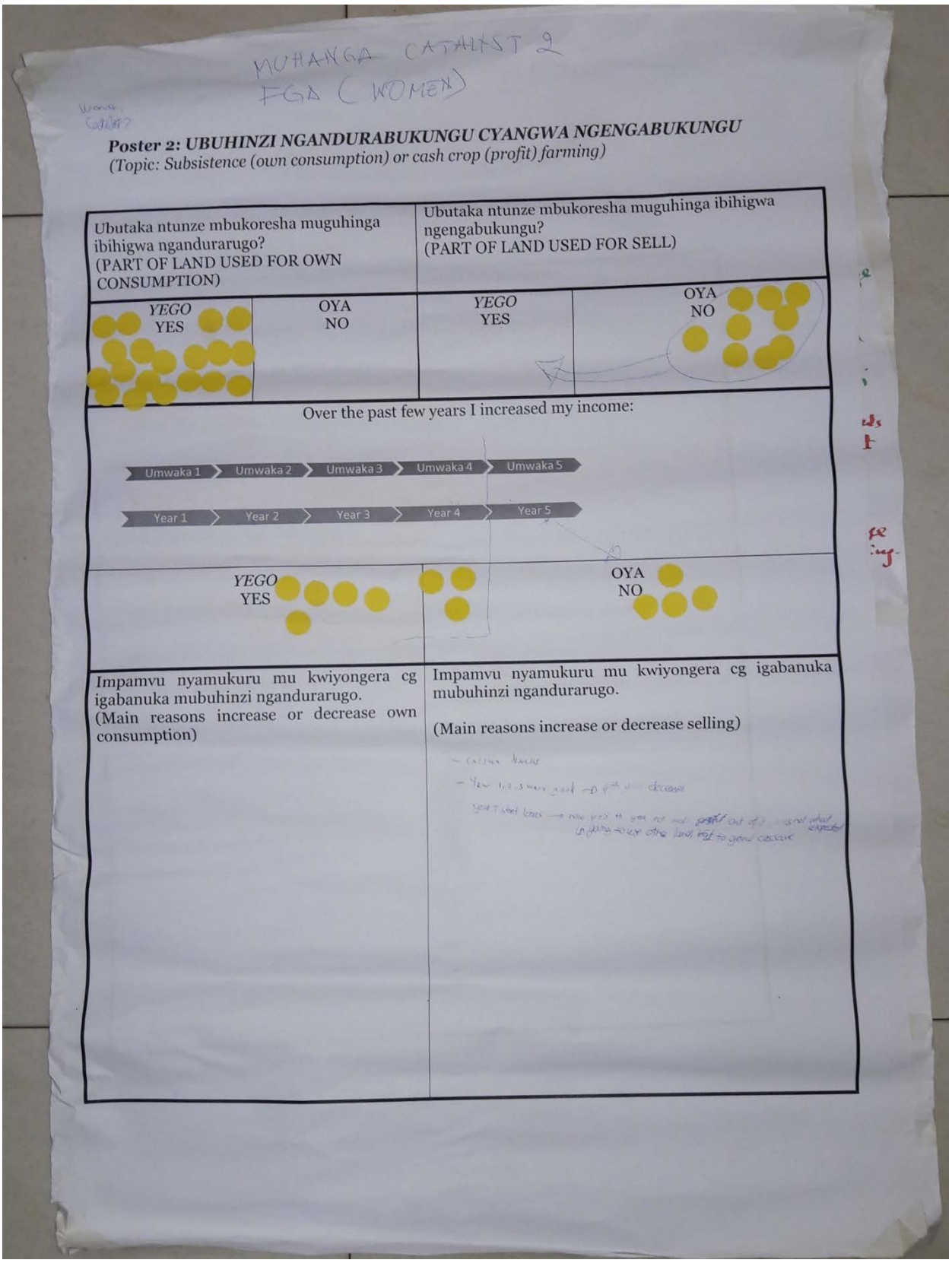


Poster 1: Ingingo iganirwaho: Ikoreshwa ndetse n'iboneka ry'inyongeramusaruro

[Topic: Use of and access to crops]

Yego nkoresha inyongeramusaruro? (Yes, I USE AGRO-INPUTS)	***Oya Sinkoresha inyongeramusaruro?*** (No, I DO NOT USE AGRO-INPUTS)
Ifumbire mva ruganda (Fertilizer)	
Imbuto z'indobanure (Improved seeds)	
Imiti yica udukoko (Pesticides)	
Ikindi (Other)	
Impamvu nyamukuru zo gukoresha inyongera musaruro: (Main reasons of using)	***Impamvu nyamukuru yo kudakoresha inyongeramusaruro:*** (Main reasons for not using)

<u>Summary Interpretation of Table Above</u>
All the farmers were using agro-inputs including commercial fertilizers, locally made fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides. The reason for using these was that they could be used for growing different crops



MUHANGA CATALYST 2
FGD (WOMEN)

Poster 2: UBUHINZI NGANDURABUKUNGU CYANGWA NGENGABUKUNGU
(Topic: Subsistence (own consumption) or cash crop (profit) farming)

Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngandurarugo? (PART OF LAND USED FOR OWN CONSUMPTION)		Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngengabukungu? (PART OF LAND USED FOR SELL)	
YEGO YES	OYA NO	*YEGO* YES	OYA NO

Over the past few years I increased my income:

Umwaka 1 > Umwaka 2 > Umwaka 3 > Umwaka 4 > Umwaka 5

Year 1 > Year 2 > Year 3 > Year 4 > Year 5

YEGO YES	OYA NO

Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease own consumption)	Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease selling)

Summary Interpretation of Table Above
All the women use their land to grow crops for both own consumption and sell
The women's income increased in the first, second, third and fourth year of their participation in the program, but significantly reduced in the fifth year because most of their crops were attacked by pests in this year so the harvest was not that good

As indicated in the poster above, the farmers in Muhanga suggested better management of diseases especially for cassava for better harvests which will enable them to get better yields for sell and therefore realize improvements in their income levels.

Project Effectiveness

Below are some of the ways the project has exhibited effectiveness according to the women who participated in this FGD:

- The women in this FGD reported that there is a significant increase in the volumes of their farm harvest since the project started;
- Crop pests are no longer a problem to the farmers since they have been taught how to make homemade pesticides.
- Because of the project's interventions, the women participants said they are more independent, this has improved their involvement in decision making in their homes; and,
- Household incomes of the women have steadily improved which has in turn improved their standards of living as well as that of the family;
- The women reported that they have achieved a relatively higher degree of financial independence from their husbands as result of the incomes they were getting from sale of crops; and,
- From this FGD, the women reported that food insecurity is no longer a big problem in their area and this has been mostly because of the use of pesticides and improved seeds that have a higher yield than the local varieties of seeds.

Sustainability of the Programme

The women who participated in this FGD acknowledged sustainability as one of the issues they have to work on. The women said they were planning to continue to implement the new knowledge and skills that the have been taught by the project (***Ibakwe/ Catalist2 team***) so that even after the project they will be able to continue with the project activities.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

The women in this FGD reported that their husbands have become supportive of their work. The men were reported to be now active in raising the children, supporting the wives in the households and in the farms. Also of particular significance is the fact that the men have given their wives (women) financial independence unlike before the start of the project.

This was noted as an outcome of this project because the men have got information and awareness on the importance of supporting their wives to a great extent as a result of this project. The men now appreciate the value of supporting and working closely with their wives.

3.3 CATALIST-2 - Muhanga District Non-Project Participants – Men and Women Focus Group Discussion

Introduction

At the ADC Church, in Cyeza Sector, Muhanga District; another FGD was conducted on the 7th March 2016 involving men and women who had not benefitted from the interventions of the CATALIST-2 Programme implemented through Ibakwe.

This mixed FGD involved 12 participants who included 2 male and 10 female non-participants. These participants from selected from the cell where the CATALIST2 Programme has been implemented but they have not participated in the project. The information sought from the non-participants was the same as that which was obtained from the project beneficiaries i.e. their opinions on the project, the achievements/ benefits realised from the project by the farmers who participated in the project and the surrounding communities, the implementation of the project and how they thought the project could be made sustainable as well as ways to improve future similar projects.

FGD Participants Information

In the table below are the specific details of the non-participants in the CATALIST2 Programme selected from Cyeza Sector, Binunga cell in Muhanga District:

Project Name		**CATALIST-2**
District		Muhanga
Sector		Cyeza
Village		Binunga
Venue of FGD		ADC Church
Number of FGD participants		12
Gender	Male	2
	Female	10
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Household Size		5.5
Average number of children per household		2.8
Average number of Women per household		1.3
Average number of girls per household		1
Average size of land per household		0.9 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		0.8 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		Cassava
		Beans
		maize
		Soya
		Sweet Potatoes
Domestic Animals kept	Pigs	4/12
	Chicken	8/12
	Cows	10/12
	Goats	4/12

Findings from FGD

These farmers did not receive any direct support from the project. They said that, they chose what to plant after consulting with their spouses. They preferred planting cassava, maize, beans and soya beans which are the popular crops in the area. These are also their main sources of income.

These farmers also said that they did not belong to any farming group or organization. They also do not use any agro-inputs such as fertilizers since they consider them to be expensive. As a result, their farm yields are not as high and do not have much left for sale after household consumption. They said that they were not aware of Integrated Soil Fertility Management and therefore not apply any of its components in their farming.

The project did not benefit them except a few who reported that their neighbours who were part of the project shared some of their improved seeds.

Details Posters

As highlighted on the poster below for the non-participants (men and women), the FGD participants (**3/12**) reported that they were using agro-inputs such as pesticides, (**2/12**) were using fertilizers and (**3/10**) were using improved seeds.

The main reasons given by the majority of the FGD participants (**9/12**) for not using the agro-inputs (pesticides, fertilizers and improved seeds) included the following:

- Lack of access to improved seeds
- Lack of training in modern farming techniques
- Lack of knowledge on how to practice better and modern farming methods
- Having a traditional mindset to family.

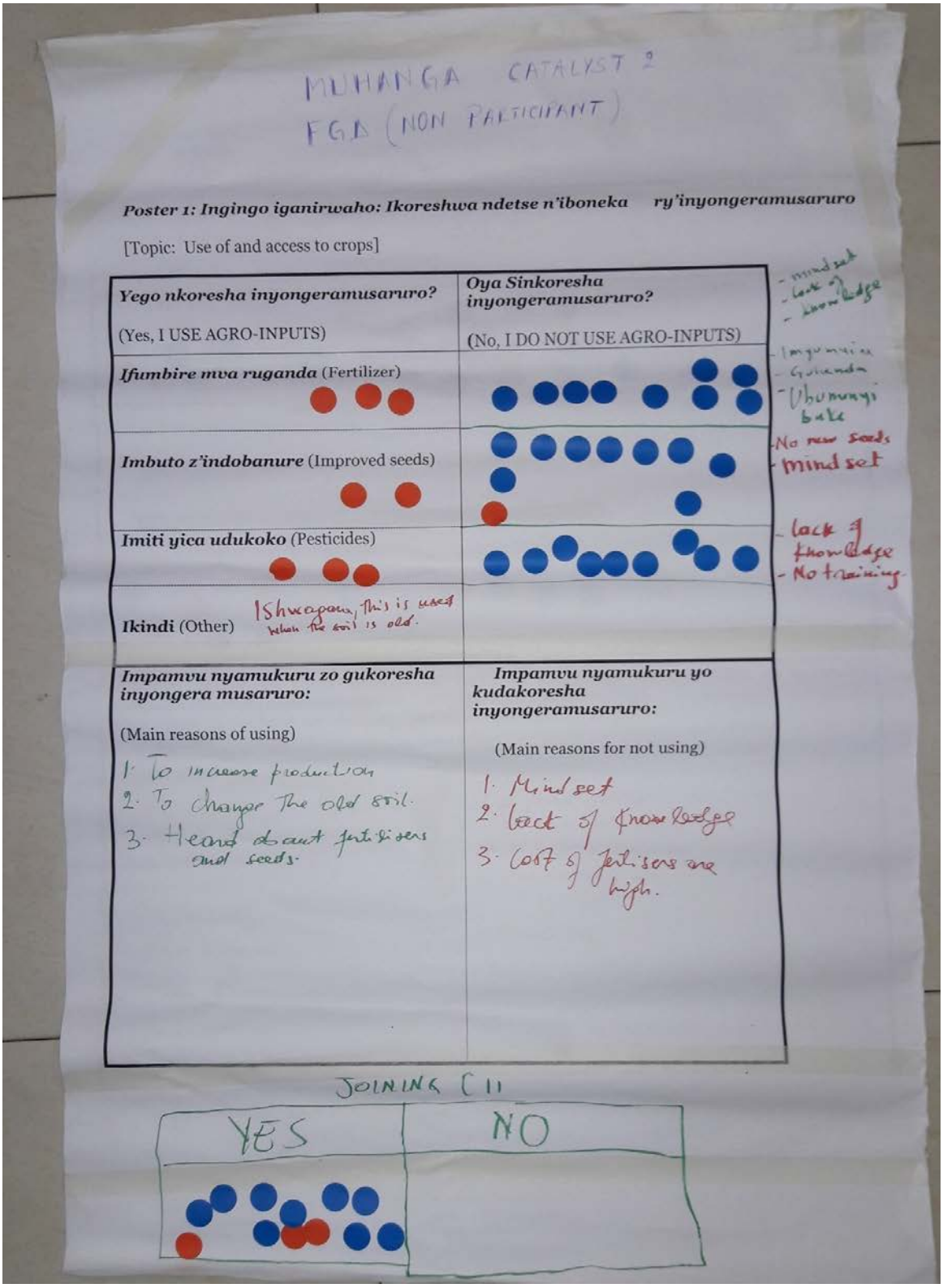
The challenges mentioned above are also reflected in a comment/ quotation from one of the participants in the FGD for non-project participants:

> "*We see what our colleagues are doing and their gardens look better than ours. They use better methods and they harvest more than what we harvest. For me I want also to acquire the knowledge and training like them so I can produce more than I produce at the moment*" **Male Participant, Non-Participant FGD, Muhanga District**

When other participants were probed on whether they had similar sentiments, all the FGD participants (**12/12**) agreed and noted that it would be good if the project expanded to cover and benefit more farmers in the district.

