RGB
Rwanda Governance Board

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF UMUGANDA

2007-2016

OCTOBER 2017

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FOREWORD

"Umuganda is one of the reasons we are moving forward, working together and believing in our common goal of transforming the lives of our families".

H.E. PAUL KAGAME, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA.

Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) is pleased to present this publication on the impact of Umuganda under the theme "Impact Assessment of Umuganda: 2007 - 2016". Umuganda is one of the traditional tools of mutual help rooted in Rwandan culture. This practice was re-invented after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi by the Government of Rwanda (GoR) as one of Rwanda's Home Grown Solutions (HGS) to address societal challenges.

Umuganda contributions are of two dimensions. Firstly, it contributes to the socio-economic development of the community through infrastructure development, environmental protection and cleanness as well as the implementation of government programs. Secondly, through meetings held in its framework, Umuganda contributes to information sharing and fostering social cohesion and peace building in the country.

This assessment focuses on the performance of Umuganda from 2007 to 2016 and presents features that make it unique. It analyses the program set up, its achievements and impact to the community. The report also analyses citizen satisfaction and participation in Umuganda program.

As this report shows, there has been a significant increase of Umuganda monetary value, from 4 billion Frw in 2007 to 19 billion Frw in 2016. This means that economic benefits of Umuganda multiplied almost five times in just one decade. Umuganda was particularly key to the successful implementation of Nine and Twelve Years Basic Education (9&12YBE) program where it contributed nearly 62% of total cost of classrooms constructed.

The report also proposes policy responses to address identified challenges. These are related to flexibility and adaptability with urban/rural settings, coordination, monitoring and evaluation as well as sustainability of economic benefits and effectiveness of Umuganda.

This report is a collaborative achievement. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all partner institutions, particularly the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), which supported RGB in its production. Equally, I thank the RGB researchers (Dr. Félicien Usengumukiza, Sibylle Kamikazi, Justin Murwanashyaka, Ferdinand Mbonaruza, Anatole Mulindwa, Jean Damascène Nkusi and Angélique Kayitesi) and other experts, for their contribution to this study.

Going forward, RGB commits to monitor and spur the effectiveness of Umuganda and other governance innovations as part of our responsibility to preserve and promote HGS for their greater impact on national transformation.

We trust you will enjoy the reading.

Prof. Anastase SHYAKA
CEO, Rwanda Governance Board

I. Introduction

Umuganda or community works can be translated as "coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome" [1]. It is one of the precious tools of mutual help in the Rwandan culture. "Umuganda day" called umunsi w'Umuganda, is designed as a day where citizens contribute to the building of their country. The concept of Umuganda originates from Kinyarwanda word meaning woods used to construct traditional house[2].

The start of Umuganda practice goes back to pre-colonial times; in traditional Rwandan culture members of the community would work together to solve social and economic problems for mutual benefit. This practice was notably extended to those who were very poor or incapacitated to take part in collective action.

The activities of the then Umuganda included, for instance, farming for those who were unable to do so due to either physical handicap or old age, building houses for the poor and providing transportation to medical facilities to those who were in need[3]. A group of households used to come together to share the burden of the work, making sure that everyone in the community had shelter and had their farms ready in time for the planting season[4].

In the same line, André Guichaoua (1991) confirms that Umuganda originates from Rwandan traditional practices by arguing that formal community works (Umuganda) takes roots from the existing traditional practice of mutual help which took place during major family and social issues like losing a family member, destruction of house or difficult works that required family or neighbour's help[5].

During colonial times, the master utilised this practice in his own interest by transforming Umuganda into forced labour mainly in the plantation of coffee, tea and road construction and hence the essence of Umuganda was almost lost[6]. After the colonial times, during the 1970's up to 1994, leaders tried to revitalise to help in social economic development but this later became the channel through which politicians used to pass their ideological propaganda message. From 1991, following the multiparty system in place, people started to resist participating in Umuganda because it was the ultimate rejection of the economic and political system at the time[7]. Umuganda served as a means of mass mobilisation during the 1994 genocide[8].

In the post-genocide period, Umuganda was reintroduced as one of the Rwanda's Home grown solutions; as means of the social and economic reconstruction of the country.

The developing and application of home grown solutions in development strategy signifies the use of cultural resources in mitigating effects of scarce resources as envisioned in vision 2020. Rwanda aims to become a modern united and prosperous nation founded on the positive values of its culture anchored on principles of accountability, transparency and efficiency in deploying scarce resources[9].

The Rwanda's medium term strategy – EDPRS I priority under "promoting decentralisation, citizen participation and empowerment, transparency and accountability" puts emphasize on using Umuganda in promoting citizen participation. (According to this strategy, participation in Umuganda activities should rise by 50% as should the revenues generated by these activities).

EDPRS II "priority one" under accountable governance also emphasizes strengthening of citizen participation and demand for accountability by using "home grown solutions" notably Umuganda to promote citizen participation.

Through a deep analysis of data gathered from the Citizen Report Card survey of 2016[10], this paper assesses the implementation of Umuganda and provides the citizens' perspective on the progress and challenges faced by the program.

II. Institution Set Up, Management and Coordination

Umuganda is a practice that takes root from Rwandan culture of self-help and cooperation. Given its significant contribution to community development, it was formalised through establishing its legal framework to enhance the development of local infrastructure in addition to strengthening friendship and conviviality among Rwandans.

Currently, the General Directorate in charge of Social welfare and Community Development in MINALOC coordinates Umuganda. It is regulated by the Law establishing community works[11], and the Prime Minister Order determining the attributions, organisation and functioning of "Community Works Supervising Committees" and their relations with other organs. These committees are established at each level of administration (from village level: Umudugudu) and are responsible for planning and supervising Umuganda activities.

Umuganda is always held on the last Saturday of the month. The population in consultation with relevant authorities may, however, where necessary, decide to carry out community work more than once a month. Umuganda takes place from 8:00 am to 11:00 pm. In the same way, upon agreement by the participants in the community works and the supervising committee, the starting hour for the community works may be subject to change. All able persons aged 18 to 65 years do Umuganda. However, a person above sixty-five (65) years of age who is willing may participate in the community works. Expatriates residing in Rwanda are also encouraged to participate in community works[12].

Umuganda timeline

FEB 1974

Under the Second Republic, Umuganda was officially launched on 2nd February 1974, and placed in the Ministry responsible for District development

2005 2006

The policy of umuganda was adopted

NOV 2007

The Law No 53/2007 governing community works was established

AUG 2009

On 24th August 2009 the Prime Minister's order No 58/03 determining the attributions, organisation, and functioning of community works supervisory committees and their relations with other organs was established

2013 2014

Since 2013-2014, Umuganda contribution was integrated into the national budget (MINALOC presentation, 2016)

22 February 2014 : President Paul Kagame joins Masaka residents in Umuganda to buil homes for vulnarable people

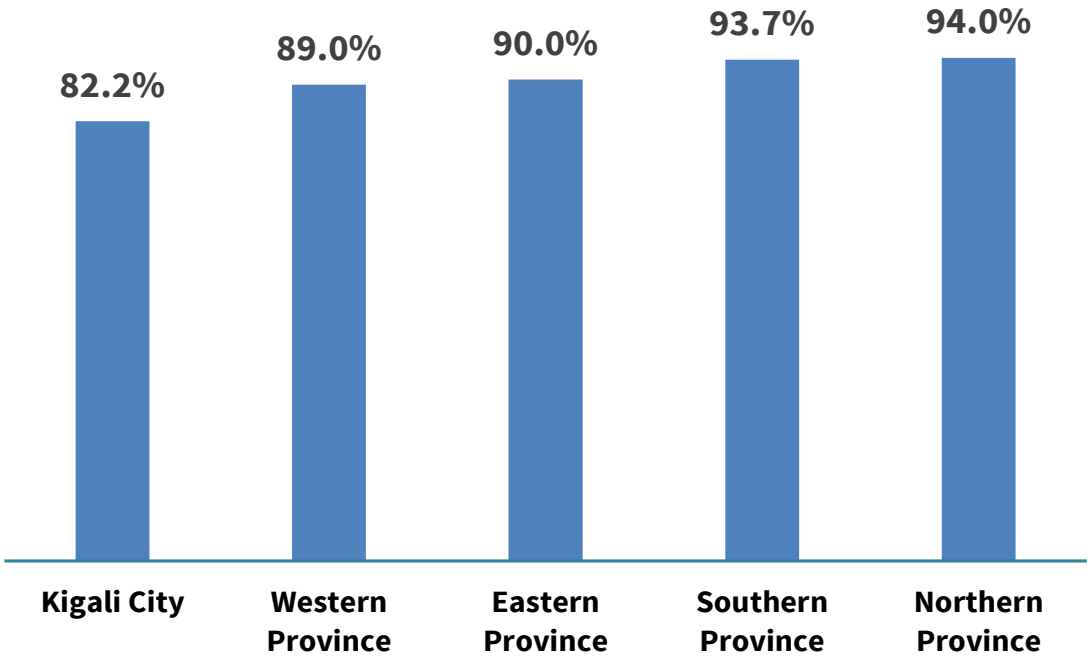
Upon consultations with the population, the Community Works Supervising Committee specifies the activities to be carried out, the place where they are to be carried out and the tools to be used. This information is communicated to the population through different media including notices posted at the Village office, if any, and at public places, at least seven (7) days before Umuganda takes place. Residents are requested to bring the appropriate tools for Umuganda. However, when the activities to be carried out require specific tools that the population may not find, the committee at that level provides the population with such tools. Acquisition fees for such tools are covered by the budget of the concerned level[13].

Apart from these legal provisions, the work done is organised by the community members and is done without remuneration. After community works, participants hold a meeting and are informed of the results, discuss different issues on the agenda and decide where the next community works shall take place and the activities to be performed. Community works provide also a forum to the local administration and the population to interact.

III. Citizens' Participation in Umuganda Program

Umuganda is one of the government's programs where a big number of Rwandan citizens participate. MINALOC indicates that the level of participation is high (average of 91.3% countrywide for the fiscal year 2015-2016)[14]. The target (in terms of participation) to be achieved by Umuganda every year, is calculated basing on the sum of days set aside (imibyizi) for all valid persons aged 18-65[15]. The graph below indicates the level of citizens' participation in Umuganda.

