

RWANDA RURAL REHABILITATION INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

RWARRI

For a Wealthy Future



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For a Wealthy Future

Message from our Chairperson



Gatera Augustin, Chairperson of the RWARRI Board of Directors

As we look back on the past year's achievements, I am pleased to present our RWARRI's Annual Report, which highlights our significant accomplishments and results as an organization. The year 2024 has demonstrated our team's resilience, dedication, innovation, and the unwavering support of our partners and stakeholders.

Our work continues to make a profound difference, and our collective efforts have achieved significant milestones in advancing our mission. From expanding our reach to promote sustainable agriculture and food systems in rural communities as a contribution to the

implementation of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) to improve food systems to intensify the fight against malnutrition and stunting to fostering meaningful collaborations, we have laid a strong foundation for future growth and success.

This year has also presented challenges that tested our adaptability and resolve. Yet, we have emerged stronger, driven by our commitment to enhancing lasting change in the communities where we partner to change lives.

I am incredibly proud of the innovative solutions we have implemented to address these challenges and our team's collective courage to overcome them. We hope this reassures you of our capabilities. As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission and vision while working to create positive change. With your continued support, we can achieve an even more significant impact and drive transformative progress.

I sincerely thank our dedicated staff, partners, donors, and everyone contributing to our shared mission. Your trust and collaboration are the foundation of our success, and I am eager to explore the opportunities to build on this momentum together.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to our cause. Your support has been invaluable, and I would like to extend a heartfelt invitation for you to join us as we work together to create a brighter future. We can harness our collective strengths and drive meaningful change with your involvement. Together, we can overcome challenges and make a lasting impact on our community and beyond. Let's embark on this journey together, forging a path towards hope and progress.

Executive Summary



Uwizeye Belange, Executive Director of RWARRI

In 2024, the Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative (RWARRI) made significant strides in rural economic development, environmental sustainability, and women's empowerment. The organization focused on improving livelihoods, agricultural productivity, and climate resilience through strategic partnerships and innovative community-driven projects.

Economic Growth and Livelihoods

RWARRI implemented key initiatives to enhance savings, investment awareness, and value addition in agriculture and livestock. The Thrive 2030 Project, in partnership with World Vision Rwanda, aimed to graduate 14,100 people out of poverty by 2026 through the development of a poultry value chain. This project provided training, market access, and entrepreneurship support to farmers, resulting in the production of 361,079 eggs and sales worth 220,788,172 RWF in 2024.

Improving Agricultural Productivity

Through the Hinga Ukire Project, funded by the European Union, RWARRI supported smallholder farmers in Rubavu and Rutsiro districts with biofortified crops such as high-iron beans, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, and carotene-rich cassava. By the end of 2024, the initiative had trained 3,156 farmers, with the goal of increasing household incomes by 30% and reducing child malnutrition.

Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE Project)

RWARRI, in collaboration with WFP and MIGEPROF, launched the JP RWEE project to empower rural women through solar-powered irrigation, cold storage facilities, and training in climate-smart agriculture. These efforts enhanced nutrition, food security, and market access for women-led agricultural enterprises.

Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resilience

The Igitini ni Ukubaho Project facilitated the restoration of 214,200 agroforestry trees and 85,800 fruit trees in Rubavu and Rutsiro districts, improving biodiversity and soil conservation. RWARRI also led community engagement through 65 savings groups, training 2,275 members in financial literacy.

Under the AREECA Program, RWARRI mobilized communities in Nyagatare and Kirehe to restore forest landscapes through awareness campaigns, tree planting, and farmer training. By December 2024, 176,583 trees had been planted across key restoration sites.

Key Achievements & Challenges

- Strengthened stakeholder engagement through training, partnerships, and policy dialogues.
- Innovative solutions such as solar-powered hatcheries increased poultry production and income generation.
- Major challenges included overgrazing, forest fires, and slow adoption of tree planting, requiring extensive community mobilization.

RWARRI's projects in 2024 significantly improved livelihoods, promoted environmental sustainability, and empowered rural women, reinforcing its commitment to rural development and resilience-building across Rwanda.

Acronyms

- AGMs:** Annual General Meetings
- AMITH:** Amizero Institute of Technology and Hospitality
- AREECA:** Alliance for the Restoration of Forest Landscapes and Ecosystems
- C A:** Culinary Arts
- CECF:** Community Environment Conservation Fund
- CIGs:** Common Interest Groups
- CSA:** Climate-Smart Agriculture
- FBO:** Food and Beverage Operations
- FLR:** Forest Landscape Restoration
- FOSP:** Flesh Orange Sweet Potatoes
- GAP:** Good Agricultural Practices
- GDP:** Gross Domestic Product
- H D:** Hair Dressing
- IKI:** International Climate Initiative in Africa
- IUCN:** International Union for Conservation of the Nature
- JP RWEE:** Joint Program Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
- MIGEPROF:** Ministry Of Gender And Family Promotion
- NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization
- NST2:** National Strategy for Transformation
- PHHS:** Post-Harvest Handling and Storage
- RFA:** Rwanda Forest Authority
- RGB:** Rwanda Governance Board
- RWARRI:** Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative
- TVET:** Technical and Vocational Education Training school
- VLUAPs:** Village Land Use Action plans
- WFP:** World Food Program
- ZECC:** Zero-Energy Cooling Chamber



Amizero Institute of Technology and Hospitality, a RWARRI-TVET school / Photo: RWARRI

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RWARRI's Overview

Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative (RWARRI) is a national Non-Governmental Organization (Legal Entity) that started its operations in Rwanda in 1995. RWARRI promotes and improves Rwandan communities' social and economic welfare. It was officially recognized and registered by the Government of Rwanda as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in 2003. RWARRI has been registered with the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) since 2011 under registration number 023/11.



- Ultimate realization of a vulnerable community that is economically sustainable, socially transformed, and food secure;
- Fundamental to our vision is the belief that the community members take ownership and responsibility for the entire development process.



- Working towards achieving sustainable livelihoods among people with low incomes;
- Contributing towards shaping and implementing national and global policies that lead to positive economic, social, and technological transformation of the citizens;
- Being one of the most valued and respected NGOs in Rwanda and beyond.



- Transparency
- Accountability
- Respect for human dignity
- Effectiveness and Equity

OUR MOTTO



"For a
Wealthy
Future"

RWARRI Policies

1. Safeguarding Policy
2. Anti-harassment Policy
3. Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
4. Whistleblowing and Complaint Policy
5. Transparency and Accountability Policy
6. Conflict of Interest Policy
7. Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
8. Open Door Policy
9. Salary Policy
10. Volunteer Program Policy
11. Data protection policy

Programs

RWARRI is guided by four thematic intervention areas that align with Rwanda's Vision 2050 and other relevant national and international programs.

Economic Sustainability

The Rwandan economy seeks to enhance human well-being and quality of life sustainably. Many community members work to create opportunities by overcoming barriers that hinder them from fully realizing their human and economic potential. As a result, they can break the vicious cycle of poverty and become active participants in the economy. Access to markets enables smallholder farmers to obtain better crop prices and enjoy benefits throughout the value chain..

Ecological Viability

Rwanda faces significant challenges related to food security and climate effects due to its heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture and the impacts of climate change, intensified by its hilly regions in the west and north and the lowlands and plains in the southeast. Implementing rainwater harvesting, crop irrigation, landscape restoration, and promoting Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices can significantly enhance food security and strengthen resilience to climate change.

Technological Transformation

The importance of food and agriculture to Rwanda is undeniable. Approximately 80% of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, contributing around 43% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Rwanda aims to position itself as the "kitchen of the region." Agricultural mechanization and technology implementation will significantly enhance production by reducing operational time, particularly for smallholder farmers, thus considerably lowering poverty levels.

Social Transformation

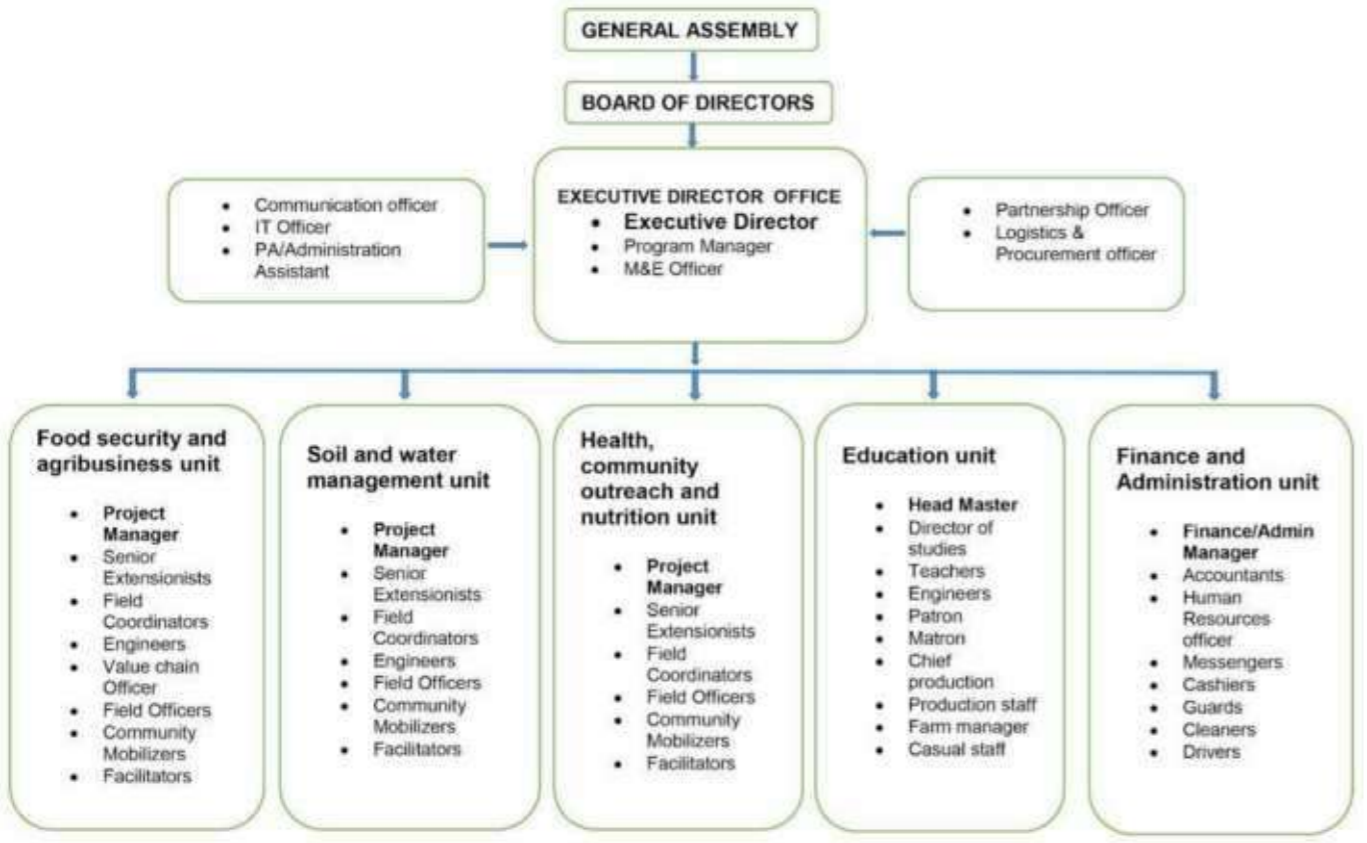
Many smallholder farmers benefit more from increased income by connecting them to markets. A concerted effort must raise awareness about productively reinvesting the additional income. Literacy training will be emphasized as a means to access the markets, which is crucial because most smallholder farmers in Rwanda currently own mobile phones. They should learn to use them as essential business tools by comparing prices across markets before deciding where to sell their produce.

