



Vi Agroforestry



Where trees grow, people grow

The Vi Agroforestry 16-year story in Rwanda

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Munyantore, Photo- Niyigeza Mark

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the board	1
Vi Agroforestry Foreword	2
Ministry of Environment Foreword	4
Vi Agroforestry footprint in Rwanda	6
About Vi Agroforestry	7
How do we work	8
Areas of Operations in Rwanda	12
The commitment of Vi Agroforestry Rwanda programme in Agroforestry	14
Taking Actions	15
Conclusions and Recommendations	19
Meet the people	21
Partners	36
Donors	40



The Board of Vi Agroforestry is proud of the impact created for the last 16 years in Rwanda. We entered Rwanda in 2005, eager to learn, listen, and partner with communities and other stakeholders in Rwanda. We responded to the government call for partnership to halt soil erosion. We therefore came with lessons learnt from our work in other countries in East Africa, promoting tree planting and agroforestry. People are an integral part of everything that happens in the landscapes and that is why our means was and remains building the capacity of women, men, youth and children to own sustainable management of their ecosystems, leading to sustainable development.

The 16 years have seen Vi Agroforestry partner with farmer organisations in Rwanda. We have provided financial and technical support as they seek to realise their own ambition for growth, contributing to the larger development of the country. Farmer enterprise development has also been another area of success, with farmers building resilience to climate and economic shocks through judicious enterprise selection and diversification. Farmer organisations were nurtured by getting support to improve their business systems for increased efficiency and production. School children programmes have also been very successful. Contributing to the young minds having an appreciation of how to take care of the environment, so that the environment can take care of them.

Conditions prevailing in the sector have compelled Vi Agroforestry to phase out operations in Rwanda. We encourage all stakeholders to continue contributing to sustainable development, and as an art of the global citizenry, we will continue being available for consultation when required to share our lessons from our 16 years of success in Rwanda.

To the staff who have effortlessly served the organisation in Rwanda, we say thank you.

To peer organisations that have been part of our engagement in Rwanda, we say thank you.

To the farmer organisations that have contributed to changing lives of farmers and communities, we say, continue being strong and do not tire to seek sustainable development for your members, the wider community, and country at large.

Charlotta Szczepanowski
Vi Agroforestry Board President



Nyiramvuyekure Dancille, Photo - Victory Ishimwe

Vi Agroforestry foreword

Vi Agroforestry started operations in East Africa in 1983 focusing on protecting the Lake Victoria basin. The operations started in Kenya, then gradually moved into Uganda and Tanzania, and setting up in Rwanda in 2005. Vi Agroforestry develops multiyear programmes guided by the organisation strategy. During 2005 when entering Rwanda, Vi Agroforestry was implementing the ‘Lake Victoria Development Program’ (LVDP). LVDP aimed to “contribute to improved livelihood and empowerment of small-scale farmers in the Lake Victoria basin through sustainable management of natural resources and business development”. Since then, the organisation has implemented several other programmes to date.

The overall focus of Vi Agroforestry over the years has been the sustenance of natural resources, reducing environmental degradation, and fighting poverty and climate change. These have been compounded in East Africa by population pressure, soils degradation, reduced tree cover, among other factors. Vi Agroforestry interventions has evolved over the years becoming more holistic in sustainable development and improvement of rural population livelihoods. The spectrum of activities varied in the different programmes carried out through the years, guided by the changing contexts and conditions; incorporating lessons learnt over the years of implementation.

Vi Agroforestry started with a focus on purely tree planting, then transitioned to agroforestry and later to having a package that includes; climate change mitigation and adaption, Agroforestry, economic security, and organisational development. The consideration for cross cutting issues such as, Gender, HIV and AIDS mainstreaming was crucial for lasting impact. Eventually, Sustainable Agriculture Land Management centred on agroforestry completed the value proposition of Vi Agroforestry in the region and country.

Our approaches are people centred (using human rights based approaches (HRBA)) and focus to increase local ownership and sustainability of the work. Thus, the building of partnerships and consortia where farmers’ organisations are members, through strengthening of farmers’ groups for demand driven advisory services (Capacity Building, Policy and Advocacy Work) is now central. Policy and advocacy work became underpinning in most of the Vi Agroforestry work.

The concept and approach to partnership, and organisation development was fostered on the conviction that partners will accept and apply the proposed techniques when they understand and experience the benefits of Sustainable Agriculture Land Management (SALM) This supported uptake and adoption of promoted sustainable techniques, as well as ensuring that local organisations take charge and own the development, for continued sustainable implementation.

Eva Åberg
Director
Vi Agroforestry

Gudrun Boström
Regional Director
Vi Agroforestry

Albert Mutasa
Country Manager
Vi Agroforestry



Photo- Lisa Brunzell

Ministry of Environment foreword

The Government of Rwanda is committed to implement and achieve its priorities related to environmental protection. The Ministry of Environment and Vi Agroforestry engaged in a partnership for environmental protection and community livelihoods promotion.

Like other countries, Rwanda has seen unprecedented social, biological and economic losses due to environmental degradation. The country is losing topsoil due to soil erosion and an estimated of over 500 thousand hectares of land are under risk of erosion and therefore need protection.

A significant investment is needed to establish contour bank terraces, radical terraces, forests and agroforestry coverage to reverse the losses and build resilience of our community.

The Ministry of Environment is happy to have worked with Vi Agroforestry to address some of the environmental challenges that include soil erosion, although more actors and green investments are still needed for a green growth and climate resilient Rwanda.

We are grateful for interventions done by Vi Agroforestry and we will continue to ensure the sustainability of their impact.



Dr Jeanne d’Arc MUJAWAMARIYA
Minister of Environment
Government of Rwanda

Vi Agroforestry footprint in Rwanda from 1983-2022



20,488,359
trees planted since 2005

22,202

girls and boys took part in Vi Agroforestry programmes.



136,898
New farmers families using Agroforestry & SALM practices.

1,016
Hectares of destroyed land have been restored.

129
New support groups to form corporatives and to be registered

39,309
House holds with renewable energy/energy saving technology

38,927
Farmers, have access to financial services such as savings & loans groups.