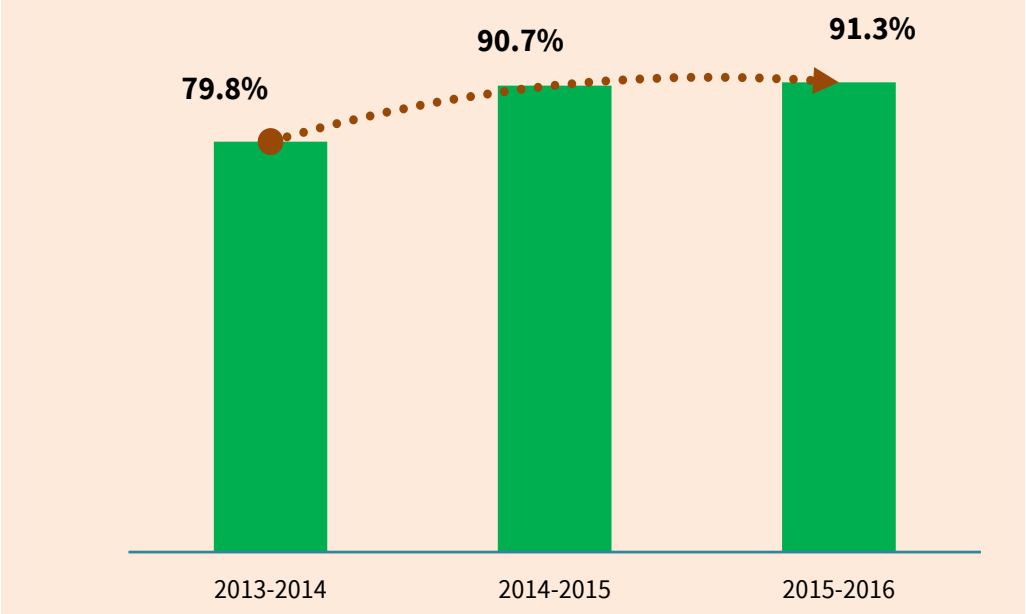
BAR GRAPH 1: PARTICIPATION LEVEL BY PROVINCE AND COK FROM JULY 2015-JUNE 2016



Source: MINALOC, Umuganda Annual Report, Kigali 2016.

One can say that the level of citizens' participation in Umuganda activities in all provinces is satisfying even though the CoK can do better; it has the lowest level of participation (82.2%) as the national average level is 91.3%. The Northern Province has the highest level of participation in Umuganda with 94.03%. The Southern Province attained 93% participation; the Eastern Province has 90% while the Western Province stands at 89%. Figures from MINALOC also show that this level of participation continues to increase as illustrated by the following graph.

BAR GRAPH 2 : EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL LEVEL OF CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION IN UMUGANDA FROM 2013-2016



Source: MINALOC, Umuganda annual reports: 2014, 2015, 2016.

The level of participation has increased by 4% from 87.8% in 2013-2014 to 91.3% in 2015-2016. This indicates the citizens' interest and commitment to building the country, and developing its infrastructure through public works.

IV. Main achievements of Umuganda

After the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, many programs were introduced to rebuild the country which was devastated. As an indigenous initiative[16], Umuganda was and is still regarded as crucial for economic and social development.

It represents the idea of mutual assistance, mutual social responsibility, social obligation, self-help and traditional strategies for development[17]. Umuganda contributes to environment protection through erosion control, tree planting, and cleanings; but also to developing, building and maintaining different infrastructures (roads, houses for vulnerable people, public offices, health centres, schools especially 9&12 years' education, etc.).

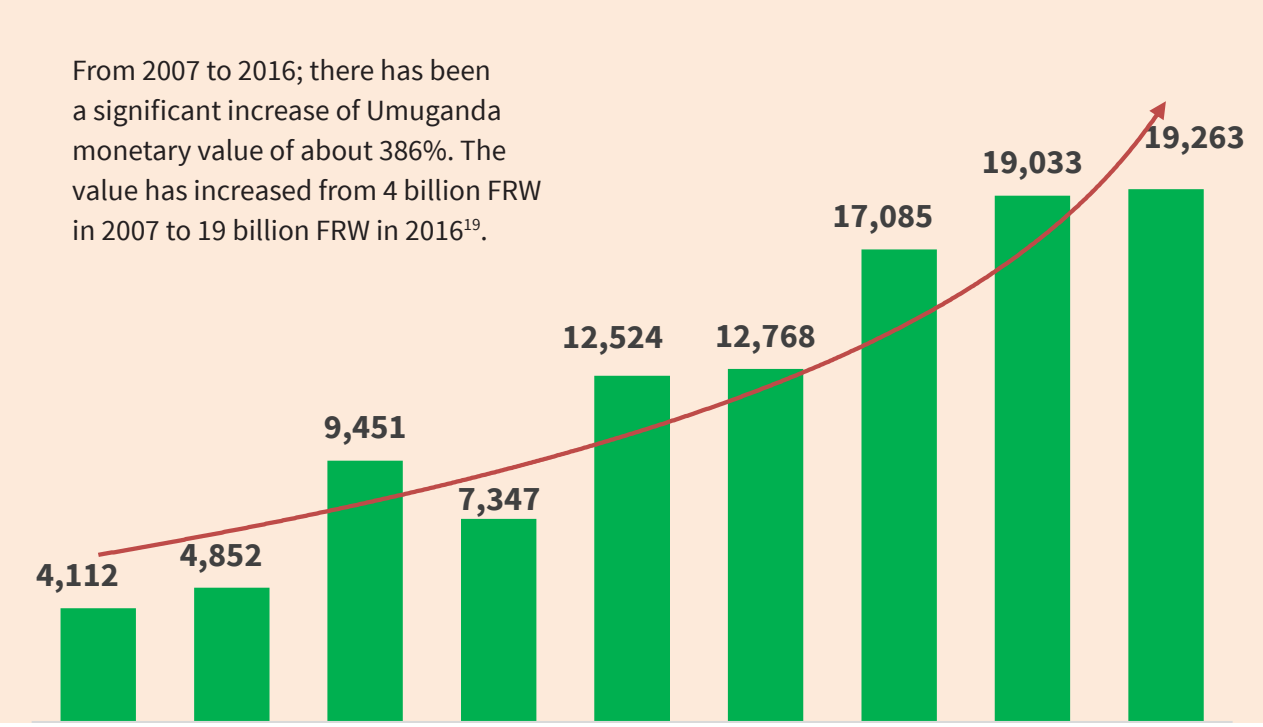
As well, Umuganda contributes to unity and reconciliation through conflict arbitration between community members. Doing Umuganda also strengthens cohesion between persons of different background and provides to the community an opportunity to articulate their needs and express their opinions on various issues. The following are examples that help to illustrate the contribution of Umuganda to national growth and development.

Valuation of Umuganda activities

The value of Umuganda activities as consolidated by MINALOC is **106 billion Frw** or "**127 million in USD**" for the period 2007 to 2016.

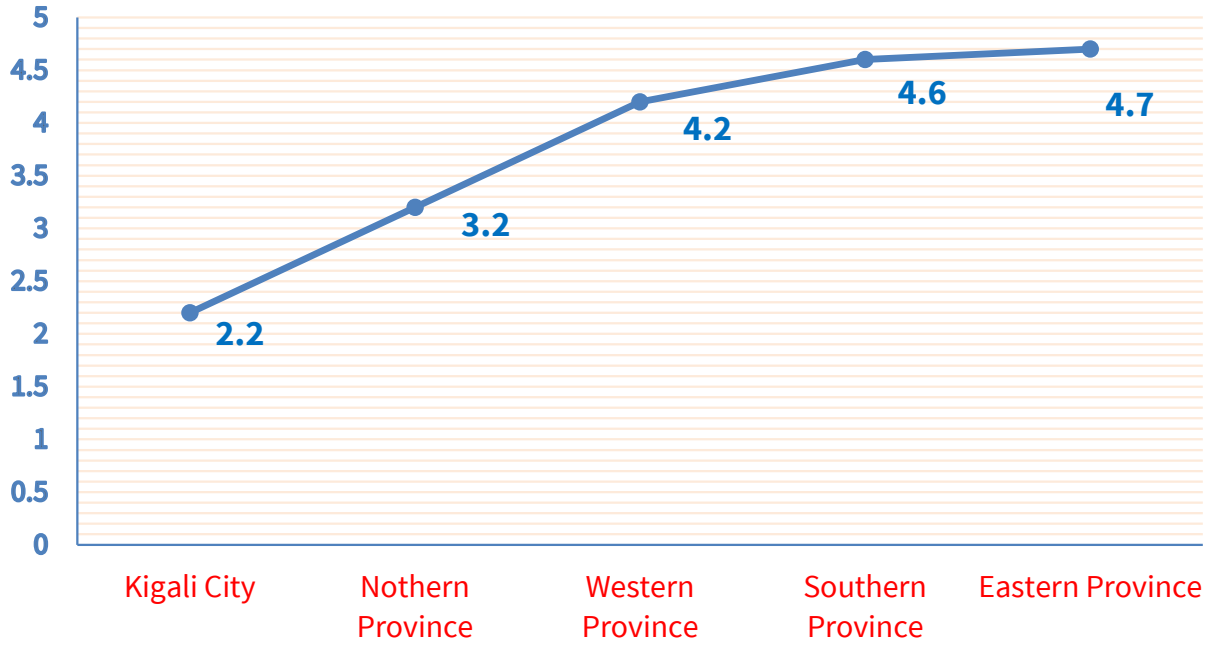
At the end of community works, the monetary value of the realisations is assessed by the supervising committee using Umuganda valuation indicators[18]. The indicators include indicators for agricultural activities, reforestations, water resources activities and roads maintenance. After the assessment, the results are submitted to the higher organ. The figure below shows the monetary value of the community works for the period between 2007 and 2016.

BAR GRAPH 3 : THE EVOLUTION OF ESTIMATED MONETARY VALUE OF UMUGANDA ACTIVITIES FROM 2007-2016



Source: MINALOC, The monetary value of Umuganda from 2007 to 2016. (www. umuseke.com consulted in December, 2016)

LINE GRAPH 1: UMUGANDA ESTIMATED MONETARY VALUE PER PROVINCE/COK FROM JULY 2015-JUNE 2016



Source: MINALOC, Umuganda Annual Report, Kigali, 2016.

The previous figure shows that Eastern Province is heading the list with a contribution of 4.6 billion FRW and the CoK is the last with 2,2 billion Frw (more than USD 2.7 million). The total contribution exceeds 19 billion frws for the above-mentioned period. While there may be other reasons why some provinces contribute less and others more, one can look at the spatial distribution of the population in different provinces. Data shows that the provinces with a small population (CoK) contribute less while those with a larger population contribute more.