The non-participant farmers noted that participation on the project would help them also in the following ways:

- Increase the productivity of their land just like their counterparts;
- Help their acquire new knowledge and information on how to use fertilizers and pesticides



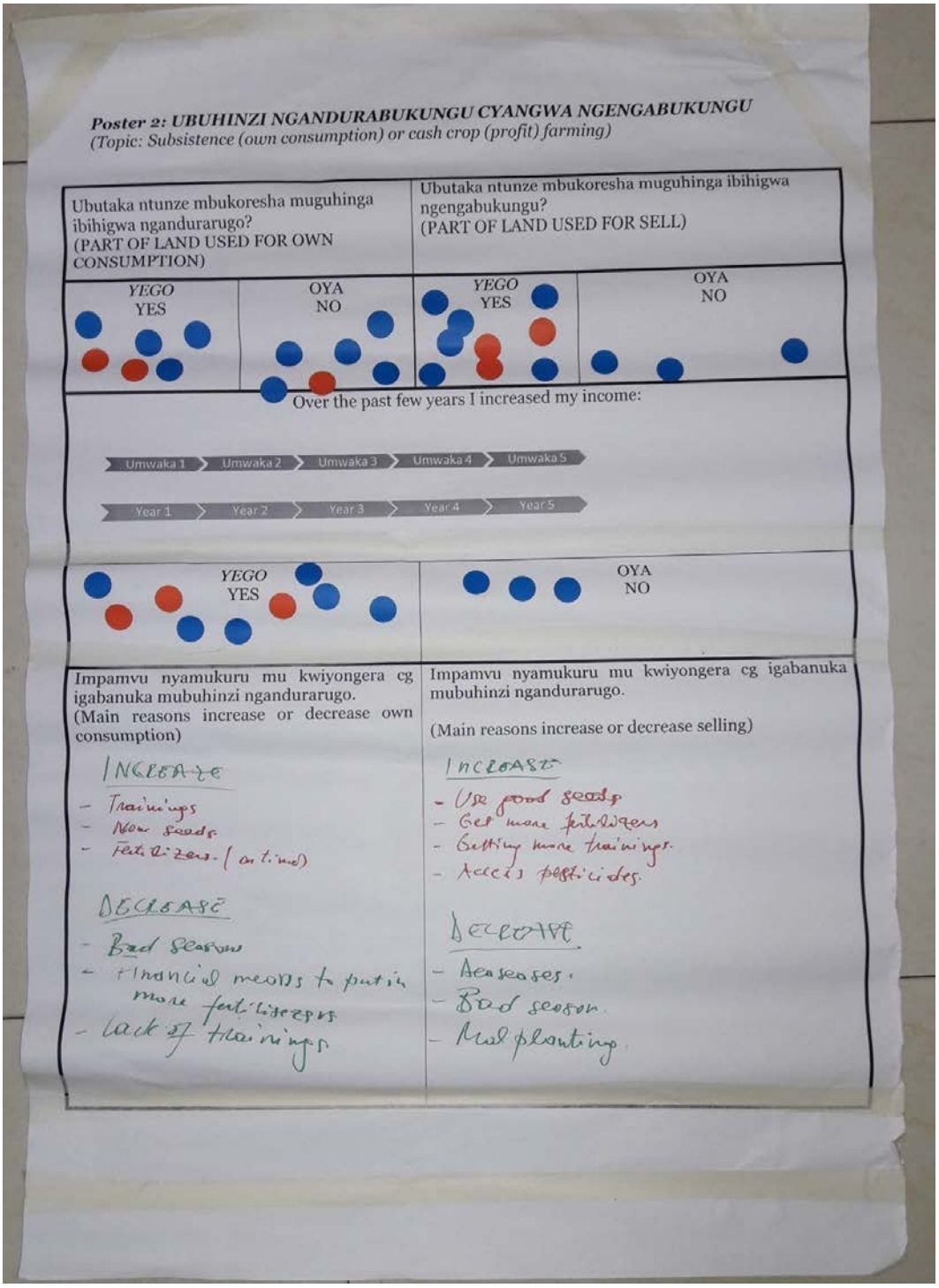
Summary Interpretation of Table Above

Main reasons for using Agro-inputs were:

- ***To increase production***
- ***To improve soil fertility***

Main reasons for not using agro-inputs

- ***Lack of knowledge***
- ***High cost of fertilizers***



Summary Interpretation of Table Above

Reasons for increased subsistence

- ***Better farming skills acquired through trainings***
- ***Use of improved seeds***
- ***Use of fertilizers***

Reasons for decreased subsistence (these were prior to the project)

- ***Unfavourable weather***
- ***Lack of finances***
- ***Lack of trainings***

As indicated in the poster above, the non-participant farmers were also asked about using land to produce food for own consumption Vs production for sell. Half of the participants (**5/12**) noted that they produce for home use whereas the other half reported that they produce for sale.

The reasons given for decreasing production for home consumption while increasing production for selling included the following:

- The need to increase household income because one **3/12** FGD participants had reported being able to increase their incomes over the years. The need to increase income was thus reported as the driving factor for the need to increase production for selling.

- The non-participants also noted that acquisition of new knowledge and skills through training would facilitate them to increase agricultural production so that they can be able to sell the extra produce after removing what is needed for home consumption.

- Other FGD members mentioned the need to use new agro-inputs such fertilizers, pesticides and improved seeds as the driving factors for them to increase production for sale.

Project Effectiveness

The question of project effectiveness was put to the farmers who did not participate in the project. As much as the majority (10/12) participants noted that they were not very conversant with the actual project benefits, they noted that from what they see from their colleagues who are part of the project; they are able to conclude that the CATALIST2 Project has been effective in changing the livelihoods of their colleagues and neighbours.

> *"I have seen how my friends have benefited and I would like benefit to from this project"* **Female Participant, Non-Participant FGD, at Binuga Cell, Cyeza Sector in Muhanga District**

It was reported that the project has supported the farmers in the area to learn better farming practices, access good planting materials for cassava, learn how to control crop diseases and also how to apply fertilizers including the manual fertilizers.

The non-participants expressed a desire to also be included in the next phase of the project for them to benefit just like their colleagues. They also recommended that it would be good if the beneficiaries would be allowed to share the knowledge, skills and some of the improved seeds with their neighbours so that the whole community benefits.

Sustainability of the Programme

On project sustainability, all the non-participant farmers (**12/12**) who took part in this FGD noted that the best way to ensure sustainability of the project was to ensure that more farmers from the area and district benefited from the new farming techniques, use of improved seeds, modern methods of controlling diseases.

They noted that this is the best way to further expand the project and ensure that its interventions are not benefitting only a few farmers but reach out to the majority in the community.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

The FGD participants noted that since they did not participate in the project, they were not knowledgeable on the unplanned positive effects.

However, a few FGD participants (**3/12**) noted that this project had to some extent created some petty jealousies, pride and income inequality between the beneficiary farmers and the non-participant farmers. This was noted not to be a big issue but they noted that some of the non-beneficiary farmers in the community feel that way because they are not able to produce the same yields as their counterparts on the project.

3.4 CATALIST-2 – Nyanza District Project Participants - Men Focus Group Discussion

Introduction

A total of 11 male beneficiaries of the CATALIST2 programme participated in the FGD conducted on 8th March 2016 at Musangano village, Busoro Sector in Nyanza District. The FGD was conducted at the Rice Farmers' Cooperative Building at Musangano village.

This FGD was conducted for only the male beneficiaries who benefitted from the interventions implemented through the CATALIST-2 Programme through Ibakwe, a local Rwanda based organization. This focus group discussion sought to generate qualitative data from the male participants with regard to their involvement in the project. Inf0rmation was also sought on the benefits derived by the men from the project, their opinions on project implementation, sustainability of the project and how similar future projects can be improved.

FGD Participants Information

The table below, highlights a summary of the information on the male beneficiaries from Musangano village in Busoro Sector in Nyanza District who participated in the CATALIST2 Programme:

Project Name		CATALIST-2
District		Nyanza
Sector		Busoro
Village		Masangano
Venue of FGD		Rice Farmers' Cooperative Building
Number of FGD participants		11
Gender	Male	11
	Female	0
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Household Size		5.8
Average number of children per household		3.1
Average number of Women per household		1.1
Average number of girls per household		1.6
Average size of land per household		2.0 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		1.1 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		Cassava

		Maize
		Beans
		Rice
		Soya
Domestic Animals kept	Cows	8/11
	Goats	6/11
	Chicken	5/11
	Pigs	1/11

Findings from FGD

The farmers who participated in this FGD (**10/10**) have worked with Ibakwe Association on the CATALIST-2 for the past 3 years. It was reported that the farmers agreed with the Catalist2 team to focus on one crop every season. The group agreed that the dry places would be used to grow cassava and beans and then the valleys for growing rice. The big part of the land is now used to grow cassava because it brings in more income compared to other crops.

The farmers (**10/10**) noted that before the project started to support them, they used to grow crops for own consumption for the families because the harvests were not sufficient. However after the project started to support them through different trainings on using modern farming methods and the use of fertilizers; the farmers are now able to produce enough for own consumption and also for sell on the market to generate money which is used to meet other basic household needs for the farmers and their families.

The participants of this FGD were all beneficiaries of the interventions by Ibakwe/ CATALIST-2 project. They participated in project activities and reported that they received trainings on:

- Preparation of land
- Growing one crop as opposed mixed cropping on a single farm
- Use of improved seeds
- Use of fertilizers
- Use of pesticides in disease control and management
- They were taught also on record keeping and cost benefit analysis

The project focused mainly on cassava growing. The project also linked them with markets where they could sell their produce. Before the project, farmers used to practice subsistence farming using traditional practices which were not very productive but the project empowered them to produce commercially.

They said that they were able to apply the knowledge acquired in practical ways in their farming. As a result, the project had positively impacted the community in the following ways:

- Increase in production meaning they had sufficient quantities of food for consumption and the excess for sale.
- They also bought or leased land to increase their production.
- Increase in income from sale of produces.
- Improved access to food. From the income gained from sales of farm produce, the farmers were able to buys other foods that did not produce.
- Improved ability to meet household needs such as paying schools fees, buying food.

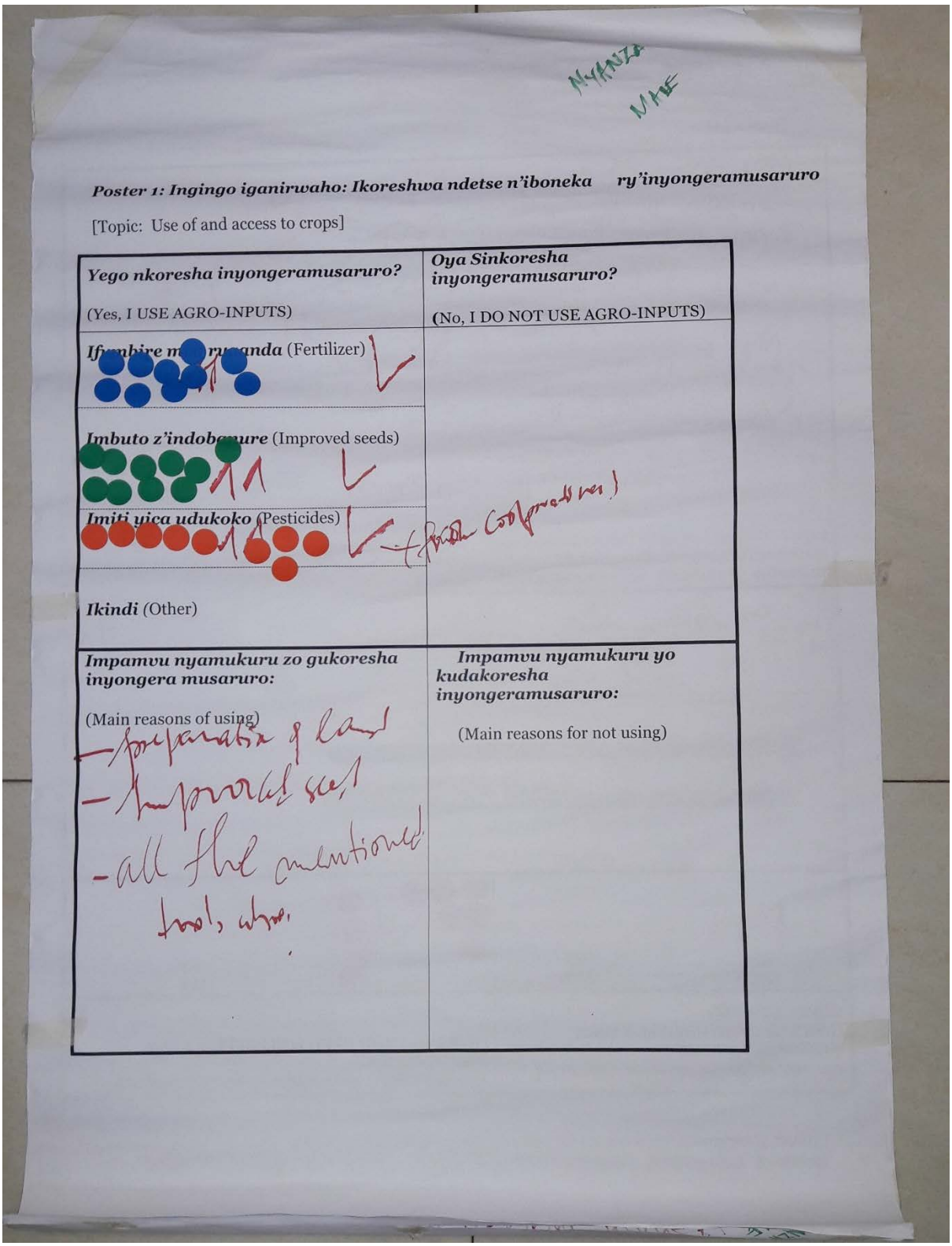
The following were the main challenges experienced by the farmers:

- Crops pests and diseases. These had greatly reduced their yield as one of the diseases was viral and they did not a way of controlling it.
- Changing weather which is unpredictable. This had made it difficult to plan the planting time. Rains would sometimes come early or delay and were intermittent.

- Difficulties in loan repayments from banks

Details Posters

As indicated on the poster below, all FGD participants (**10/10**) at Musangano Cell in Nyanza District reported that they use agro-inputs i.e. fertilizers (**10/10**), improved seeds (**10/10**) and use pesticides (**10/10**) to control crop diseases. The reasons given by the farmers were to ensure increased productivity from the small pieces of land that the farmers in the area are using for their farming activities.



NYANZA
MALE

Poster 1: Ingingo iganirwaho: Ikoreshwa ndetse n'iboneka ry'inyongeramusaruro

[Topic: Use of and access to crops]

Yego nkoresha inyongeramusaruro? (Yes, I USE AGRO-INPUTS)	***Oya Sinkoresha inyongeramusaruro?*** (No, I DO NOT USE AGRO-INPUTS)
Ifumbire m[illegible] ru[illegible]anda (Fertilizer)	
Imbuto z'indobanure (Improved seeds)	
Imiti yica udukoko (Pesticides)	
Ikindi (Other)	
Impamvu nyamukuru zo gukoresha inyongera musaruro: (Main reasons of using)	***Impamvu nyamukuru yo kudakoresha inyongeramusaruro:*** (Main reasons for not using)

- preparation of land
- improved seed
- all the mentioned tools, also.

<u>Summary Interpretation of Table Above</u>
The farmers were using agro-inputs mainly fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides. They main reasons for using such was because it improved production and consequently sales. The farmers acquired improved skills for preparing land.

NYANZA MALE

Poster 2: UBUHINZI NGANDURABUKUNGU CYANGWA NGENGABUKUNGU
(Topic: Subsistence (own consumption) or cash crop (profit) farming)

Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngandurarugo? (PART OF LAND USED FOR OWN CONSUMPTION)		Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngengabukungu? (PART OF LAND USED FOR SELL)	
YEGO YES	OYA NO	*YEGO* YES	OYA NO
✓ 11		✓ 11	

Over the past few years I increased my income:

Umwaka 1 > Umwaka 2 > Umwaka 3 > Umwaka 4 > Umwaka 5

Year 1 > Year 2 > Year 3 > Year 4 > Year 5

YEGO YES ✓	OYA NO
(1) 150,000 Rs (2) 150,000 (3) 300,000 (4) 500,000 (5) 500,000	
Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease own consumption)	Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease selling)
(Challenges) - Improved seeds diseases!! - Non availability of seeds on time. - higher price of Certain fertilizers. - barrisless to get back loans (we don't have collateral).	- Trainings. - Improved seeds - growing on time - Land explanation - Cost - benefit - use of pesticids - fight against erosion.