71,474
Houses holds with new enterprises

9,899
House holds supported to construct water harvesting structures

136,898 Farmers families using SALM practices

www.viagroforestry.org

About Vi Agroforestry

Vi Agroforestry is a Swedish development organisation working with local communities in East Africa; Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania to fight poverty and climate change through Agroforestry and sustainable agriculture land management. These countries have been severely affected by deforestation and climate change causing devastating effects on both humans and nature. We have so far contributed to the planting of over 148 million trees and supported over 2.4 million farmer families, to improve their livelihoods. Our vision is a sustainable environment that enables women and men living in poverty to improve their lives.

<p>Vision </p> <p>A sustainable environment that enables women and men living in poverty to improve their lives.</p>	<p>Mission </p> <p>Fighting poverty and climate change – together. Through agroforestry and strengthening of farmers’ organisations, to empower smallholder farmer families to reduce poverty, hunger, and deforestation, and contribute to increased biodiversity.</p>
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Vi Agroforestry fights poverty and climate change together through agroforestry.

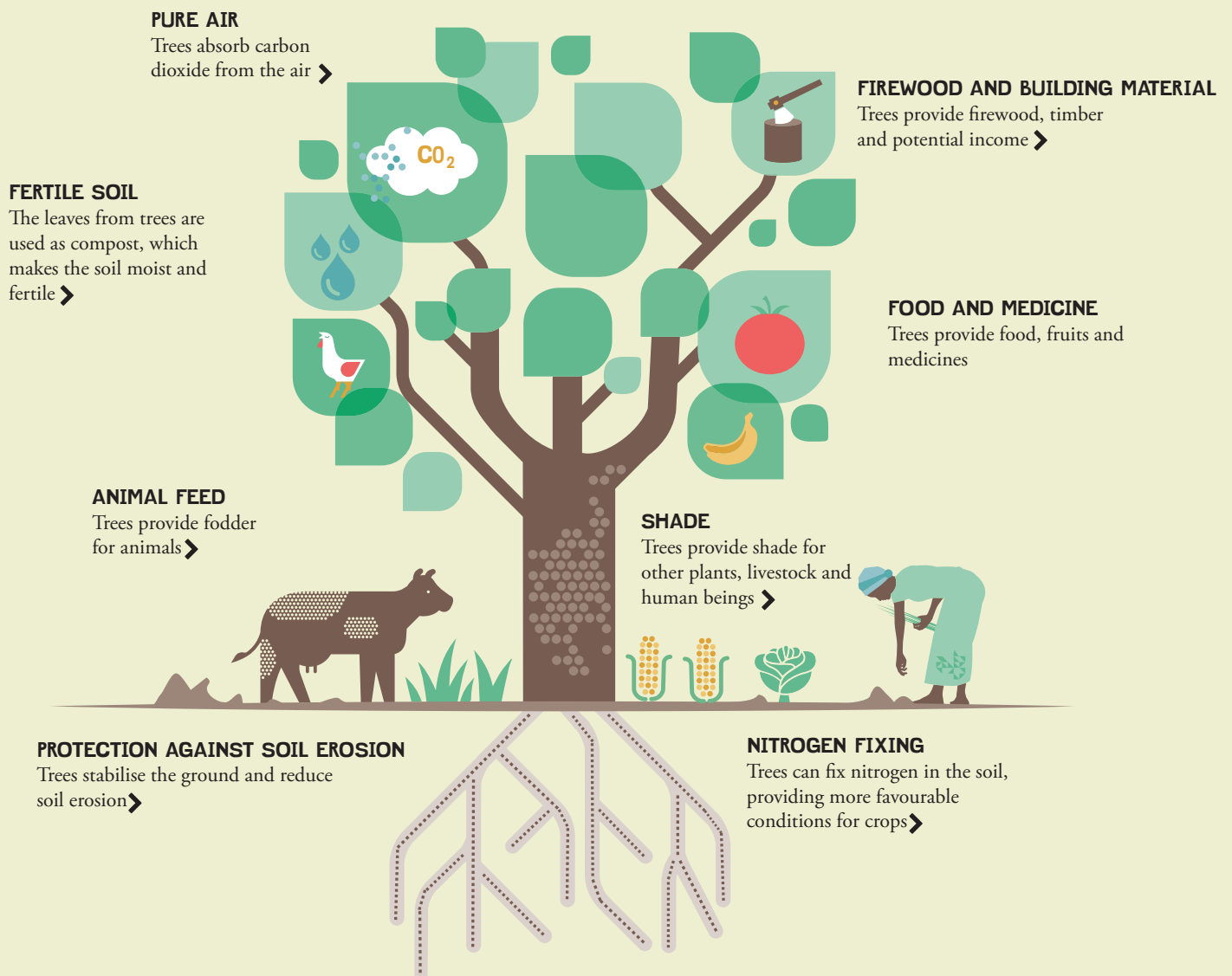
One of the biggest threats to development in Africa is climate change. The unreliable rainfalls make it difficult for farmers to plant their crops. Drought and soil erosion ruin the land and crops fail. Those already vulnerable are hit the hardest. Sustainable agriculture contributes to the mitigation of climate change and protects against the negative effects of climate change.



How do we work?

We recognise that the world is changing faster than ever. Poverty and hunger are increasing. The climate crisis, environmental depletion, financial uncertainty, conflicts, gender inequality, gender-based violence, and continuously shrinking democratic space add to the challenges. Human rights can never be taken for granted. They are indisputable and must be defended and reconquered - every single day.

As such Vi Agroforestry works to sustainably improve livelihoods for smallholder farmer families in Sub-Saharan Africa through increased climate change resilience, food security, higher incomes and greater equality between women and men. Through agroforestry and by strengthening the capacity of democratic farmer organisations our work empowers smallholder farmer families to reduce poverty, hunger, and deforestation, and contribute to increased biodiversity.