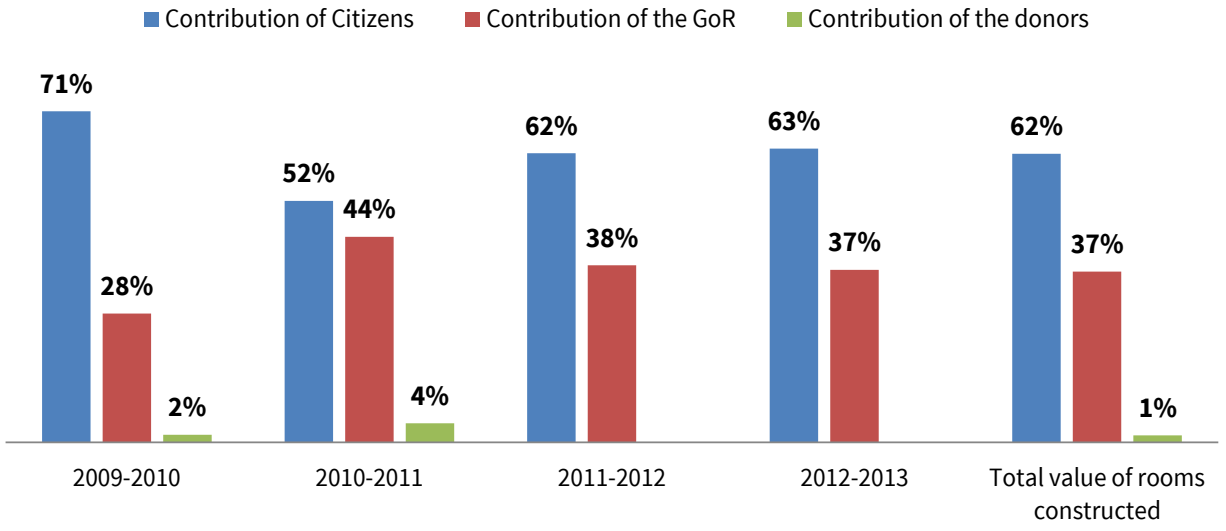
Province/CoK	Total Population :
CoK	1,132,686
North	1,726,370
West	2,471,239
South	2,589,975
East	2,595,703
Total	**10,515,973**

Source: **NISR, Fourth population and housing census, Rwanda 2012.**

Infrastructure Development

Umuganda has contributed to infrastructure development. Achievements of Umuganda are numerous and they include the construction of houses for vulnerable people, support to the implementation of water supply projects, construction of new classrooms for 9 YBE and 12 YBE, health centers, administration offices, construction of genocide memorials and Police stations, road maintenance, tree planting, radical terracing and other soil erosion control infrastructures[20]. The graph below shows the level of contribution of citizens in the construction of 9 & 12 years' basic education classrooms.

BAR GRAPH 4: CONTRIBUTION OF CITIZENS AND GOVERNMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF 9BYE CLASSROOMS



Source: RGB, National Umushyikirano Council: A Decade of Delivering Democracy and Development to the People. 2003 -2014.

Visually, it is evident that the contribution of citizens in the construction of 9 YBE rooms is much bigger than that of government or donors. The estimated monetary value of community work attained 61,9% of the total cost for the classrooms construction, with 135 frws, 730,416,667 while 36.62% was the government's contribution.

The citizens' contribution is made of the value of labour, money contributed to help payment of technical persons, and food provided to feed people in these construction activities. In fact, citizens constitute a valuable sponsor, a great partner in the development of the country.

In total, 3,172 classrooms have been constructed under 9YBE by parents in collaboration with the Government. Today, the access to 9YBE attained a commendable percentage of 97%; thus contributing to achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

Special Umuganda: Army Week

Umuganda has also contributed to a good relationship between the army and the population. One of the innovations introduced in the practice of Umuganda is the participation of the Ministry of Defense in Community Work during the "Army Week". This allowed achieving outstanding activities such as eye treatment for 2,266 people, dental treatment for 13,193 people, and construction of 1,089 houses for needy people[21]. The community works were also introduced in Darfur (Sudan) by the Rwandan troops[22].

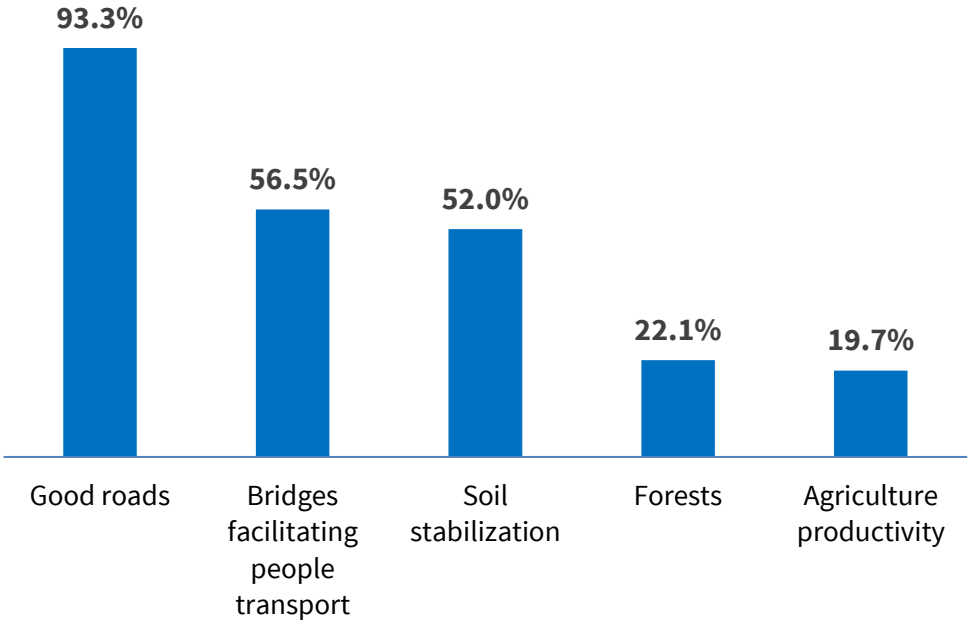
Rwanda Peacekeepers engage in School construction activities during Umuganda in South Sudan.

V. Impact of Umuganda

Economic impact

The most critical input of Umuganda is in terms of economic development. As already stressed, the value of Umuganda activities as consolidated by MINALOC is 106 billion frw or"127 million in USD" for the period 2007 to 2016. This is a huge support to the national budget; the resources that would have been disbursed to have the activities carried out are saved or allocated for further development activities. Umuganda is also a crucial tool for infrastructure development: roads and bridges built are facilitating the transport of goods and people, erosion that would have destroyed agriculture is controlled trough soil stabilisation activities, contributing to the improvement of agriculture productivity and trees planted are contributing to the environment protection.

BAR GRAPH 5: ECONOMIC BENEFITS BROUGHT BY UMUGANDA



Source: RGB, The Assessment of the Impact of Home Grown Initiatives, Kigali, 2014.

The surveyed households pointed out that Umuganda's economic benefits are good roads (93.3%), bridges facilitating the transport of people (56.5%), soil stabilisation (52%), and improvement in agriculture productivity itself (19.7%), forests planting (22.1%)[23]. In fact, good roads and bridges have a great economic impact in the country; where there is a good road, there is chance for more employment, more businesses starting, more exchanges, trade is facilitated, but also movement of people and goods is improved.

Environment Protection

To a great extent, most activities of Umuganda countrywide are linked with environmental protection. Generally, people participate in cleaning streets, cutting grass, trimming bushes alongside the roads, planting trees and repairing public buildings[24]. As the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Paul Kagame explained,

> *"the concept of Umuganda is a good idea to maintain a clean society and this has helped the country to gain its new face [25]. He added that the concept does not only propagate a clean society but also; community work (Umuganda Rusange) presents an opportunity for people to join hands to achieve set objectives, on top of fostering harmony among residents[26]".*

Governance impact

Doing Umuganda strengthens cohesion between persons of different backgrounds and provides to the community an opportunity to articulate their needs and express their opinions on various issues. As well, Umuganda contributes to unity and reconciliation through conflict arbitration between community members.

It was found that Umuganda enables the population in the neighbourhood to know each other; it has allowed the population to engage in a friendship, and enables mutual assistance in the community[27]. Delegates from different countries all over the world come to visit Rwanda, they are impressed by the achievements of home-grown solutions especially Umuganda. As well, Rwanda Defence Forces peacekeepers wherever they are deployed, introduce and practice Umuganda by cleaning areas surrounding their military camps and beyond. They, in fact, engage local communities to take part in community works; enabling a clean neighbourhood and protected environment.

Umuganda also enables to spread the good image of the country. On her visit to Rwanda, Malawi's Minister of Industry and Trade commended Umuganda and recommended this practice in other countries. In an article published by the Nyasa Times, she notes:

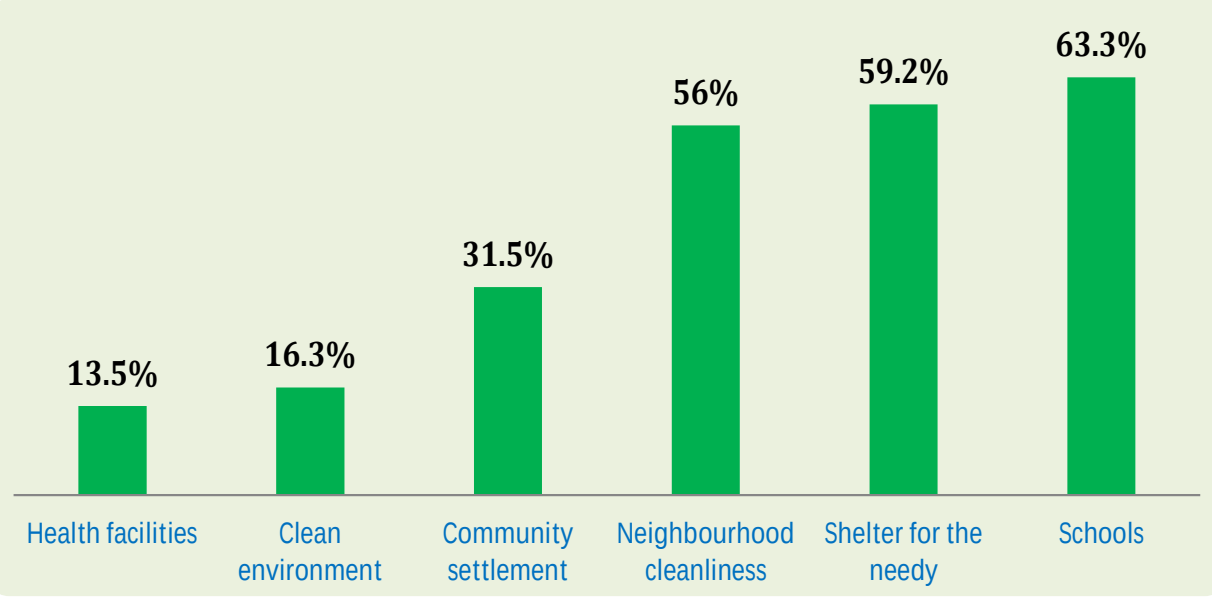
30 September 2017: Local residents gather for Community Work to plant trees in Gikomera IDP Model Village

> *"This is something all African countries need to do because wherever we go in Africa now, there is environmental degradation and the only way to resolve the issue is to have every person involved in curbing it".*
>
> *(Nyasa Times, 1 Nov 2010).*

Impact of Umuganda on social protection programs

Among activities carried out during Umuganda include the construction of houses for the needy, schools, health facilities and preparation of sites for settlement. Umuganda has made possible access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation, environmental protection and neighbourhood beautification, as indicated by the list of activities that are carried out (MINALOC annual report , Kigali, 2016).