Institutional Strengthening & Capacity Enhancement

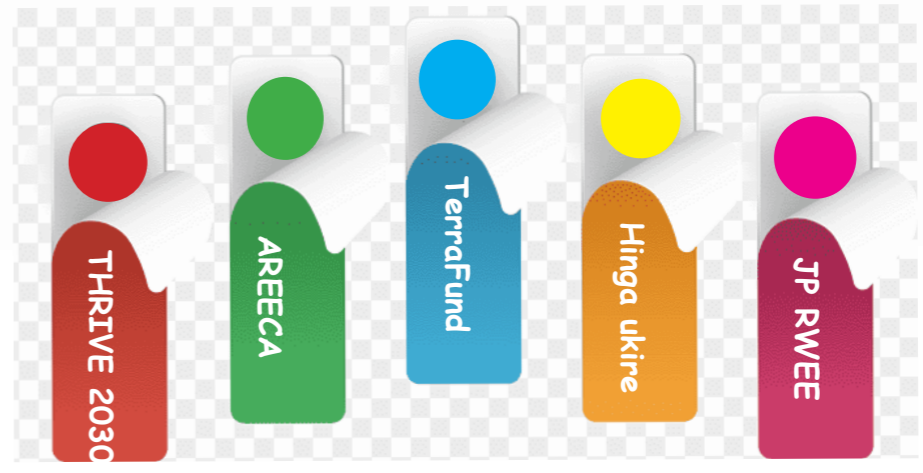
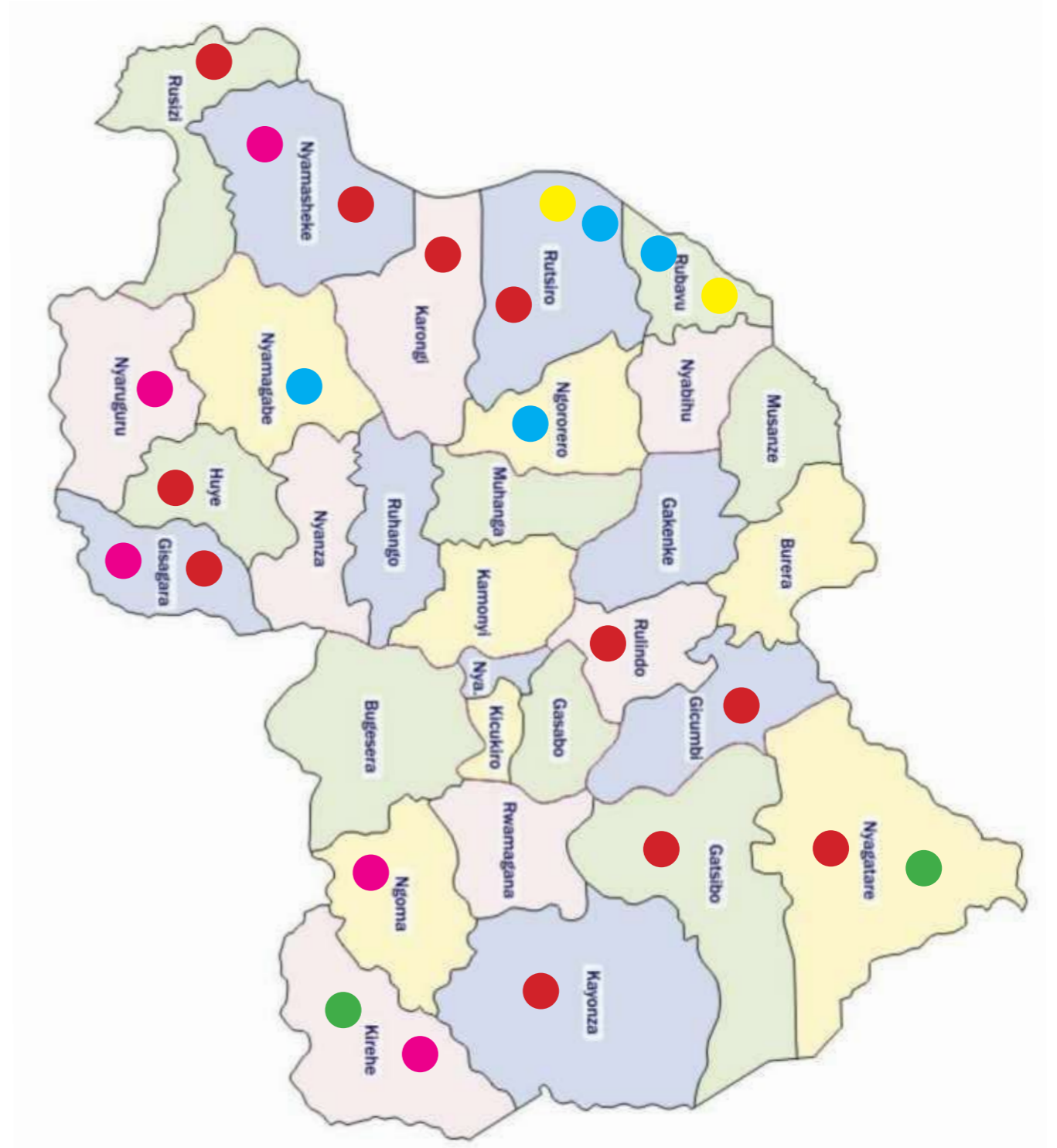
For RWARRI to execute its Strategic Plan for 2023-2030, it will require the necessary institutional arrangements and capacity. All core activities under this program will be derived from and support systematic capacity building for the Secretariat team, the Executive Committee, RWARRI members, and program beneficiaries. The strategy will also emphasize acquiring sufficient fiscal resources, equipment, facilities, and a permanent office space.



RWARRI Structure



RWARRI Board of Directors / Photo: RWARRI



KEY PARTNERS



As the year 2024 draws to a close, RWARRI Board, Management and Staff take this moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for the trust, collaboration, and support you've extended to us throughout 2024.

It has been a pleasure working with you, and we look forward to continuing our successful partnership in 2025.

Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year 2025!

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ECONOMICAL SUSTAINABILITY

Regarding economic growth, RWARRI aims to increase Rwandans' income, skills, and competencies sustainably. To achieve the organization's objectives, the focus is on assisting farmers in establishing strong organizations, enhancing production both quantitatively and qualitatively, processing agricultural products, promoting commercialization, connecting farmers with all stakeholders in the farming sector, providing practical skills that improve employability, and, most importantly, ensuring significant inclusion of youth and women. In 2024, RWARRI concentrated primarily on rural economic development.

In this domain, the primary Planned Activities felt in these key areas:

- Raise awareness on savings and investments and facilitate the formation and functioning of saving groups
- Strengthen the capacity of farmers in Livestock management
- Facilitate value addition of agriculture and livestock production and assist farmers in recycling and transforming the rest of agriculture production



Thrive 2030 project improves lives Kampire got financial independence



Kampire Spora and her husband's poultry farming business began to flourish / Photo: RWARRI

Spora Kampire, a poultry farmer 39 years old, with a husband and 5 children, is a member of the poultry Commercial Producer Group (Abishyizehamwe), located in Rusizi District, Nyakabuye Sector, Gaseke Cell, Kagabiro Village. She had always dreamed of becoming financially independent though she lived in a small rural village where opportunities were limited.

In September 2024, when Kampire attended the training on poultry farming organized by RWARRI under Thrive 2030, a World Vision International Rwanda supported project, she overheard how poultry farming can lead someone to a better life. The idea immediately sparked her interest. Kampire had seen a few families raising chickens in her

village but she had never considered it as a viable business opportunity. Kampire decided to request for a loan from a Saving for Transformation group formed by World Vision International Rwanda and she started poultry farming. By raising 100 one-day old chicks and selling them after 30 days, Kampire found a stable and profitable business.

"The loan of 180,000 Rwf borrowed from my saving group, helped me to purchase my first 100 one-day old chicks from UZIMA Chicken at 1,300 Rwf each and I sold them at 3,000 Rwf each after 30 days. The profit was 120,000 Rwf", said Kampire. Every day, Kampire dedicated herself to learning about proper chicken care, feeding, and maintaining health to ensure the chickens were producing at

through the development of poultry due to poultry farming

their best. "RWARRI's trainings were very fruitful for the effectiveness of my business", Kampire added.

Since then, Kampire's poultry farming business began to flourish. Kampire not only achieved financial independence but also became a role model for other women in her community. She regularly

mentored aspiring women in her CPG as a Lead farmer, helping them get into farming, and promoting sustainable farming practices. Today, Kampire is not just a successful poultry farmer; she is a symbol of empowerment, demonstrating that with the right mind set, a woman can overcome any challenge and thrive.

Thrive 2030 project background

Through its partnership with World Vision International Rwanda, Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative (RWARRI) aims to lift impoverished individuals out of poverty by increasing household income by developing a poultry value chain as part of the Thrive 2030 project. RWARRI is involved in the poultry value chain across the districts of Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Kayonza, Gicumbi, Rulindo, Huye, Gisagara, Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Karongi, Rutsiro, and Ngororero.

The current agreement between World Vision International Rwanda and RWARRI aims to graduate 14,100 individuals by 2026. Participants in RWARRI's interventions under the Thrive 2030 project and within the poultry value chain are poor farmers who were selected and profiled in close collaboration with the districts by World Vision International Rwanda.

These farmers have completed the first phase of the graduation process, which includes training on the empowered worldview—a program designed to shift mindsets and help individuals understand their roles and contributions to household development. This phase also enhances their ability to identify available and potential business opportunities to increase household income and encourages participation in transformation activities through savings groups.

After completing the first phase, participants engaged in business development within the poultry value chain are connected to RWARRI, which has expertise in this sector, to support their growth and graduation. In developing the poultry value chain as part of the graduation process, RWARRI facilitates the formation of producer groups through which all interventions are delivered to poultry farmers. These initiatives aim to increase household income by providing trainings to enhance poultry production and entrepreneurship skills while fostering connections and collaboration with other value chain actors, including input suppliers, buyers, and financial institutions.

Trainings to increase poultry farmers' skills and competencies

Nsengiyumva's life transformed through poultry value chain

Emmanuel Nsengiyumva is a resident of the Kiramuruzi sector, Gatsibo district, Eastern Province. He is 41 years old and has a family of 6 made of a wife and four children (2 girls and 2 boys). The family of Nsengiyumva depended only on agricultural activities. Before enrolling in the THRIVE 2030 program, Nsengiyumva struggled to cover his family's needs.

After enrolling in the THRIVE 2030 program, in the poultry value chain funded by the World Vision International Rwanda, he chose to do poultry activities and registered as a Girubuzima group member in the Kiramuruzi area. As a member of the group, Nsengiyumva received a training in modern poultry farming practices and decided to start poultry farming.

On his first step, Nsengiyumva started with 80 chickens bought with 72,000Rwf. Thus, Nsengimana gradually increased and improved his poultry activities to become an UZIMA CHICKEN Agent who sells one-month old chicks. Through his work as an

agent, Nsengimana generated steady income and strengthened his position within the local poultry value chain to distribute chicks to other farmers. In his own poultry business, Nsengimana currently raises 200 chicks. His monthly earnings from the poultry is equal to 200,000Rwf. From the income obtained from the poultry, he managed to buy land for 1,000,000Rwf and goats for 105,000Rwf, aiming to diversify the household income. Nsengiyuma rented one of his houses to be used by his poultry farming group Girubuzima activities, where they are rearing 50 chickens. Indeed, Nsengiyumva is not struggling with getting his family's needs, he can access food, clothing, health insurance, school materials for his children.

The vision of Nsengiyumva is to increase the number of chickens from 200 up to 600 chickens and more. The plan is to sell the current 200 chickens after getting old and reinvest the money in buying the new 600 chicks.