We need more trainings.

Summary Interpretation of Table Above
These farmers grew crops for own consumption as well as for sell.
They reported that their incomes from farming had increased over the years as a result of the project interventions.
The reasons given for the increase in production were:
- ***The trainings equipped them with better farming skills***
- ***They were using improved seeds and planting materials***
- ***They ensured timely planting***
- ***They prepared the land appropriately.***
- ***They were using pesticides***
- ***They controlled soil erosion on their farms.***

Despite the improved production, they faced some challenges including:
- ***Some diseases affected their crops***
- ***Sometimes improved seeds were not available on time.***
- ***Certain fertilizers were expensive and they could not afford.***
- ***Some farmers had not been able to access bank loans***
- ***They felt they needed more trainings***

During the focus group discussion, the participating farmers were asked whether they use the land to grow crops for household consumption and all of them (**11/11**) respondent yes. Also, equally the same number of participants noted that they also use part of their land to grow food for sale.

The same farmers were asked whether there has been an increase in their income over the years. The majority (**10/11**) noted that they have experienced increases in their incomes. For example the increase in incomes have ranged from RwF 30,000 – 150,000, from RwF 50,000 to 200,000 and from RwF 150,000 to 500,000 for some of the farmers. Other farmers reported experiencing evening higher income increases of RwF 1,000,000 and above.

A number of reasons have propelled the farmers to intensify growing crops for sell on part of their land, namely;

- The training that the farmers have got from the project with regard to use of modern farming methods;
- Access to and use of improved seeds for cassava, rice and maize which give better returns for the farmers hence allowing them to produce enough for home consumption and for sale
- Growing crops on a timely basis i.e. during the right season and weather as well as at a time when the demand for the produce is high. This has ensured that there is always a ready market/ demand for the produce.
- Access to and use of pesticides to control the various diseases that attack crops. The farmers who have participated in the project, have been able to apply pesticides to control diseases which attack cassava, maize and rice
- Land conservation and control of soil erosion has given the farmers an opportunity to grow crops on the hill-sides and in marshlands. Previously, the farmers were unable to grow crops in some of these places but today they are able to due to the introduction of modern farming techniques and as a result, the farmers have got new opportunities to grow crops in areas which used to be redundant hence increasing their produce for home use and for sale.

Project Effectiveness

According to the FGD participants, the Catalist2 project has had a significant impact on the farmers. The project has helped them to change from the traditional farming activities the farmers used to practice to using the modern farming methods today such as conserving soil and containing soil erosion, growing crops using improved seeds, controlling crop diseases using pesticides and also using fertilizers (both chemical and manual ones) to keep the productivity of the soil up.

In the past the farmers used to grow for own consumption, cultivating different crops in one piece of land which was counter-productive and were also not using any crop pests control measures. However, today after the many trainings, improved seeds, and using pesticides to fight off diseases; the farmers are putting into practice what we they have been taught; they have able to increase productivity considerably.

This has helped the farmers to realize a number of achievements:

- Farmers have bought additional pieces of land to expand their farming activities,
- Gained ability pay school fees for their children,
- Farmers are now able satisfy other family needs
- Some of the farmers have started to even consider diversification to go into other income generating projects using resources/ finances generated from sale of agricultural produce.

The farmers also noted that the effectiveness of this project is reflected in the way the project has changed their lives in terms of increase in productivity, increasing household income levels, ensuring food security and improvements in the financial capacity of the farmers.

Also, the farmers noted that the project has given them sustainable farming techniques which they are using to increase production on the same small pieces of land because the farmers are now able to use fertilizers, grow one crop but using improved seeds and in collaboration with local authorities the farmers have now been able to learn land conservation measures such as using terraces and planting of trees that have capacity to grow with crops to control erosion.

Sustainability of the Programme

According to the participants in this FGD, sustainability of the project will be achieved in the sense that farmers have been equipped with knowledge and skills to carry on with the activities.

Also, the farmer groups (cooperatives) formed will continue to exist and support farmers even beyond the project period and they will therefore be in a position to continue with the activities initiated by the project. The farmers reported that they would continue to work with the local authorities so as to be able to get technical support whenever there is need.

Again, some of the investments made during the project period will continue to benefit farmers beyond the project period. Such investments include the agro-forestry activities, the conservation of land on the hill-sides through terracing, construction of feeder roads to serves that farmers in their communities and well as measures put in place to control soil erosion.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

One of the key unplanned positive effects of the programme mentioned by the FGD participants (**all**) is the initiation of cooperative groups that have brought farmers together. For example, the farmers mentioned that through these cooperatives, they have been encouraged to learn how to save money, they have been taught how to access loans from commercial institutions to initiate income generating projects including expanding their farming activities, and also the cooperatives are acting as a voice for the farmers. This has helped them to bargain for better prices for their produce and hence they get better returns than when they used to sell individually.

> *"When I was still acting alone, I used to sell my crops at low prices. These days our group leaders are able to get for us better prices and we also get paid without any delays which used not to the case"* **FGD Participant, Nyanza District**

All the farmers who participated in this FGD echoed the same satisfaction with regard to them coming together and acting as a group with similar interests.

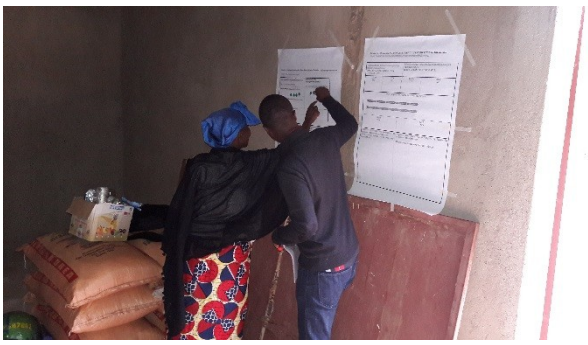
According to the farmers in this FGD, other aspects of positive unplanned effects are reflected in the following:

- Lower food prices which has increased food security;
- More work opportunity for the women and youth;
- Increase in income levels that have improved the standards of living;
- Increased capacity to educate the children by being able to pay their school fees
- Wealth creation as a result of the financial resources the farmers are generating from sale of their produce which they are re-investing in other income generating businesses.

3.5 CATALIST-2 – Nyanza District Project Participants - Women Focus Group Discussion

Introduction

Focus group discussion data in Nyanza District was also collected from 11 female participants in the CATALIST2 programme. The FGD was also conducted on 8th March 2016 at the Rice Farmers' Cooperative Building in Musangano village in Busoro Sector in Nyanza District.



From this FGD, qualitative information was sought from the female participants with regard to their involvement in the CATALIST2 project. Information was also sought on the benefits the participants realised from the project, the project implementation process and the sustainability of the project as well as areas for improvement for similar projects in future.

FGD Participants Information

From this FGD, the following information was collected from the female project participants:

Project Name		CATALIST-2
District		Nyanza
Sector		Busoro
Village		Masangano
Venue of FGD		Rice Farmers' Cooperative Building
Number of FGD participants		11
Gender	Male	0
	Female	11
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Household Size		5.5
Average number of children per household		3
Average number of Women per household		1.2
Average number of girls per household		1.7
Average size of land per household		0.6 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		0.4 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		Cassava
		Beans
		Maize
		Rice
		Soya
Domestic Animals kept	Pigs	0/10
	Cows	5/10

	Goats	5/10
	Chicken	5/10

Findings from FGD

Information generated from this FGD indicates that all the participants (**11/11**) have lived in the area for more than 30 years. The group members and farmers in the area mostly grow cassava, rice, maize, beans and soya beans. Cassava, rice, maize and beans are the most commonly grown crops in this area.

According to the FGD members, they started working with the Catalist2 project after the farmers were selected by Ibakwe to participate in this project and they have been working with the project for the past 3 years. According to the farmers, they agree as a group on the crops to grow at the start of the rains/ season depending on the season. The group grows cassava and beans on the dry lands and hill sides whereas the same group grows rice in the valleys/ marshlands.

Before the project came in, the group used to mostly concentrate on growing food for home consumption since the yields used to be very weak leaving them with no extra food for sell. However, with the support of the project which included training on using modern farming techniques, use of fertilizers; the farmers are now able to produce enough food for own consumption and the surplus is sold on the market to generate income for the farmers.

From the information obtained from the FGD participants, the women showed that they understood the project and the main reasons it was initiated and brought to their area. They mentioned that the project came in the area to serve the following purposes:

- Help the farmers to increase production,
- Help the farmers to learn modern ways of growing crops,
- Help farmers to learn how to use inputs as well as fertilizers.
- Help the farmers with families to improve their lives.

They felt that the project had achieved its goals due to the fact that this project has positively impacted their lives by increasing their household income from farming resulting in improved standards of living. The project changed the way they used to do farming which was not very productive prior to the project but had greatly improved with the project intervening. They benefitted from the project through trainings on:

- Preparation of land
- Growing one crop
- Use of improved seeds
- Use of fertilizers
- Use pesticides to fight against plants diseases
- Fighting/controlling cassava disease
- Commercial farming
- Linking farmers with the market

They reported that the project had affected them and their families in the following ways

- It helped increase their production,
- They acquired more skills and knowledge on how to grow different crops such as cassava, rice and maize.
- They learned new and modern ways of growing crops,
- It help them learn how to use inputs as well as fertilizers.
- They have managed to buy additional land to expand our farming activities,
- They were better able to pay school fees for their children,
- They were able to meet other family needs
- They could pay for their health insurance

- They were now more open to diversifying their livelihoods to other income generating activities such as small businesses, mixed farming (animal) etc.

Generally, the project has had a positive impact on the families as a result of increased yields which translated to improved access to food for the families and increased incomes.

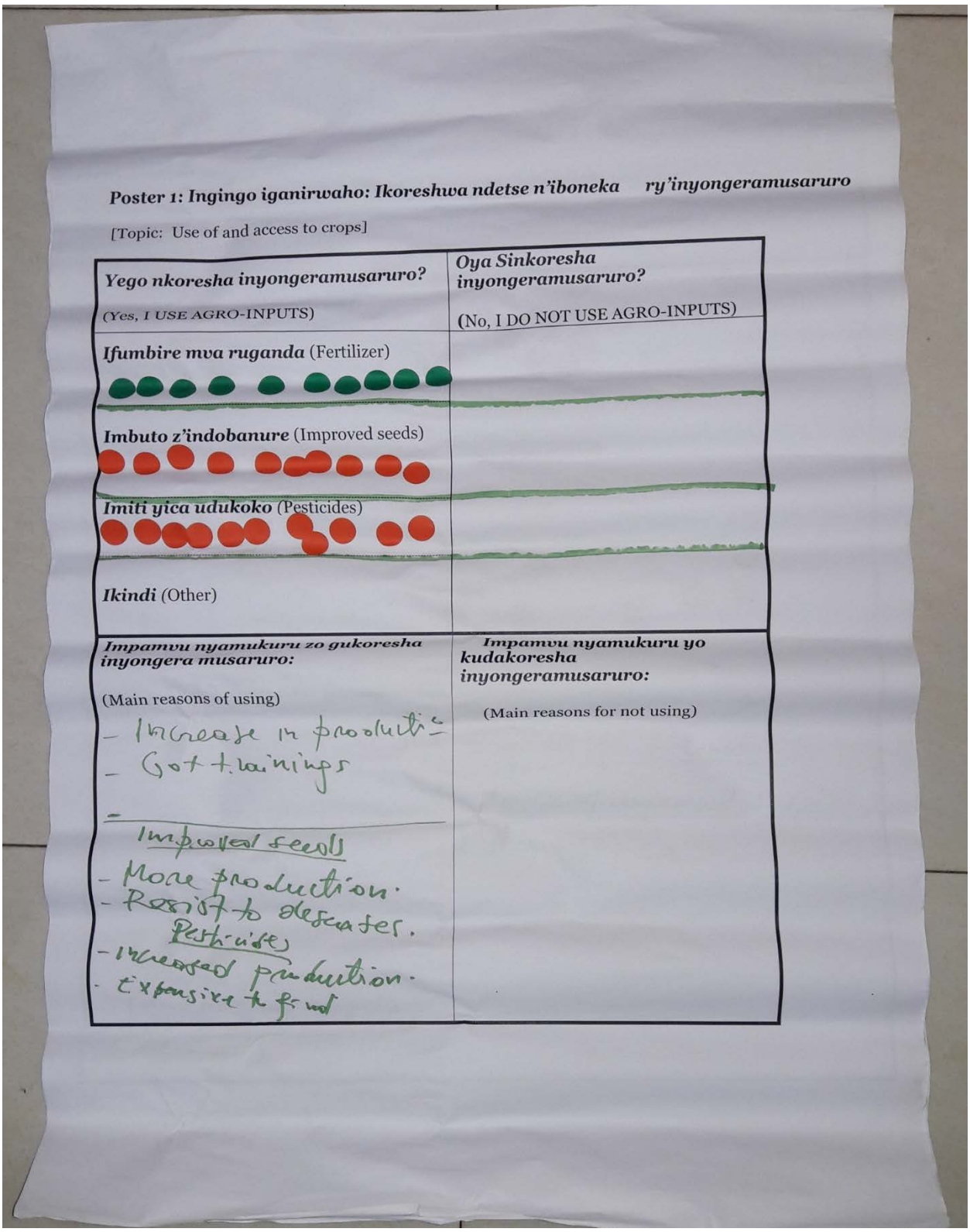
The farmers said that they also involved in other projects form other donors which were mostly on protecting soil against erosion.

For future projects, the farmers recommended more trainings should be given so as to develop the skills of farmers in farming. They felt more crucial were the trainings on identification/detection of diseases and how to control them.

They said that main challenges they faced were diseases and the unpredictable rains due to the fast changing climatic conditions that have affected the weather and rain patterns.

Details Posters

According to the female farmers (women) who were involved in this FGD, the use of agro-inputs was very popular in that all the farmers (**11/11**) were using fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides to group crops. The reasons they gave ranged from the need to increase productivity of their farms, having access to the fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides, to the fact that these farmers got trained on how to use modern farming techniques for better yields.



