



End-line Evaluation of
UBU - ITUZE IWACU
Project

Final Report

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By PARS Research

For

RCN Justice and Démocratie

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

A2J	Access to Justice
CSOs:	Civil Society Organizations
DMI	Department of Military Intelligence
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
ES	Executive Secretaries
FGDs:	Focus Group Discussions
IEC:	Information, Education and Communication
IECMS	Integrated Electronic Case Management System
JRLOS:	Justice, Reconciliation, Law & Order Sector
KII:	Key Informant Interviews
LA	Local Authorities
LAC	Legal Aid Clinics
LOH	Lawyers of Hope
MAJ:	Maison d’Accès à la Justice (Justice centres or Access to Justice Bureaus)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO:	Non-governmental Organisations
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
OECD/DAC:	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PARS:	Pan African Research Services Ltd
RCN J&D:	RCN Justice & Démocratie
RCS	Rwanda Correctional Service
SDC:	Swiss Development Cooperation
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
UBU:	Ubutabera Bwegereye Umuturage

Glossary and terms

Abunzi (singular, Umwunzi): Means ‘those who reconcile’. It is a hybrid form of justice combining traditional with “modern” methods of conflict resolution. There are 2,564 Abunzi committees at cell and sector level in Rwanda each comprising seven Abunzi who are elected and work on a voluntary basis. Their role is to settle civil disputes with the resources of the local communities. Most of the cases handled by the Abunzi committees involve land or inheritance issues.

Civil Society Organisations (CSO): CSOs include all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organize to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic. Operating from the local to the national, regional and international levels, they comprise urban and rural, formal and informal organizations including non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, foundations, research institutions, trade

unions and employers' organizations, cooperatives, professional and business associations, and the not-for-profit media¹.

Community: A group of people residing in a specific place and sharing day-to-day lifestyle including key moral values, imbricated interests, basic facilities resources including schools, churches, public transport, water points, group leaders and local government representatives.

Final Beneficiaries: Those people, who may or may not be engaged directly by RCN J&D's project, who are intended to benefit from an improvement in the functioning of, and access to, the justice sector and an increased respect for legal and human rights in Rwanda.

Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sector (JRLOS) Committee: A coordination structure which enables institutions in the sector to work together effectively towards common objectives. Also known as the Coordination Committee of the Justice Sector. Established by Ministerial Instruction at Central and District level, it includes representatives of the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST), Rwanda National Police (RNP), Rwanda Correctional Service (RCS), National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA), Rwanda Bar Association (RBA), professional bailiffs, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) involved in the justice sector, reconciliation and human rights. Its specific objectives are to ensure universal access to quality justice; to ensure that the genocide ideology is eradicated and reconciliation mechanisms are reinforced; to ensure that the rule of law, accountability and human rights are promoted; and to ensure that the law and order are maintained and enhanced.

Justice Service Providers: Organisations and institutions outside of the Government who provide justice services, for example paralegals, professional bailiffs, the Rwanda Bar Association and NGOs providing legal services or monitoring the Government's justice service delivery.

Maison d'Accès à la Justice (MAJ): Also known as "Justice Centres" or "Access to Justice Bureaus", MAJ offices have been established in each of the country's thirty Districts. These centres, which are staffed by three lawyers (known as Agents), provide free legal aid and advice to an average population of 350,000 persons per office. One MAJ agent is a bailiff, one is responsible for handling Gender Based Violence (GBV) and child cases in addition to having responsibility for training and supervising the Abunzi, and a third operates as a senior coordinator of the district office and also represents local citizens in court.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): A type of CSO, non-profit, citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level, and whose main objective is to engage in development or humanitarian work for the benefit of the population.

Proximity Justice: Is not a concept defined in international conventions or texts, but has been developed by RCN J&D to indicate the need to bring the institution of justice to the people. By using it in developing and post-conflict countries, RCN J&D has developed the concept, which includes the following components: timeliness (justice delivered within a reasonable time), affordability, geographic accessibility, legitimacy and citizen participation. Under this concept, to meet the needs

¹ Definition taken from EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society (2014 – 2017): Guidance Version 1.0. December 2013

of citizens and ensure the right to justice, justice services must go well beyond improved access to justice through legal representation, support and advice.

Proximity Justice Actor (PJA): Government institutions and CSOs who play a role in the delivery and functioning of proximity justice, for example service delivery, trainings, monitoring, coaching, advocacy, and raising awareness of justice sector issues. PJA can be CSOs or state-level actors.

Executive summary

This endline report is based on the external evaluation of the recently concluded Ubutabera Bwegereye Umuturage (UBU) Project in Rwanda. The Project was implemented by RCN J&D and other consortium members including Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro and Lawyers of Hope (LOH) (Rwandan CSOs), Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company Ltd (an expert in behaviour change communication) and Viamo (an expert in mobile technology solutions). Some consortium members such as ARAMA and the University of Sheffield dropped out of the Project during its initial years. ARAMA was replaced by Lawyers of Hope (LOH). The Project which was originally planned to run from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2021 experienced delays in the kick off phase that made it start on January 1st 2019 to end on 31st December 2022. During the third year of the Project implementation, discussions with the Swiss Cooperation Office in the Great Lakes led to the signature of an agreement to co-fund UBU Project by adding **ITUZE IWACU** component (meaning approximately tranquility in our community/family in English). This new situation brought some changes in the Project. The title of the Project changed from **UBU Project to UBU-ITUZE IWACU** project. The geographical coverage changed from six Districts (Kicukiro, Nyanza, Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngoma and Kayanza) to seven with Nyabihu as an additional District. The third adjustment was the additional activities, among others the development of the radio programme, support of legal aid activities with particular attention to legal representation of women and young girl's victims of right violations. Some project activities were amplified including community dialogues, justice caravan, legal aid clinic activities, execution of judgments, support of JRLOS District committees, etc.