BAR GRAPH 6: SOCIAL BENEFITS BROUGHT BY UMUGANDA



Source: RGB, The Assessment of the Impact of Home Grown Initiatives, Kigali, 2014.

Cleanness (cleaning, greening and beautifying) is vital for one's good health; but also a clean neighbourhood has a better value for money/market and helps create positive environment for those living there. As shown by the figure above, Umuganda contributes greatly to Rwanda's cleanness and environment; when asked about the changes brought by Umuganda; apart from good schools, shelter and health facilities, the citizens responded clean neighbourhood (56%), and fresh air and clean environment (16.3%).

Umuganda promotes dialogue between national leaders and the population. The President of the Republic of Rwanda, members of Parliament and Ministers participate in the monthly community works together with the population which promotes dialogue with the population at the grassroots. It is a channel through which most of the public policies are communicated and explained to the general population; an avenue for information sharing.

Umuganda enhances ownership of the development planning, (after carrying out manual activities, people get time to evaluate themselves on achievements, plan future actions) (MINALOC, presentation, 2016). Umuganda is indeed a crucial tool of community mobilisation and sensitization. It is also a forum where citizens are given a voice in decision-making; enhancing their commitment and participation.

Through Umuganda, some innovations have been introduced. These include the initiation of Umuganda competition at the District level since the fiscal year 2009-2010. In this exercise, the best activity at district level is awarded a certificate and cash prize. At provincial and national levels, the three best activities are also awarded prizes (MINALOC presentation on Umuganda, 2016).

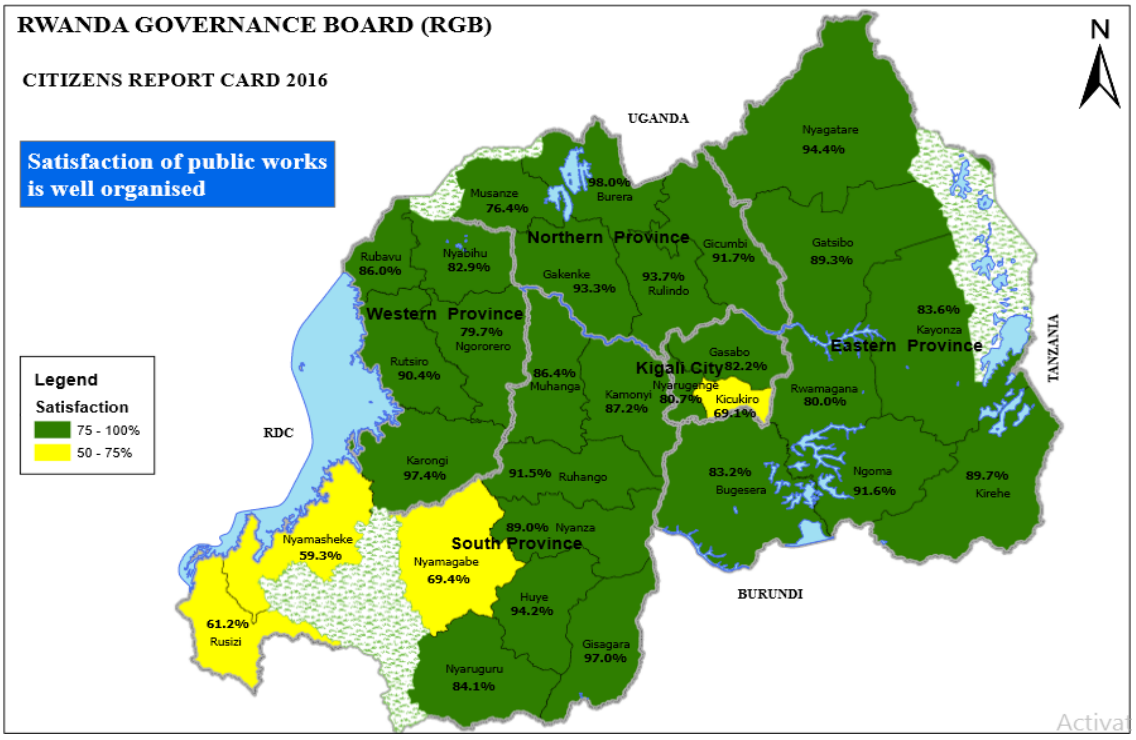
VI. Citizens' perspective on the implementation of Umuganda program

The Government of Rwanda takes the citizen's participation in decision making as prerequisites for good governance. One of the major pillars of the country's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) is accountable governance that emphasises citizen participation in all processes of decision making[28]. This section assesses the implementation of Umuganda program through analysis of people's perspective on its organisation, their role in the program, its outcome, its usefulness, challenges and what they propose as solutions for the program to be more efficient.

Citizens' Perspective on Umuganda organisation

Citizens were asked about their views on Umuganda organisation. Their perspective is illustrated in the map below.

MAP 1: CITIZEN SATISFACTION ON THE ORGANISATION OF UMUGANDA

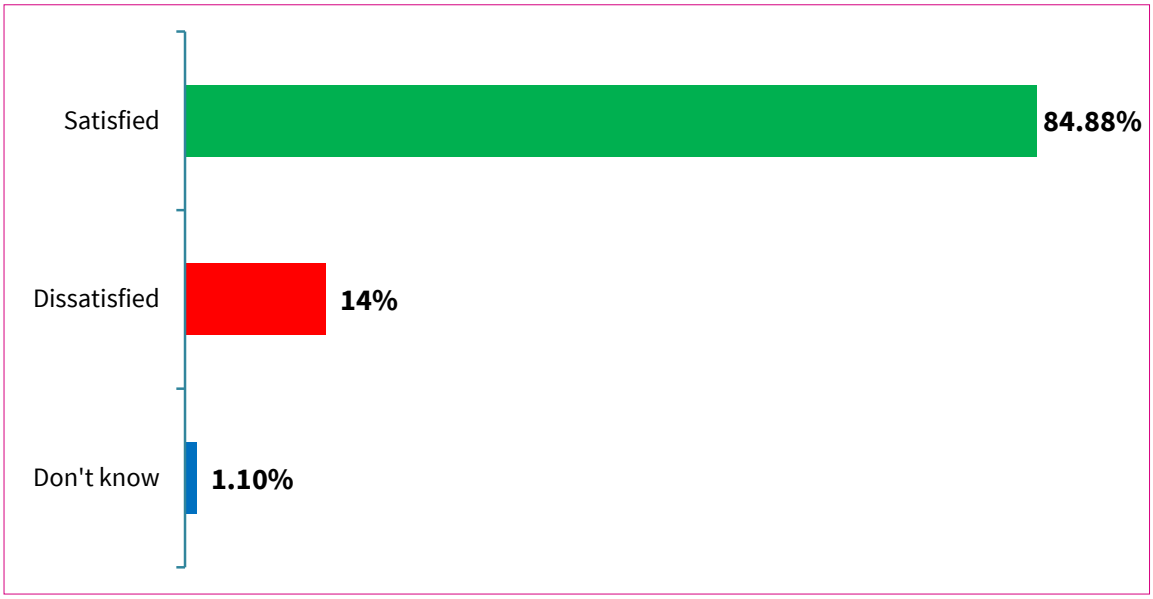


Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

The map above shows that in the view of the population, Umuganda is well organised. The map indicates that satisfaction is above 75% for 26 districts. Only four districts (Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Nyamagabe and Kicukiro) scored between 50% and 75%.

Organization of Umuganda includes specifying the activities, the place where they are to be carried out and tools to be used. This information is communicated to the population through different media including notices posted at the village office, if any, at a public place, at least 7 days before Umuganda takes place[29].

BAR GRAPH 7: CITIZEN SATISFACTION WITH UMUGANDA ORGANISATION



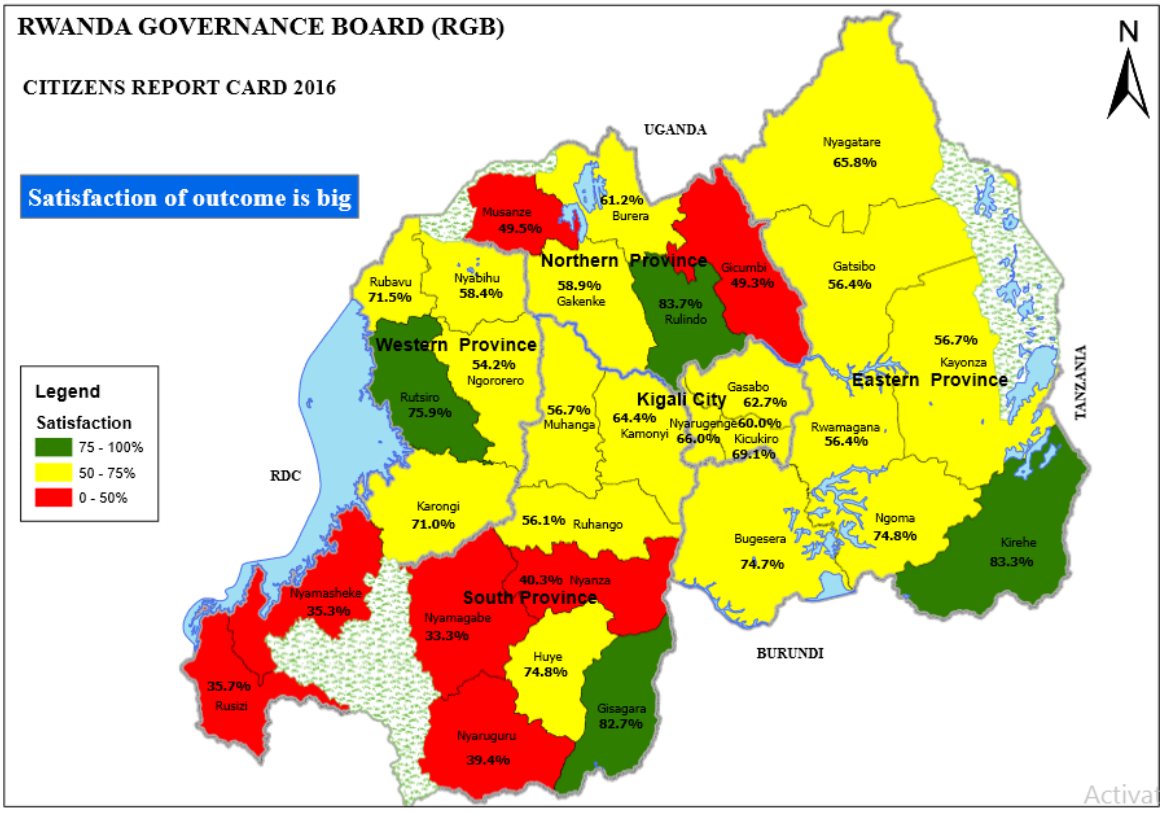
Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

From the above graph, when asked about their perspective on the Umuganda organisation, 84.88% of the respondents said that Umuganda is well organised while 14% said they were dissatisfied due to poor organization and poor planning of Umuganda.