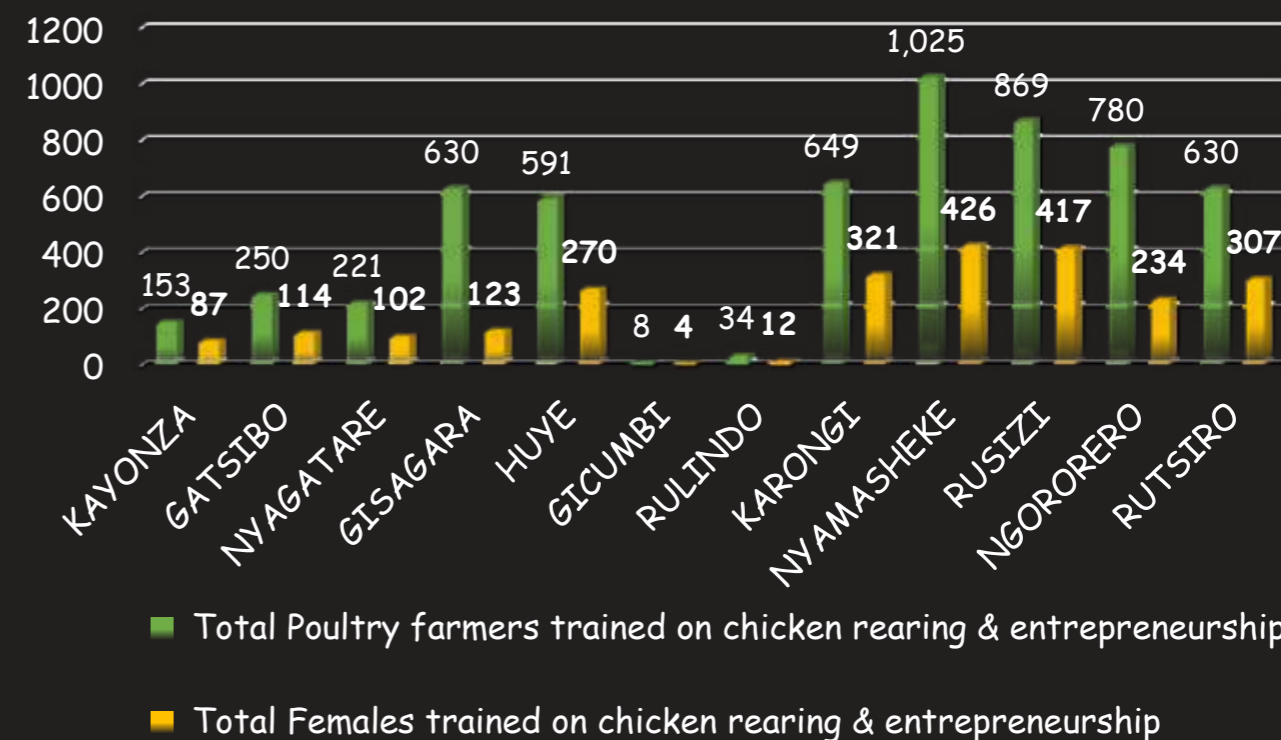


Nsengiyumva vision is to increase the number of chickens / Photo: RWARRI

Training poultry farmers to increase their skills and competencies

Trainings on poultry farming aimed to increase farmers skills and competencies in poultry value chain activities to increase their production as well as household income. Poultry farmers grouped into producer groups are capacitated to properly do business in the poultry value chain and the main training provided to them are: the training on chicken rearing; through each, they are trained on best practices in rearing chicken (housing, feeding, biosecurity measures), the training on entrepreneurship through which they learn how to do poultry as a profitable business.

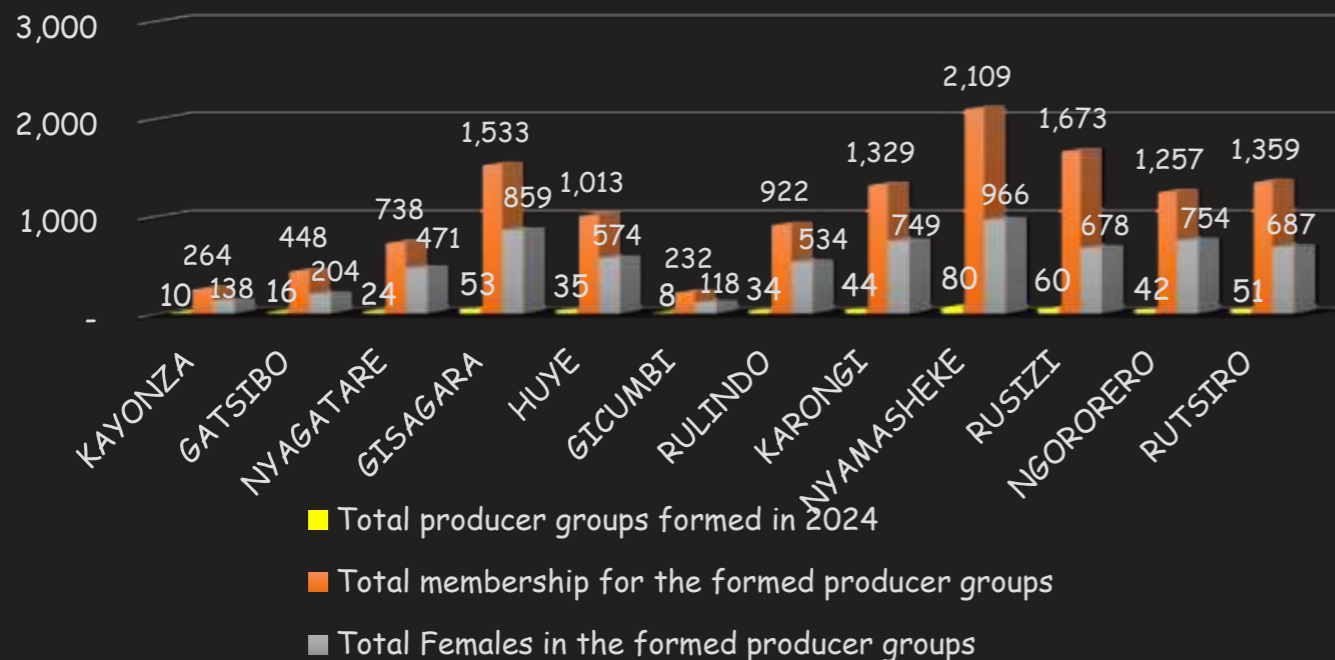
In 2024, the training on chicken rearing provided to the total number of farmers is 5,840 and are distributed into the districts as follow;



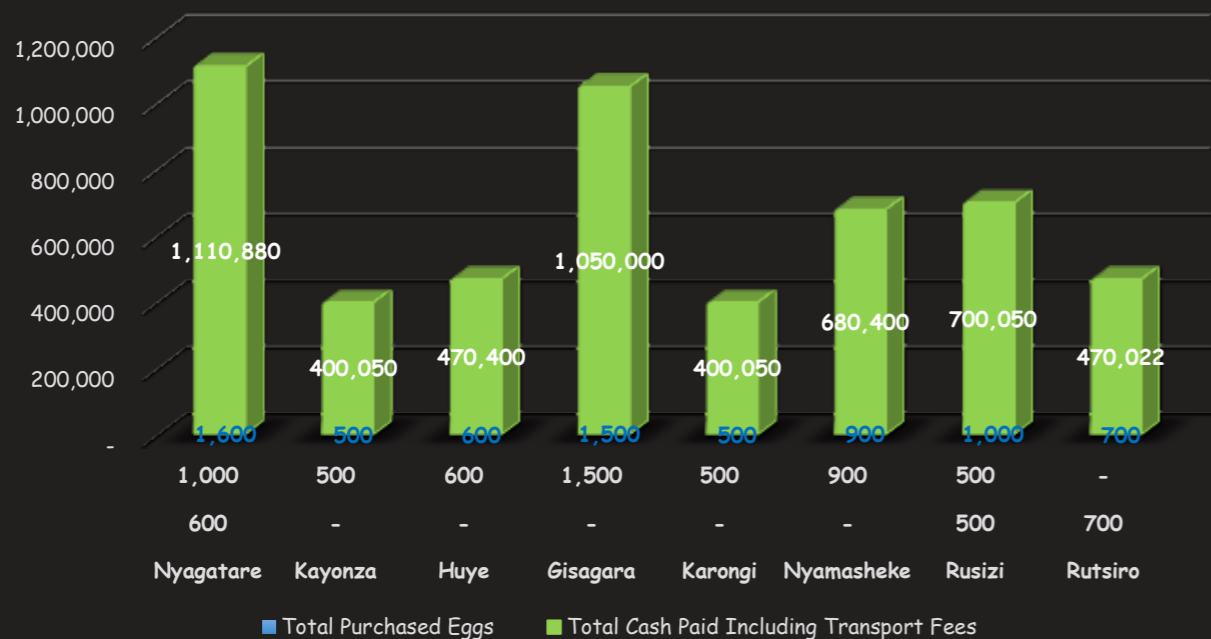
Trainings on poultry farming increase farmers skills and competencies / Photo: RWARRI

Chicken producer groups formation

During 2024, RWARRI facilitated the formation of poultry producer groups in all the intervention districts. The table below provides more details on the producer groups formed compared to the targeted numbers;



Total number of incubated eggs and amount spent on purchasing and transportation



Market facilitation and connection to other value chain actors

Ndoreyaho's life transformed due to market linkage in poultry farming

In the Kiyogori Village, Akabuga Cell, Kiramuruzi Sector, Gatsibo District, Ndoreyaho Jean Damascene, a passionate poultry farmer, managed to transform his life due to market linkage under the THRIVE 2030 Program, a World Vision International Rwanda funded project. Ndoreyaho has recently reached a significant milestone in his farming journey, thanks to the unwavering support efforts of RWARRI that runs this project. Ndoreyaho has long been committed to poultry farming, but like many farmers in his community, he faced challenges in accessing reliable buyers and securing fair prices for his chickens. Despite producing healthy and high-quality poultry, these hurdles kept him from realizing the full potential of his business. This changed when RWARRI stepped in to assist him. Recognizing Ndoreyaho's dedication and potential, RWARRI facilitated a connection with Hakizimana Straton, a local

buyer seeking high-quality chickens. This timely intervention proved to be a game-changer for Ndoreyaho. Through the linkage, Ndoreyaho sold 100 chickens to Hakizimana at an impressive price of 7,000 Rwandan Francs each. The transaction resulted in a total income of 700,000 Rwandan Francs- a significant boost to Ndoreyaho's poultry business and livelihood. With the income from the sale, Ndoreyaho plans to reinvest in his farm by purchasing more chicks, improving the quality of feed, and enhancing the infrastructure of his poultry operation. These steps will not only sustain his business but also create opportunities for further growth. "I am incredibly grateful to RWARRI for linking me to a buyer like Hakizimana. This sale has given me the confidence and resources to expand my poultry business and support my family", shared Ndoreyaho.



Incubators enable commercial poultry farming / Photo: RWARRI

Access to markets and other services or products is a key factor driving the growth of poultry value chain production, which affects household income. RWARRI helps poultry farmers connect with the market through organized meetings to discuss poultry products with potential buyers. In 2024, these meetings brought together all participants in the value chain who provide services or products—including chick suppliers, medicine and vaccine providers, equipment vendors, insurance companies, and financial institutions—to collaborate with poultry farmers in developing this value chain. These gatherings encourage all value-chain participants to partner with farmers and engage in mutually beneficial business ventures. Linkage meetings were conducted in Nyagatare, Gatsibo, Kayonza, Huye, Gisagara, Rusizi, Nyamasheke, Karongi, Rutsiro, and Ngororero districts in 2024. The participation in the linkage meeting during 2024 equals 269 poultry farmers, including 121 women and 148 men. Market facilitation has enabled poultry farmers to generate 220,788,172 Rwf in total sales from poultry products and bi-products.

Nsengiyumva' s journey to success through agriculture

In Burango Village, Kabere cell, Kivumu sector, Rutsiro District, Patrice Nsengiyumva, a father of five, struggled to meet his family's needs due to poor soil and low yields. His situation changed after joining the Hinga Ukire Project, where he received trainings on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and received improved orange-fleshed sweet potato vines.