Stephanie Mukabagorora, Photo: Eva Larsson

Our work contributed mainly to 5 of the global Sustainable Development Goals:

1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 CLIMATE
ACTION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY

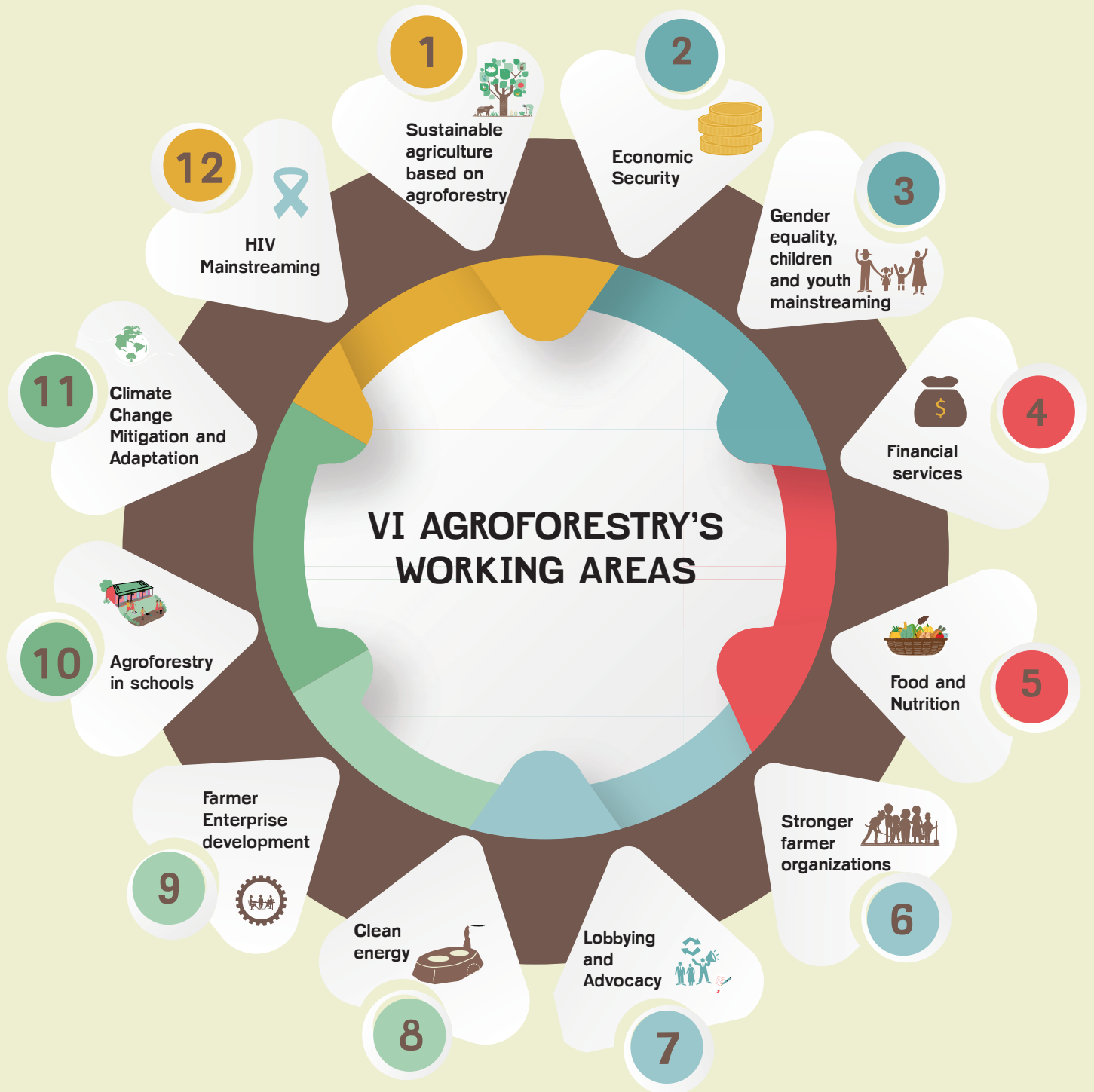


15 LIFE
ON LAND



Working areas in Rwanda

During the 16 year period in Rwanda, Vi Agroforestry and partners have positively contribute to;





