



“Ubufatanye mu Miyoborere”: Advancing CSO-Led participatory Governance in Rwanda

In the decades following the genocide, Rwanda has made impressive progress. The country boasts economic prowess, a strong women’s empowerment agenda and has made significant strides in the health and education sectors. However, challenges remain, particularly around strengthening youth participation in local politics and further bolstering the ability of media and civil society organizations to uphold and safeguard participatory, inclusive, and accountable governance.

In 2017, SFCG, The European Union and local partners began a 3-year project titled **“Ubufatanye mu Miyoborere: Advancing CSO-led Participatory Governance in Rwanda”**. This project was implemented in partnership with the Rwanda Scouts Association (RSA) and three community radio stations (Radio Ishingiro, Radio Isangano, and Radio Izuba). The overall goal of the project was to enhance the capacity and confidence of Rwandan civil society organisations to promote more inclusive, responsive, and transparent local-level governance. This overall goal was achieved through three complementary work focus areas:

1. Training & Youth-led Research

Search conducted training of youth researchers to strengthen their capacities in data collection, data analysis, and reporting. Research focused on topics of local governance, budgeting processes and fiscal transparency. This content was combined with Common Ground Approach and advocacy skills to enable youth researchers to effectively share findings with local authorities. The project also connected youth CSOs with the partner radio stations allowing them to share lessons learned and brainstorm a roadmap for collaboration around governance issues with the broader community and to reinforce their collaboration around governance issues.

91.3% of CSOs indicated they feel more confident in their skills, relationships, and abilities to advocate for, lead and support the promotion of good governance at the local level (compared to 30% at baseline)

93.8% of trained Scouts and 88% of CSO participants said that feel that their research and advocacy skills will help them to use relevant information to support local government decision-making.

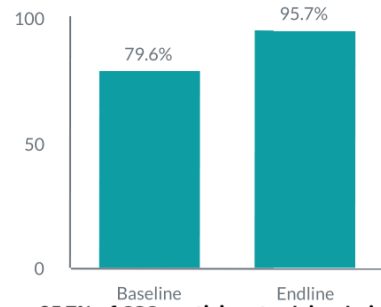
“We learned how to analyse data. If we were asked to do it, we would feel comfortable, we feel like we are the eyes of our community. We learned a lot about the rights of citizens and the responsibilities/duties of local leaders towards the citizens.”

2. Connecting Youth With Decision Makers.

Restitution and Townhall meetings enabled youth and local citizens to participate in local governance efforts through the discussions they had with the local authorities, informing them about Governance related issues they face and proposing solutions to those issues. Specifically, training, restitution meetings, town hall meetings, radio programs and youth assemblies contributed to increasing participants' knowledge of good governance and providing platforms to citizens to raise their concerns over governance-related issues. These activities have contributed to participants from partner CSOs increasing their overall participation in local governance.

- 5098 citizens attended town hall meetings
- 6 Youth assemblies attended by 1237 citizens
- 3 Youth debates attended by 924 citizens
- A national policy forum was organised via Television in October 2020

“Due to the project interventions, citizens are recognized by local authorities and participate in local governance through research, community meetings, live radio talks in conjunction with local government authorities”.
- Focus group participant



- 95.7% of CSO participants claim their participation in strengthening local governance within their communities has increased as a result of the action.
- 84.6% of government authorities claim they will continue to engage with CSOs and youth for their critical input on governance issues

3. Building Governance Through Media

Over the course of the project **implementation, relationship-building and exchange sessions** between radio partners and CSOs were conducted. These sessions helped radio partners to connect with CSOs; they also helped participants to reinforce their collaboration in addressing relevant local governance issues. Additionally, capacity building sessions with radio partners and subsequently produced radio programmes were conducted to improve the role of radio partners as interlocutors between citizens and government authorities.

116

people participated
in in-Person meeting
between CSOs and radio
stations

“with the support of Ruhango district officials and local community through live radio talk, a number of youth in Ruhango district were supported to get their money (Rwf 40 million) from the contractor who had refused to pay them for the casual work they had done”

- Journalist of Radio Huye
participating in KIIs

92%

OF CSOs
and radio stations
agree they will continue to
collaborate around
governance issues.

10

meetings between
CSOs and radio
stations
(6 in person, 4 virtual)

3

Joint initiatives

carried out between radio
stations and CSOs

2

Capacity Building
Trainings

for radio partners on fiscal
transparency and
governance related issues

378

Radio Programs

locally produced and
broadcast