By applying Good Agricultural Practices, he made a decision that reaped extraordinary rewards. "We used to harvest six tons per hectare. This time, we harvested 17 tons," Nsengiyumva shared proudly.

Selling his harvest at 300 RWF per kilogram

to nearby schools and selling the rest to local buyers, Nsengiyumva earned more than 2 million RWF. His family also enjoyed the orange-fleshed sweet potatoes for the first time. With this income, he transformed his family's life, building a cow shed for 200,000 RWF, purchasing land for 1,200,000 RWF, paying for his family's health insurance, covering his son's school fees, and reinvesting the remainder in agricultural inputs for the next season. "The Hinga Ukire Project has given us hope and improved our livelihoods," Nsengiyumva said.



Nsengiyumva Patrice's livelihoods is improved due to Hinga Ukire project / Photo: RWARRI

Improving productivity through bio-fortified crops

background

The project entitled "Improving productivity through bio-fortified crops for smallholder farmers in Rubavu and Rutsiro districts, Hinga Ukire project" is implemented by RWARRI with support from the European Union. The initiative focuses on distributing biofortified crops, sourced from Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Board (RAB); producing and disseminating clean planting materials for biofortified crops, namely high iron beans, orange fleshed sweet potatoes, and cassava rich in carotene to smallholder farmers.

The expected impact of this 5 year project is to increase the households' incomes among the 15,525 (9,880 in Rutsiro and 5,645 in Rubavu) targeted smallholder farmers by 30% on seasonal production and reduce by 5% the number of children between 0 and 5 years suffering from stunting.

The Hinga Ukire Project targets include cultivating bio-fortified crops across 4500 hectares of beans, 900 hectares of cassava, and 810 hectares of sweet potatoes

In 2024, RWARRI's interventions included the multiplication and dissemination of biofortified planting materials in Rubavu and Rutsiro. Thus, 1,098 smallholder farmers (50% of them are women) comprising 817 small farmers (among them 420 are females) in Rutsiro district and 281 small farmers in Rubavu district among them 129 are females received improved biofortified crops varieties namely high iron beans, orange fleshed sweet potatoes, and Cassava rich in carotene to smallholder farmers known for high yields and high market demand.

Apart from multiplying and disseminating biofortified crops, RWARRI provided smallholder farmers with training in various domains including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Post Harvest Handling and Storage (PHHS) aiming at increasing by 30% on seasonal production.



Saving groups facilitated the access to agricultural inputs

In Gatuntu Village, Kigarama cell, Nyundo Sector, Rubavu District, farmers are embracing a new way to access agricultural inputs through saving and loaning groups introduced by the Hinga Ukire Project. Twizamure Bahinzi, a group of 24 members among them 10 females and 14 males that contribute 500 RWF per individual and per week and so far, they have saved 693,750 RWF. Unlike other saving groups that focus on health insurance or year-end cash

distribution, this initiative is dedicated to securing funds for agricultural inputs. "Getting loans from financial institutions is not easy," says Aloys Musabyimana, a member of the Community Seed Fund group-Twizamure Bahinzi. "Through this saving group, we ensure that every member can afford quality seeds and fertilizers on time." Indeed, saving groups empower farmers with financial independence, to increase productivity, and ensure long-term agricultural sustainability.



Saving groups help farmers to afford quality seeds and fertilizers / Photo: RWARRI

Through saving groups, individuals come together to collectively save money, manage their finances, and sometimes provide loans to members within the group. By fostering collaboration and resilience, saving groups support smallholder farmers in investing in productivity, enhancing their livelihoods, and promoting long-term economic independence. By the end of 2024, the number of farmers that joined saving groups under Hinga ukire project were 2,492 farmers (51.6% of whom are women) grouped in 64 saving groups in Rutsiro and 664 farmers (52.9% of whom are women) grouped in 37 saving groups in Rubavu.

RWARRI contributes to empower the Rural Women's Economy

The Joint Program on Accelerating Progress towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) that RWARRI runs is funded by WFP through MIGEPROF. It aims to enhance resilience, improve livelihoods, and empower rural women through sustainable agricultural practices and climate-resilient infrastructures.

Starting in November 2024, the project's core activities include installing a solar-powered irrigation system for 10 hectares, a large-scale Zero-Energy Cooling Chamber (ZECC) in Gisagara District, and a cold room in Ngoma District. These initiatives are vital for promoting sustainable agricultural practices and improving food security. The promotion of biofortified crops, including high-iron beans, carotene-rich cassava, and vitamin A-rich orange sweet potatoes, along with the provision of vegetable seeds for start-ups at the irrigated site in Gisagara District, aims to improve nutrition and food security for rural communities.

Training will be provided to rural women farmers in several key areas. This includes the management of solar-powered irrigation systems to ensure water-efficient crop production, the use of PHHS facilities to extend the shelf life of produce, and processing equipment to add value to cassava and sweet potato crops. Additionally, rural women will be trained in climate-smart agriculture techniques, including mulching, agroforestry, and composting, which will help improve resilience to climate change, preserve soil moisture, and enhance soil health. These practices will also promote the integration of trees into agricultural systems. To further support food security, the project will provide training on post-harvest handling to minimize losses and preserve the quality of crops. Processing units will be established to enable rural women to add value to their produce, particularly orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and carotene-rich cassava. Furthermore, market linkages will be facilitated to connect Farmer Service Centers and rural women's groups with buyers, fostering direct engagement and strengthening market access. Policy dialogues will be held in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), allowing stakeholders to address gaps in gender, agriculture, food systems, and climate change policies. These efforts are aimed at contributing to poverty reduction, improved food security, and greater economic stability for rural women.



RWARRI team with Gisagara officials during the project introduction meeting / Photo: RWARRI

Nyiransekeyabanzi pleased with saving groups

Nyiransekeyabanzi Speciose's eyes sparkle with confidence as she describes her membership in the community savings group in her village in Mushonyi of Rutsiro District. "Being part of this group has changed how I see my future," she shares. Every Wednesday, she joins thirty-four other group members, where they each contribute 500 Rwandan francs to their shared savings. After a year of consistent participation, Speciose has 26,500 rwf in savings and has already successfully taken and repaid a small loan of 9,000 rwf. "What gives me peace of mind," she explains, "is knowing that when the right moment comes to start my tree nursery business, I won't have to worry about where to find the money. Our group has a strong foundation, and we support each other's dreams."



Saving groups facilitate sustainability of landscapes restoration activities / Photo: RWARRI

Under the Igitu ni Ukubaho project, RWARRI facilitated the establishment of 65 savings groups comprising 2,275 landowners (1,288 males, 987 females, and 317 youth) from the areas targeted for restoration. This represents a significant milestone for the project in 2024. Group members have received comprehensive training in financial literacy and savings group management. This integrated approach, which combines land ownership with economic empowerment, ensures strong community ownership of the restoration efforts and enhances the project's long-term sustainability. In 2024, the savings groups accumulated total savings of 4,046,500 RWF and emergency savings (Ingoboka), amounting to 629,400 RWF

Nyirarukato is pleased to increase the productivity of high-iron beans

In Nyarusuku Village, Kigeyo Sector, Rutsiro District, Speciose Nyirarukato, a mother of four, has transformed her farming practices and increased yields with support from the Hinga-Ukire Project. Funded by the European Union and implemented by RWARRI, the project provided her with bio-fortified high-iron bean seeds and training on multiplication and agricultural best practices.

"As a farmer, three major things contribute to your production: quality of seed, input, and good agricultural practices. If you use the wrong seeds, you will have poor yields", Nyirarukato explained.

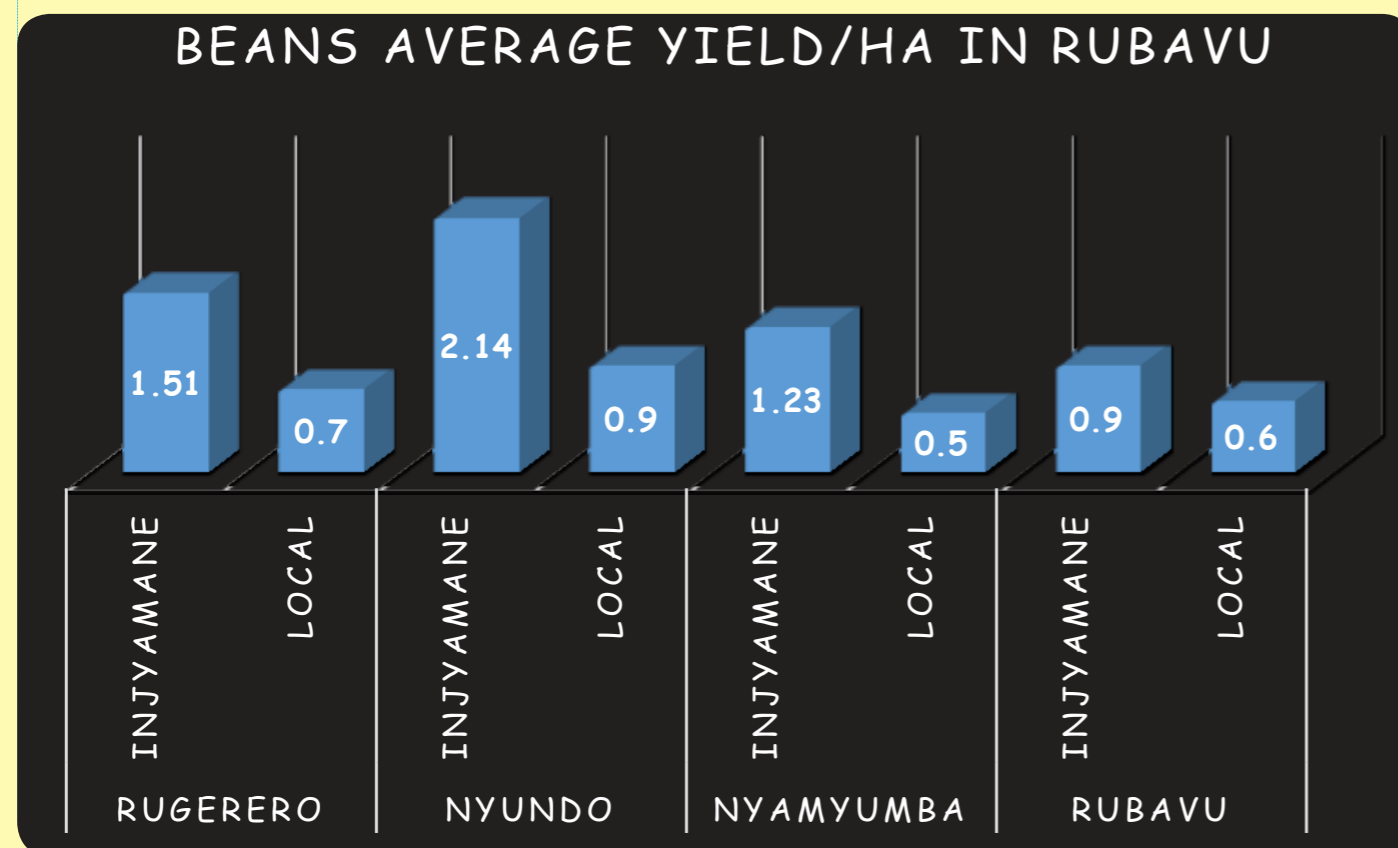
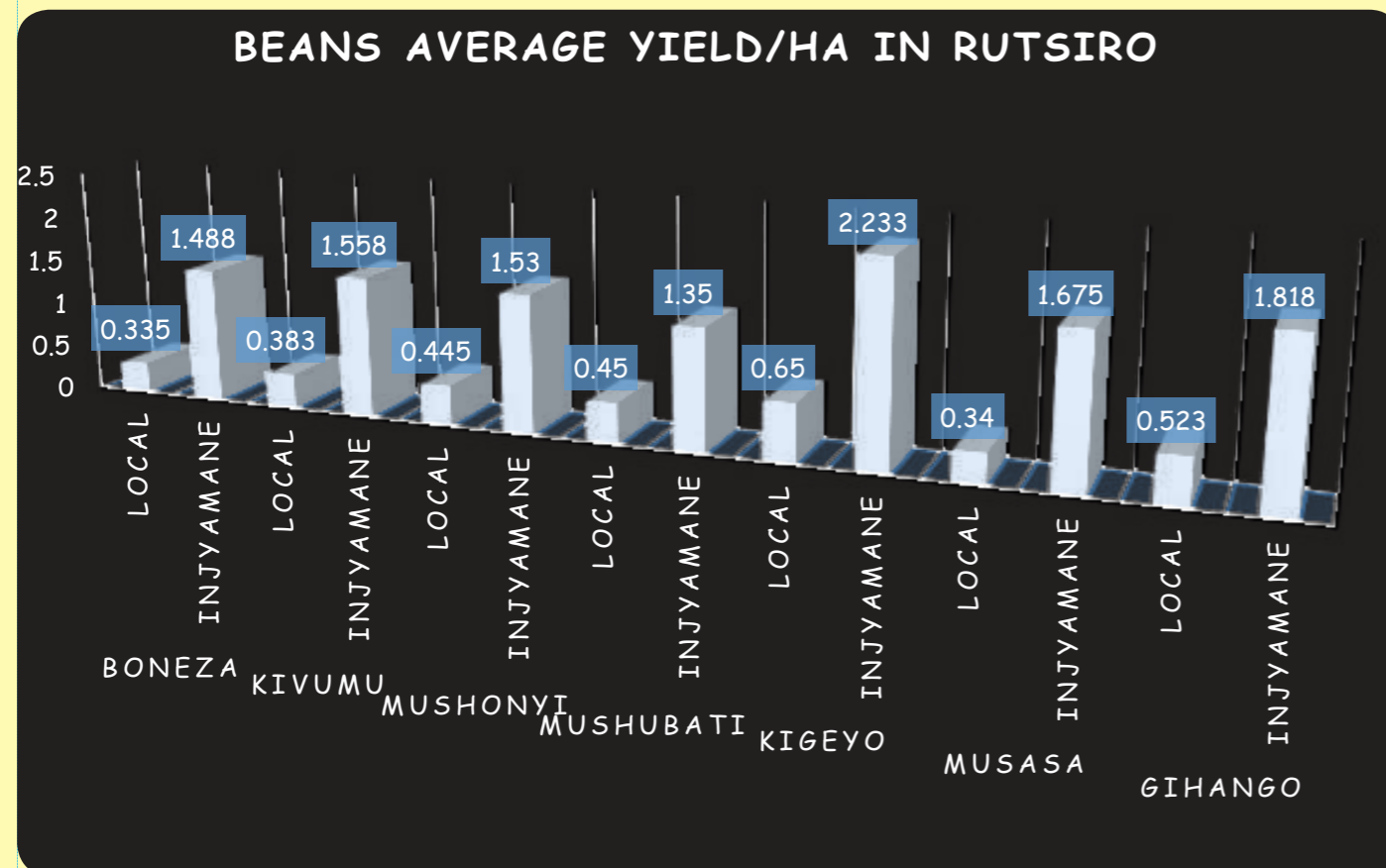
Previously, Nyirarukato harvested only 6 kilograms of beans per Are. With the project's intervention, her yield soared to 35 kilograms per Are. She shared part of her harvest with nine neighbors, enabling them to benefit from the improved seeds, while the remainder was used to expand her cultivation.