Areas of operation in Rwanda

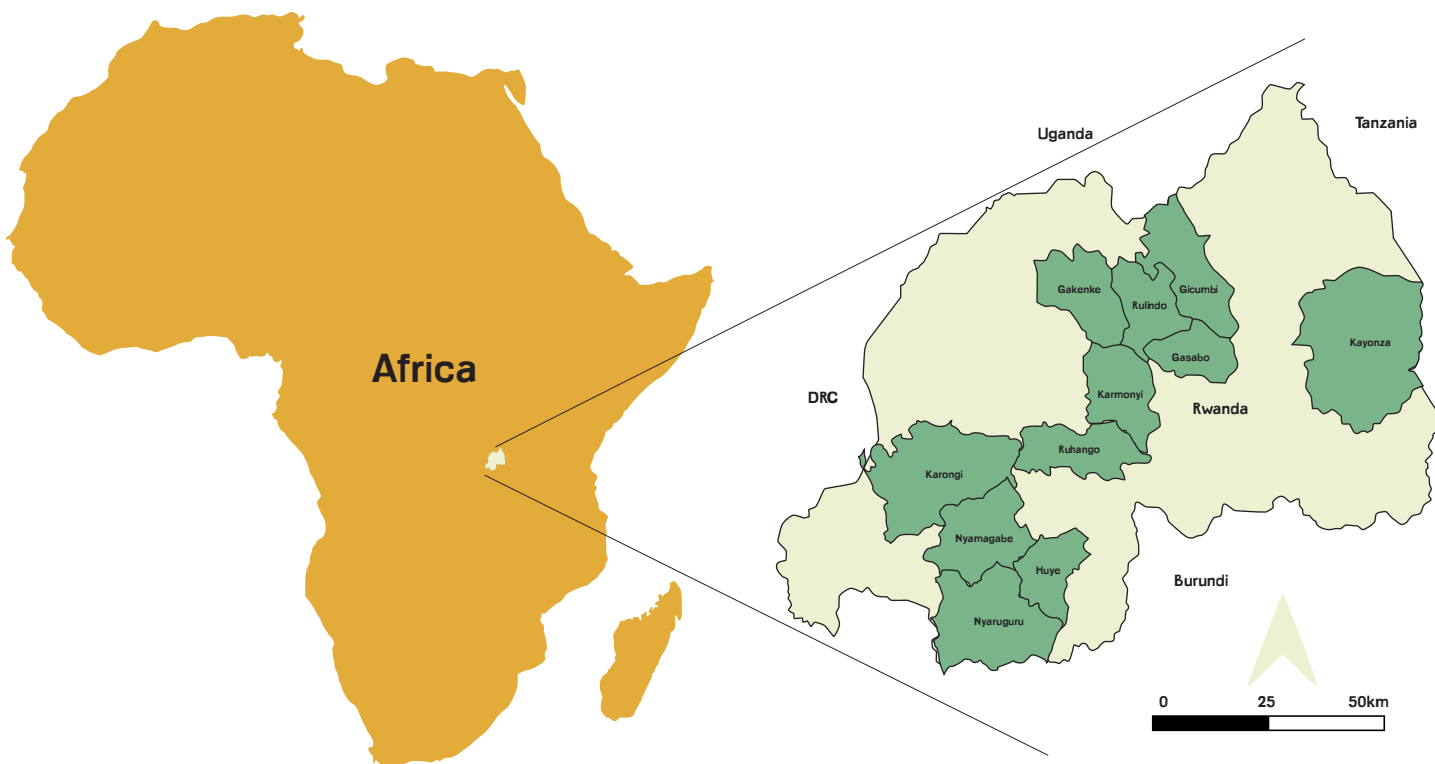
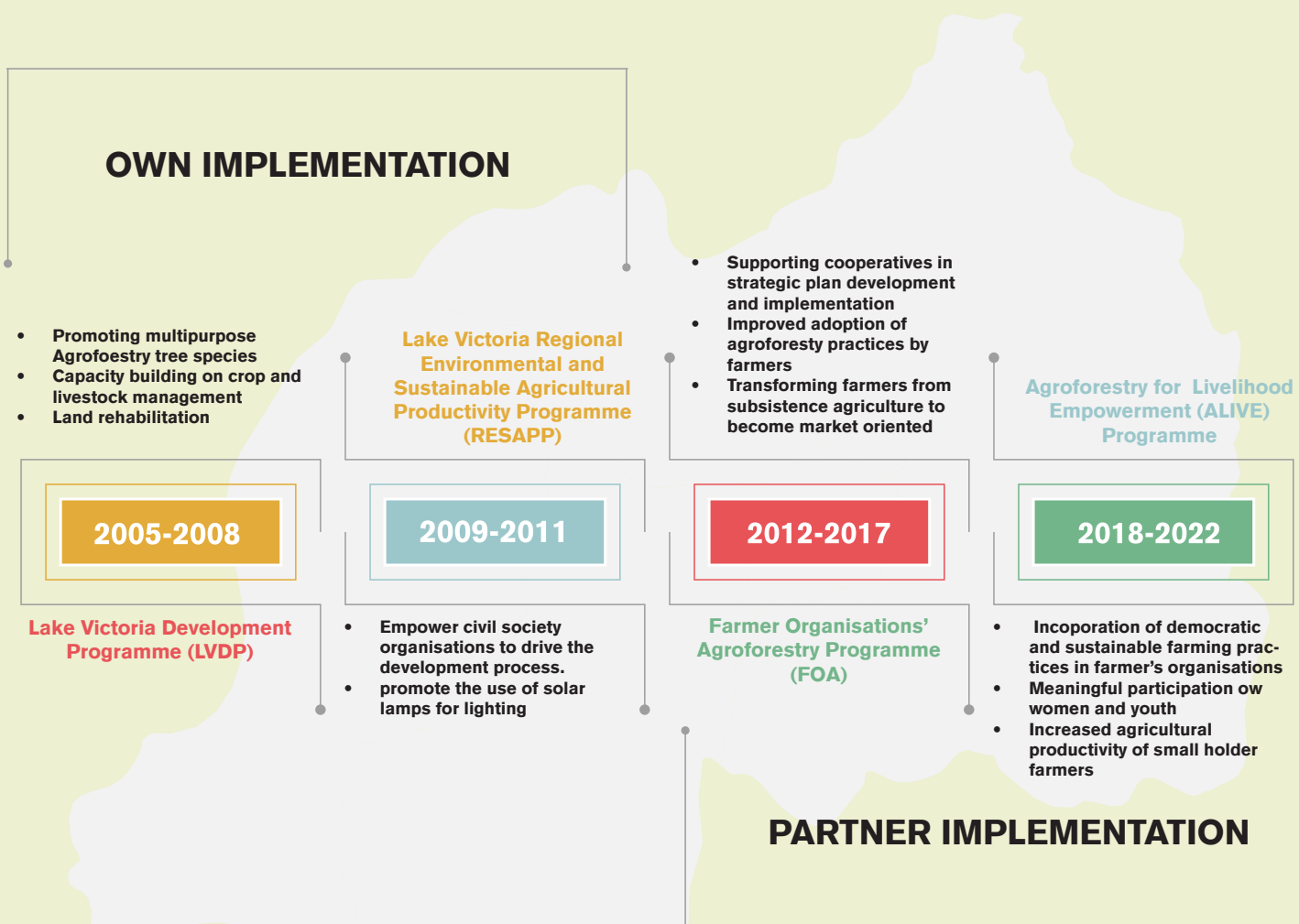


Photo - Vi Agroforestry

The Vi Agroforestry Rwanda Programme

Vi Agroforestry has implemented four programs in Rwanda since the inception of its first program in 2005. The strategies were carefully developed after assessing the countries needs.



	LVDP 2005-2008	RESAPP 2009-2011	FOA 2012-2017	ALIVE 2018-2022
Tot/Rwf	1,538,294,062	3,003,578,247	4,840,118,897	4,063,780,706
Tot/SEK	15,858,702	30,964,724.20	53,312,027	37,536,871

Taking actions

To actualise the ambition of the programmes, the following methods and strategies were applied.

Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

The HRBA is the foundation for all our programmes. In Rwanda, this meant that we worked towards a constructive engagement of duty bearers by rights holders while supporting the duty bearers to enable them to fulfil the rights of, in this case, farmer communities through farmers' organisations.

Strategic partnerships

Working with the civil society organisations has been a key strategic point especially engaging them to complement the human resources and skills for the fulfilment of identified rights and for scaling up the impact. Local Advocacy work was coordinated such that the common issues identified in the partner organisations can be solved. Strategic partners played an important role in advocacy at local and national level. They support the core partners in terms of capacity development.

Organisation development

The role of farmer organisations in mobilising and reaching out to small holder farmers was important for engaging farmers at the grassroots level. We supported farmer organisations in identifying their capacity gaps and developing actions geared towards increasing the level of efficiency and effectiveness.