Poster 1: Ingingo iganirwaho: Ikoreshwa ndetse n'iboneka ry'inyongeramusaruro

[Topic: Use of and access to crops]

Yego nkoresha inyongeramusaruro? (Yes, I USE AGRO-INPUTS)	*Oya Sinkoresha inyongeramusaruro?* (No, I DO NOT USE AGRO-INPUTS)
Ifumbire mva ruganda (Fertilizer)	
Imbuto z'indobanure (Improved seeds)	
Imiti yica udukoko (Pesticides)	
Ikindi (Other)	
Impamvu nyamukuru zo gukoresha inyongera musaruro: (Main reasons of using)	***Impamvu nyamukuru yo kudakoresha inyongeramusaruro:*** (Main reasons for not using)

- Increase in production
- Got trainings
-

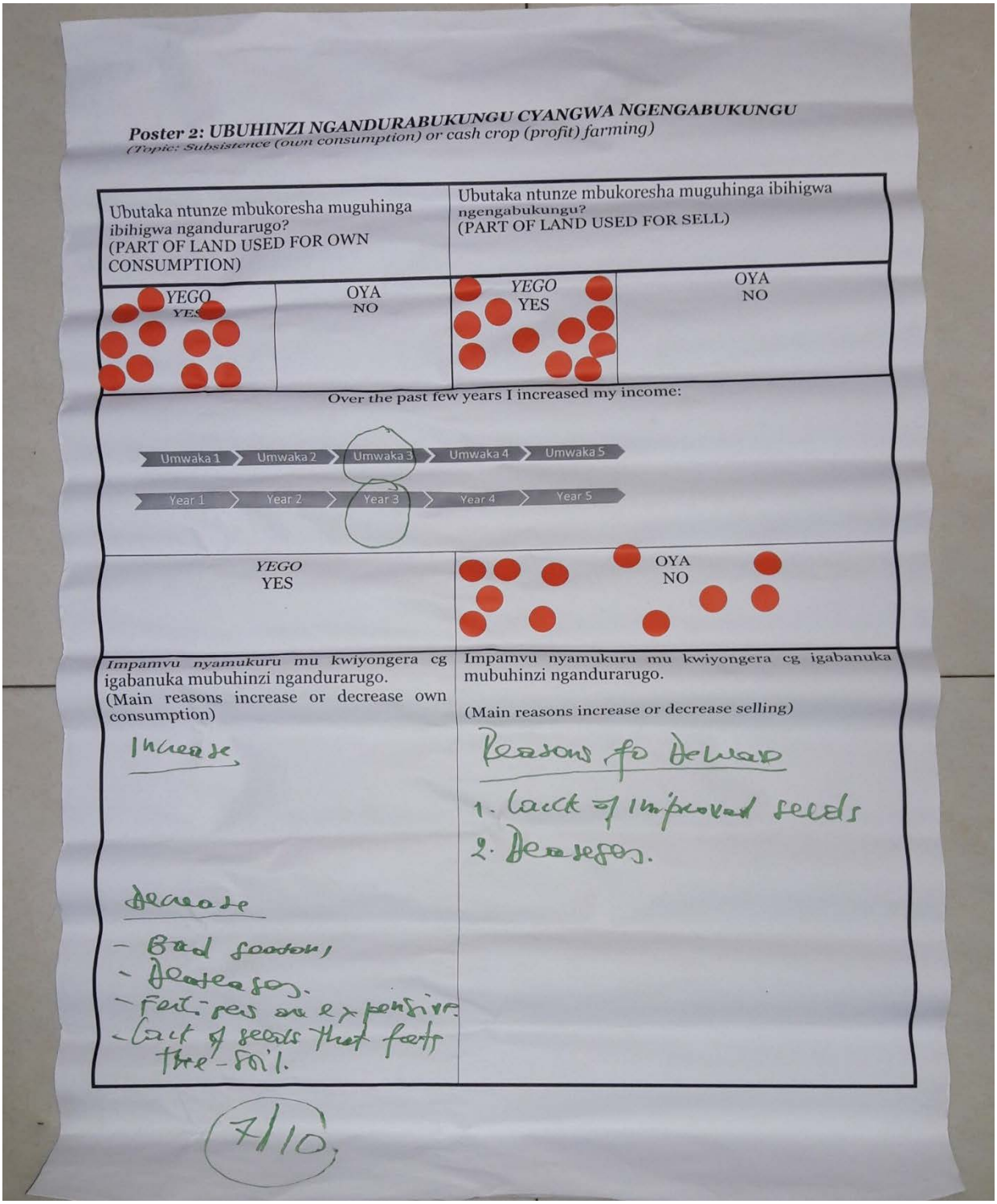
Improved seeds
- More production.
- Resist to descases.

Pesticides
- Increased production.
- Expensive to find

Summary Interpretation of Table Above

The farmers were using agro-inputs that included fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides. The reasons for using these were:

- ***They received training and wanted to increase their production.***
- ***They acquired improved seeds that gave more yield and were resistant to some diseases.***
- ***They used pesticides.***



Summary Interpretation of Table Above

These farmers said that although they did both subsistence and for-profit farming, their farm yields were decreasing citing the following reasons:

- ***That they did not have access to good quality seeds.***
- ***That fertilizers were expensive that they could not afford.***
- ***Disease outbreaks reduced their production.***

With regard to using part of the land to grow food for own home consumption, all the FGD participants (**11/11**) agreed that they were doing this i.e. growing food on part of the land for own consumption. However, equally the same number of participants (**11/11**) were doing the same i.e. using part of the land to grow crops for sell on the market.

The reason given by the participants for using part of the land to grow food for own consumption was largely the need to become food secure whereas the reasons for decreasing using land for own consumption (**7/11**) was attributed to bad seasons/ weather, inadequate access to improved seeds, lack of pesticides to control crop diseases among other reasons.

Project Effectiveness

With regard to project effectiveness, the majority of the women who participated in this FGD (**9/11**) noted that the project has been effective in as far as it has helped them in following ways:

- Increasing production levels as a result of increased productivity on the land they were using to grow maize, rice and cassava and other crops;

- The project helped in equipping the women with better knowledge and skills which they did not have before on how to grow different crops such as cassava, rice and maize. This has contributed to their families becoming not only food secure but also helping them to generate income from sale of the surplus produce;

> *"The struggle to get enough food to feed my family is now very much lessened thanks to this project. What we grow is enough for the family and the extra is what we sell through the cooperative"* **Female FGD Participant, Nyanza District**

- The women have learnt new and modern farming techniques including growing crops on the hill-sides using terraces and planting trees to control water flow and soil erosion. This was a big challenge before the project came in to support the farmers in this area;

- The project also introduced the use of agro-inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides which have dramatically changed the fortunes of the farmers in the area;

As a result of the above changes due to the CATALIST-2 project interventions, the participants (farmers) involved in this FGD, have realized a number of benefits:

The CATALIST-2 project has changed our lives for the better because we are producing more compared to the period before the project started. We are able to meet the basic needs of our families (**9/11**), we can now pay for the medical insurance (*mutualle de sante*) (**10/11**) and we can also now afford to pay school fees for our children (**9/11**).

Other areas where the FGD members felt that the project has been effective are as follows:

- Improvement in the standards of living as a result of improved household incomes of the farmers (women). The women that there has been a steady improvement in their standard of living (including for their families) since they started working with this project;

- Again, the women brought up the issue of gaining a degree of financial independence as a result of this project. The women noted that this was especially so in the way their husbands have ceased interfering in their financial affairs. They largely manage their income, have freedom to meet their needs and also look after the children in addition to the needs that are met by the husbands;

Sustainability of the Programme

The female farmers (women) who participated in the FGD at Masangano Cell in Nyanza District, expressed optimism that the CATALIST-2 project would be sustainable. The women pointed out that they had acquired the necessary skills to carry on with the project interventions including using the appropriate farming techniques.

The women however were to some extent worried about how they would address challenges such as diseases in the future. They noted that some of the challenges they face require some external technical support to manage them. They were however again optimistic that the techniques they have acquired from the trainings make them different and better suited to handle these challenges than their counterparts who have not got the opportunity to be part of the project.

The women (**5/11**) were also to some extent sceptical about how they would continue to access high quality cassava cuttings/ improved seeds which were provided through the project. The women noted that it would be good to establish for them channels how they would continue to have access to better improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides before the project ends completely. The women suggested this as one of the sustainability measures that the project needs to leave in place.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

According to this focus group discussion, the women (**11/11**) unanimously noted that the single most important unplanned outcome from this programme was the way they have been empowered through various trainings. The women (**8/11**) noted that this has given financial literacy and independence in the sense that they are now in a better position to manage their money.

> *"All I can say is that this project opened our eyes on how to manage money and allowed our husbands to learn to give us freedom and to support us"* **Female FGD, Nyanza District.**

The FGD participants also reported that as a result of this project, the men also have learnt to give financial freedom to the women to handle their own finances/ money to meet their needs. They are reported that the men have become more supportive to the women not only in the homes but also in the farms/ gardens and in raising the children. The women who participated in the project noted that this was not the case before the CATALIST-2 project started.

3.6 CATALIST-2 – Nyanza District Non-Project Participants (Men and Women) Focus Group Discussion

Introduction

On the 8th March, 2016, a focus group discussion was also for non-participants. A total of 9 participants participated in this FGD which was conducted at the Rice Farmers' Cooperative Building in Musangano village in Busoro Sector in Nyanza District. The FGD targeted male and female participants who did not benefit from the CATALIST2 programme that was implemented through Ibakwe (a local Rwanda based organization).

The information collected from non-participants included information on the project, the benefits realised by the farmers who participated in the project, the project implementation processes, the sustainability of the project and ways how projects like this one can be improved in the future.

FGD Participants Information

Below are the details of the 9 FGD participants who included 6 male and 3 female non-participants that was conducted at the Rice Farmers' Cooperative Building in Musangano village in Busoro Sector in Nyanza District:

Project Name		**CATALIST-2**
District		Nyanza
Sector		Busoro
Village		Masangano
Venue of FGD		Rice Farmers' Cooperative Building
Number of FGD participants		9
Gender	Male	6
	Female	3
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Household Size		6.5
Average number of children per household		3.6
Average number of Women per household		1.4
Average number of girls per household		2.5
Average size of land per household		1.4 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		1.2 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		**Rice**
		Cassava
		Maize
		Beans
Domestic Animals kept	Pigs	0/10
	Cows	5/10
	Chicken	5/10
	Goats	5/10

Findings from FGD

The farmers in this FGD said that they did not participate in any of the project activities. Some were aware of the existence of the CATALIST-2 Project but did not join the groups for various reasons. According to them, rice, cassava and beans were the most important crops grown in the region. They said that most families relied on farming activities as the main source of income.

They said they did not have any special criteria in choosing wat crops to grow but that they planted what they felt would do well at any given season. Most of the crops they produced were for own consumption but when the harvests were good, they would spare some of the produce and sell it in the market. They said that they did not belong to any farmer organization and also did not use any agro inputs as these were very expensive for them.

According to them, the area was good for farming and was favourable for cassava growing. Many families were able to access adequate food but most people only had two meals a day.

They said that they were not affected in anyway by the CATALIST-2 Project, that the project beneficiaries did not share with them any of the planting materials and seeds, nor did they get any farming implements and tools. They however stated that the project had a positive impact in the households of the beneficiaries and as a result there is plenty of food in the market.

The FGD participants noted that since the time the CATALIST-2 project started supporting some farmers in their area, agriculture production has gone up and increased on the market. Apart from this positive result of the project, the non-participant farmers seemed unsure of other ways the project has impacted the area.

It was noted that this area is very conducive for growing cassava. One of the FGD participants remarked that "even if cassava is not grown by every farmer, when the harvest period comes, every household will have adequate food and at the same time be able to sell some quantity to be able to buy other household items.

The FGD participants also reported that they grow rice and some vegetables are the main crops grown in the valley. They also mentioned that they grow beans in remote areas and some cassava on small piece of land.

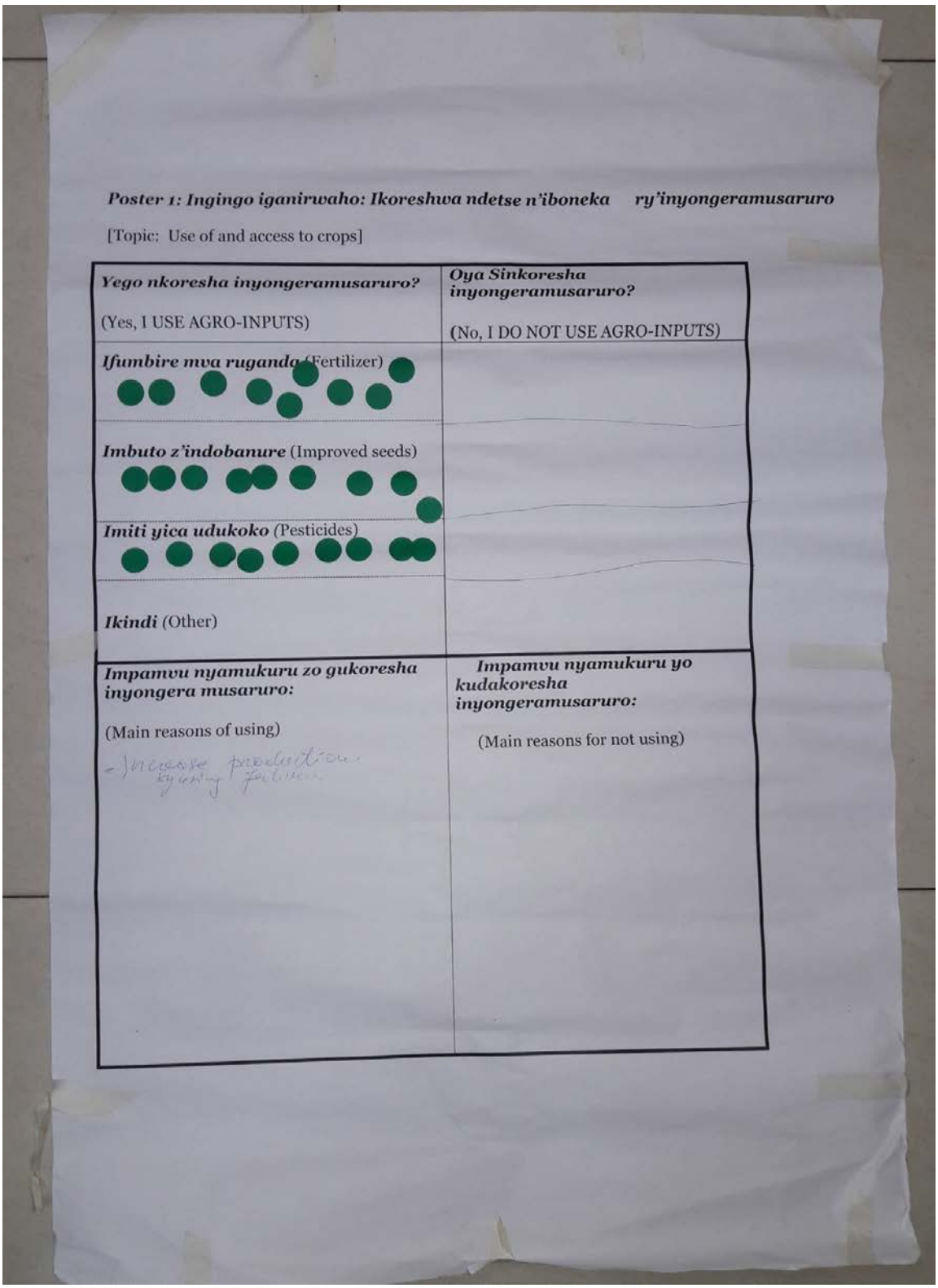
Details Posters

The information generated from the non-participants FGD on use of agro-inputs, all the participants (**9/9**) reported that the use fertilizers (**9/9**), improved seeds (**9/9**) and pesticides (**9/9**). The main reason the non-participant farmers provided for using agro-inputs was the need to increase agricultural production from their farms.

On the second poster, the non-participant farmers were further asked on the issue of substance i.e. whether use the land they have to grow food for home consumption or for sale. The majority of the FGD participants (**8/9**) reported that they grow food on part of their land for home consumption and only one participants reported that they grow food stuffs for sale to both the internal (*district*) and external (*outside district*) markets.

> *"For us we grow crops for our own consumption except when the harvest is good, we can take some quantity to the market in order to get some money and be able to take care of the family "* **Male FGD Non-Participant, Busoro Sector in Nyanza District.**

The growing of food for mainly home consumption was largely attributed to lack of better farming technology, lack of better yielding crop varieties as well as the prevalence of many crop diseases which sometimes overwhelm the farmers and most especially the non-project farmers.