This evaluation had two main purposes: firstly, to assess the achievement of the expected results of the UBU ITUZE IWACU Project, draw lessons learned; and to situate stakeholders on its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Secondly, to identify and propose relevant future intervention opportunities, still required for the achievement of the SDGs in relation to justice, with a focus on the declaration of the Ministers of Justice in 2019. In the long run, the evaluation has reviewed the Project achievements on the basis of the international criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. It has focused on the achievement of results according to the Project's logical framework, on the relevance of strategies implemented by RCN J&D and their adaptability in case they are implemented by local implementation partners, the sustainability of the results, as well as the efficiency of the funds granted. Besides, it has assessed the Project contribution on national legal and political framework, SDG 16.3 as well as the national and international strategic priorities, according to the Justice Ministries Declaration of The Hague.

This assessment has also reviewed and provided insights on relevant policies related to the strengthening of Access to Justice and conflict prevention mechanisms as well as to the evolution of related policies. This will allow RCN J&D to identify where to put efforts in the near future, areas to

focus on for their strategic planning. The identification of strategic priorities, according to the current status of proximity justice as well as conflict prevention and resolution in the light of the current legal and political framework taking into account the SDG 16.3 and the Declaration of Ministers of Justice quoted in its five (5) has been referred to in coming up with this evaluation's conclusions. Finally, this report will inform RCN J&D and partners, including CSOs, development partners as well as government, to shape, scope and prepare future strategic interventions, for the consolidation of conflict prevention policy, and will inform policies of access to justice and conflict prevention in Rwanda.

The evaluation adopted a mixed methodology approach i.e. employing both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was obtained from Project documents as well as reputable publications such as the human right publications. Primary data collection was in form of qualitative methods with quantifications on closed ended questions. This was targeted to justice recipients and justice providers. At the end, a total of 29 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 70 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) was achieved from 420 justice recipients and 150 justice providers. This was distributed in 9 Districts that comprise of the 7 intervention Districts and 2 control Districts. Justice recipients included: Beneficiaries of legal aid clinics and Abunzi services at sector level and participants in community dialogues and justice caravan and intensive judgement execution. On the other hand, justice providers included: Supreme Court and court mediators, Inspectorate-General of Courts, Members of JLROs (RCS (Rwanda Correctional Service), Access to Justice Department in the Ministry of Justice, among others. Training of moderators and data collection took place from 3rd to 17th October 2023. Qualitative data was then analysed through thematic and content analysis.

The report has been organised along the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability as well as the evaluation objectives stated above.

Summary of Findings

Project's Relevance and Appropriateness

This evaluation finds that the UBU ITUZE IWACU Project was relevant to the needs of the justice recipients as well as those of the justice providers and that the project design was relevant. This was attained through:

- a. **Relevance to the needs of the justice recipients:** One of the barriers and gaps to accessing justice for justice recipients, in this case the community members and especially the vulnerable groups, had been the lack of knowledge on their basic rights, the functioning of the proximity justice system as well as community-level conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. This was addressed through the UBU ITUZE IWACU project.
- b. **Relevance to the needs of the Proximity Justice Providers (Actors):** Proximity justice is a concept that was defined by RCN to indicate the need to bring institutions of justice to the people. This concept includes timeliness of justice deliverable within a reasonable time, affordability, geographic accessibility, legitimacy and citizen participation. The actors therefore within this definition being proximity justice actors include government institutions and CSOs. Efforts of Proximity actors such as Conciliators committees and Local Authorities (LA) at sector level was

limited with mastery of the justice system. The UBU- ITUZE IWACU Project intervened through capacity building that included the coaching workshops of conciliators committees and Executive Secretaries by judges and MAJ. This helped address their needs.

- c. **Relevance of the Project Design:** The Project design took on the form of a supply-side; focusing on the justice providers and a demand side which focused on the justice recipients. The Project dealt with the challenges faced by the supply side and the demand side. This enabled the recipients of services to know what they can demand for (their rights) and the supplier of justice (PAJ) to know which services to supply and how to do it. UBU- ITUZE IWACU Project also worked with existing CSOs who work with JRLOS to capacity build them and therefore enhance their capability to create advocacy with the aim of influencing positive change in the justice system.