"I thank the government of Rwanda and the Hinga-Ukire Project funded by the European Union for distributing seeds to our doorsteps," she said. Speciose now looks forward to next season, expecting even greater yields and income to improve her family's livelihood.

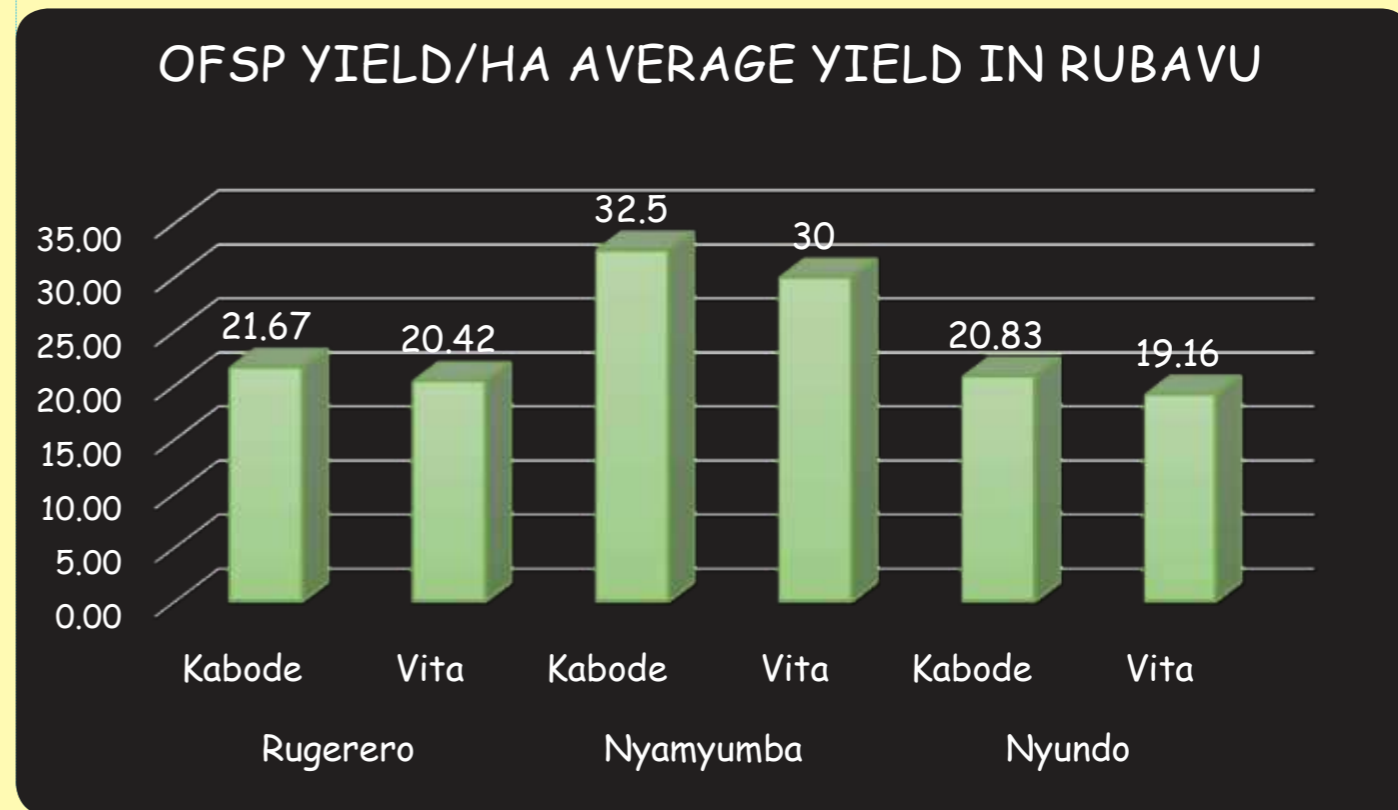
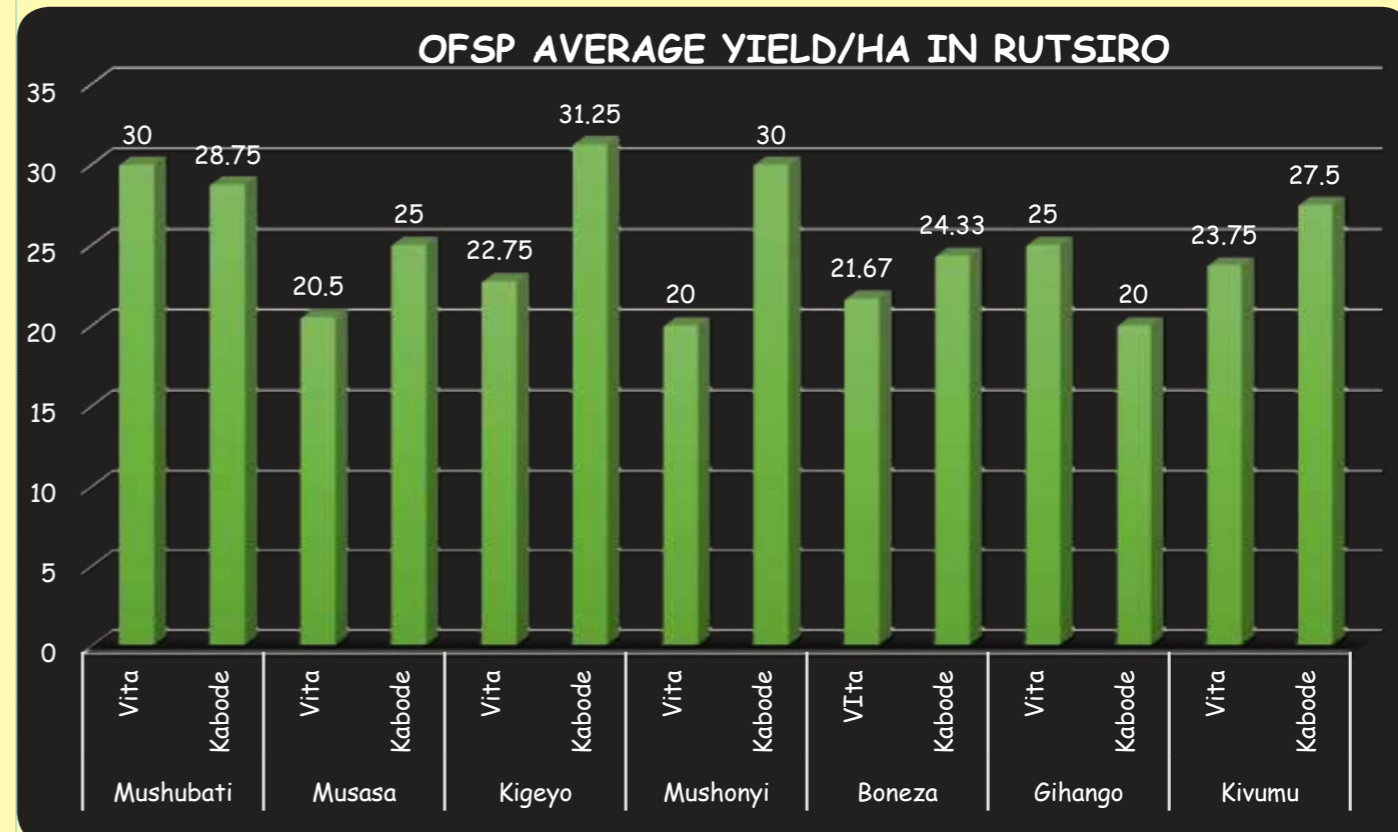


Nyirarukato increased the productivity of high iron-beans /Photo: RWARRI

SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS HINGA UKIRE 2024



SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS HINGA UKIRE 2024



Cassava rapid multiplication made easy with access to seeds

Habyarimana Medard, a resident of Rutsiro district, Kigeyo sector, Mpora Cell, as a member of the Community Seed Fund group supported by the Hinga Ukire Project, is helping to transform cassava farming in his community. For over 40 years, farmers struggled with a shortage of good cassava planting materials.

"We've been without new cassava varieties for decades. But through Hinga Ukire's training on rapid multiplication, we learned how to produce many cuttings from just

a small piece of land in a short time", said Habyarimana.

Starting with 3,000 cuttings from demo plots, Habyarimana and his group are now multiplying over 60,000 cuttings, which will soon be available to be distributed to other farmers. This innovation is contributing to the availability and accessibility of cassava rich in carotene, paving the way for better nutrition and improved food security in the future.