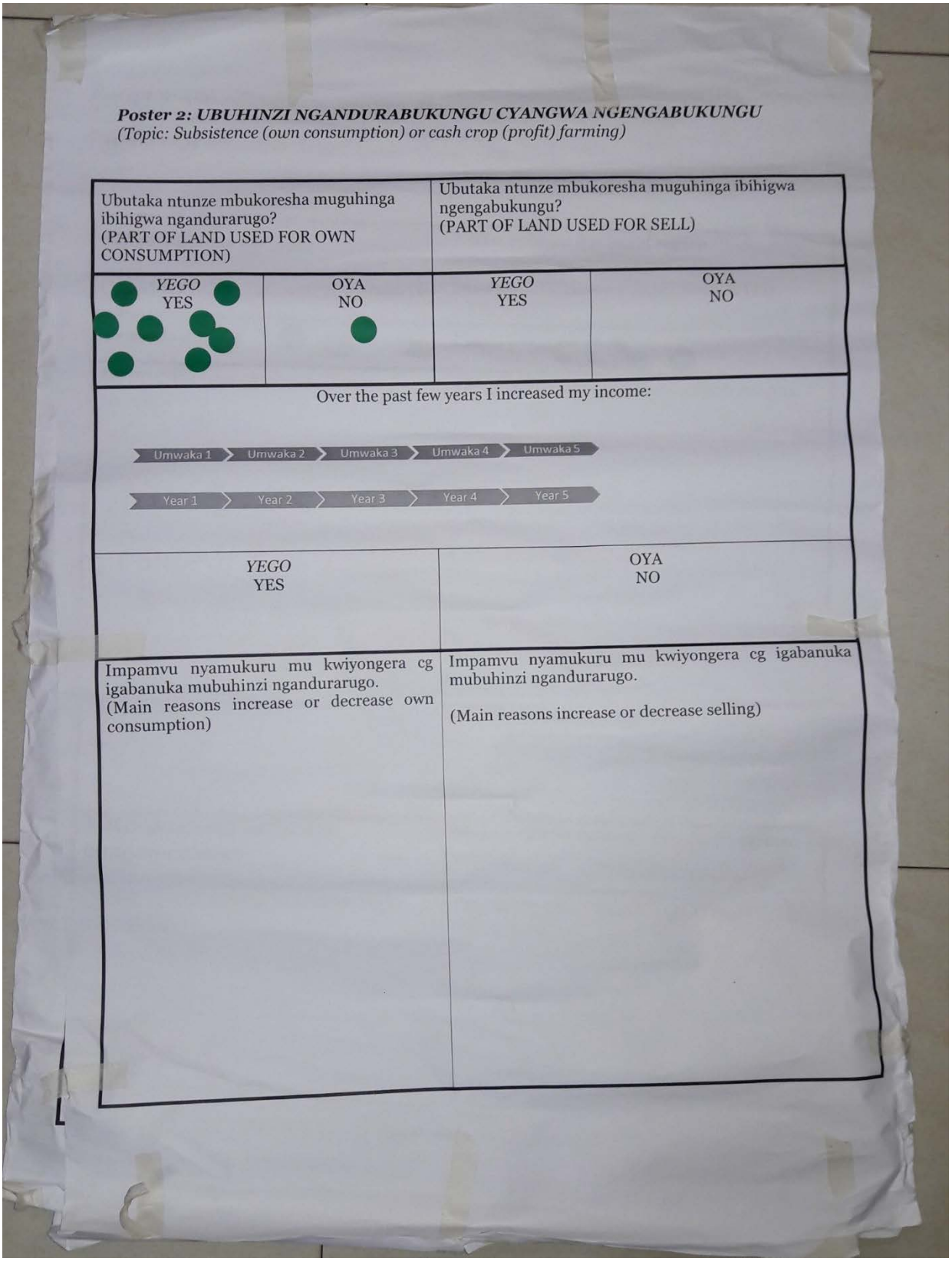
Poster 1: Ingingo iganirwaho: Ikoreshwa ndetse n'iboneka ry'inyongeramusaruro

[Topic: Use of and access to crops]

Yego nkoresha inyongeramusaruro? (Yes, I USE AGRO-INPUTS)	***Oya Sinkoresha inyongeramusaruro?*** (No, I DO NOT USE AGRO-INPUTS)
Ifumbire mva ruganda (Fertilizer)	
Imbuto z'indobanure (Improved seeds)	
Imiti yica udukoko (Pesticides)	
Ikindi (Other)	
Impamvu nyamukuru zo gukoresha inyongera musaruro: (Main reasons of using) - Increase production by using fertilizer	***Impamvu nyamukuru yo kudakoresha inyongeramusaruro:*** (Main reasons for not using)

Summary Interpretation of Table Above

All the farmers said they were using agro-inputs including fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides with the main reason of increasing production.



Poster 2: UBUHINZI NGANDURABUKUNGU CYANGWA NGENGABUKUNGU
(Topic: Subsistence (own consumption) or cash crop (profit) farming)

Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngandurarugo? (PART OF LAND USED FOR OWN CONSUMPTION)		Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngengabukungu? (PART OF LAND USED FOR SELL)	
YEGO YES	OYA NO	*YEGO* YES	OYA NO

Over the past few years I increased my income:

Umwaka 1 > Umwaka 2 > Umwaka 3 > Umwaka 4 > Umwaka 5

Year 1 > Year 2 > Year 3 > Year 4 > Year 5

YEGO YES	OYA NO

Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease own consumption)	Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease selling)

As indicated in the above two posters, the non-participant FGD participants evidently did not have information on the project, its implementation, benefits and impact on farmers and agriculture in the district in general

Project Effectiveness

With regard to the effectiveness of the project, the majority (**7/8**) of the FGD participants reported that the project did not impact them since they were not beneficiaries. This group of farmers felt that it is those who participated in the project were the only ones who were impacted by the CATALIST-2 project.

> *"No the project did not affect our situation or that of our family apart from the other people who participated because for them they grow food for themselves. They don't share the improved seeds with us during the farming season"* **Female FGD Non-Participant, Musangano Cell, Busoro Sector in Nyanza District.**

The above opinions were expressed by the rest of the non-participant farmers who were involved in this FGD.

Sustainability of the Programme

With regard to sustainability of the programme, this group of farmers (**8/8**) who were non-participants in the project advocated for the need for the beneficiary farmers to share the skills and best practices which the beneficiary farmers have acquired from the project with the non-participants as a way of ensuring that the programme becomes sustainable.

Also, the non-participants (**3/8**) suggested that the project needs to encourage and promote the involvement of the local leaders. This they noted will ease the process of mobilising the farmers to practice what they are taught by the project.

It was also noted (**4/8**) that bringing more stakeholders on board such as the Government and local governments will guarantee increased access to improved seeds and other agro-inputs.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

With regard to the unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme, the participants in this FGD noted that this did not apply to them like it did for the farmers who benefited from the CATALIST-2 programme. None of the 8 FGD participants was able to point out any unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme.

Note:

Muhanga vs Nyanza - The FGDs responses in Muhanga and Nyanza for the CATALIST-2 bore a lot of similarities. Respondents in both districts generally had similar experiences and opinions about how the project had impacted their lives. They faced similar challenges and their crops suffered similar diseases.

3.7 Consolidation of Marshlands - Welthungerhilfe

Introduction

This FGD (***left***) was conducted on the 9th March 2016 at the KIABR Cooperative Office near Rugeramigozi Water Dam in Muhanga District. The FGD involved a group of 9 participants i.e. 7 men and 2 women who are rice farmers that benefitted from the Rugeramigozi Consolidation of Marshland Development Project.

In this FGD, the data collection team sought to obtain qualitative data from the participants on their involvement in the project, how they have benefitted from it, their opinions on how the project should have been implemented, sustainability of the project and improvements for future similar projects.

FGD Participants Information

In the table below, we highlight the specific details of the 9 participants who participated in the FGD at the KIABR Cooperative Office near Rugeramigozi Water Dam:

Project Name		**Consolidation of Marshland Development**
District		Muhanga
Sector		Rugeramigozi
Village		Rugeramigozi
Venue of FGD		KIABR Cooperative Office near Rugeramigozi Water Dam
Number of FGD participants		9
Gender	Male	7
	Female	2
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Household Size		7.1
Average number of children per household		3.2
Average number of Women per household		1.6
Average number of girls per household		2.1
Average size of land per household		0.6 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		0.4 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		**Rice**
		Maize
		Beans

		Soya
		Cassava
Domestic Animals kept	Cows	4/9
	Pigs	4/9
	Chicken	3/9
	Goats	3/9

Findings from FGD

The farmers felt that the project was a valuable one to them stating that it had greatly contributed to improving their livelihoods. The farmer experience with the project was that:

- The project helped increase their production
- The project gave them important trainings and they acquired skills which they were using in their daily farming activities.
- Their household incomes have greatly increased.
- From the increased income some of the farmers have constructed modern/ permanent houses, paid for their families health insurance (***mutualle de sante***), bought additional plots of land, some have bought bicycles and are better able to afford essential family items.

They said that they practiced subsistence and commercial farming. Generally, 80% of their produce was taken to the cooperative for sale and the financial proceeds banked in their respective bank accounts. The remaining 20% was taken home for own consumption.

With the coming of the project in their area, the farmers abandoned their traditional farming practices which were not very productive and instead adopted modern tested and proven techniques of farming which greatly improved their production.

Some of the challenges faced by the farmers include the following:

- The farmers reported that they did not have a warehouse in which to keep their produce before taking it to the market;

- It was reported that some farmers were not willing to sell their produce and wanted to keep all what they produced at home for subsistence. However, with time, they have started to store only what they require for home consumption and the extra is sold to earn income for the household; and,

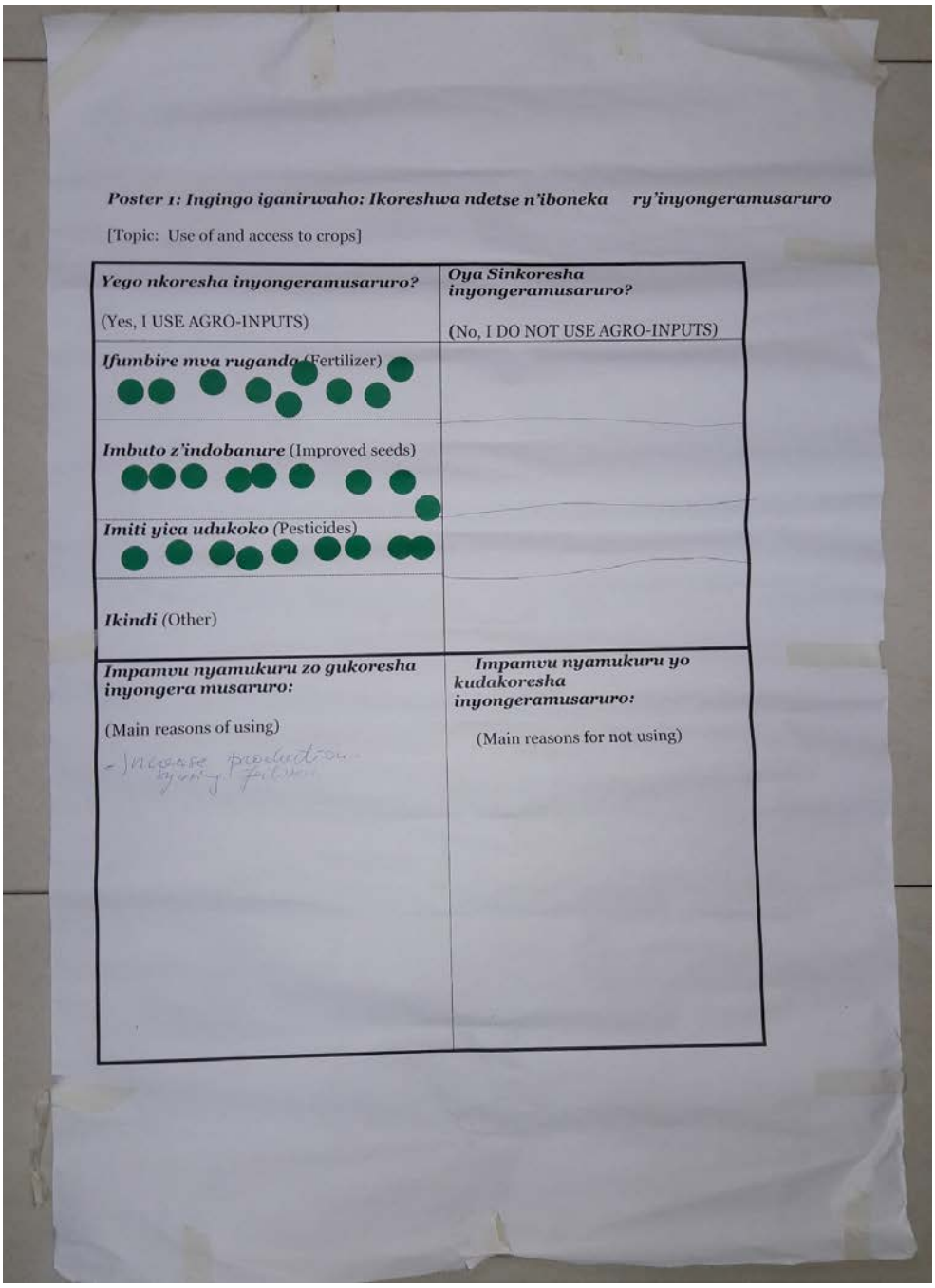
- Another challenge is that there is some theft during the harvest period. To prevent this, the cooperative has recruited some guards that oversee the marshland, and they work together with the farmers that live near the marshland to share information in case they come across cases of theft of produce.

From the information provided by the farmers, even when the project was completed, there were still some challenges faced by the farmers:

- The farmers could not access improved seeds on time which led to a decrease in food production;
- The prices of chemical fertilizers went up rendering some farmers unable to buy them; and,
- Due to the unpredictable weather, some farmers struggled a lot in paying back the loans they acquired from commercial banks and other lending institutions leading the banks to cease giving loans to farmers since they saw agriculture as a very risky business.

Details Posters

As highlighted on the poster below, all the farmers (**9/9**) reported using agro-inputs such as pesticides, fertilizers and improved seeds. The main reason given by all the farmers (**9/9**) was the need to increase the productivity of their land.