Project's Effectiveness

The evaluation was able to ascertain that used strategies were adequate in addressing identified specific issues and have well achieved the project objectives and can be extended to other zones of intervention based on the following:

Through goal one of the Project, justice recipients were informed on their basic rights, the functioning of the justice system and other alternative mechanisms, where to claim their rights and where to go to have their disputes peacefully resolved. Different activities applied in raising public awareness such as community dialogues, justice caravan, Radio programs, IEC and Mobisodes were effective in achieving this goal. For example, Justice Caravans toured all the sites as planned and were able to reach out to 97% of the target audience. Secondly, many of the citizens invited to the Community Dialogues were able to attend with a success rate of 96.7%. Through legal aid clinics present in seven Districts, the citizens were able to receive information from legal aid officers. The evaluation found that by year 3, 27.27% of respondents attending public awareness had supported their neighbours to claim their rights through appropriate mechanisms surpassing the 10% target in the 36th month of the Project. In addition, 9.98% of respondents in year 1 and 14.26% of respondents in year 2 had used the received messages to solve conflict themselves by changing behaviors. This demonstrates that the received messages were effective in promoting legal awareness to justice recipients and allowed them to make decisions pertaining conflict resolution.

Goal two aimed at building the capacity of CSOs in the justice sector to conduct advocacy in the interest of influencing positive change in the justice system. The main activities by UBU-ITUZE IWACU project on this initiative was: Capacity development in advocacy for JRLOs CSOs through networking, dialogue on role of CSOs, capacity building, developing advocacy policies and strategies, formal/informal meetings with DMI and rapid response funds as well as their participation in mass execution drives to reduce backlog in execution of decisions

The above strategy was not effective due to disinterested participation of the CSOs leading to low attendance of CSO leaders. Hence, it was very difficult for organizations to apply for the advocacy initiatives with funding from the project. Therefore, this activity did not contribute to increased activity by CSOs in advocacy as envisioned by the Project

Through goal two of building the capacity of CSOs and strengthening the justice proximity actors, Abunzi committee members were coached by Primary Court Judges and MAJ and had their performance improve from 34.37% before the intervention, 76.05% average after the intervention of the Project. They learned how to execute judgment through IECMS system and how to conduct a voluntary execution judgment session.

Project's Coherence

Project coherence was observed from the design of the Project in terms of selection of Project locations, CSOs, and collaboration with various stakeholders as discussed below.

District selection for the Project ensured coherence. The initial six Districts (Kicukiro, Nyanza, Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngoma and Kayonza) and later Nyabihu were selected based on a defined criteria to ensure they did not contain similar activities under different funding for example funding by EKNR under the Good Governance and Justice call for proposals; community dialogues and coaching of Abunzi by Primary Court Judges during RCN J&D's SIDA's-funded SPJR Project; USAID/Chemonics Duteze Imbere Ubutabera (DIU) Project and that CSO partners (Arama, Haguruka or Tubibe Amahoro) had an office there.

Information provided by CSOs working with Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sectors (JRLOS) was used to segment the CSOs based on the Districts they worked which was vital in ensuring coverage of Districts as well as avoiding duplication of roles among the different stakeholders.

Involving PC Judges, MAJ Agents and local authorities in capacity building of Abunzi allowed different actors to improve collaboration whilst better understanding each other's mandate, and the different challenges faced in their role therefore permitting all concerned to work more effectively. Furthermore, there was adequate consultation of all relevant stakeholders at the various stages of the Project design, and redesign. This was done by proactively informing others about the Project and ensuring complementarity of efforts among all actors in the justice sector. There was also continuous sharing of information and collaboration with other CSOs in the wider justice sector to share lessons and to ensure complementarity and synergy.

Project's Efficiency

The Project was value for money taking into consideration the funding and the outcomes of activities.

- a. **Financial Efficiency:** Though the Project kick-off delayed, the expansion of its duration and the innovative virtual implementation of some activities due to Covid -19 pandemic allowed the Project team to achieve most of the results with a lower budget. It was also noted that most of planned activities were implemented and hence most of planned outputs delivered within a very good rate of budget expenditure with 100% of the disbursed amount spent as of December 2022.
- b. **Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL).** The evaluation found that there was adequate monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning by the Project. This involved the coordination of all monitoring, reporting and learning for the Project including coordination of annual/operational progress report. In addition, it included holding of steering committee

learning reflection meetings, reporting and coordination of Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) of Project achievements.

- c. **Collaboration with local authorities** - The Project was implemented in a context where the administration has an eye on everything happening in the area and ensure that it responds to their administrative entity's needs and priority. Without involving them from the beginning to the end of the Project would hinder its realization

A few challenges were however experienced which slightly affected the efficiency. They included local leaders postponing meetings with the CSOs and other PJAs which dragged out the Project's activities. Another challenge was with ARAMA – a consortium member who had to be dropped from the Project due to misappropriation of Project funds.

Project's Sustainability

RCN J&D ensured that its projects were fully in line with Rwanda's medium- and long-term political strategies, including the MINIJUST's strategic plan (2013–18), the JLOS Strategy and the government's seven-year plan (7YGP). RCN J&D also worked closely with the MINIJUST ensuring a coordinated approach to project delivery by all actors working to support the justice sector, which supported the MINIJUST's priorities. There was also sharing of knowledge, tools and plans, which increased ownership of activities. RCN J&D worked to ensure that any tools developed involved institutional stakeholders from the start and could be handed over once the project ended (for example on-demand mobile resources, or materials concerning the execution of decisions). In addition, RCN J&D would continue to advocate for the provision of adequate budget support to justice sector institutions by the central government, particularly to support the on-going costs of the Abunzi system such as training, material support.