Cassava rapid multiplication facilitated easy access to seeds / Photo: RWARRI

ECOLOGICAL VIABILITY

RWARRI's goal, under the ecological viability theme, is to promote environmental sustainability and natural resource management. Our Strategic Plan 2023-2030 emphasizes defined initiatives through research on best practices for achieving our planned activities, including but not limited to the following:

- Increase the adoption of forestry and agroforestry management practices by providing training on planting of agroforestry trees and its proper use,
- Forestation and awareness of forestry and agroforestry management,
- Promote climate resilience and adaptation and prevention of environment degradation by sensitizing new and existing innovations to cope with climate,
- Accelerate resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts by anticipating, preparing for, adapting to, and recovering from the effects of climate change while advancing climate resilience through adaptation and Climate-smart agriculture,
- Protect and restore waterbodies and watersheds by protecting these resources against threats from climate change, drought, invasive species, plastics, and nutrient pollution.



AREECA successfully reintroduced indigenous tree species

Community members in the Nyagatare district praise the AREECA project for successfully reintroducing indigenous tree species to their land. For Uzabakiriho Jean Nepomuscene from Rukundo II Village, Kabeza cell in Rwimiyaga sector, Nyagatare district, there are indigenous tree species that were disappearing from their farmlands and which are now being restored. "We were about to forget species like *Ficus tonninghii*, *Erythrina abyssinica* and *Acacia polyacantha*. He thanked the AREECA project for reintroducing these tree species on their land, especially their pasturelands.

Indeed, Muberi Eugene, the forests

extensionist of the Rwimiyaga sector, highlighted the benefits of indigenous tree species, including building climate resilience, being a haven for biodiversity, being a source of food for animals, medicines, and various wood products, restoring soil health, providing oxygen to breathe, reducing air pollution, and reducing the effects of flooding.

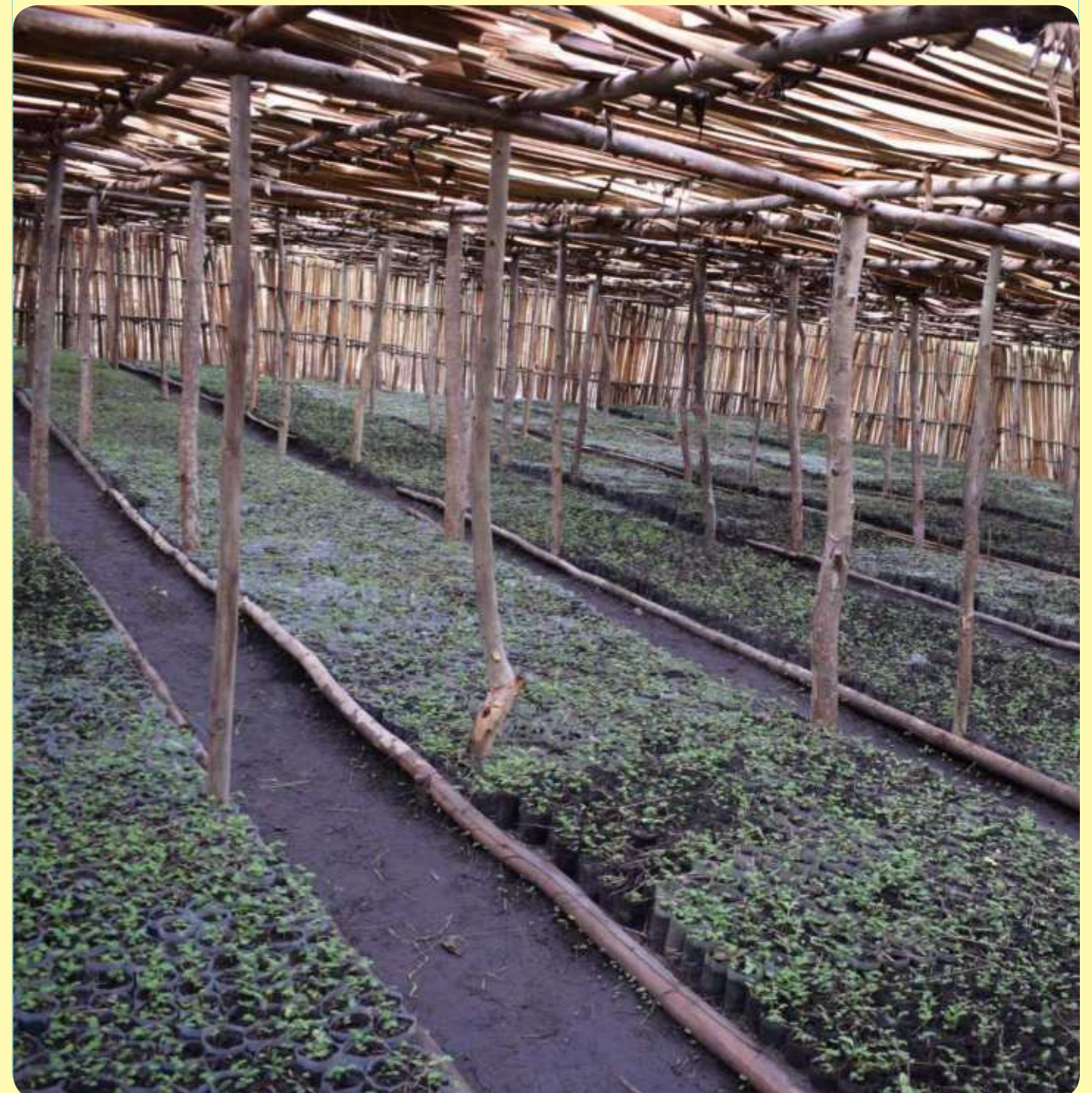
When visiting AREECA sites, there are achievements to notice, mainly seeing these indigenous tree species rebirthing the former nature of the landscape of Nyagatare and Kirehe districts.



Ficus tonninghii is one of the indigenous tree species promoted by AREECA / Photo: RWARRI

AREECA Background

The Alliance for Restoration of Forest Landscapes and Ecosystems in Africa (AREECA program) has been established to enhance large-scale forest restoration's socio-economic, ecological, and climate-related benefits in critical countries, including Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, and Rwanda. Since its inception in November 2021, the program has engaged various partners, notably the Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative (RWARRI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Rwanda Forests Authority (RFA), and local authorities from the Kirehe and Nyagatare districts. Together, in 2024, we were working diligently to implement and achieve the objectives of the AREECA program. Through this initiative, RWARRI aimed to foster a deeper understanding of forests' critical role in combating climate change and supporting sustainable development, ensuring that the benefits of the AREECA program are felt throughout the communities involved.



RWARRI contributed to Forest

In 2024, RWARRI under the Alliance for Restoration of Forest Landscapes and Ecosystems in Africa (AREECA program) has been actively operating in several sectors in the Nyagatare district, including Nyagatare, Rwimiyaga, and Karama, as well as in the Kirehe district, where the sectors of Nyamugari, Mpanga, Nasho, Nyarubuye, and Kigarama have been targeted. These areas were crucial for promoting forest landscapes restoration and ecological sustainability.

As an implementing partner of the AREECA program, RWARRI has led community mobilization, capacity building, and awareness-raising initiatives. These efforts have been directed at local leaders and community members to foster greater engagement and ownership of the restoration activities. This is vital for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the AREECA program's interventions.

RWARRI's significant achievements include a range of targeted interventions focused on capacity training, raising awareness and actively promoting forest landscape restoration. In 2024, the key activities undertaken were as follows:

Snapshot of achievements AREECA

Awareness Campaigns: We conduct comprehensive awareness campaigns aimed at educating local leaders and the general population of the Kirehe and Nyagatare districts about the importance of Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR).

- 18,626 people in Kirehe including 8,855 males and 9,771 females
- 23,205 people in Nyagatare including 11,825 males and 11,380 females

School Engagement Initiatives: Organizing awareness campaigns within schools to instill knowledge about forest conservation and restoration among younger generations.

- 8,662 schools' population reached in Kirehe including 4,375 males and 4,287 females
- 15,287 School population reached in Nyagatare including 7,561 males and 7,726 females

Media Outreach: Facilitating radio talk shows to reach a broader audience, providing platforms for forest restoration discussions, sharing community success stories and best practices.

- 83,111 population targeted in Kirehe
- 197,484 population targeted in Nyagatare

landscapes and ecosystems restoration

Snapshot of achievements AREECA

Peer-to-Peer Learning Visits: Arranging opportunities for community members to learn from one another through peer-to-peer visits, thereby enhancing knowledge exchange and best practices in forest restoration.

- 45 individuals among them 27 from Kirehe and 18 from Nyagatare

Training for Lead Farmers: Conducting specialized training sessions for lead farmers focused on effective tree planting techniques and sustainable agricultural practices that support forest restoration efforts.

- 201 individuals including 152 males and 49 females were reached in Kirehe
- 178 individuals including 137 males and 49 females were reached in Nyagatare

Community Implementation Approaches: Facilitating the implementation of community-focused approaches to ensure local participation and investment in restoration activities.

- 6 farmer groups comprising 157 individuals in Kirehe and 5 farmer groups comprising 74 individuals in Nyagatare were trained to produce, plant and maintain trees seedlings

Recognition of Excellence: Establishing a system to award the best-performing farmer groups with exceptional commitment and results in forest restoration efforts.

- "Twite ku bidukikije" farmer group from the Mpanga sector in Kirehe and "Ngwino urebe" farmer group from the Rwimiyaga sector in Nyagatare were awarded

Feasibility Studies: A feasibility study exploring the implementation of the Community Ecosystem Conservation Fund (CECF) was conducted, culminating in the presentation of the findings for adoption by local stakeholders.

- The study targeted 365 respondents (180 males and 185 females), 62 key interviewees and 37 Focus Group Discussions from 35 villages in 7 Districts that compose Eastern Province (5 villages in each district)

Rutsiro and Rubavu districts forests restoration is on a good path

Empowering Rutsiro and Rubavu Communities through Lake Kivu Catchment Forest Restoration"-Igiti ni ukubaho project aims to enact positive change by facilitating the restoration of 214,200 forest and agroforestry trees in the vicinity of farmlands, riversides, and anti-erosive structures and 85,800 fruit trees. This initiative is being implemented within Rwanda's catchment regions of the Rubavu and Rutsiro districts. Specifically, the Rubavu district includes the sectors of Rubavu, Rugerero, Gisenyi, and Nyamyumba, whereas the Rutsiro district encompasses the sectors of Kivumu, Mushonyi, and Kigeyo.

The project aims to involve people in reversing degradation and creating public benefits through improved incomes and resilience from the sustainable use of landscape resources. The project envisions that the restoration efforts create corridors for wildlife movement to help recover endangered species and improve overall biodiversity within the Kivu Basin.



Tree planting launch in Rutsiro under Igiti ni Ukubaho project / Photo: RWARRI

The successful identification and mapping of six restoration sites with varying restoration targets and progress. At the Rubavu site, out of the total 50.5 hectares designated for agroforestry restoration, 31 hectares have been successfully restored. The Gitsimbi site comprises 57 hectares allocated for agroforestry and 3.7 hectares of riverbank areas designated for bamboo restoration, 23 hectares of agroforestry was successfully restored. In Burehe, the site includes 60.5 hectares for agroforestry, of which 40 hectares have been restored, along with 5.6 hectares of riverbank areas planned for bamboo planting. The Nyamwenda site features 53.6 hectares designated for agroforestry, with 34 hectares already restored, and 4.7 hectares of riverbank areas allocated for bamboo. At the Nkora site, out of the 60.3 hectares planned for agroforestry, 51 hectares have been restored, with an additional 13.3 hectares designated for bamboo restoration. Finally, the Mushonyi site consists of 15.7 hectares for agroforestry and 10.5 hectares for forest restoration, with current progress showing 8 hectares of agroforestry restored and 3 hectares planted with Eucalyptus.