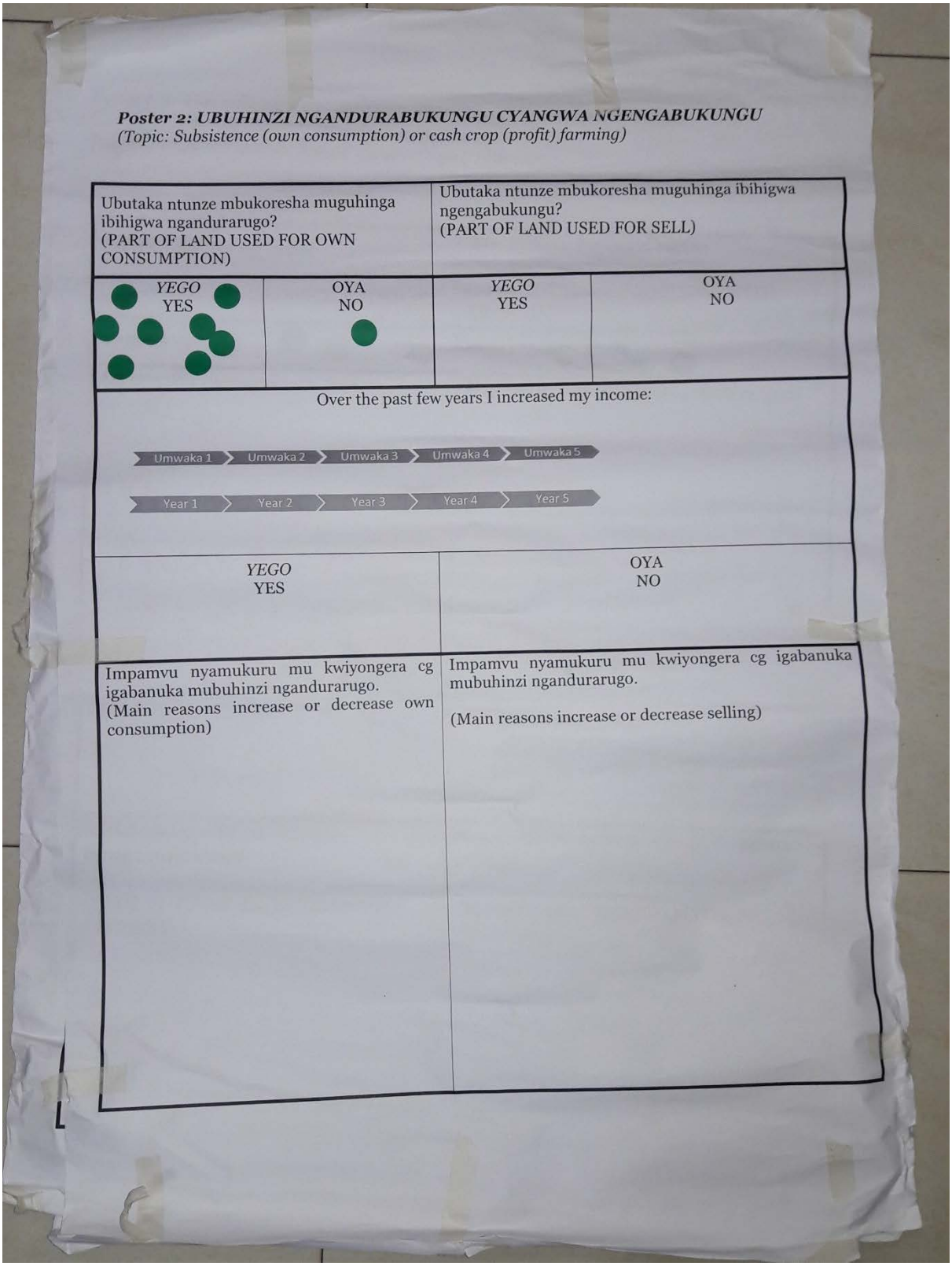


Poster 1: Ingingo iganirwaho: Ikoreshwa ndetse n'iboneka ry'inyongeramusaruro

[Topic: Use of and access to crops]

Yego nkoresha inyongeramusaruro? (Yes, I USE AGRO-INPUTS)	***Oya Sinkoresha inyongeramusaruro?*** (No, I DO NOT USE AGRO-INPUTS)
Ifumbire mva ruganda (Fertilizer)	
Imbuto z'indobanure (Improved seeds)	
Imiti yica udukoko (Pesticides)	
Ikindi (Other)	
Impamvu nyamukuru zo gukoresha inyongera musaruro: (Main reasons of using) - Increase production by using fertilizer	***Impamvu nyamukuru yo kudakoresha inyongeramusaruro:*** (Main reasons for not using)

Summary Interpretation of Table Above
All the farmers said they were using agro-inputs including fertilizers, improved seeds and pesticides with the main reason of increasing production.



Poster 2: UBUHINZI NGANDURABUKUNGU CYANGWA NGENGABUKUNGU
(Topic: Subsistence (own consumption) or cash crop (profit) farming)

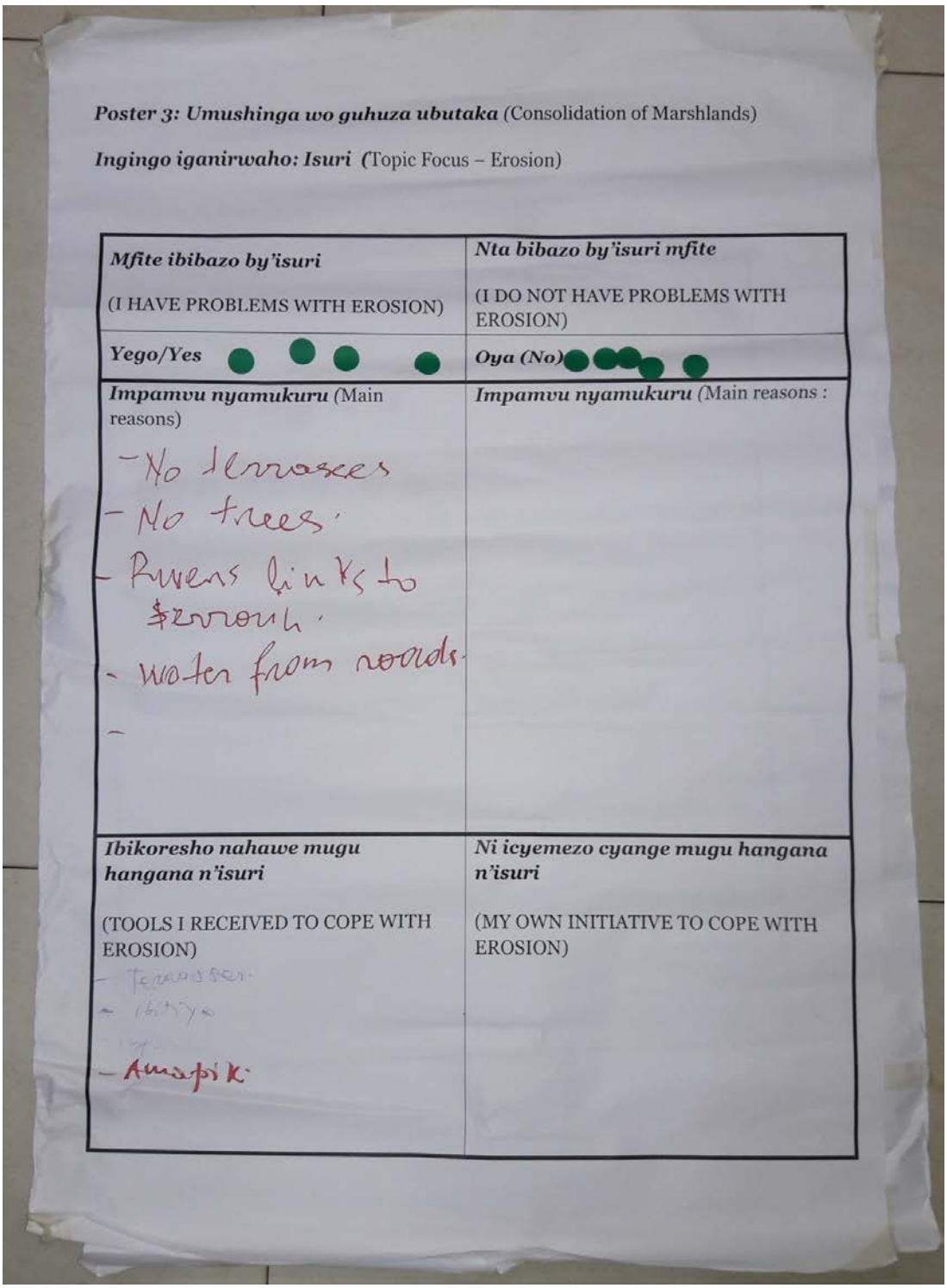
Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngandurarugo? (PART OF LAND USED FOR OWN CONSUMPTION)		Ubutaka ntunze mbukoresha muguhinga ibihigwa ngengabukungu? (PART OF LAND USED FOR SELL)	
YEGO YES	OYA NO	*YEGO* YES	OYA NO

Over the past few years I increased my income:

Umwaka 1 > Umwaka 2 > Umwaka 3 > Umwaka 4 > Umwaka 5

Year 1 > Year 2 > Year 3 > Year 4 > Year 5

YEGO YES	OYA NO
Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease own consumption)	Impamvu nyamukuru mu kwiyongera cg igabanuka mubuhinzi ngandurarugo. (Main reasons increase or decrease selling)



Poster 3: Umushinga wo guhuza ubutaka (Consolidation of Marshlands)

Ingingo iganirwaho: Isuri (Topic Focus – Erosion)

Mfite ibibazo by'isuri (I HAVE PROBLEMS WITH EROSION)	***Nta bibazo by'isuri mfite*** (I DO NOT HAVE PROBLEMS WITH EROSION)
Yego/Yes	***Oya (No)***
Impamvu nyamukuru (Main reasons) - No terraces - No trees. - Rivers links to Serrouh. - Water from roads. -	***Impamvu nyamukuru*** (Main reasons :
Ibikoresho nahawe mugu hangana n'isuri (TOOLS I RECEIVED TO COPE WITH EROSION) - Terrasser - Ibitiyo - Amasipi.	***Ni icyemezo cyange mugu hangana n'isuri*** (MY OWN INITIATIVE TO COPE WITH EROSION)

Summary Interpretation of Table Above

The reasons why farmers experience problems with soil erosion

- ***They had no terraces on their farms***
- ***Had not planted trees on the farms***
- ***The rivers were also carrying away fertile soil***
- ***Flooding***

They said they received some tools to cope with erosion such as spades that they used in constructing terraces.

The information on the poster above shows that half of the FGD participants reported that they still have challenges with soil erosion. The reasons given for this include the following:

- Lack of enough trees/ vegetation to provide soil cover in order to reduce run off of water;
- Water coming from roads that are around the marshlands which directly flows into the marshlands and sometimes causes flooding of the rice fields/ gardens.
- Some of the areas have got seasonal rivers that tend to floods during the heavy rains hence leading to some of the run-off water finding its way into the marshlands.

Project Effectiveness

The farmers who participated in the FGD at KIABR Cooperative Office near Rugeramigozi Water Dam in Muhanga District noted that the effectiveness of the Consolidation of Marshlands project could be summed up in the following ways:

- The FGD participants reported that the project has led to an improvement in food security in the area. They cited the increment into the tonnage of rice and maize grown by the farmers. For example, it was reported that farm production increased on average 4-5 tonnes for rice per ha per season and 4.2 tonnes per ha per season for maize.

  This increase in food production has made the households in the area to become food secure which was not the case before the project.

- The training that the farmers who participated in the programme received was also cited as a major area that highlights the effectiveness of the project. The farmers involved in the marshlands project have been taught better ways of farming in marshlands, how to conserve water in the marshlands and on the adjacent hill-sides to control soil erosion as well as use of modern farming practices such as using fertilizers, pesticides and improved seeds.

- The farmers also expressed satisfaction with the fact that the improvement in income which is attributable to this project has allowed them to be able to acquire other assets such building permanent houses, buying animals and other assets such as bicycles and motor cycles.

> *"From the proceeds I got from the sale of my rice and maize I have been able to build a better house for my family"* **FGD Participant, Consolidation of Marshlands project**

Sustainability of the Programme

- In collaboration with local authorities, cooperatives are working closely with the Government to sustain the infrastructure that exists now by planting trees on terraces that are around the marshland as a measure to fight soil erosion.

- Local administration has provided an agronomist to advice the farmers. This is being done through different meetings where discussions on issues pertinent to farming are held and challenges resolved.

- Cooperatives and Water Users Committees (Organizations) are working together to sustain all the infrastructure that are placed to help them to keep increasing the production.

- The dams are also being used for fish farming. This activity has been generating income for the group which covers for some of the maintenance expenses.

- Agricultural production is sustainable because land that was consolidated is well maintained. The farmers have put in place measures to curb soil erosion, and have access to improved seeds for the rice farmers.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

The project had led to some unplanned positive effects, namely;

- It was reported that the farmers who are part of the KIABR Cooperative are undertaking fish farming in the marshlands (Rugeramigozi I and II Water Dams). This was reported to be an additional source of income for the farmers since they sell the fish caught from the dam to earn extra income for their group;

- The Water User Committees which were formed as part of the Marshland Consolidation Development project, have positively encouraged a culture of savings among members of the cooperative groups/ farmers who are involved in the project.

- The visitors who go to visit Rugeramigozi I and II Water Dams and the Marshlands and take pictures/ photographs, are charged a small fee (***RwF 1,000***) while those with events such as weddings pay between RwF 5,000 and RwF 10,000 which money goes to the account of the Cooperatives as an additional income.

  This is a positive unplanned effect of the project that is earning extra income for the farmers. The funds generated from this activity are used partly to maintain the infrastructure at water dams and the marshlands.

3.8 Focus Group Discussion – Access to Food for Young Children – CRS-Rwanda

Introduction

The UNICEF Access to Food for Young Children Project beneficiaries FGD was conducted on 8th March 2016 at project field offices in Muhanga District. The participants in this FGD were carefully selected to ensure that only women with children below two (2) years of age or were pregnant were involved in the FGD. A total of 10 women participated in this focus group discussion.

FGD Participants Information

In the photograph on the left are the women who participated in the FGD at the Access to Food for Young Children Project at the field office in Muhanga District.

The women who participated in this FGD either had children below two years or were pregnant

In the table below are the details of the women who participated in the FGD for the Access to Food for Young Children Project at its field office in Muhanga:

Project Name		Access to Food for Young Children
District		Muhanga
Sector		Muhanga
Village		Tyazo/ Kivomo Cell
Venue of FGD		Project Field Office in Muhanga Town
Number of FGD participants		10
Gender	Male	0
	Female	10
Occupation		All are farmers
Average Age of FGD respondents		36.7
Average Household Size		5.9
Average number of children per household		4.1
Average number of Women per household		1
Average number of girls per household		2.4
Average size of land per household		1.4 hectares
Average size of land under crops per household		1.3 hectares
Crops grown starting with most popular		Cassava
		Potatoes

		Beans
		Sorghum
		Sweet potatoes
Domestic Animals kept	Pigs	3/10
	Cows	5/10
	Chicken	4/10
	Goats	0/10

Findings from FGD

Knowledge of the project and its interventions

All the participants (**10/10**) knew about this UNICEF (EKN) Access to Food for Young Children project. All the mothers reported that they stay in the same village and that they got to know about the project through the District Officers In-charge of Agriculture (Agronomist) and the one in-charge of health. These two officers recruited the women who had children below two years by then and started training them on different aspects of nutrition as well as how to take care of themselves during pregnancy and of the children. At the start of the project (in 2014), the participants were 61 in total, but as at the time of this evaluation, only 30 mothers were still in the project. Those that left the group did so for various reason with some saying they did not have time for the group, others felt they did not need the group and others had other personal priorities to attend to.

Experience with the project

All the mothers in the project reported that they have had a very good experience with the project and that there is an impact in their lives as well as their families and communities. They mentioned that there is a big difference and improvement in their standards of living when they compare themselves and the other 31 mothers who left the project or those who did not participate in this project.

The following are some of the achievements that were mentioned by the mothers:

The savings group that was created within this project has taught them how to save. Again, the women mentioned that they have a privilege of getting loans from this group from time to time. With time the savings group has grown, at first, each person used to contribute RwF 400 but each person now contributes RwF 1000 which is an indication that there has been progress in the income status of these mothers. They use the money saved with the group in following ways:

- Rent more pieces of land so as to do more extensive agriculture
- Be able to buy more nutritious food stuffs that they cannot grow in the gardens.
- Take their other children to school
- Be independent of their husbands when it comes to providing basic needs for themselves.