In addition, the project promoted sustainable behavior change in target groups (Justice Recipients) and local partners (PJA) through capacity building of local partners. Towards this end the capacity building of CSOs, legal aid services (including paralegal networks), MAJ and Primary Court Judges will allow them to act as reference points for community members especially because they have a known presence. Other key resources developed during the Project will continue to be available beyond the Project life and include on-demand education resources for Abunzi and citizens developed with Viamo. Sustainability was further enhanced through the knowledge gained by the general citizens in the intervention Districts through the various awareness strategies including IEC Materials, which some community members were noted to have kept for reference.

Other elements of sustainability observed were the mainstreaming of interventions under the UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project by organisations working with RCN for example Haguruka and Lawyers of Hope. Some consortium partners were also noted to have already mobilized resources to continue the work which was being done under UBU- ITUZE IWACU Project and included Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro and Lawyers of Hope. The spirit of volunteerism was evident for paralegals working under the UBU-ITUZE IWACU project who had continued to provide their services beyond the Project period.

The only challenge to sustainability was funding challenges experienced by the organisations while mainstreaming project activities and that the work of MAJ and Primary Court Judges in supporting Abunzi was reliant on Government financial support.

Looking Forward

Despite some challenges incurred during UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project implementation, most of the intended activities responded to their respectful objectives to some extent. These activities can however be more impactful in future based on the following suggestions:

- a. **Legal Aid Clinic Services:** The need for legal aid cannot be overemphasized. CSOs carrying this work still experience a large number of community members seeking these services. Findings from primary data indicate that there is still large demand for legal aid services.
- b. **Community dialogue:** Community dialogue as a means of giving advice and assistance is still important. This has been one of the best ways used to ensure that information about laws and access to justice has been received at community levels. This should continue even after the closure of the project.
- c. **Capacity Building of Proximity Justice and Conflict Resolution Actors-** In future, there should be more recruitment and training of non-professional bailiffs such as paralegals who would continue with the work even after the Project intervention. Recruitment should be nationwide. Additionally, there should be the availability of continuous training programs such as virtual programs to further equip the non-professional bailiffs
- d. **Justice Caravan:** Justice Caravan is a good idea in reaching many people. However, the timing of the project during the rainy season was nearly impossible to get people. This led to postponement of a number of activities due to rains. In future, Justice Caravans should consider having temporary tents that can shelter more people when raining.

For more effective implementation, the use of Justice Caravans should consider the following:

- (i) The scheduling of Justice Caravans- Preferably use the Justice Caravans during seasons where weather is more favorable to maximize on turn up and engagement by the public. Where alignment with seasons does not work, interventions should consider having temporary tents that can shelter people when raining.
- (ii) Have scheduled maintenance for machinery used during implementation to avoid technical disruptions as was noted by Mashirika where this had affected one of the performances
- (iii) Close collaboration with local authorities and support including continuous communication to ensure there is adequate awareness amongst targeted groups and critical actors on the planned activities. This will help to avoid last minute negotiations with actors on the ground that are critical in ensuring that the activities run efficiently as was noted in an instance reported by Mashirika where market managers had initially denied access to Justice Caravans. This was however at the time resolved through negotiation with the managers.

- (iv) Employ specific community recruitment strategies that would allow special interest groups such as persons with disability to participate. There should be specific tents and recruitment process for special interest groups.
- e. **Radio program:** Radio program was one of the most expensive awareness activities. However, there was lack of reporting of the actual numbers reached as a result of listenership to the radio program. The lack of these numbers largely undermines the likely impact this strategy had on awareness for justice recipients. This information can be easily obtained from the media itself and thus the program would need in future to obtain and track this numbers for adequate monitoring and reporting.
- f. **Continuous training of ABUNZI and Executive Secretaries:** Abunzi and Executive Secretaries are instrumental in proximity justice within the local communities. Their knowledge development on justice systems is also very instrumental. As a way forward, we recommend a project that would ensure their continuous monitoring.

Recommendations for Future Project design

The area of Access to Justice is still key to the people of Rwanda. This is seen from the whole question of relevance which is still important today including the fulfilment of the declaration of the Ministers of Justice and the SDGs. UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project intended to streamline access to justice under SDG 16 as part of its broader objective aimed at making progress under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This Project was also in response to the Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for all by 2030 whose intention is to move justice from access for few to justice for all. Based on this context, the following recommendations are made for RCN's future project design as well as their linkages to declaration on the SDG:

- 1) RCN has the opportunity to build on its successes by designing a larger intervention covering all Districts in the Country. UBU- ITUZE IWACU's intervention was in 7 Districts out of 30 which a small fraction is considering the SDG declaration on equal justice to all by 2023. Further, program concepts such as legal aid clinics are still in demand due to the ongoing justice reforms. A nationwide program intervention would enhance progress in the achievement of SDG 16 and Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All by 2030
- 2) The Project was intended to reach vulnerable groups including women, children and persons with disabilities. However, there is little data on how the Project reached the children and persons with disabilities in the area of legal awareness and legal aid. There is need to have a deliberate monitoring of these two groups through capturing of disaggregated data by age, gender, disability, marginalized groups, etc. Thus all partners engaged in the implementation process should ensure their activities are designed to capture this information. This would also require that relevant capacity is built for staff engaged in this data collection/capture activity. This process would address the SDG declaration for universal access to justice.
- 3) There is need to establish M&E framework with a clear plan for measuring results and a data management system that produces reports, and links financial and project data. The current framework with dashboards are quite elaborate on field data reporting, however, they should be interlinked with the financial and project data systems to enable on time tracking on the project's efficiency.