Citizens perspective on Umuganda outcome

In the CRC 2016, citizens were asked about the Umuganda outcome and their answers are illustrated in the map below.

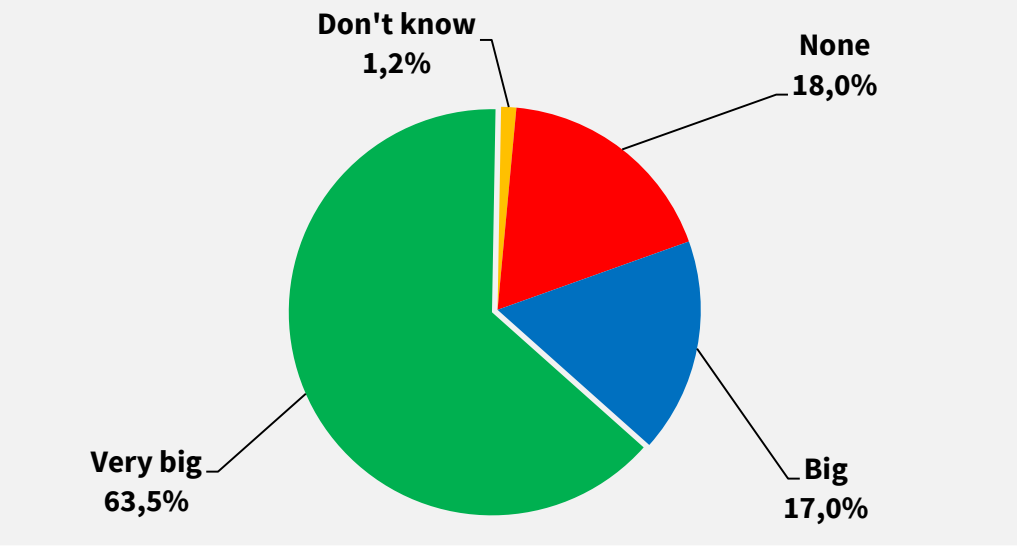
MAP 2: CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE ON THE UMUGANDA OUTCOMES



Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

Map 2 above shows that in four districts (Gisagara, Kirehe, Rulindo and Rutsiro) more than 75% of the respondents are satisfied with Umuganda outcome while 19 districts scored between 50% and 75%; 7 other Districts (Nyamagabe, Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Nyaruguru, Musanze and Gicumbi) scored below 50%. This means that about 1/3 of the population did not rank the outcome of Umuganda highly.

PIE CHART 1: CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE AT ATTENDANCE IN UMUGANDA

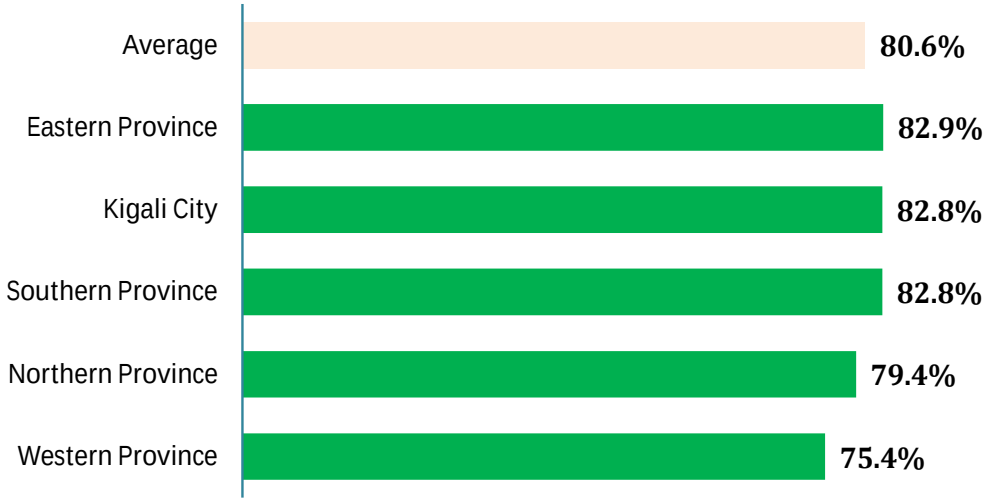


Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

According to the above chart, citizens provide a positive perspective on their attendance in Umuganda. For 63.5% respondents, this attendance is very big while 17% think that their attendance is big which gives a satisfaction level of 80.5% combining very big and big. However, a portion of 18% of respondents (or about 2 out of 10 respondents) think that the citizens do not sufficiently attend Umuganda activities.

From the above data, the citizens' attendance in Umuganda is crucial to the achievements of the program's activities. In general, the citizens are aware of the importance of their attendance except a small portion who still indifferent to the program. This requires that the citizens but also the leaders at all levels to strengthen the sensitization for increased participation in Umuganda.

BAR GRAPH 8 : CITIZENS 'PERSPECTIVE WITH THEIR ATTENDANCE UMUGANDA BY PROVINCE AND THE COK



Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

Nationally, 80.6% of respondents said that they attend Umuganda in a big numbers. The population in Eastern Province top the scoring with 82.9%, while the Western province trails with 75.4%.

Compared to the previous citizens' perspective on their attendance, it is worth to note that in the view of the respondents, the perception shows a relative decrease as the graph below indicates. There has been a difference of about 13% in 3 years.

BAR GRAPH 9 : EVOLUTION OF CITIZENS' PERSPECTIVE ON THEIR ROLE IN ATTENDING UMUGANDA

Source: RGB, CRC Surveys 2014, 2015, 2016.

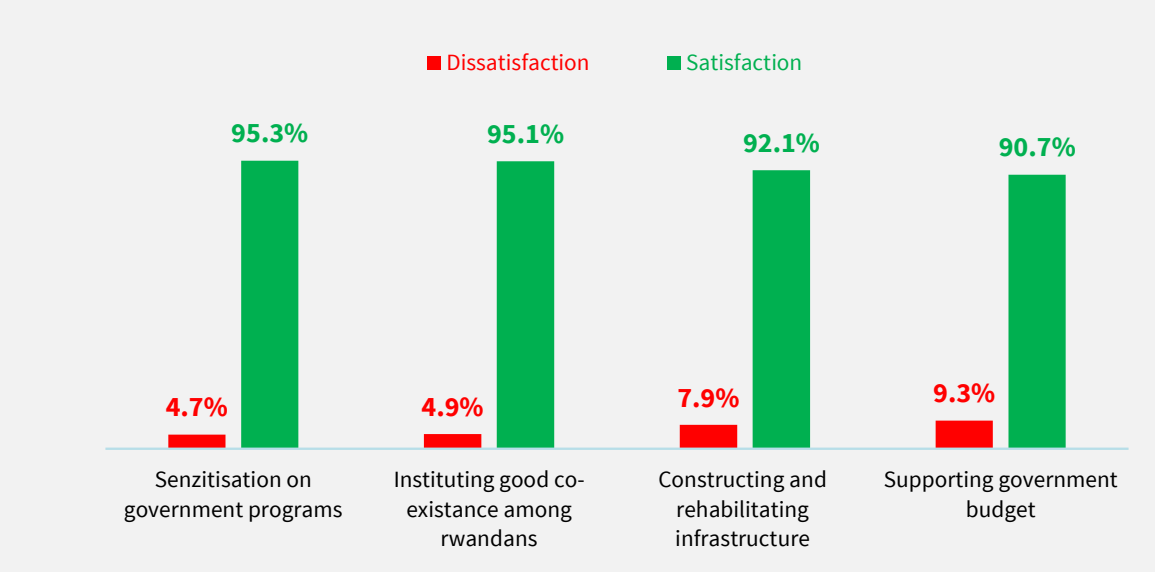
The report from MINALOC on the citizen participation in Umuganda (See graph 2) indicates an increase in the level of citizen participation during the same period. There is a disparity between data from MINALOC and the CRC findings. Assuming that MINALOC data are accurate; let's recall that utilization of subjective evaluation has its own limitation.

Citizens' perception may be affected by their personal experience and may not entirely reflect the reality. Let's take an example of a given community, where in the past, a number of 40 community members used to attend Umuganda for ordinary cleanliness and in the 2016 the number could rise up to 60 but for this time, the purpose is to build roads, which normally requires a higher numbers and means than the available ones. Therefore, a citizen can perceive that their attendance is not sufficient due to the gap he/she is noticing: the evaluation depends therefore more on the nature of activities and the means required).

Citizen perspective on the usefulness of Community Works (Umuganda)

During Umuganda sessions, participants are informed about government programs and policy to strengthen ownership and promote their role in the implementation of socio-economic programs. Respondents to the CRC were asked to indicate the level of usefulness of Umuganda and their responses are captured in the following graph.