The Thursday Cooking Classes that the mothers are given by Caritas (CRS) staff have enabled them to learn how to make healthy and nutritious food for their children and to also learn what classes of food are a must to give the children in order to prevent them from being malnourished. During these classes they are also taught how to make balanced diets and they are also told of the importance of having quality food (balanced diet) and not just giving the children quantities and quantities of food, since the quantity alone cannot fight the malnutrition problem.

The Farmer Field Schools (FSS) that the project has started for the women have also had a great impact. The mothers say that from these schools they have acquired knowledge of being able to grow vegetables in addition to the other crops they have been growing and on the same piece of land. During these FFS they were taught that one can put soil in a container or in a place that is away from the main garden, put fertilizers in that soil and then plant vegetables. The mothers said, this technique has worked out so well for them that they are even benefiting from it by not only giving their children nutritious vegetables but also selling the extra produce at a profit.

The mothers also mentioned that they have learnt a lot from the lessons they are given by Caritas about how to take care of themselves during and after pregnancy. The mothers have learnt the importance of going for ante-natal care during pregnancy. From our analysis, almost 90% (**9/10**) of the mothers in the FGD said they went for ante-natal visits at least 4 times during pregnancy.

They also said they are taught about taking care of their children, mostly about the importance of breast feeding and why it is important to do exclusive breast feeding for all babies below the age of 6 months. We found out that all the women who attended the FGD practice exclusive breast feeding and also continue breast feeding until the child is 2 years of age, the only people who said where not breast feeding their under 2 children were those that could not because they were pregnant.

The women who took part in the FGD reported that the following project activities have contributed greatly in improving their lives:

- Lessons on Mother and baby care. They said that the project had taught them how to take care of themselves during and after pregnancy. That they had learned the importance of attending ante-natal care clinic when pregnant. The women said that they at least make four (4) visits to the ante-natal clinic during pregnancy. They also mentioned that they were taught the importance of breast feeding. They said that they now understood the importance of exclusive breast feeding for all babies below the age of six (6) months.

- Nutrition. They were given cooking lessons on Thursdays by Caritas staff. The lessons also encompassed learning on how to prepare balanced, healthy and nutritious diets for their children in order to protect them from malnutrition.

- Farmer Field Schools and Model Gardens. They said that they had been taught how to do kitchen gardens around their homes whereby they were encouraged to plant vegetables to supplement their diets. They described the process of making multi-storey gardens from improvised containers of gunny bags in which they heap piles of soil in the improvised containers and make holes on the sides of the container in which they plant vegetables. Multi-storey gardening is a simple farming technology which is aimed at producing vegetables to supplement the food basket for micronutrient provision.

Details Posters

As indicated in the poster below, the information provided by the majority of the mothers (**9/10**) who were involved in this FGD reported that they did not experience malnutrition. However, at an individual level, they acknowledged that malnutrition for them and their children is still a challenge.

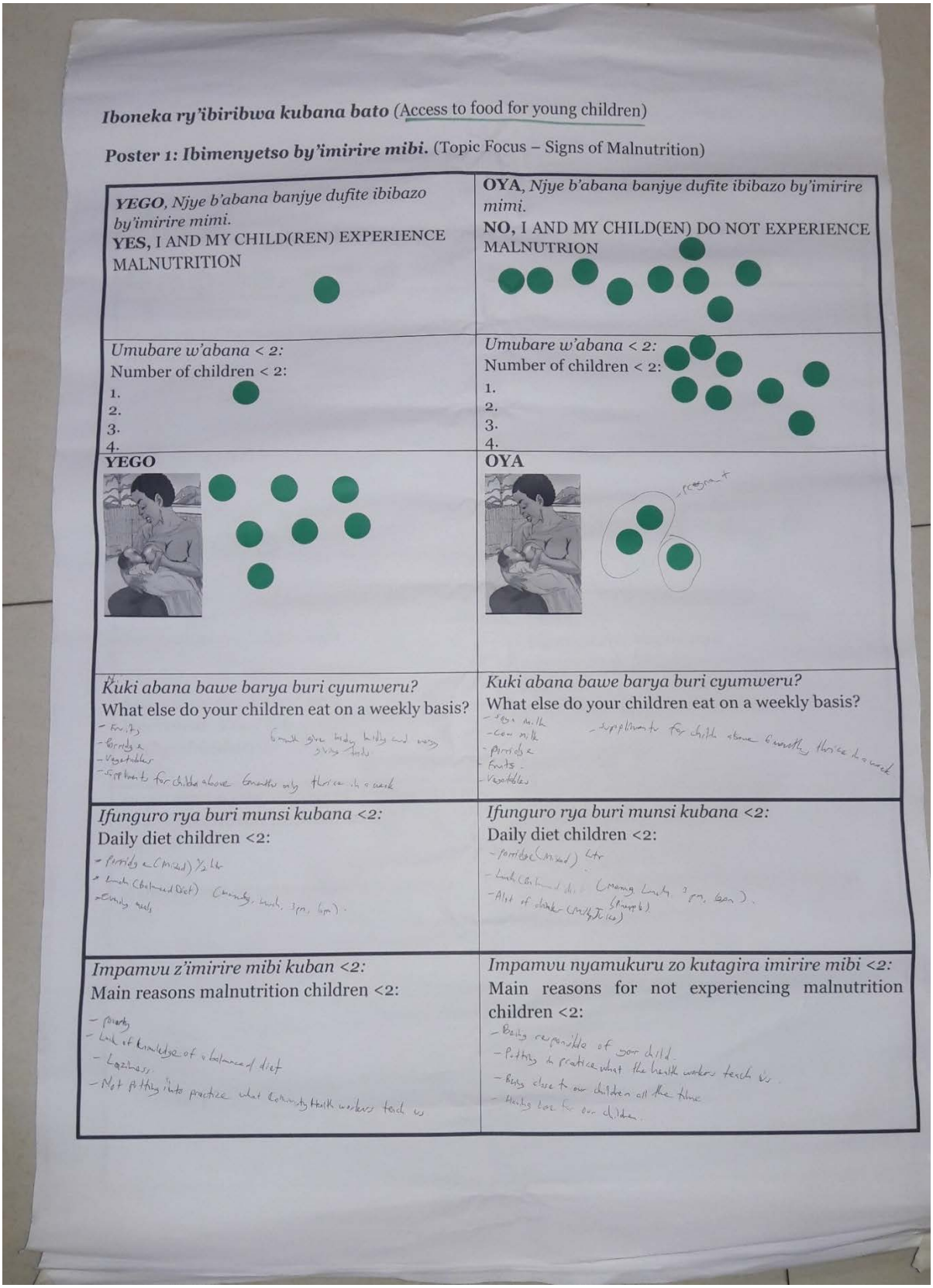
Those who said the malnutrition among children is still a challenge, cited the following reasons using general observations within their community:

- Poverty within the community whereby the mothers and their husbands are not able to get access to all the nutritious food stuffs that they require for their children.
- Laziness was also cited as a contributing factor to malnutrition for women who are not participating in the project. For example, they mentioned that although some of the project non-participating women had the information on how to grow vegetables and other crops, some were still not doing so hence lacking enough food to feed their children/ families.
- Not providing a balanced diet to children was also mentioned as a reason contributing continued malnutrition.
- Failure to practice or to put into practice the knowledge and skills provided to the women through this project. It was noted that such women continue to have malnourished children.

On the other hand, the women who were not experienced malnutrition among their children attributed it to the following reasons:

- Being responsible mothers who provide good care for their children
- Feeding the children on a timely basis and with the right food

- Putting into practice the knowledge and skills taught to the mothers on how to care for the children.



Iboneka ry'ibiribwa kubana bato (Access to food for young children)

Poster 1: *Ibimenyetso by'imirire mibi.* (Topic Focus – Signs of Malnutrition)

***YEGO**, Njye b'abana banjye dufite ibibazo by'imirire mimi.* **YES,** I AND MY CHILD(REN) EXPERIENCE MALNUTRITION	**OYA**, *Njye b'abana banjye dufite ibibazo by'imirire mimi.* **NO,** I AND MY CHILD(EN) DO NOT EXPERIENCE MALNUTRION
Umubare w'abana < 2: Number of children < 2: 1. 2. 3. 4.	*Umubare w'abana < 2:* Number of children < 2: 1. 2. 3. 4.
YEGO	**OYA**
Kuki abana bawe barya buri cyumweru? What else do your children eat on a weekly basis? - Fruits - Porridge - Vegetables - Supplements for children above 6 months only thrice in a week	*Kuki abana bawe barya buri cyumweru?* What else do your children eat on a weekly basis? - Breast Milk - Cow milk - Porridge - Fruits - Vegetables - Supplements for children above 6 months thrice in a week
Ifunguro rya buri munsi kubana <2: Daily diet children <2: - Porridge (Mixed) ½ ltr - Lunch (Balanced Diet) (Morning, lunch, 3pm, 6pm). - Daily meals	*Ifunguro rya buri munsi kubana <2:* Daily diet children <2: - Porridge (Mixed) ½ ltr - Lunch (Balanced diet) (Morning, Lunch, 3pm, 6pm). - List of drinks (Milk, Juice, Sprite)
Impamvu z'imirire mibi kuban <2: Main reasons malnutrition children <2: - Poverty - Lack of knowledge of a balanced diet - Laziness. - Not putting into practice what community health workers teach us	*Impamvu nyamukuru zo kutagira imirire mibi <2:* Main reasons for not experiencing malnutrition children <2: - Being responsible of your child. - Putting in practice what the health workers teach us. - Being close to our children all the time - Having love for our children.

Summary Interpretation of Table Above

All the women reported that they breastfed their children except three who could not because they were pregnant.

1. One mother reported to experience malnutrition with her baby

1.1 What else do your children eat on a weekly basis?

- ***Fruits***
- ***Porridge***
- ***Vegetables***
- ***Supplements for children above 6 months only thrice in a week.***

1.2 Daily diet for children <2

- ***Porridge***
- ***Lunch (balanced diet)***
- ***Evening meals (3pm and 6pm)***

1.3 Main reasons for malnutrition of children <2

- ***Poverty***
- ***Lack of knowledge on balanced diet***
- ***Laziness***
- ***Not putting into practice what community health workers teach.***

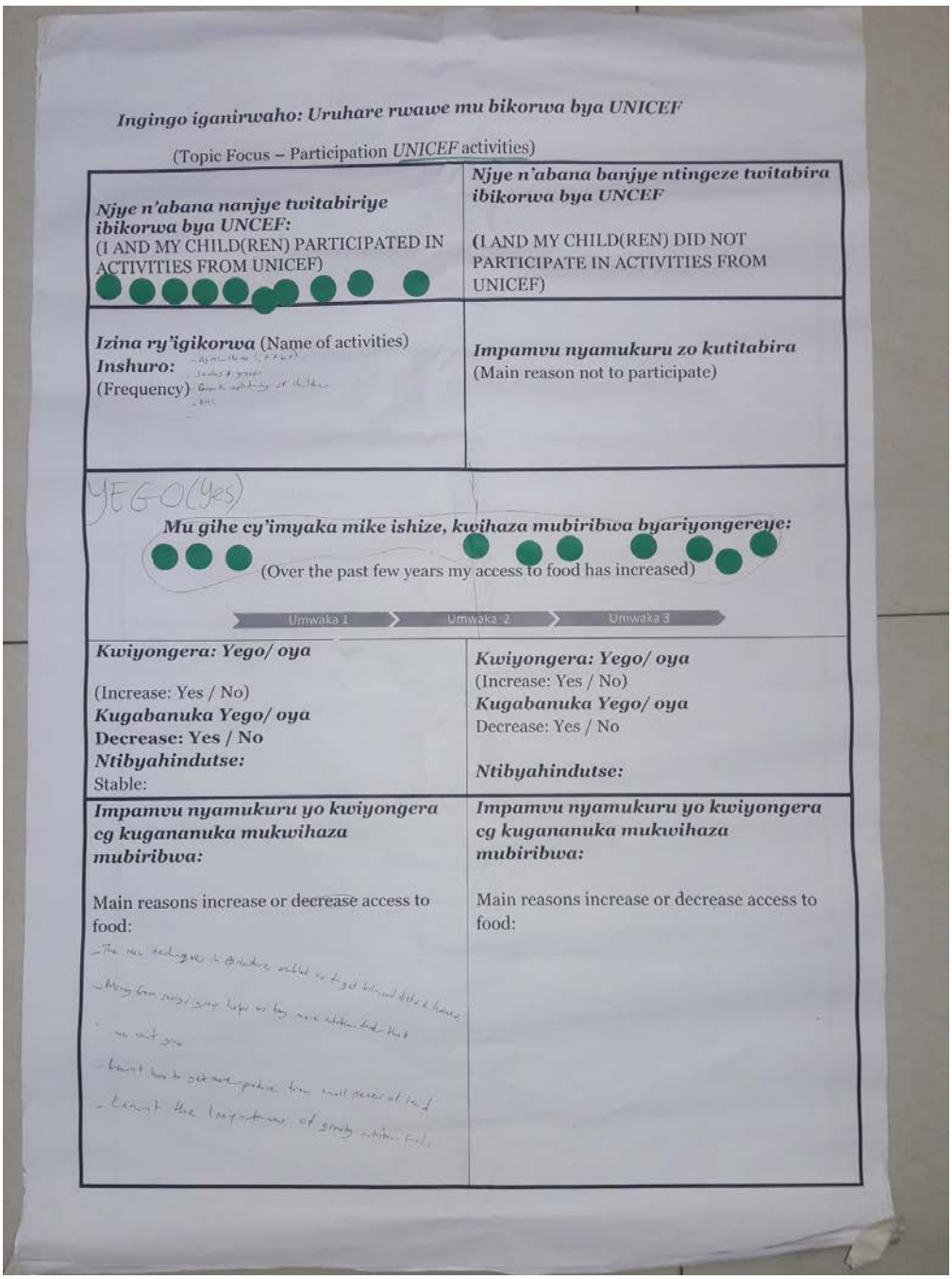
2. All the other mothers reported they did not experience malnutrition with their babies

2.1 What else do your children eat on a weekly basis?

- ***Soya milk***
- ***Cow milk***
- ***Porridge***
- ***Fruits***
- ***Vegetables***
- ***Supplements for children above 6 months thrice a week***

2.2 Daily diet for children under <2

- ***Porridge (mixed) 1 litre per day***
- ***Lunch (balanced diet***
- ***A lot of drinks (milk, pineapple juice)***
- ***Ensure children are fed in the morning, lunch time, 3pm and 6 pm***



Ingingo iganirwaho: Uruhare rwawe mu bikorwa bya UNICEF

(Topic Focus – Participation UNICEF activities)

Njye n'abana nanjye twitabiriye ibikorwa bya UNCEF: (I AND MY CHILD(REN) PARTICIPATED IN ACTIVITIES FROM UNICEF)	***Njye n'abana banjye ntingeze twitabira ibikorwa bya UNCEF*** (I AND MY CHILD(REN) DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES FROM UNICEF)
Izina ry'igikorwa (Name of activities) ***Inshuro:*** (Frequency)	***Impamvu nyamukuru zo kutitabira*** (Main reason not to participate)