- 4) Among the project activities, it can be concluded that radio program can be redesigned to expand its listeners' category and that there is adequate capture of the numbers reached during the radio programs. Consideration should be made on the timing of the project as well as contents that would appeal to a larger section of the population
- 5) The involvement of CSO leaders, the need for a membership framework and having advocacy in the mission of CSOs was key towards them playing their role in the JRLOS Committees: The unframed way of becoming members of the JRLOS as representatives of other CSOs, the lack of guidance on the role (especially advocacy role) of CSOs in the Committee role, led to the absence of their leadership's involvement and the ineffectiveness as members of the Committee. In future, the project should consider having a structured framework for CSO membership to the JRLOS. The structures should also define different roles by each CSO and make it mandatory for CSO leadership to attend meetings and other important functions.
- 6) There should be some extended funding for post-project monitoring on some components that would continue being relevant even after the project has ended for example support for Abunzi. Future budgets can therefore cater for post-project intervention support or in –lieu this role can be adapted by different CSOs, Government (Ministry of Justice) or project-intervention reserves or savings which can be used for this purpose.
- 7) While the Project largely achieved its outputs and outcomes, 4 years was found to be inadequate to produce tangible impact on behaviour change. The evaluation thus recommends a second phase in order to keep the momentum gained during the initial project phase and produce more long-term lasting solutions.

Introduction/Project background

Introduction

In the aftermath of the Genocide of 1994 against the Tutsi, the classical and Gacaca courts have helped the Country with the task of managing a justice process that involved the entire nation either as victim, witness, or perpetrators. This was to allow a large majority of the population to transition through a process of truth, reconciliation and healing. Rwanda has been going through a process of rebuilding the human resources and infrastructure of the justice sector, undergoing legislative reforms, ratifying important international conventions, and signing new national laws and constitution reforms. This work is monumental and still to be done in the area of harmonising different laws, implementing existing ones and advancing the rule of law and exercising of democratic freedom.

Rwanda has adopted technology in service delivery by putting Government services including the Integrated Electronic Case Management System for the justice sector. However, this service faces the challenges of availability of computers/smartphones, internet access, decent network speeds and lack of knowledge of how to use this technology both by the users and those offering the services².

Justice has been accepted as one of the essential tools for combating the culture of impunity and as an instrument for preventing mass crimes and restoring social cohesion. These processes have made an enormous contribution to healing and reconciliation. However, an ongoing issue is that decisions resulting from over 54,000 cases judged by Gacaca courts have still not been executed³. The delays are attributed to the strained legal and administrative infrastructure, leading to bottlenecks in the implementation process. Additionally, issues like resource constraints, logistical challenges, and the need for coordination between different agencies have contributed to the sluggish pace. This is a complex situation that requires a multi-faceted approach.

Efforts to streamline the execution process, allocate sufficient resources, and enhance coordination between relevant authorities could contribute to overcoming these challenges. It's a delicate balance between ensuring justice is served and dealing with the practical realities of implementing such a large number of decisions.

The National Legal Aid Policy adopted in 2014 and other laws and conventions/agreements aim to promote access to quality justice for indigent and vulnerable citizens and to increase their existence. However, these initiatives are not well known by people living outside of district capitals and how to access the same. Additionally, although dozens of different CSOs (including INGO and faith based organisations) provide legal aid services throughout Rwanda, their institutional and technical capacity is often weak, and the geographical coverage given by these CSOs is patchy and unable to satisfy the demand of citizens, particularly those (e.g. indigents and disabled people) who may find it difficult to reach the legal aid centres run by these CSOs by their own means.

² Kayizali, Caesar C. 2005. [E-governance in Rwanda: Application of ICT in the delivery of public services](#)

³ The New Times. 19/4/18. [Over 54,000 Gacaca cases of looted property are unsettled.](#)

Project Description and Scope

With funding from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Rwanda (EKN), RCN Justice & Démocratie (RCN J&D) began a 48-month Project in January 2019 entitled *Ubutabera Bwegereye Umuturage* (UBU), meaning “justice which is close to the people” in Kinyarwanda. Originally it was planned to run from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2021. Due to delays related to procedures it started on January 1st 2019. The delay in procedures also affected the actual implementation timelines leading to delay in completion till 31 December 2022.

Initially the Project was implemented by a consortium of partners led by RCN J&D and including Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro and Arama (Rwandan CSOs), Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company Ltd (an expert in behavior change communication) and Viamo (an expert in mobile technology solutions). At the end of the first semester of the year one of the projects, one member of the Consortium (ARAMA) was replaced by a new CSO- Lawyers of Hope (LOH).

During the third year of the project implementation, discussions with the Swiss Development Cooperation office (SDC) in the Great Lakes led to the signature of an agreement to co-fund UBU project by adding ITUZE IWACU component (meaning tranquility in our community/family in English). This new situation brought some changes in the Project. The title of the Project changed from UBU Project to UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project. The geographical coverage changed from six -Districts (Kicukiro, Nyanza, Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngoma and Kayonza) to seven with Nyabihu as an additional District. The third adjustment was the additional activities, among others the development of the radio programme, support of legal aid activities with particular attention to legal representation of women and young girl’s victims of right violations. Some of the Project activities were amplified including community dialogues, justice caravan, legal aid clinic activities, execution of judgments, support of Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sector (JRLOS) District committees etc.