Financial Literacy and Access to financial service

The right to adequate standard of living is universal. By applying sustainable farming technologies boosting productivity, market-oriented agriculture, building strong value chains and through increased access to financial services, small-holder farmers were economically empowered to grow their enterprises thus improving livelihoods. The programmes used the value chain development approach to enable farmers, especially women and youth, to realise a higher economic growth. Market-oriented production and value-addition was promoted, whereby small-holder farmers are able to capture a larger percentage of the final product and secure long-term market access. Partners were supported to identify agriculture value chains which required different levels of financial inputs, encouraging their members to save and be able to make viable investments. Through scaling up of enterprises and collective marketing initiatives supported by partners, farmers were able to market their produce at competitive prices leading to an increase in income for the farmer families.

Sustainable Agricultural Land Management and Agroforestry

Supporting farmer organisations in identifying their capacity gaps and develop actions geared towards increasing the level of efficiency and effectiveness. The farmer organisations support their members in employing agroforestry and climate smart agriculture as an approach to realise food security, secure the food systems and reduce poverty as well as adaptation and mitigation of climate change while enhancing agro-ecosystems sustainable functioning. The programmes increased focus on landscape approach using conservation, agriculture and other land uses to address increasing complexity of widespread environmental, social and political challenges transcending conventional management of resources and economic growth boundaries.



Garatia Mukamurenzi, Photo- Lisa Brunzell

Household Road Maps (HRM) and Gender transformation

Enhancing the role of women, children and youth as drivers of poverty reduction and combating climate change; recognizing the connection to gender equality; while safeguarding the environment for current and future generations was key in addressing challenges faced by the smallholder farmer families. A gender lens was employed in all interventions towards ensuring inclusion of women and youth in decision making, leadership roles, and in value chain development. A gender analysis was done to inform programme interventions and promote gender equality. Gender based financial management including budgeting was introduced where the tracking of allocation of resources between men and women was done using "Fair Resource Allocation system" (FRAS).

Leave no one behind

Vi Agroforestry worked in an inclusive manner where no one is left behind - in line with the UN Agenda 2030. This meant taking special care to include and empower people in a vulnerable and marginalized situation. Fighting the norms and structures in society that shut groups of people out from having influence and enjoying their human rights.

Participatory extension

Vi Agroforestry, utilises participatory extension models, where innovative farmers plug the extension gap. The innovative farmers called "model farmers" are capacitated through training, and user friendly manuals so they support and train their peers. Model farmers commit to develop their farms to demonstrate to others the benefits of sustainable practices, with support from extension staff from cooperatives and Vi Agroforestry. Model Farmers are supported by community facilitators who mobilize and support in the local training facilitation. If there are challenges, the cooperative extension are called to support.



Photo- Magnifique Ingabire



Photo - Vi Agroforestry

Conclusions and recommendations moving forward

Lessons Learnt

Throughout the 16 years, Vi Agroforestry has accumulated lessons that are important for other development actors and stakeholders. This is summarised below.

Inadequate land sizes: Planning smallholder farmers interventions in Rwanda should consider the limited agricultural land sizes available. This means there is reduced potential to extend the area under production and focus should be more on increasing yield per unit area.

Agroforestry projects are long-term commitments requiring working with partners with a strong presence in the community as a prerequisite for success. Satisfactory results are dependent on trust with communities, dedicated community representatives, professional staff, and ownership of the implementation by farmers.

Gender mainstreaming is necessary for any development interventions to succeed. Tools such as **Household Road Map** facilitate inclusive (men, women, and youth/children) gender dialogues, where each person gets to understand their rights, roles, and responsibilities, create an opportunity for each person to; own and utilise resources, participate in decision making at household and community level. This helps to also demystify gender equality at local and household level.

Agroforestry needs to be streamlined in **schools programs** at early age. Involvement of young people in agriculture is possible only when they are supported and engaged at an early stage.

Partner organisations should consider introducing **youth-based agroforestry dependent programmes** such as beekeeping projects, tree nurseries, gardening, and small animal husbandry like poultry, which do not need land ownership and have proved to be successful.

Soil conservation need **landscape approaches** than isolated membership-based to be effective. Partner organisations that closely collaborate with District government organisations had a decent work relationship. Extension emphasis should be placed on improving the working relationships with local government extension agents engaging and capacitate

Voluntary Contact farmers and facilitators.

Recommendations

Stakeholders should support and invest in sustainable land management (terracing, ditches, gully control) at community rather than at farm level.

All actors should embrace transformative gender approaches, to realise development results in all sectors.

Support to farmer organisations should be both technical and financial, including supporting them to strengthen their own governance and internal systems.

Inclusive models for cooperatives to add youth and business management need to be strengthened.





Meet the people





Photo-Elin Larsson

Known as the land of a thousand hills, Rwanda is highly susceptible to soil erosion which affects farm productivity. For Laurence Mukandama the problem of poor farming conditions did not only affect her harvest. It cost her the life of her first-born child.

Every time it rained, we watched all the fertilizer get washed away. The result was often a very bad harvest and almost no food for my family, she says.

When her first born child got sick the family couldn't afford the hospital.

I am still thinking about this every day even though it is more than 20 years ago. If we just had the money he would have been alive today, she says.

Today Laurence living situation has changed. Through her farmer organisation she got training from Vi Agroforestry in making terraces and other sustainable agriculture and land management techniques. The harvest is not only enough for the family, they can also sell some of the crops.

Nowadays she is sharing her knowledge by training others on how to fight climate change by adopting sustainable

land management practices such as well managed terraces.

My life has changed! I am so happy that we have managed this. My family eats nutritious healthy food from my farm, we have insurance and I have even start dreaming about a new house, she says.

“ Every time it rained, we watched all the fertilizer get washed away. The result was often a very bad harvest and almost no food for my family. ”



Nkizinkiko Aaron

Photo- Nyigeza Mark

Nkizinkiko Aaron is a model farmer who joined Vi Agroforestry activities in 2014.

To kick start his journey he planted many trees and shrubs like Grevillea, Sesbania and Caliandra on his farm. Now he is able to easily get fodder to feed his cows and affirms that their daily milk production has increased.

“ I have enough milk to feed my family and even to sell. ”

“I have enough milk to feed my family and even to sell” he says. From the cows I get manure , which I use in my farm and has in turn increased my food production *“My family is happy”*, said Nkizinkiko.