BAR GRAPH 10. CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE ON THE USEFULNESS OF UMUGANDA

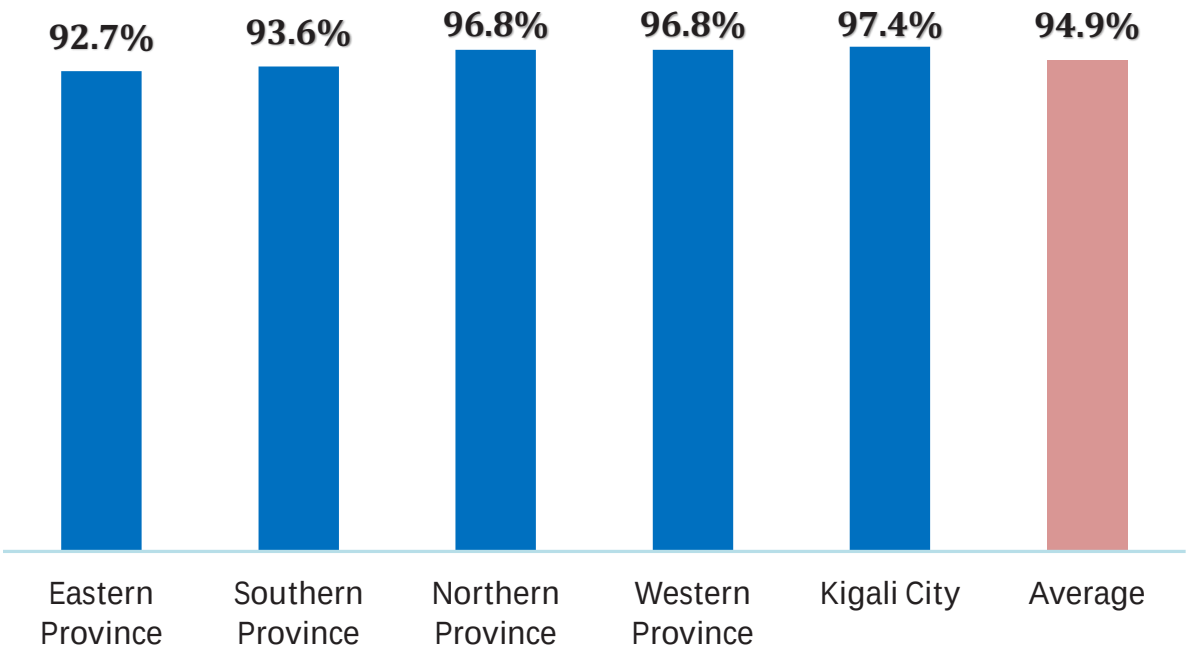


Source: RGB, CRC Survey 2016.

The previous graph shows a very positive citizens' perspective on the usefulness of community works (Umuganda), around 90%. As indicates the figure, Umuganda is very useful in facilitating the sensitization of government programs (94.9%), instituting good co-existence among Rwandans (94.7%), construction and rehabilitation of infrastructures (91, 7%) and supporting government budget (88%).

The findings correspond to the aim of promoting development activities to support the national budget and providing an opportunity for conviviality among people as stipulated by the law[30].

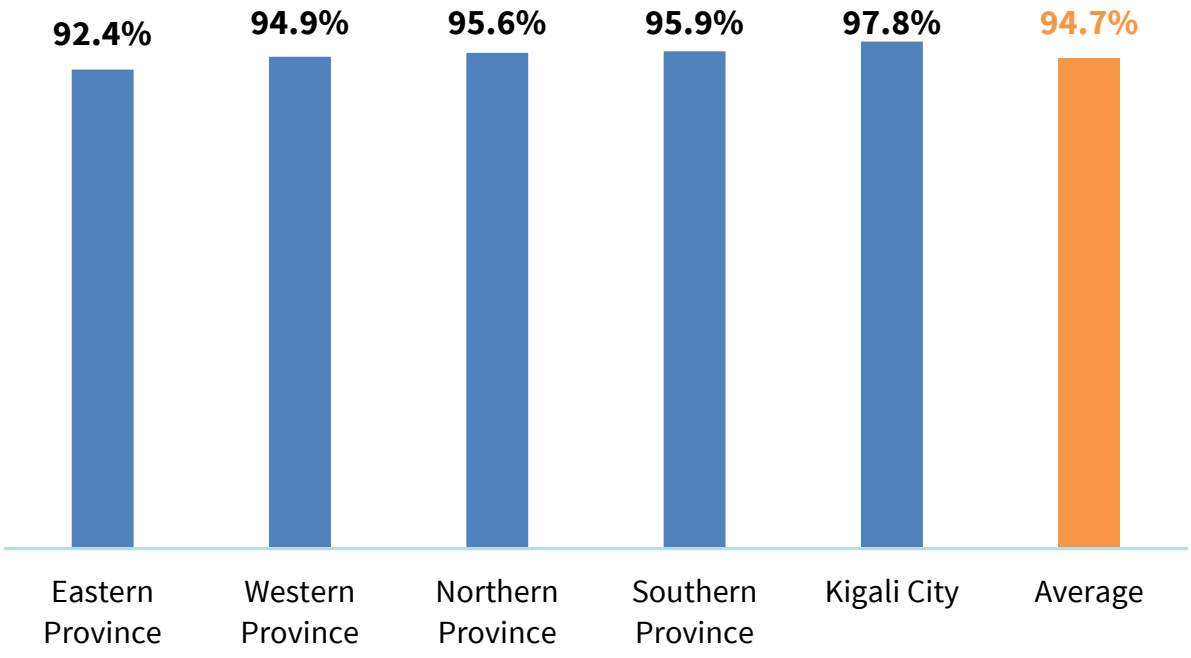
BAR GRAPH 11: CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF UMUGANDA IN SENSITIZATION ON GOVERNMENT PROGRAM BY PROVINCE AND KIGALI CITY



Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

This graph shows that in all the provinces and City of Kigali, the citizen's perspective on the importance of Umuganda is over 90%. In fact, Umuganda is an excellent communication channel between leaders and citizens and between citizens themselves. The programs that are discussed during Umuganda meetings include mobilization and sensitization on health insurance subscription and other health issues like fighting against malaria and other diseases, security issues, the culture of saving, fighting against corruption, Ubudehe categorization etc (for more information, see the list from MINALOC, Annual report, Kigali, 2016).

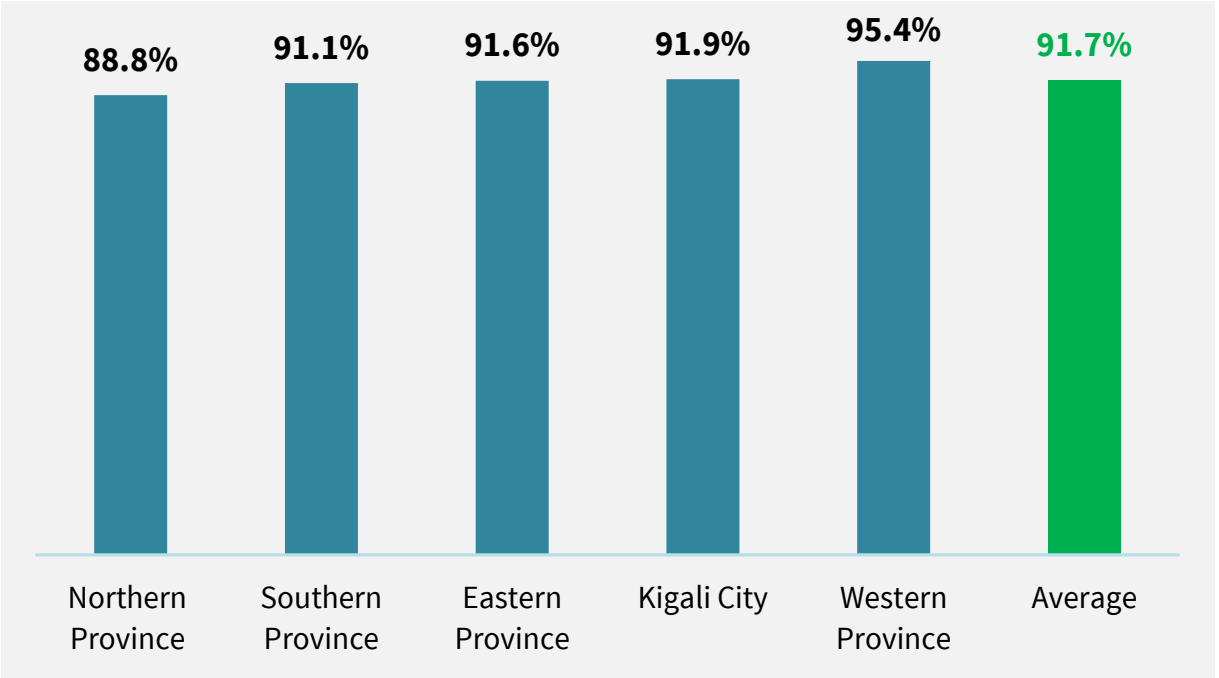
BAR GRAPH 12: CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF UMUGANDA IN INSTITUTING GOOD CO-EXISTENCE AMONG RWANDANS



Source: RGS, CRC survey 2016.

The above graph shows that more than 94.7% of the respondents expressed that Umuganda is useful in instituting good co-existence among Rwandans. It is worthy to note that the national average stands at 94.7% while all the Provinces scored over 92%. Umuganda enables relation development and mutual help; it is an avenue of socialisation and integration. Citizens engage in interactions, collaboration, communication and discussions during and after Umuganda. The Home Grown Solution constitutes a channel through which norms, customs, values are disseminated.

BAR GRAPH 13: CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF UMUGANDA IN CONSTRUCTING AND REHABILITATING INFRASTRUCTURES



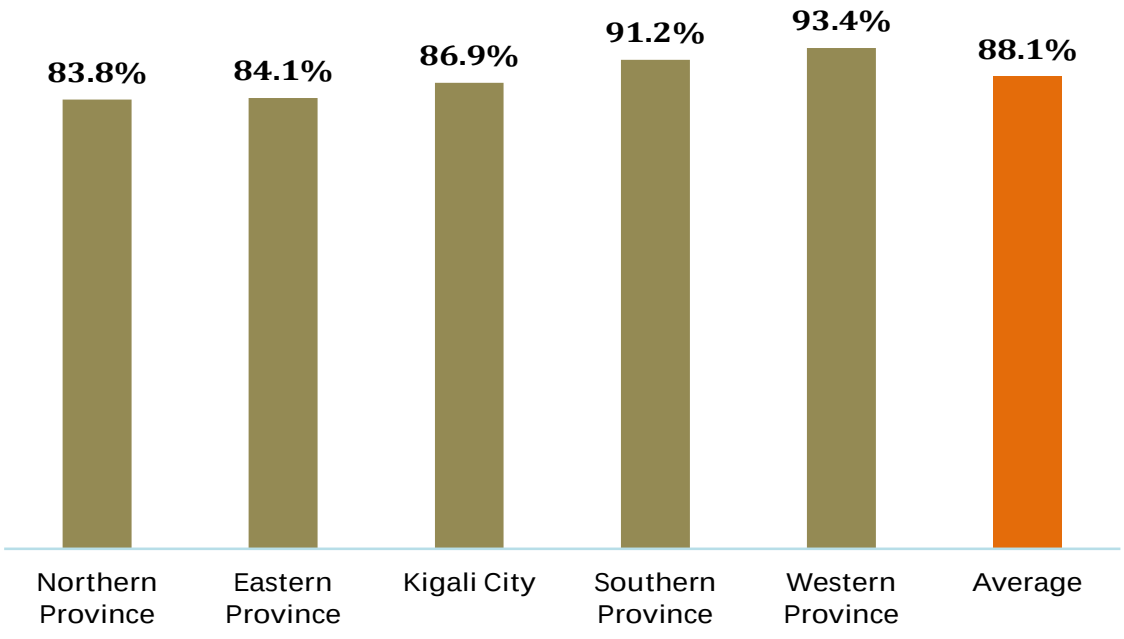
Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

The above graph shows that except for the Northern Province, all other provinces and City of Kigali scored over 90%. Districts ranked bottom are Nyamagabe, Gicumbi and Nyaruguru with 73%, 72% and 70% respectively.