The map below demonstrates the Project Districts.

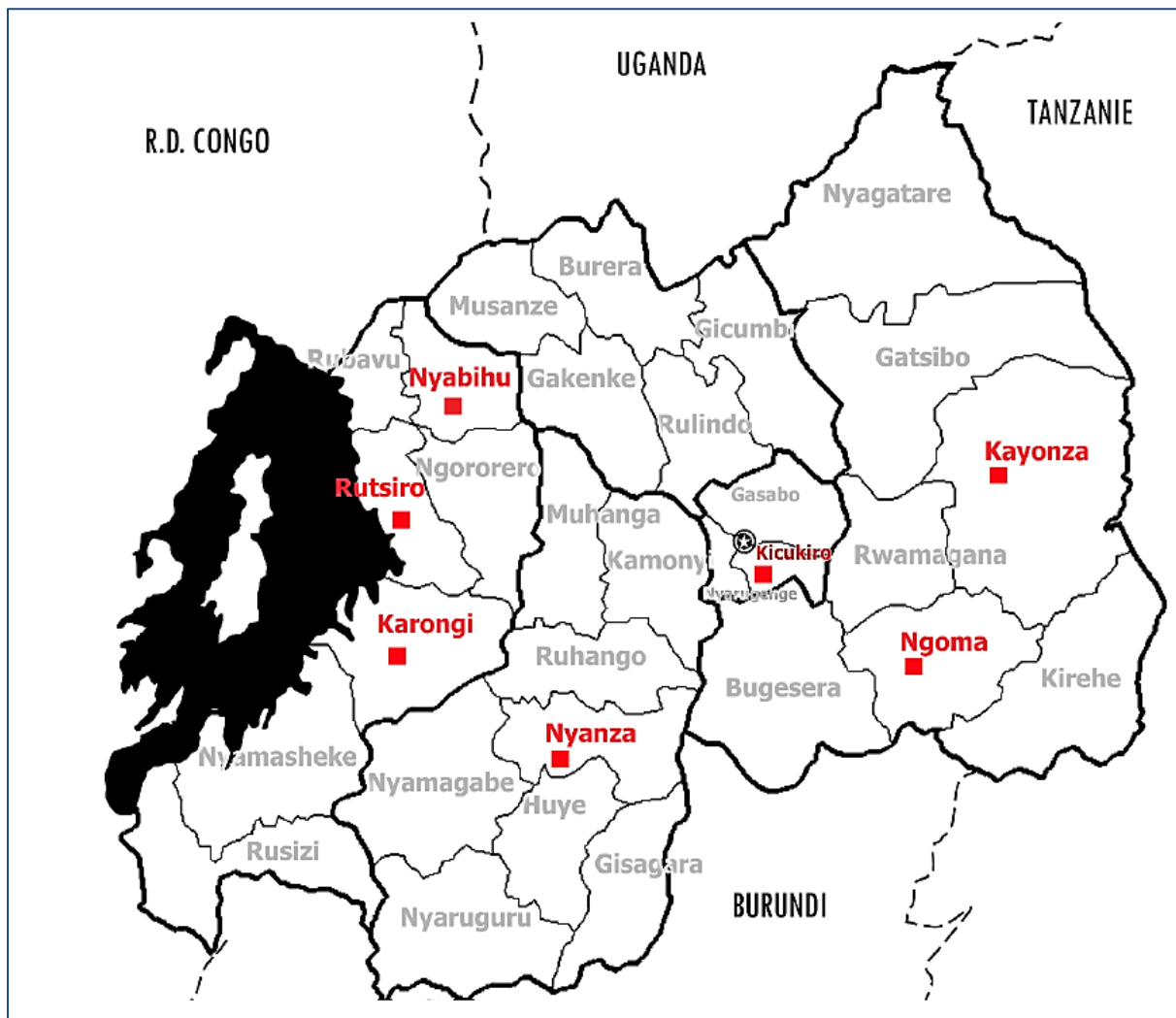


Figure 1: Map illustrating the geographical coverage (Districts) of the Project.

Key Project stakeholders

Key Project stakeholders include the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Rwanda and Swiss Development Cooperation in the Great Lakes Region as the donors, institutional partners, consortium members, academic institutions and the people of Rwanda. Besides RCN Justice & Démocratie, other recipients of this report will be the Project stakeholders, Ministry of Justice and any relevant institution/person in the Rwandan justice and advocacy process. Table 1 below shows the Project stakeholders:

Table 1: Project Stakeholders

Category of the stakeholder	Name of the stakeholder	Role and population served by the stakeholders
Donors	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Rwanda	Project donor right from onset to conclusion
	Swiss Development Cooperation in the Great Lakes region	Project co-donor coopted in the third year of the project
Institutional Partners	Ministry of Justice, Districts	Helped in coordination at the District level
Consortium Members		
1. Civil Society Organizations	Haguruka NGO	Organized community dialogues
	Tubibe Amahoro	Organized community dialogues
	Lawyers of Hope (Replaced ARAMA in third year)	Organized community dialogues and legal aid clinics.
2. Private companies	Mashirika performing arts	Participated in Justice Caravans managed to reach a total of 83,500
	VIAMO	Raised awareness through mobisodes via MTN845 phone. A total of 223,447 reached