Nkizinkiko was also trained on gender equality and house road map tool and now testifies that this has improved the decision making in his family. He plans together with his wife, every year the set family to achieve.

He compares the support from Vi Agroforestry to the story of family growing crops and birds’ survival as they say in Kinyarwanda *“Ni nkaho umuhinzi yakuye inyoni”*.





Photo - Vi Agroforestry

Celestin Ndayambaje

Celestin Ndayambaje is a young man living in Kibyagira cell, Sekera village, Uwinkingi sector of Nyamagabe district. He is the chairperson of Twuzuzanye youth group of KOABITU cooperative, one of the cooperative members of UNICOOPAGI cooperative union. Together with his wife Vestine Uwimbabazi they have 4 children and are currently working together to cultivate their farm and raise their children. “Before being trained on gender equality and the Household Road Map everyone used to work on their own and there was no unity in their home as everyone would do their own things without thinking of the other. The wife is now involved in decision making, and this helped her a lot, before she was not allowed to do anything, the husband was deciding everything to be done at home.

After receiving a training on gender equality they adopted the use of the Household Road Map, where they decided to legalise their marriage, a long pending request by the wife, which the husband had not felt was important. But after this training he changed his view of things and realised they were a team and involving his wife would benefit both in building their future. This formed the beginning of their beautiful journey, working together as a team. They also received different trainings on SALM and now he attests on how their lives have improved. “*My wife doesn't have to travel far to fetch firewood, I have planted enough shrubs to ease her burden*”. “*I am a happy man and my family is happy*” He says. Entering in Ndayambaje Celestin house the first thing you

see is the household roadmap vision journey hanged in the sitting room. he tells us it's a reminder of the commitment they have for each other, “*I value her input and now I see her as an equal partner, she is a wise woman*” he says. The family's vision journey from 2020 to 2022 was to increase farm production, buy small animals, more land, pay school fees, pay medical insurance, and rehabilitate their house.

They have so far managed to reach 85% of their targets; they have 8 piglets, bought land of 200,000Rwf, planted trees and grass on terraces and production has been increasing year by year, and the wife has a small business of selling local beer. Now they can pay health insurance, and school fees for their children.

With an improved social status, they had the confidence to contest for cell leadership position and won the elections. Today we celebrate them!

“ My wife doesn't have to travel far to fetch firewood, I have planted enough shrubs to ease her burden. ”



Angelique

Photo - Vi Agroforestry

Angelique is 25 years and a mother of 4 children. She lives in the rural area of Gasogi village with her family. In the year 2020 she joined Twitezimbere Cooperative which is supported by Benishyaka/Vi Agroforestry under the Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Agriculture Project, where she received trainings on financial literacy, village saving and loan association (VSLA) and on sustainable agriculture land management (SALM) practices to support her adapt to the impacts of climate change and she is now reaping big. She has so far planted over 2,000 Agroforestry trees, received a pig which has since multiplied to 8 pigs, and set up gabions in her farm to control soil erosion. From her farm she produces vegetables for sell and for home consumption.

After the trainings, Angelique joined the sweater knitting group, where they knit and sell scarves, sweaters, and other products to the local market. From all her proceeds she is now able to pay the national medical insurance for her family and can afford medicine, food costs and everyday basic needs. She hopes to grow this enterprise to enable her access bigger market soon; “*much money is yet to come*”, she said proudly.

“ We have challenges on how to cheaply buy raw materials, machines are few compared to the numbers of youth trained and marketing our products is still a problem as we live in rural areas but with the skills impacted to us, this is bound to change. ”

Like any business, they face challenges; “*we have challenges on how to cheaply buy raw materials, machines are few compared to the numbers of youth trained and marketing our products is still a problem as we live in rural areas but with the skills impacted to us this is bound to change...*”

Her future plan is to supplement her knitting income with farm produce as she owns a small piece of land (less than 1ha) which is not enough to produce food and income. In 2021 her average annual income from the farm was 100,000 Rwf (the equivalent to USD100), from the sale of vegetables. She thinks complimenting these two enterprises has been a smart move in securing her future.



Sylvia Iradukunda, Photo - Victory Ishimwe



Photo - Ylva Olsson



Felicien Murindahabi, Photo - Victory Ishimwe



Eraste Habimana, Photo - Victory Ishimwe



Odette Mugurirwa, Photo - Victory Ishimwe



Photo - Magnifique Ingabire



Photo - Vi Agroforestry



Photo -Victory Ishimwe

Violette Kabaganwa

Violette Kabaganwa is a farmer living in Nyamagabe District Kitabi Sector Mujuga Cell from DUFATANYENSHUTI Cooperative.

Before the trainings, the family faced many challenges , with a small house, shortage of food to feed the family, low crop yields due to poor agricultural practices, difficulties finding firewood and water for domestic use, difficulties in paying school fees for their children and regular misunderstandings between the couple.

Violette and her husband Faustin Munyakanza joined UNICOOPAGI where they received trainings on sustainable agricultural practices to increase their crop yields , and equal participation of both man and woman in Agricultural value chain. Through the trainings the mindsets of both Violette and her husband changed and they began to take the advice from the agronomists seriously. The husband was selected as a community facilitator in that area, and this helped the family a lot, because he got many training and applied most of all the practices he learnt in his farms. The couple decided to shift from unsustainable conventional

farming methods to sustainable agriculture which improved their farm productivity. They increased their wheat production and as such they were able to invest in the education of their 6 children, and they have since been able to build a bigger house for their family.

The couple now understands their different responsibilities towards the household development and now they work together and support each other. Due to the water challenges in the area the husband set up a water tank for the family, reducing the time spent looking for the water. He also constructed a biogas to reduce the burden for searching for firewood by encourage recycling of biomass on the farm and also providing clean energy for the household.



Photo - Vi Agroforestry



Yvonne Mukeshimana

Photo - Vi Agroforestry

Yvonne is just one among the many disadvantaged youths, in Kayonza district Rwanda. An area that is drought prone and degraded. The situation in the area has been worsened by the COVID 19 pandemic compounded by the existing effects of climate change. Among the challenges facing the youth in Kayonza include dropping out from school as teens to become mothers due to lack of opportunities to earn a living, finances and agricultural knowledge.