Successful tree planting in Rubavu and Rutsiro district

The project has reached a significant milestone by successfully planting 176,583 trees across all six designated restoration sites. This planting effort represents approximately 63% of our total seedling production, 291,000 trees. The seedlings were produced in six nurseries across two districts. In Rutsiro District, Nyamwenda Nursery produced 28,340 seedlings, Nkora Nursery produced 48,769 seedlings, and Mushonyi Nursery produced 24,225 seedlings. In Rubavu District, Rubavu Nursery produced 20,052 seedlings, Gitsimbi Nursery produced 20,200 seedlings, and Burehe Nursery produced 34,997 seedlings, indicating substantial progress while allowing for continued expansion. The planted trees have been strategically distributed across the restoration sites to ensure optimal coverage and ecological impact.

- Each restoration site has received an average of 21,000 trees
- The planting has been carried out following careful site-specific plans
- 2,275 community members were trained in proper planting techniques and have been instrumental in the implementation
- The timing of planting has been coordinated with seasonal rainfall patterns to maximize survival rates where our survival rate reaches 61%
- Regular monitoring is being conducted to track tree survival and growth rates
- Post-planting monitoring is in place to ensure the long-term success of the planted trees



Tree planting by the Community members in Rutsiro and Rubavu / Photo: RWARRI

Nsanzimana confirmed that eroded riverbanks can be restored

Nsanzimana Maurice, a father of five and a farmer in Nyamyumba sector, had watched helplessly as the unprotected Burehe River eroded more than two acres of his fertile farmland over the years. Though initially skeptical when the land restoration project proposed planting bamboos and trees along the riverbanks, having previously tried unsuccessful solutions like stones and trenches, Nsanzimana's hope was restored when the project team explained how tree roots would stabilize the soil and showed examples from other regions. "The project has also taught me how to establish nurseries, sowing seeds, planting seedlings and protecting the plants", he said joyfully. Thus, Burehe river that was seen as an enemy a year ago is now viewed as part of the community source of wealth.



Nurseries within communities facilitate the access to tree seedlings / Photo: RWARRI

The training program utilized a cascade model, where professional consultants trained 195 group representatives who subsequently trained 2,080 members of their respective groups, reaching a total of 2,275 community members. The participant demographics included 1,288 males, 987 females, and 317 youth. Through these training sessions, community members enhanced their skills in nursery preparation and management.

A network of six nurseries has been established, strategically positioned with one nursery at each restoration site. The community members have received comprehensive training in nursery preparation and management techniques to ensure proper operation. These nurseries collectively have an impressive production capacity of 291,000 tree seedlings, demonstrating significant potential for supporting the restoration efforts. A total of 176,583 seedlings have survived, representing a 61% survival rate across Rubavu and Rutsiro districts. The distribution is as follows: 101,334 seedlings in Rutsiro District and 75,249 seedlings in Rubavu District.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Derived from the National Strategy for Transformation (NTS1), where Rwanda's goal is to develop its citizens into a capable and skilled people with quality standards of living and a stable and secure society', our Strategic Plan's Social Transformation's planned core activities for the next seven years are a bid to contribute to the realization of the national goal.

The below listed activities are in no way exhaustive but are a representation of the initiatives that RWARRI has tactically considered through research to feasibly achieve the national goal.

- Reduced malnutrition among young children, pregnant and breast-feeding mothers and other vulnerable persons by mobilizing community members to establish kitchen gardens and small livestock rearing
- Create certified short courses aimed at building a knowledge-based economy by conducting a need assessment (feasibility study on focus areas); Planning session; Content and methods development of a knowledge-based curriculum; Pilot delivery and revise; Implementation of the curriculum (completed package); Evaluation and reporting on progress
- Scaling up the school feeding program in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools to reduce dropout through distribution of On-site meals to children while at school during meal times. These may include serving fortified porridge, high energy/fortified snacks or meal composed of different food items.
- Construction and equipping of TVET Centres with teaching and learning materials such as a fully equipped kitchens; IT classrooms; etc



Sensitizing the community members on nutrition under Hinga Ukiro

Rugaragara students tasted the nutritious orange-fleshed sweet potatoes

G.S Rugaragara, a school located in Rutsiro District, Mushonyi Sector, Rurara Cell, had students and staff that are excited to taste orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, a bio-fortified crop, for the first time. For the school population, 220 females and 160 males, this was a moment of curiosity and joy as everyone eagerly embraced the nutritious crop, known for its high vitamin A content.

"It was our first time tasting orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, and everyone was delighted by how delicious and nutritious they were. This initiative has opened our eyes to the value of these crops in improving nutrition", said Ntirandeba Raymond, the Headmaster of G.S Rugaragara.

The positive impact of these biofortified crops extends beyond the school. Many early child schools (Amarerero) in the Hinga

Ukiro project area have now incorporated orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and high iron beans into the daily meals of children under 5. Louise Uwamariya, a community member and a caregiver at an early child school in Rubavu district, Rugerero sector, Kabirizi cell, shared, "The children really enjoyed the new crops and have quickly adopted them into their diet. We are hopeful that these nutritious foods will support their growth and development, and help reduce malnutrition among children under five."

Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes are a nutrient-dense superfood that supports eye health, immunity, digestion, heart health, and weight management. They are an excellent addition to a balanced diet, especially for children, pregnant women, and people at risk of vitamin A deficiency.



Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes contribute to nutrition reduction among kids / Photo: RWARRI

This initiative promotes bio-fortified crops like high-iron beans, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, and carotene-rich cassava to improve nutrition and food security in Rubavu and Rutsiro districts. In 2024, the initiative focused on educating farmers and community members about the processing, and health benefits of these crops, especially through Early childhood development Centers (Amarerero) that provide balanced diets for children. So far, 3,156 community members in Rubavu and Rutsiro districts have received nutrition training, and engagement with these Early childhood development Centers have increased the consumption of biofortified crops. Despite slow behavioral change, targeted campaigns and further training aim to boost production and consumption, enhancing community health.

Land use action plan sessions to boost community engagement

Ndimubanzi Zacharie's behavior changed dramatically when he attended a Village Land Use Action Plan meeting at Kivumu Sector. At 52, he had been farming the same way his father taught him, watching his harvests steadily decline, until Igitu Ni Ukubaho project Consultants showed him degradation maps that revealed his hillside property was at severe risk. The stark visual evidence that he could lose up

to 70% of his fertile soil within a decade served as a wake-up call, making him realize his children's inheritance was disappearing before his eyes. Within days of seeing those degradation maps, Zacharie transformed into one of the most active participants in the land restoration program, attending all the trainings, participating in nursery work and learning more about agroforestry techniques.



Community members were involved in the project planning and implementation / Photo: RWARRI

The Village Land Use Action plans (VLUAPs) were conducted as a process from problems analysis to potential solutions and practical work plan to answer what, where, when, how and who questions which took place in the identified degraded sites namely Rubavu mountain, Gitsimbi river area, Burehe river area, Nyamwenda river area, Nkora river area and Mushonyi.

The VLUAPs consultative meetings targeted 58 villages (30 villages in Rutsiro district and 28 villages in Rubavu district) community members populated by 9,829 households including 4,533 households in Rutsiro district and 5,296 households in Rubavu district. The completion of Village Land Use Action Plans for all restoration sites represents a significant milestone in our planning process. These comprehensive plans serve as essential guidelines for implementing sustainable land management practices that ensure restoration activities which are carefully aligned with both local community needs and ecological requirements of the areas.

Amizero Institute best achievements of 2024

At the end of this academic year, AMITH proudly celebrates a spectrum of outstanding achievements. Our students demonstrated remarkable academic excellence, earning high grades and receiving awards that underscore their commitment to learning and mastery in challenging subjects. Notably, we observed significant improvements in critical thinking and problem-solving skills, reflecting a robust emphasis on enhanced cognitive development. Furthermore, our students experienced considerable personal growth, mastering time management and developing increased confidence.

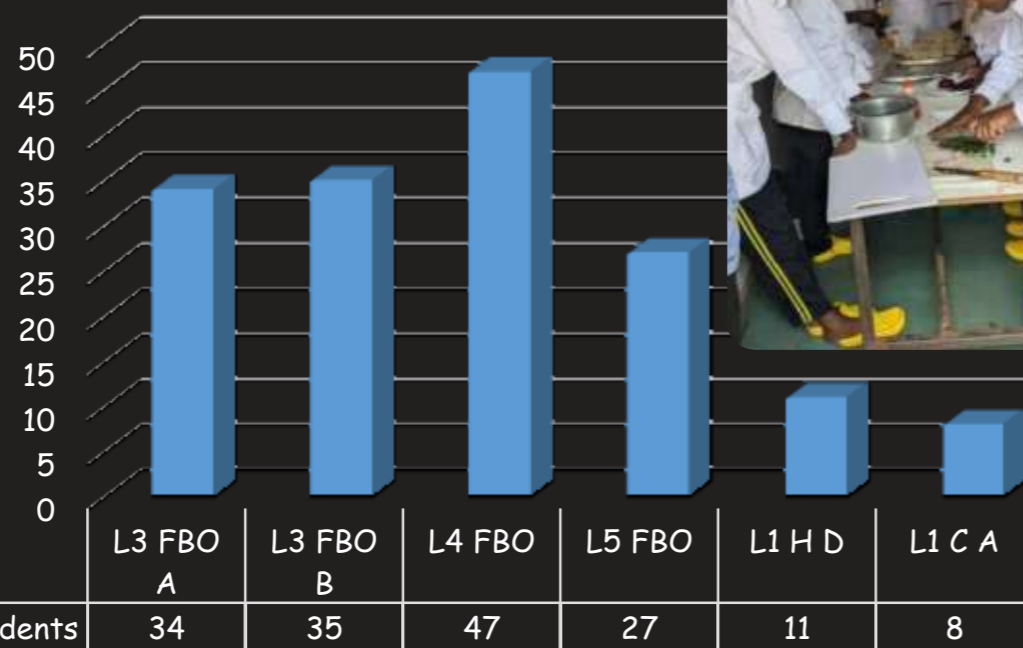
They embraced leadership roles in clubs, projects, and extracurricular activities while actively contributing to community service initiatives. Their participation in competitions across academics, sports, and the arts resulted in several notable victories. Equally important were the strengthened interpersonal relationships, exemplary hygiene practices, and disciplined conduct, all of which have established a culture of excellence and mutual respect. AMITH remains dedicated to nurturing these values as we continue to build a strong, inclusive community for future success.

AMITH-Amizero Institute of Technology and Hospitality, initially known as Amizero Training Center, is an institution established by professional Rwandans who believe in promoting education in Rwanda.

AMITH is a brainchild of the Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative-RWARRI, a national Non-Governmental Organization dedicated to promoting and improving the social and economic welfare of vulnerable communities in Rwanda.

On the other hand, AMITH is registered in Rwanda as a technical and vocational education training school (TVET) accredited by the Rwanda TVET Board under the Ministry of Education. AMITH-TVET School has 20 years of experience in the implementation of short course training and TVET programs.

Number of Students



TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

RWARRI plans focus on knowledge appropriation, dissemination, use and communication models while improving knowledge of the target groups and technologies in terms of innovation. Technology advancement is favoured by RWARRI in its development efforts, as it helps to develop early-stage intellectual property into tools for direct use by the communities, foundations for new development platforms, products or services to be transformed into products for public use.