YEGO (Yes)

Mu gihe cy'imyaka mike ishize, kwihaza mubiribwa byariyongereye:

(Over the past few years my access to food has increased)

Umwaka 1 | Umwaka 2 | Umwaka 3

Kwiyongera: Yego/ oya (Increase: Yes / No) ***Kugabanuka Yego/ oya*** **Decrease: Yes / No** ***Ntibyahindutse:*** Stable:	***Kwiyongera: Yego/ oya*** (Increase: Yes / No) ***Kugabanuka Yego/ oya*** Decrease: Yes / No ***Ntibyahindutse:***
Impamvu nyamukuru yo kwiyongera cg kugananuka mukwihaza mubiribwa: Main reasons increase or decrease access to food:	***Impamvu nyamukuru yo kwiyongera cg kugananuka mukwihaza mubiribwa:*** Main reasons increase or decrease access to food:

<u>Summary Interpretation of Table Above</u>

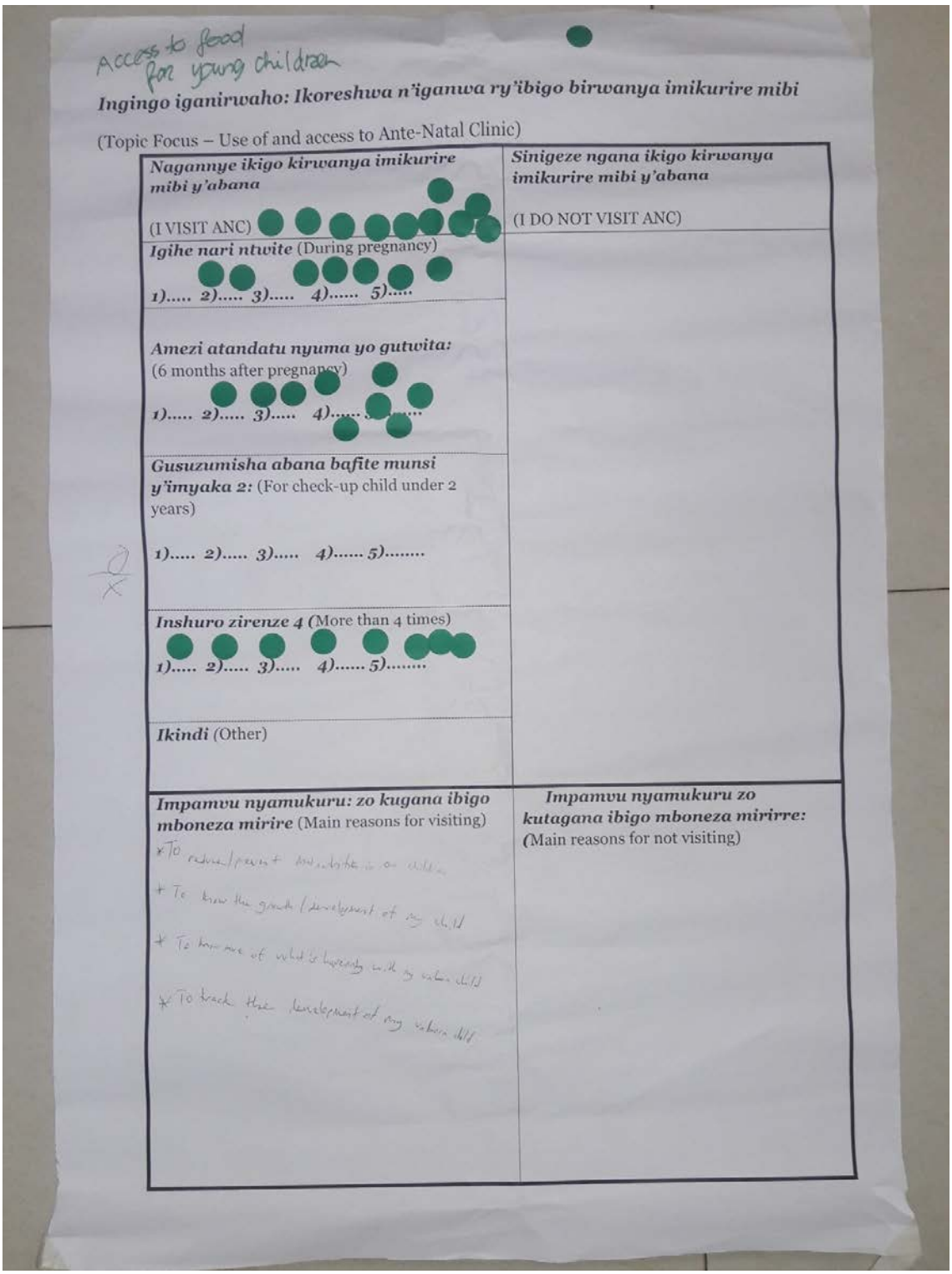
They all participated in the activities by UNICEF which included

- ***Farmer Field Days***
- ***Savings group meetings***
- ***Ante-natal Clinic (ANC)***
- ***Growth monitoring of their children***

Main reasons for increased or decreased access to food;

- ***The new technologies in agriculture enabled the farmers to get balanced diets***
- ***Money from the savings groups helped them to buy more nutritious foods that they could not grow.***
- ***They learned how to intensify production in small pieces of land.***
- ***They learned the importance of growing nutritious foods.***

As indicated in the poster above, all the women (**10/10**) who took part in this FGD, reported to have participated in the UNICEF project activities and acknowledged that over the project period, their access to food has increased as a result of this project.



Summary Interpretation of Table Above
Main reasons for visiting Ante-Natal Clinic
- ***To reduce/prevent malnutrition in their children.***
- ***To track the development of their unborn babies.***
- ***To monitoring the growth and development of their children.***

As indicated in the poster above, the women (**10/10**) further acknowledged that their participation in ante-natal care increased and that a majority (**7/10**) visited the ANC clinics more than 3 times during pregnancy and again after the pregnancy.

Project Effectiveness

The project had several goals, two of which were to improve food security and resilience of vulnerable targeted households with children under two and pregnant and lactating women in target districts and; support social and behaviour change activities at community level for improved maternal and child feeding practices. From the feedback received from the women, it is evident that the project has been beneficial to them.

An analysis of the FGD information shows that the project objectives and results/ achievements were on track. This is evident from the fact that malnutrition rates in Muhanga District have reduced if a comparison is made between before and after the project was introduced. The malnutrition reduction was also evidenced by the testimonies from some of the mothers who said their children were healed of malnutrition because of the project's interventions.

> "*Before the project started, I did not have enough information on how to feed my baby but today I can grow vegetables which helps me to feed my babies well*" **Female Participant, UNICEF Project, Muhanga District**

From the information provided by the female participants, the health status of mothers and children who participated in the project has improved. For example the pregnant mothers now often go for ante-natal care and are able to eat a balanced diet now than before the project started.

The women reported an increase in the attendance of ante-natal clinic as a result of the project. The women reported that they are now quite keen to ensure that they exclusively breastfeed their children up-to 6 months of age and that they continue to breastfeed until the children reach two years of age.

The project has led to better food security in Muhanga District. This has been possible because of the following factors:

- Better farming techniques on how to properly use the small pieces of land to produce more. Since most farmers in the area (Muhanga) have got small pieces of land, this had greatly helped the farmers;
- Practical knowledge on growing vegetables alongside the main crops grown since the vegetables grow in a shorter period of time compared to the main crops;
- How to use fertilizers in their farms to produce more yields; and,
- Access to improved seeds that give more produce and grow in a shorter period of time than the other traditional/ non-modified seeds.

However, from this FGD with women it was realized that as much as food security has improved there is still more work to be done to further improve the situation. During the FGD, the team noticed that ***when the mothers were asked in a group if food insecurity still existed, they all said yes it does, but when asked individually, they were a bit hesitant to say that food insecurity is still a challenge in this area***. This therefore indicated to the data collection team that the issue of food insecurity was a bit of a sensitive issue and that some level of food insecurity still existed. This in a way affects projects effectiveness as this project was designed to increase access to food for young children.

Sustainability of the Programme

The mothers who participated in this FGD noted that in the event the project ceased operations/ activities, the mothers would continue putting in practice everything they learnt during the implementation of the project. They also noted that they would make sure that they train other women who did not get the opportunity to participate in this project.

Other suggestions for improving the sustainability of the project mentioned by the women include the following:

- The mothers from this FGD noted that more trainings should be given to participants to better their lives and the lives of their children;
- The mothers also mentioned that the need to be supported to acquire equipment to use in practicing the skills they were equipped with. They mentioned equipment such as fertilizer appliers and grinding machines among others.
- The mothers also noted that the project should include exchange visit activities to other places in the country where project interventions are implemented so that they learn by picking lessons from what other mothers are doing differently in different districts.
- Another area proposed for improvement to make the project more sustainable is the provision of water. From the FGD, it was mentioned that access to water in this area was a problem which has many negative effects on the people in this area, so the mothers proposed for provision of water.

Unplanned positive or negative effects of the programme

The women who participated in this FGD mentioned that their husbands have been very supportive of their participation in this project. The women noted that the men got information on the importance of supporting their wives and this changed their attitudes for the better and as a result they started providing support to the women in taking more care of the children and the family as a whole. Some said their husbands supported them financially to make savings in the group and also assisted with manual work in the farms.

4.0 Overall Conclusion

The Dutch Food Security Programme for Rwanda aimed at achieving 3 major outputs namely:

i) Improved infrastructure (roads, electricity, land) to produce, process distribute and prepare food.
ii) Strengthened capacity of government agencies, private sector and discussion for a
iii) Increased access to healthy food for very young children.

In light of these, the evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

i) Did the project contribute to improved food security?
ii) What was the impact of the project on the target group? Has their situation changed/improved?
iii) Who else has been affected by the project (family members/neighbors etc.) and in what way? And what was the impact of the project on the indirect beneficiaries?
iv) What other factors influenced the project and in what way?

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life". Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences.

The combined results of the three projects covered in this evaluation led the evaluation team to conclude that they indeed contributed to the improvement in the food security situation of the project beneficiaries. This can be supported by the responses the beneficiaries gave. They said that before the project, most of them only farmed for subsistence but as a result of the project interventions, they had produced enough for household consumption and sold the excess. This contributed to an increase in household income which was used to cater for household needs including buying foods that they did not grow. The impact was more than just improved food security but also improved standards of living. Some of the beneficiaries reported that they had acquired assets from the income raised through farming activities such as land, motorbikes, built houses, paid school fees for their children among others.

Although the non-participants said they did not directly benefit from the project, it can be argued that they actually did from some of the project components. For example, the Consolidation of Marshlands project rehabilitated roads which benefitted the communities as a whole. Again, the Farmer Field Schools held each planting season were open to the whole community. Some of the community members who were not directly targeted were reached through such forums.

Mothers who were reached by the Access to Food for Young Children gained knowledge and skills on making healthy, nutritious and balanced diets for their children and their families.

The question of sustainability was also dealt with by the formation of Farmer Cooperatives and Water Users Association (WUA) which were duly registered and empowered to perform their functions. The farmers said that they were able to fetch good prices for their farm produce through their cooperatives. The WUAs were able to perform maintenance and regulate the use of the water in the dams.

Annexes

Annex 1: Lists of project staff interviewed in Muhanga and Nyanza Districts

Ibakwe Project Staff:

1. Jeannine NYIRAMANA – Muhanga District (District Coordinator)
2. Paulin MISAGO – Nyanza District (Former District Coordinator upto Sept 2015)
3. Emmanuel – Nyanza District (Current District Coordinator from Oct 2015)

Welthungerhilfe Project Staff:

1. Jonathan NTURO – Muhanga District
2. Emmanuel Octave BANANEZA – Muhanga District

Access to Food for Young Children

1. Odette Uwera Kamanzi - CRS, Rwanda, EKN Project Director.
2. Father Innocent MUTABAZI - Director of Caritas/Kabgayi
3. Claudien NSENGIYUMVA - EKN project coordinator
4. Edith MUNGANYINKA - EKN project nutritionist
5. Charles HATEGEKIMANA - EKN project agronomist/SILC officer

Annex 2: Schedule of the Focus Group Discussions

Below are the schedules for the field data collection in Muhanga and Nyanza Districts in which the PwC Rwanda Team supported the PwC Netherlands Team of Bas and Pauline:

Date	Location	Project	Time	Programme	Team
7 March 2016	**Muhanga** (Cyeza sector, **Binunga** village)	**24720 CATALIST-2** *Partners:* IFDC Rwanda, Ibakwe and Caritas	8.00 – 8.30	**Walk around**	PwC NL + PwC Rwanda
			8.30 – 9.00	**Meet with staff project + make arrangements location FGD** (chairs / flip overs etc.)	PwC NL (P&B) + PwC Rwanda
			9.00 – 9.30	**Interview with staff project**	PwC NL + PwC Rwanda
			9.30 – 10.00	**Guided tour by staff project**	PwC NL + PwC Rwanda
			10.00 – 12.00	**FGD 1:** male project participants only	PwC NL + PwC Rwanda
			12.30 – 14.30	**FGD 2:** female project participants only	PwC Rwanda
			15.00 – 17.00	**FGD 3:** non-participants	PwC Rwanda
	Muhanga	**24371 and 25542** **Infrastructure** field visit *Partners:* LODA	12.15-12.45	**Drive to LODA location**	PwC NL (Pauline & Bas)
			12.45 – 13.00	**Walk around**	
			13.00 – 13.30	**Meet with staff project**	
			13.30 – 14.30	**Interview with local staff/ or local authorities**	
			14.30 – 16.30	**Drive through project site**	

8 March 2016 (*NOTE: it is*	**Muhanga**	**25457 Access to Food for Young Children** *Partners:* UNICEF Rwanda	8.30 – 9.00	**Walk around**	PwC NL (Pauline Mbundu) + PwC Rwanda (Carol Birungi)
			9.00 – 10.00	**Interview with staff project**	
			10.00 – 11.30	**Guided tour by staff project**	
			11.30 – 12.00	**Make arrangements location FGD** (chairs / flip overs etc.)	
			13.00 – 16.00	**FGD:** Mothers with children under 2 years: • whose children under 2 years are chronically malnourished • attend at least 4 Ante-Natal Clinic (ANC) visits during their most recent pregnancy	
	Nyanza	**24720**	8.00 –	**Walk around**	PwC Rwanda

interna-tional women's day)	(Busoro sector, **Masangano** village)	**CATALIST-2** *Partners:* IFDC Rwanda, Ibakwe and Caritas	8.30		
			8.30 – 9.00	**Meet with staff project + make arrangements location FGD (chairs / flip overs etc.)**	
			9.00 – 9.30	**Interview with staff project**	
			9.30 – 10.00	**Guided tour by staff project**	
			10.00 – 12.00	**FGD 1:** male project participants only	
			12.30 – 14.30	**FGD 2:** female project participants only	
			15.00 – 17.00	**FGD 3:** non-participants	
9 March	**Muhanga**	**25059 Consolidation of Marshland Development** *Partners:* Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V	8.00 – 8.30	**Walk around**	PwC NL (Pauline Mbundu) + PwC Rwanda (Carol Birungi)
			8.30 – 9.30	**Interview with staff project**	
			9.30 – 10.30	**Interview with government official**	
			10.30 – 12.30	**Guided tour by staff project**	
			13.00 – 16.00	**FGD:** • Cooperative members (farmers) • Users of the erosion protected hillside and bench terrace	

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