Project Goals

UBU –ITUZE IWACU Project was guided by general goals which are the following:

- 1) Strengthen Access to Justice (A2J) by increasing Justice Recipients' (especially vulnerable groups⁴) knowledge of their basic rights and the functioning of the proximity justice system, allowing them to claim their rights. Improving the ability of Justice Providers (including state actors and CSOs) to deliver high quality justice services, to inform the population of their rights and the functioning of the justice system, and to support citizens (especially vulnerable groups) to exercise their rights. **The hypothesis tested on this objective was that increasing knowledge of rights and functioning of the justice system and improving the ability of justice providers to deliver high quality justice service led to public satisfaction with services of justice providers.**
- 2) Build the capacity of CSOs in the justice sector to conduct advocacy in the interest of influencing positive change in the justice system, especially for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, for the benefit of the population (especially women and vulnerable groups). **The hypothesis tested on this objective was that increasing capacity of CSOs in the justice sector to conduct advocacy in the interest of influencing positive change in the justice system, especially for**

⁴ Vulnerable groups include poor, indigent, women and girls, children, disabled people, elderly, prisoners, refugees and any group or individual who is marginalised by society or the state. This proposal speaks of 'vulnerable groups' only, not 'vulnerable or marginalised groups', since marginalisation is but one factor that can lead to vulnerability.

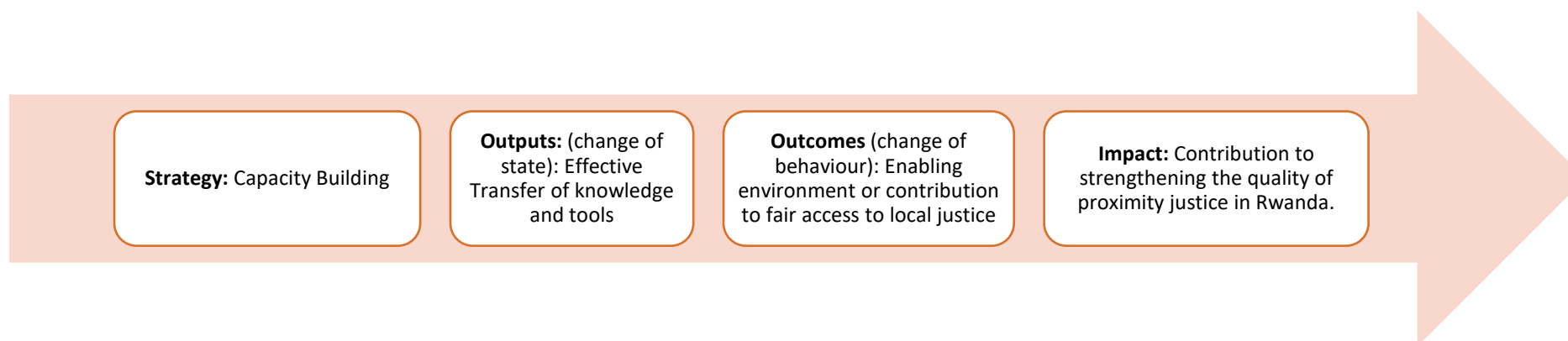
the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, for the benefit of the population will result into increased access to justice by citizens.

Focusing on these five key issues, the UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project was implemented through a range of activities to improve the **supply-side** of the justice sector by building the capacity of proximity justice actors (PJA), particularly CSOs, Primary Court Judges, MAJ Agents, Abunzi and bailiffs (professional and non-professional). The project also addressed the **demand-side by** raising public awareness of basic rights, key legislation, and the functioning of the justice system. The Project worked on building the capacity to conduct **advocacy** by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) currently working within the Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sector (JRLOS) at central and district level. The key aim was to enable them have the ability of inclusive policy development in the justice sector by building the capacity to analyse, share expertise and advocate for change and create spaces for dialogue to encourage mutual accountability between duty bearers and right holders.

A gender and conflict-sensitive approach to project design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) was taken to ensure that the positive impact of the project was maximised, and the negative minimised. Ultimately, the UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project benefited the whole population where it was implemented.

The Theory of Change

Development problems	Development Hypothesis and project Outcomes	project impact
<p>Boundary Partner 1: Justice Recipients have a limited understanding of basic rights, the laws which confer those rights, and the functioning of the justice system designed to uphold those rights</p> <p>Boundary Partner 2: Proximity Justice Actors (PJA) have limited capacities to fulfil their mandates and should improve their collaboration with other PJA. The Abunzi, Executive Secretaries and the MAJ need coaching and mentoring. CSOs need space to discuss the role of civil society in Rwanda and to play that role, including by advocating for change to state authority, particularly in support of equality and the empowerment of women.</p>	<p>If population understands the law and how to access available justice system, if PJA function according to their mandate and effectively collaborate, and if CSOs in the justice sector engage in evidence-based advocacy, then the project will have contributed to improving the population's access to fair community justice mechanisms.</p>	<p>If the project succeeds in contributing to improving citizen's knowledge of their rights and access to fair community justice mechanisms and if the decisions taken by community justice mechanisms are implemented in accordance with the law, and if CSOs act as a watchdog, advocate to address any problems in the system and defend citizen rights, then the project will have contributed to strengthening the quality of Proximity Justice in Rwanda. As will be demonstrated in the study findings we can state that the quality of justice has been strengthened.</p>