Vi Agroforestry's local partner, Benishyaka, works to support girls like Yvonne and other young people by giving them a chance to secure livelihood by teaching them sustainable agriculture cultivation. *"When I joined the YESAP project, whose objective is to secure the future of the youth while contributing to sustainable food systems, I learnt how to farm vegetables Using compost manure and mulching, on the field boundary I also planted agroforestry trees which increased my vegetable yields, and now I have enough to sell and some for home consumption. my children are getting nutritious vegetables and my kids are healthy",* Said Yvonne.

Benishyaka, has also introduced and encouraged them to be involved in study circles and pulling resources together to do savings and loaning among themselves. Those who borrow

Meet 23-year-old Yvonne Mukeshimana, a mother of two children (twins), a member of Twitezimbere youth Cooperative, working in Nyamirama sector of Kayonza district Rwanda. Yvonne had an early pregnancy while she was still a teen (15 years), which led to her dropping out school from secondary level 2, and is now a young singlemother, amongst many problems, she struggled to feed her children.

"When I joined the project, I learned to grow vegetables with compost soil and manure. At the edge of the vegetable garden, I plant trees, which helped me increase my harvest. Now my children and i have enough both to eat and sell", says Yvonne.

pay a small interest, and the proceeds are shared after a period of one year. The money she is getting from farming activities, helps her alot towards paying health insurance for her and her children as well as clothes ,shoes and she can buy things like sugar, salt... , . She said that life at home has greatly changed.

“ When I joined the project, I learnt to farm vegetables with compost soil and manure. At the edge of the vegetable garden, I plant trees, which helped me increase my harvest. Now my children and I have enough, both to eat and sell. ”



Photo - Magnifique Ingabire

Nyirankundimana

“I am now making more than 600,000 Rwf (644usd) in a month from the sale of fruits and eggs” Watch out for me I will soon be a millionaire” says Nyirankundimana Olive a model farmer living in Musave Village, Gakenke District, Rwanda. In 2016 Vi Agroforestry started working with COTUMU cooperatives where she was a member and it was here that she was trained, on agroforestry and farm management and farm enterprise development and selection. Nyirakundimana took interest in the fruit enterprise and in September 2017, she established a tree tomato farm plot planting at least 400 trees. When asked why tree tomatoes she say “I wanted to contribute to a healthy society and since am a farmer the best way was to farm tree tomatoes which are known for its health benefits”.

Her first harvest would come almost a year later in August 2018, where she harvested a bountiful harvest. In a week she harvested 60-70kilos of “*Tamarillo*” as she calls them which is a Rwandese name for tree tomatoes. A kilo of tree tomatoes fruits retails at 700 Rwf at Gakenke market which is an equivalent of 75cents US dollar. However, as she sells, she also saves in a Village Savings and Loans Associations. Currently, Nyirankundimana is able to harvest more than 135Kgs of Tree tomatoes per week which gives her an income of about 98,000 Rwf (105usd) per week which translates to over 390,000 Rwf (418usd) a month.

Nyirankundimana soon realized she had more income and came up with a new idea to diversify and increase her business enterprise. So, she invested one million Rwandan francs (1072usd) to start chicken farming. She bought 400 chickens for rearing and provision of eggs for sale. Four months later, chickens started laying eggs and now Nyirankundimana is supplying 380 eggs every day at 70 Rwf per egg. This business gives her a monthly return of 270,000 Rwf (290usd) per month. “I am now making more than 600,000 Rwf (644usd) in a month from the sale of fruits and eggs” Watch out for me I will soon be a millionaire; she exclaims can you believe it? Am no longer just a smallholder farmer I now have the knowledge and skill for a business!

“

I am now making more than 600,000 Rwf (644usd) in a month from the sale of fruits and eggs. Watch out for me I will soon be a millionaire.

”

She says one of the things she learned is to work hard and think big! She says important is to identify what you love doing and strategically tap into the needs of the community. She says each enterprise works differently it is important to check compatibility to your resources and have a plan for example plan with the seasons of the year to survive the demand and supply curve as the prices will affect the quantity of the products in the market. As we end she says her four

children are what motivates her to work hard as she wants a better future for them. She says ” *I am capable to pay school fees for all my children and provide them with other school materials and needs like clothes. I’m also able to provide food for my family and pay medical fees, through the benefit I got from my farming activities especially fruit enterprise that I have known after being trained by the cooperative*”.



Sandrine Tuyizere

Photo - Vi Agroforestry

Sandrine Tuyizere, is a member of the environmental school club at Groupe Scolaire Icyizere, in Nyamirama sector, Kayonza district. She is 14 years old and in Primary five.

Through Benishyaka, she was given a rabbit and after giving birth, she sold some rabbits and bought shoes and books, and helped her parents to pay 8,000 Rwandan francs for school feeding fees.

Sandrine is happy that now she is eating at school like other, before she was not part of the school feeding program because her parents were not able to get the small money that they are supposed to contribute. My family can eat meat now easily, added Sandrine.

Now, she has 8 rabbits and hopes that before the end of the semester, she will be able to help her parents to pay the contribution needed for school feeding fees. She wants to continue rearing rabbits and be able to pay school fees for secondary school on a better school.

Kinishya primary school is one of the school worked with Vi Agroforestry in Gicumbi district.



Diane Akimana

Photo - Eugene

19 year old Diane Akimana, is a student in Kinishya primary school, where is a member of the environmental club with 40 members (28girls and 12boys). They received trainings on agroforestry, climate change and nursery management guided by Sustainable Agricultural Land Management (SALM) booklet for children developed by Vi Agroforestry. Through the club they establish a nursery every year, and trees from that nursery are planted around the river which is near the school. Other trees are given to neighbouring school. Fruit trees are planted at school, and students take some of those fruit trees and plant them at home.

Diane is practicing at home what she learnt at school, and now neighbours who don't have a pupil on that are copying from her, they are interested on wh

At school they also have vegetable gardens, student eat vegetables and for environmental club members, this reduces feeding fees, they pay to augment the government subsidy for school feeding.



Concessa Ayinkamiye

Photo - Magnifique Ingabire

“Since I joined the Village Savings and Loans Association group, farming has become much more safer I use it as an insurance, I can borrow money to use in my farming activities” Concessa Ayinkamiye, shared..