Umuganda activities contribute to the infrastructure development of the country. The activities carried out during Umuganda include construction and repair of roads, bridges, classrooms, houses for the needy, health facilities etc. As mentioned earlier (graph 5), Umuganda has contributed about 60% of the total cost (135 billion frw) for the construction of 9&12 YBE for the period; 2009-2013.

During Umuganda activity for the construction of schools in Nyarugunga Sector, on the 24th, December, 2011, the Mayor of the City of Kigali, in his remarks to the participants, said that the cost of one classroom was six million Rwanda Francs. The government only allocated one million for materials such as iron sheets and cement. The community through labour and fundraising provided the district with money and they made bricks themselves[31].

BAR GRAPH 14 : CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF UMUGANDA IN SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT BUDGET



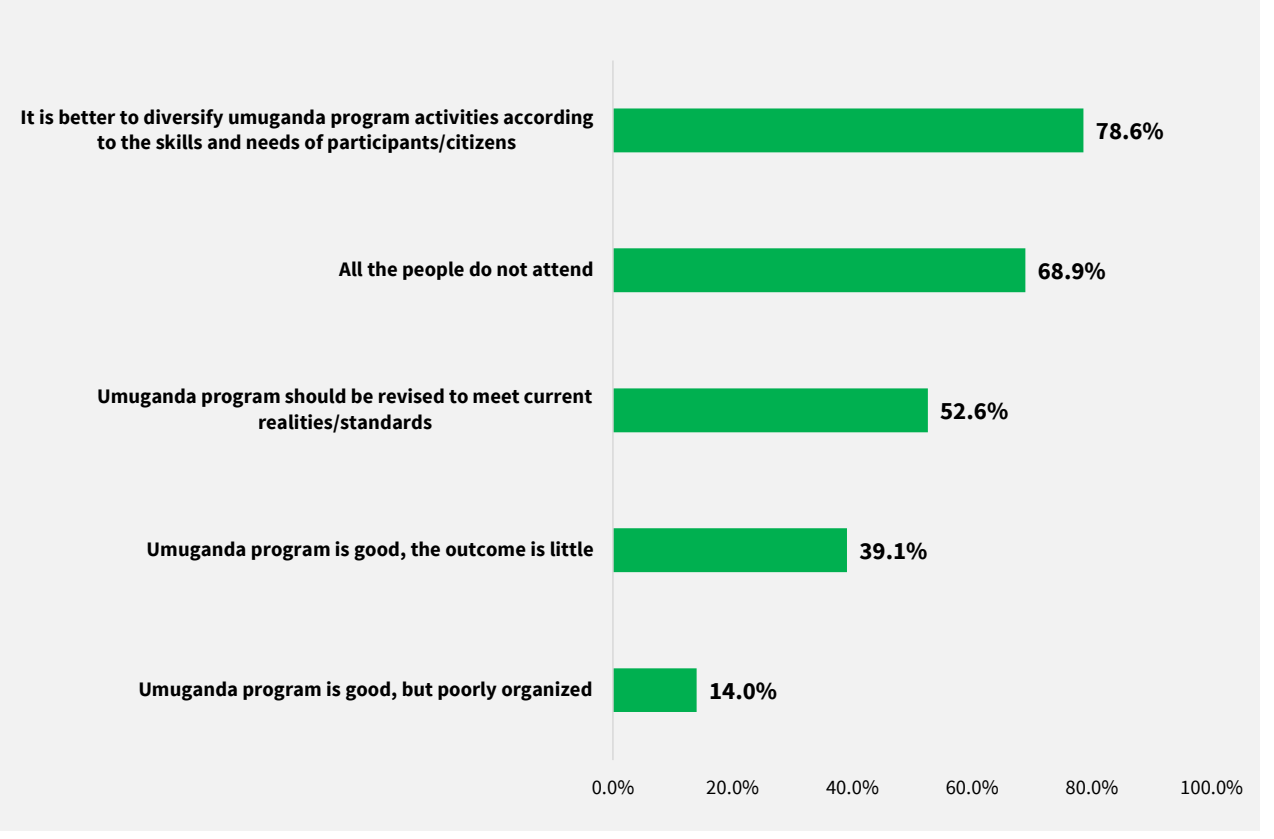
Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

From the above graph, more than 80% of the citizens found that Umuganda plays a significant role in supporting government budget especially when it comes to building public infrastructures. The value of Umuganda contribution is estimated at 106 billion RWF (about 127 millions USD) from 2007 to June 2016. Since 2013-2014, Umuganda contribution was integrated into the national budget[32].

The challenges in community works (Umuganda)

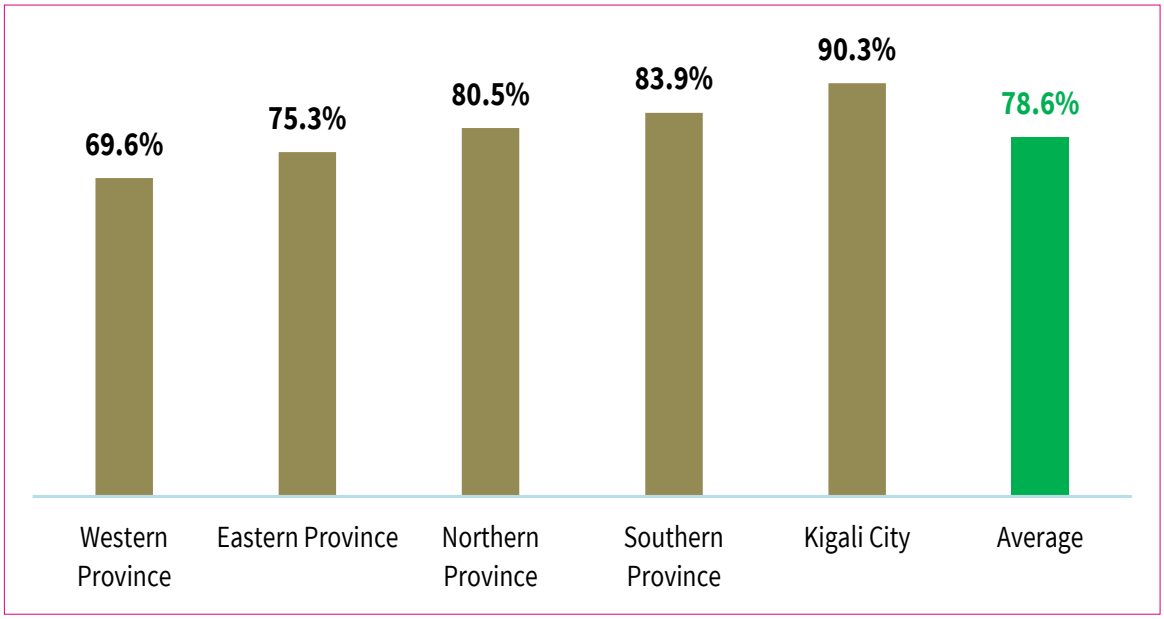
MINALOC through Umuganda strategy document highlighted some of the program challenges including bad mentality and unwillingness to perform physical labor (some people hold the view that community works should be performed by people of lower class, illiterates, and unemployed); poor organisation of community works; lack of action plans; exaggerated value of achievements; degradation of the community works realizations and non-exploitation of youth potential[33]. During CRC 2016 survey, citizens were asked about the program challenges and their answers are illustrated in the following graph.

BAR GRAPH 15: CITIZEN PERSPECTIVE ON THE CHALLENGES ABOUT COMMUNITY WORKS (UMUGANDA)



Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

BAR GRAPH 16: UMUGANDA SHOULD BE DIVERSIFIED ACCORDING TO THE SKILLS AND NEEDS OF PARTICIPANTS



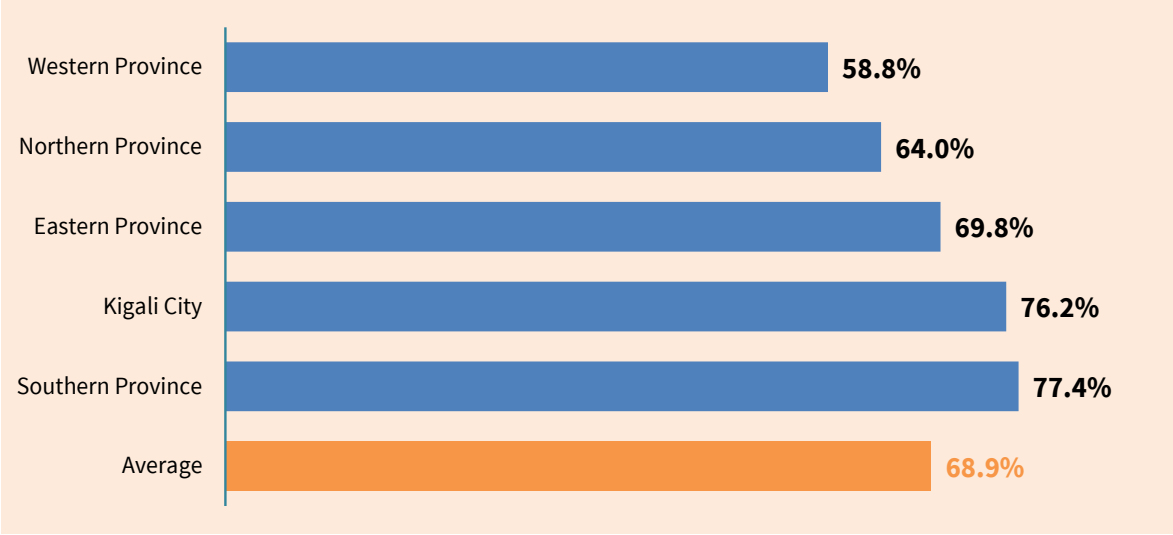
Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

Regionally, the population of the City of Kigali is most affected with the challenge related to diversification of Umuganda activities (90.3%) while the western province is the least affected (69.9%), as the figure above illustrates.

The CoK is populated by persons from different regions (Nationals and internationals) with skills in different domains. These skilled people include engineers, medical doctors, teachers, scientists, lawyers, architects, brokers, priests, experts in farming and mechanizations, social workers, to mention a few.

All these people would like to see that their area of expertise is integrated into Umuganda activities so that their participation can be more effective. Non-labour activities should be strengthened to attract citizen participation as the Law establishing community work stipulate that in Umuganda non-labour works should be performed as well.