- Major planned activities to enhance the use of technology in development of infrastructure, commercial agriculture and value addition to increase competitiveness include but not limited to the following activities:
- Link the community members with suppliers and livestock market
- Create certified short courses aimed at building a knowledge-based economy by conducting a need assessment (feasibility study on focus areas); Planning session; Content and methods development of a knowledge-based curriculum; Pilot delivery and revise; Implementation of the curriculum (completed package); Evaluation and reporting on progress



Incubators can hatch hundreds or thousands of eggs at once / Photo: RWARRI

Supporting farmers with solar powered hatcheries

TWOROREDUKIRE famer cooperative resumed its hatching activities

TWOROREDUKIRE Cooperative is a poultry farmer group in the Nyamasheke district, Mashyuza area. It is made up of 191 poultry farmers. In 2022, TWOROREDUKIRE Cooperative received the incubator from World Vision International Rwanda to facilitate farmers' easy access to improved chicks. From this time, the cooperative started hatching eggs. After producing chicks twice, the incubator was damaged and stopped hatching. During the time of inactivity of the hatching machine, the management committee of TWOROREDUKIRE experienced financial mismanagement which affected farmers and led them to abandon the hatching business. In June 2024, RWARRI agreed with World Vision International Rwanda to support the poultry value chain, and the TWOROREDUKIRE cooperative was facilitated to reorganize and resume the hatching activities after getting a new hatching machine. Poultry farmer cooperative elected the new cooperative management committee and under RWARRI facilitation managed to collect 1,080,000 Rwf, which were used to buy fertile eggs to resume hatching.



Incubators facilitate hatching process of eggs / Photo: RWARRI

Through the THRIVE 2030 project, RWARRI facilitated the establishment of hatcheries utilizing solar energy for decentralized hatchery operations. This approach empowers farmers to efficiently supply the necessary chicks and breeds to support local poultry value chains. The utilization of solar power aims to reduce energy costs while powering hatchery equipment entirely with electricity. The establishment of hatcheries involved several stages. Farmers constructed or leased premises for hatchery operations in the initial stage. Subsequently, the project provided hatcheries capable of incubating 1,056 eggs each, and solar systems to power the machines, fertilized eggs for demonstrating incubation, as well as starter feeds, vaccines, vitamins, feeders, and drinkers to illustrate the care of chicks during their first month.

In total, RWARRI provided support to poultry farmers by distributing five incubators across the following districts namely Kayonza, Gisagara, Karongi, Nyamasheke, and Rutsiro. Additionally, each farmer group with an incubator received 1,056 fertilized eggs to use in demonstrating egg incubation. The chicks obtained from the first incubation, served as a starting capital for farmers to run themselves the business of hatching. This facilitated farmers to secure themselves the purchase of fertilized eggs for the second incubation process. End of December 2024, farmers were incubating the second phase of fertilized eggs, waiting to receive the second batch of hatched chicks.

The following table details the total number of eggs in ongoing incubation process secured by poultry farmers per each district.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In October of this year, our project, aptly named The Alliance for Restoration of Forest Ecosystems in Africa (AREECA), funded by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Ministry of the Environment, came to a successful close. We also witnessed a fruitful partnership with World Vision International Rwanda, contributing to lifting impoverished people out of poverty by increasing household income through developing a poultry value chain under the THRIVE 2030 project. Additionally, we introduced the second phase of the Joint Program on Accelerating Progress towards Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) Project, funded by the World Food Programme (WFP) through the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), aimed at enhancing resilience, improving livelihoods, and empowering rural women through sustainable agricultural practices and climate-resilient infrastructure.

In keeping with RWARRI's tradition of fostering a strong connection with its staff and management, an All-Staff retreat was held at the Amizero Institute of Technology and Hospitality (AMITH), RWARRI's own accredited technical and vocational education training school (TVET). We highlighted our organizational culture in an All-Staff meeting at our headquarters. Additionally, board meetings and annual general meetings (AGMs) were held at various intervals throughout the year to address organizational matters, conduct audits, and review and amend outdated clauses in our policies and procedures.



RWARRI staff met to reflect on long-term success and growth / Photo: RWARRI

CHALLENGES

- **R**WARRI and partners invested much more time and effort into mobilizing community members and local leaders in and around tree plantation sites to counter overgrazing of trees in pasturelands and forest fires.
- At the incubator distributed to Karongi, there were changes in incubator temperature settings during the period RWARRI staff was not around (night), and the person who was monitoring the incubator did not realize the issue. This issue was noted late, with damages to the incubation process and led to the embryo not forming in the incubated eggs.
- In the preparation of the second egg incubation practice, we realized the need for better hatching trays, which are different from the ones supplied with the incubator. The issue was that these better hatching trays were not found in the Rwandan market. RWARRI is arranging for them to be sourced from China so farmers can buy them. Meanwhile, during this period, farmers rented the hatching trays from the supplier of fertilized eggs (Diamond Farm Ltd).
- Most farmers in Rutsiro and Rubavu districts hold an average of 0.029 hectares, which is too small for efficient crop multiplication. This limits the rapid dissemination of planting materials under Hinga Ukire project. Thus, to address the challenge of limited planting materials, the project introduced the rapid multiplication of cassava. This method allows for faster cuttings production and distribution of biofortified cassava planting materials, ensuring an efficient supply to farmers.



Cassava old variety versus cassava new variety / Photo: RWARRI

LESSONS LEARNED

- **S**trategic Nursery Establishment: The farmer groups quickly secured land for nurseries near water dams. This strategic location was particularly beneficial during drought, allowing for efficient irrigation practices. Consequently, farmers could sustain their crops and seedlings despite the challenging weather conditions.
- **Benefits of Indigenous Species:** farmers have had the opportunity to experience the tangible benefits of indigenous tree species. Notably, many farmers began incorporating the leaves of *Calliandra Callothyrsus* into their livestock feed. This new practice provided nutritional benefits for the livestock and informed farmers on selecting seedlings to cultivate for future planting seasons, leading to more informed choices.
- **Community Acceptance of Tree Planting:** Pastoral farm owners showed a remarkable willingness to plant trees on their lands. This acceptance was pivotal in promoting the RWARRI projects' sustainability, as it encouraged a culture of environmental responsibility among community members.
- **Job Creation and Intervention Adoption through Community Approach:** RWARRI projects emerged as significant job creators within the local districts, which enhanced their interventions' adoption level. As community members actively participated in these initiatives, they experienced firsthand the benefits of engagement, fostering a supportive environment for future projects.
- **Role of Lead Farmers:** Volunteers who served as lead farmers played an instrumental role in monitoring and nurturing the planted trees. They tracked the seedlings' health and growth and provided essential advice and guidance to fellow farmers. This mentorship was crucial in shifting the community mindset towards embracing landscape restoration through active tree-planting efforts.
- **Community-Centered Approach:** One of the foundational elements of the RWARRI projects was its community-centered approach, which facilitated the adoption of interventions at every implementation stage. By employing local community members to carry out various interventions against financial compensation, the approach not only accelerated the execution of project activities but also fostered a sense of ownership and commitment among the community members.



GENERAL CONCLUSION

In 2024, RWARRI successfully advanced its mission of fostering rural economic development, agricultural productivity, environmental sustainability, and women's empowerment. Through strategic partnerships, innovative projects, and community engagement, the organization played a key role in enhancing livelihoods, promoting food security, and strengthening climate resilience in Rwanda's rural areas.

RWARRI's initiatives, such as the Thrive 2030 Project, Hinga Ukire Project, and JP RWEE, directly impacted thousands of smallholder farmers and rural households. By providing training, access to markets, improved agricultural inputs, and sustainable financial models, these programs increased incomes, improved nutrition, and empowered women entrepreneurs.

Additionally, the Igitani ni Ukubaho and AREECA projects contributed to environmental conservation and climate resilience through large-scale tree planting, forest restoration, and sustainable land management practices.

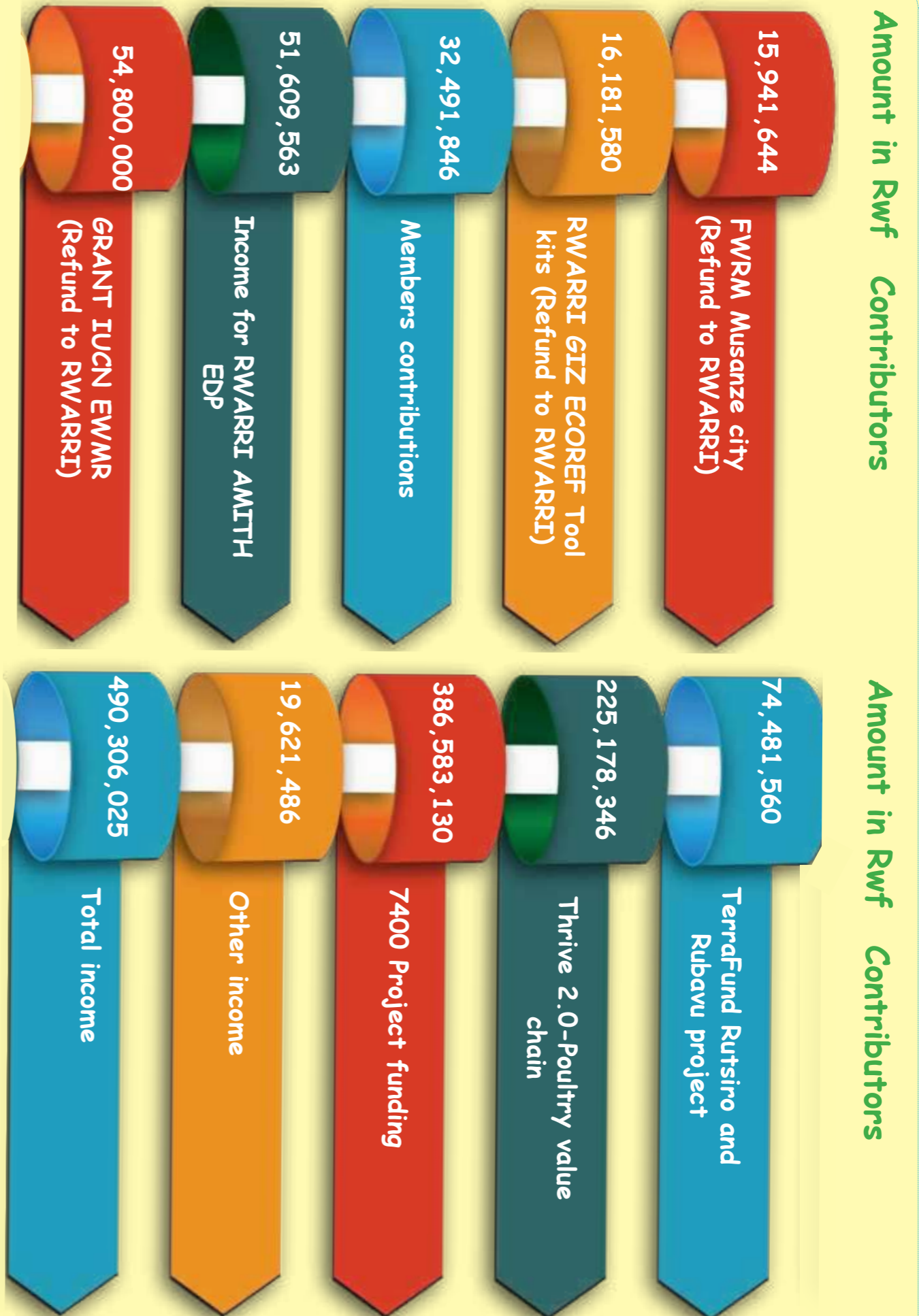
Despite these achievements, challenges such as climate-related risks, slow adoption of new farming techniques, and logistical constraints highlighted the need for continued community sensitization, policy advocacy, and capacity-building. RWARRI remains committed to addressing these challenges through innovation, partnerships, and sustainable solutions.

Looking ahead, RWARRI will focus on expanding its impact, strengthening community-led initiatives, and leveraging technology to drive rural development. By building on the successes of 2024, the organization aims to create more resilient communities, increase food security, and promote inclusive economic growth in Rwanda.

RWARRI expresses gratitude to its partners, stakeholders, and community members for their invaluable support and collaboration in achieving these milestones. Together, the journey toward a sustainable and empowered rural Rwanda continues.



Teaching students about the importance of trees for a healthy environment / Photo: RWARRI





Funded by
the European Union

Improving productivity through the
promotion of biofortified crops
for smallholder farmers in
Rubavu and Rutsiro districts
(HINGA-UKIRE Project)



Amizero Institute of Technology and Hospitality