Before Concessa was not able to give collateral required by banks for accessing their loans and as such was not able to get loans to use in her farm. However, through the VSLA She requested for a loan which was granted and she bought a pig that later gave birth to 6 piglets. She sold some of the piglets earning her enough to buy a cow and pay off her loan. The cow provides milk for the family and also manure that she use in her farm. “I am happy with the progress I am making, I can comfortably pay my kids school fees and buy beautiful igitenge and Umushanana (traditional ceremonial dresses) like the one am wearing today “, Concessa says laughing

“ Since I joined the Village Savings and Loans Association group, farming has become much more safer I use it as an insurance, I can borrow money to use in my farming activities.”

'We have now managed to subscribe to the National Health Insurance', as a common answer in Gicumbi District. Where Vi Agroforestry works. Many farmers were not able to pay the annual health insurance fee. That meant they could not afford going to the local clinic when anyone in their families got sick. But now things have changed for the better.

'We can keep the kids longer in school', is another standard response example. Farmers can now pay school fees, buy uniforms and required learning materials.

Four VSLA groups of Twisungane cooperative with 111 members in Muko sector, Gicumbi district came to together to make a major investment. Majority of them never dreamt of entering a bank, but after been trained, they learnt basic financial literacy and borrowed money from a local bank, which they used to build a house and now are renting it out to one of the cooperatives earning them a monthly income of 24,000 Rwanda Francs per month which is equally shared to all members .

“ We have now managed to subscribe to the National Health Insurance. ”



Photo - Vi Agroforestry

The participation of citizens in the planning and budgeting processes



Photo - Vi Agroforestry

Farmers attending training in budget monitoring

Together with Action Aid Rwanda we implemented a project called: **Promoting Smallholder Farmers Advocacy Skills on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security (PASAF)** which aimed at building the capacity of farmers to demand services, claim their rights from government and other service providers.

We trained the farmers to equip them with skills to identify their needs, utilize platforms in their reach to advocate and capacity to engage the duty bearers and policy makers. To also allow us to engage a wider audience we used Radio, and TV Talk Shows to reach out to the farmers and raise awareness on their roles in participating in planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring of budget allocations in agriculture. During the outreach we also invited different key stakeholders for example Director General in the Unit of Planning; Chantal INGABIRE who joined the conversation with a farmer leader and provided a platform for the farmers to call and ask questions. It was from such engagements that farmers were taken through various steps of farmer participation, status, and their roles in public stakeholder engagement for national budgeting.

Now the citizens know and are aware that they can have an influence in the budget allocation. For example, if more farmers, contribute their 50% subsidy program they compel the government to increase their counterpart. The notion that allocating to agriculture is a social cost burden was dispelled as an investment. Increase in agriculture productivity, has a direct effect on the GDP increase and contributes to national economic growth.

According to a farmer leader, Ignace Mugenzi during the radio and TV talk show; *“More still needs to be done to sensitize farmers especially women farmers to join this process so it can make an impact in their lives.”*

“ More still needs to be done to sensitize farmers especially women farmers to join this process so it can make an impact in their lives. ”



Partners

- **COOPRORIZ** works with watershed management for improving farmers' livelihood in the Kamonyi district.
- **COTUMU** teaches agroforestry methods for sustainable maize production to farmers in the Gakenke district.
- **Koperative Abizerwa Byumba (KAB)** helps fruit framers in the Gicumbi district be more resilient to climate change.
- **UCOCARU** is a union for coffee producers in the Rulindo District. The union helps coffee farmers increase their productivity and sustainability – thereby improving their livelihoods.
- **UNICOOPAGI** is a union working for economic empowerment of farmers in the Nyamagabe district through agroforestry.
- **ZAMUKA**, a cooperative in the Gasabo district teaches their members everything from how to market their products to how to secure their lands from droughts, floods and landslides.
- **BENISHYAKA** is focusing on youth empowerment for sustainable agriculture in the Kayonza district.
- **The INADES FORMATION RWANDA** is focused on national and international advocacy. They map how well Rwanda has managed to implement international commitments under the Maputo and Malabo Declarations, gathering learnings and recommendations to empower smallholder farmers.
- **ACTION AID RWANDA (AAR)** is supporting our other partners in advocacy and how to engage in improving national policies on sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, food security and social accountability.
- **Association Des Amis De La nature (ANA)**, worked in Gicumbi district. ANA is a non governmental organization that aims to protect nature, resolving ecological problems, fighting the numerous threats that affect the environment and improving people's life condition. The partnership with Vi Agroforestry was to get "Empowered children and youth engaged in preserving, protecting and benefiting from their environment."
- **Rwanda Environmental Care (REC)** was implimenting a children's project whose objective was to get "Empowered children and youth engaged in preserving, protecting and benefiting from their environment." This project was implemented in Gicumbi
- **RECOR (Rwanda Environmental Conservation Organization)** is a national environmental conservation NGO, working on climate change, biodiversity conservation, renewable energy, education for sustainable development, forestry, agroforestry, water, hygiene and sanitation. The objective of the partnership was to get "Empowered children and youth engaged in preserving, protecting and benefiting from their environment.", in Gasabo district
- **IMBARAGA** is a National Farmer Organization in Rwanda that enhances farmers' productivity and competitiveness, the partnership with Vi Agroforestry was for "Farmer's Livelihoods improvement and sustainable environment management project, in Base and Tumba sectors of Rulindo district"
- **The National Cooperatives Confederation of Rwanda (NCCR)** is the umbrella organization of Cooperative Movement with mandate to promote and represent the interests of the cooperative members. The partnership with Vi Agroforestry aimed for "Reduction of barriers humping Farmers Cooperatives development in Rwanda through Strengthening, Advocacy, Lobby and Communication mechanisms" wich supported National Cooperatives Confederation of Rwanda to achieve some of its objectives.

- Vi supported **INGABO** to implement the Integrated Management of Nyagasozi watershed in Kamonyi District" The Project goal is to empower farmers of Nyagasozi Watershed area by increasing agricultural production through environment conservation.
- Vi Supported **DUHAMIC-ADRI** to promote gender justice and Integration of agroforestry practices in vulnerable households in Mbogo sector of Rulindo District.

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Photo - Lisa Brunzell



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Photo - Olivier Dusabimana



Donors

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Photo - Magnifique Ingabire



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