BAR GRAPH 17: WE ATTEND UMUGANDA, BUT NOT ALL CAPABLE PEOPLE WHO ATTEND



Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

Citizens' country wide said that they attend Umuganda, but all capable people who do not attend. 77.4% of the population in Southern Province are not satisfied with the attendance, in Kigali city, they are 76.2%, and Western Province 58.8% (is least affected).

The law establishing community works specifies that all capable people from 18-65 years old must participate in Umuganda activities, but as the respondents indicate in the figure above, this is not respected.

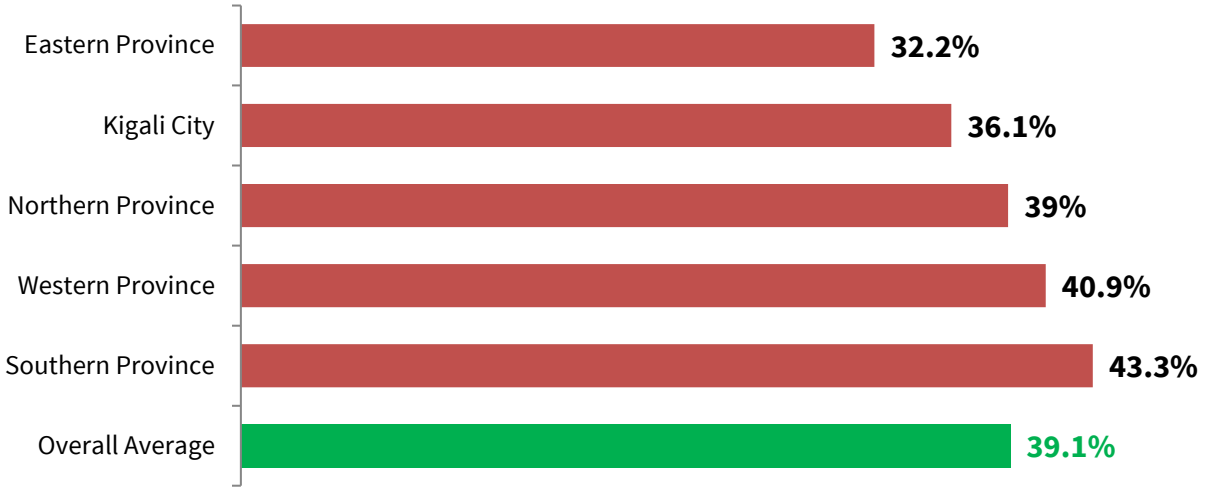
BAR GRAPH 18: UMUGANDA SHOULD BE REVISED TO MEET CURRENT REQUIREMENTS

Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

National wide, the portion of 52.6% of respondents suggest that Umuganda should be revised to meet current realities/standards. On this issue, a higher percentage is noted in the Southern Province (59.2%) and the least in Northern Province (44.7%). The survey also noted that Nyamagabe (75.9%) and Nyaruguru (72.8) districts are ahead of other Provinces in suggesting changes in Umuganda implementation.

During the meeting with Rwandan Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) held on 27 October 2016, the State Minister in MINALOC, in charge of Social Economic Development, Mr Vincent Munyeshyaka emphasised the need of changes in Umuganda implementation, where he gives an example of the medical consultation activities which should be done by Medical Doctor[34].

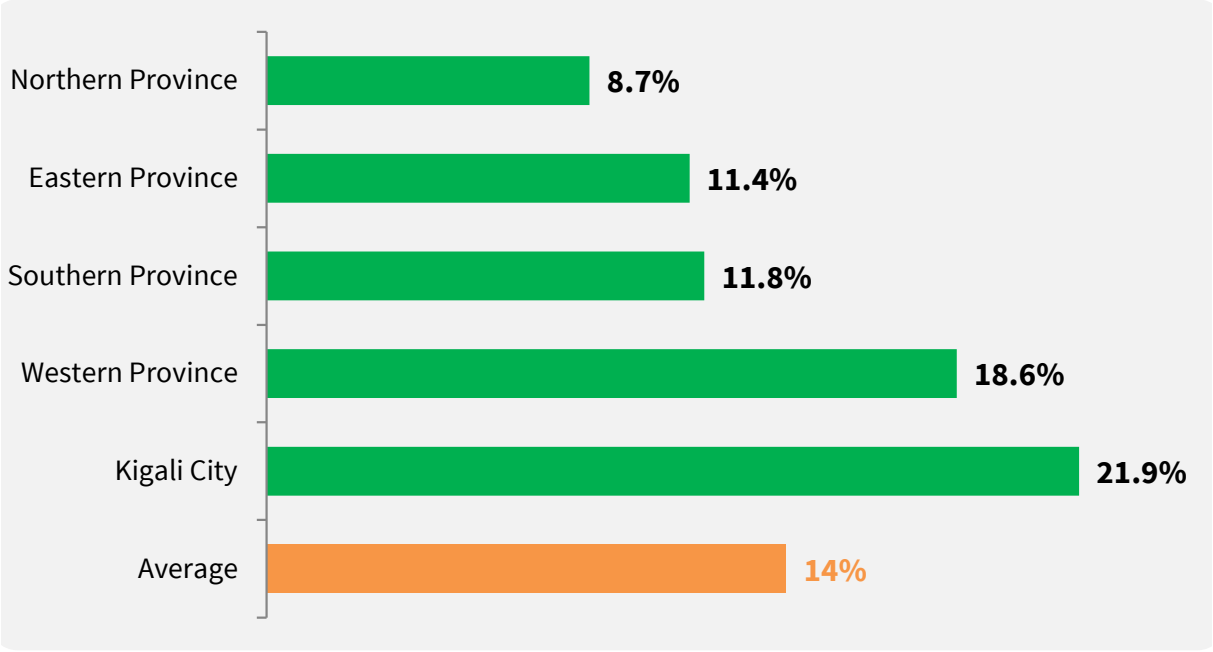
BAR GRAPH 19: COMMUNITY WORKS ARE GOOD BUT THE OUTCOME IS LITTLE



Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

The above graph shows that the southern province has the highest score, 43.3% of its population who say that the outcome of Umuganda is low; Kigali city (36.1), and the Eastern Province (32.1%). On average, 39.1% of the population confirmed that Umuganda outcome is low (about 4 out of 10 people).

BAR GRAPH 20: UMUGANDA IS GOOD BUT POORLY ORGANISED



Source: RGB, CRC survey 2016.

One of the challenges often pointed out by many reports is the organisation of Umuganda activities[35]. However, fewer of respondents indicated it as a challenge, only 14% of them said that Umuganda is poorly organised (about 1 out of 10 people asked).

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

Umuganda is one of the outstanding Rwanda Home Grown Solutions based on traditional practice and cultural values of Rwandan people. Through its inherent principle of working together as a community for common goal, Umuganda contributed enormously in social reconstruction of Rwandan community after the 1994 Tutsi Genocide where served as a platform to promote unity and reconciliation. It enhanced and restored social cohesion and culture of solidarity among the Rwandan citizen.

On the development front, Umuganda contributed to the socio-economic development of Rwandan community after 1994 and the achievements are numerous including building and maintaining different infrastructures (roads, houses for vulnerable people, public offices, health centres, schools especially 9&12 Years' Basic Education etc); environment protection through erosion control, tree planting and cleanings.

In global perspective, Umuganda continues to provide opportunities for interaction with both the state and citizens as well as rebuild infrastructure and contribute to the country's economy. It (Umuganda) for the last twenty years has turned to be the best development framework enabling citizens to participate in social and economic development of the country and being able to articulate on issues patterning development of their communities.

The estimated value of Umuganda has increased from 4,112 billion FRW in 2008 to 19,263 billion FRW in 2016. The contribution of citizens in the construction of 9YBE rooms was so much bigger than that of government and Development Partners combined. The estimated monetary value of community work attained 61, 9% of the total cost for the classrooms construction, with 135, 730,416,667 FRW while 36.62% was the government's contribution. In total, 3,172 classrooms have been constructed under 9YBE by parents. CRC 2016 points out that citizens are voluntarily engaged in the promotion of social protection through Umuganda where houses for vulnerable people have been built. The findings also show that 56% of clean environment sites are provided by Umuganda activities. Citizens are also satisfied with the role played by Umuganda in the economic development; rehabilitating and maintaining roads (93.3%), bridges (56.5%), soil stabilisation (52%), and improvement in agriculture productivity itself (19.7%), forests planting (22.1%).

According to CRC 2016, 91.3% of Rwandan citizens freely participate in monthly activities of Umuganda and 84.8% of citizens are satisfied with Umuganda program implementation and organisation. On the other hand, 39.1% of citizens have pointed out that they are not satisfied with Umuganda outcomes, due to poor planning and lack of Monitoring and Evaluation.

Actionable recommendations

According to the research findings, the following are recommended in order to improve implementation of Umuganda program:

1

Improve and strengthen the coordination, the monitoring and evaluation mechanism of umuganda at National and community level-to ease and improve implementation through strengthening local steering committees of umuganda; but also to oversee and report on time the implementation of umuganda activities. Monitoring of umuganda activities starts right from the beginning of Imihigo performance year; the District umuganda committee will design M&E tools that will ease the monitoring and evaluation of the contribution of umuganda to the community, district and national development. The evaluation report of Umuganda must be disseminated to the community members for appreciation and ownership.

2

Scale up adaptability of umuganda: the planning of umuganda needs to consider the peculiarities of urban/rural settings; non-labour intensive activities of umuganda will be mainstreamed in districts and community development plan. It should be commenced by assessing none labour intensive skills available in the district, sector, cell and in the community at village level to allow local innovation trends.

3

Expanding flexibility of umuganda and link it to other HGSs-Social Protection programs; such as army and police week, Umugoroba w'ababyeyi, Inshuti z'umuryango, Abunzi and Community Health Workers.

4

Promote and enhance local ownership of Umuganda: Umuganda provides to the community an opportunity to articulate their needs and concerns and express their opinions on various issues, enhancing citizen's role in socio-economic development:

- Districts, Sectors, Cells and Villages perspectives and needs to inform respective plans and strategies on Umuganda.
- Enhance sensitization and communication on umuganda through public debate (discussions) media campaigns and other mobilization mechanisms to increase the awareness of the citizens of their role and participation in Umuganda.

5

Enhance economic benefits and profitability of Umuganda:

- Design implementation of umuganda activities at the community level using project management approach by ensuring that budget, financial and human resources, timeframe and expected outcomes are clearly defined (this turns umuganda activities from routine to project based).
- Set Umuganda as a long-term development tool for community development. This will enable communities to have ownership of their development and create strong sense of self-reliance.
- Ensure efficiency, effectiveness of the use of human, financial and technical resources through innovation, technology and organization improvement and investment.

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