Evaluation Goal and objectives

This evaluation had two main purposes:

1. To assess the achievement of the expected results of the UBU- ITUZE IWACU Project, draw lessons learned; and to situate stakeholders on its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. Secondly, to identify and propose relevant future interventions opportunities, still required for the achievement of the SDGs in relation to justice, with a focus on the declaration of the Ministers of Justice in 2019.

It will therefore focus on the achievement of results according to the Project's logical framework, on the relevance of strategies implemented by RCN J&D and their adaptability in case they are implemented by local implementation partners, the sustainability of the results, as well as the efficiency of the funds granted. Besides, it will assess the Project contribution on national legal and political framework, SDG 16.3 as well as the national and international strategic priorities, according to The Hague Declaration of the Ministers of Justice.

This assessment on the contribution of the funds to the strengthening of Access to Justice and conflict prevention mechanisms as well as to the evolution of related policies will allow donors and RCN J&D to identify where to put efforts in the near future and will provide insights for their strategic planning. This evaluation will, therefore also focus on the identification of strategic priorities, according to the current status of proximity justice as well as conflicts prevention and resolution in the light of the current legal and political framework taking into account the SDG 16.3 and the Declaration of Ministers of Justice quoted above in its five (5) conclusions.

The evaluation will be used, in addition, by RCN J&D and partners, including CSOs, development partners as well as Government, to shape, scope and prepare future strategic interventions, for the consolidation of conflict prevention policy, and will inform policies of access to justice and conflict prevention in Rwanda.

Chapter two: Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Design

PARS adopted a participatory approach based on the active involvement of stakeholders whose opinion on the results, the lessons learned and their views on looking forward was collected and analysed. The evaluation applied mixed methods by collecting both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were obtained from Project documents shared by RCN and quantified into charts and graphs based on the evaluation themes. Primary data collection was in the form of qualitative methods in the form of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and case studies administered using unstructured discussion guides. The target respondents were justice recipients and justice providers. The evaluation targeted a total of 29 Focus group discussions and 70 Key Informant Interviews from the 420 justice recipients and 150 justice providers from 9 Districts that

comprise of the 7 intervention Districts (Kicukiro, Nyanza, Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngoma, Kayonza and Nyabihu) and 2 control Districts (Huye and Kirehe).

Justice recipients were categorized as: Beneficiaries of legal aid clinics and Abunzi services at sector level and participants in community dialogues and justice caravan and intensive judgement execution. On the other hand, justice providers were categorized as: Supreme Court and court mediators, Court administrator, Members of JLROs (RCS (Rwanda Correctional Service), Access to Justice Department in The Ministry of Justice, Rwanda National Human Rights Commission, court mediators among others.

Triangulation of data obtained from all methodologies was done to enhance the validity of the report. This information was then organized along the **OECD DAC criteria** by assessing relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the intervention.

The evaluation was carried out in 3 main phases:

1. Inception Phase
2. Field Investigation Phase
3. Synthesis and Feedback Phase.

Inception Phase

A kick-off meeting was held between RCN Justice & Démocratie and PARS on 3rd August 2023 to agree on the expectations in terms of evaluation scope and objectives, timelines for the evaluation and key project documents to be reviewed. This was followed by development of the inception report detailing the study design and methodology as well as data collection tools.

Field Investigation Phase

Due to the delays on the Visa processing and some discussions on aligning the data collection scope, the field investigation phase started after obtaining all the required approvals by NISR and RCN J&D on 4th October 2023. The field investigation was both physical and virtual. Virtual interviews were incorporated on singled out respondents who preferred that method due to their busy schedule. It also enabled the PARS research team from Nairobi to obtain first hand data that could validate the physical data. PARS undertook the qualitative and secondary review exercise in cognizance of the revised timelines. The field investigation phase was planned to be completed on 14th October 2023 but was prolonged to 17th October.

2.2 Data Sources

For secondary data, the following key documents were reviewed alongside online publications on the Rwandan Justice system.

- ✓ UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project Proposal.
- ✓ UBU-ITUZE IWACU 1st Annual Report
- ✓ UBU- ITUZE IWACU 2nd Annual Report

- ✓ CSOs Mapping Report
- ✓ UBU- ITUZE IWACU Baseline Report
- ✓ UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project Completion Report
- ✓ Activities feedback dashboards

Other sources of information for this evaluation have been obtained from the CSOs quarterly report feedbacks obtained through KIIs. Besides, in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, FGDs and case studies provided insightful data for the evaluation.

2.3 Evaluation design

Table 2 below shows the evaluation matrix clearly specifying the guiding questions and data collection approaches

Table 2: Evaluation Matrix

OECD – DAC Criteria	Evaluation Guiding Questions	Proposed Data Sources
<p>Relevance and Appropriateness - the extent to which the project interventions and designs responded to beneficiaries' needs, priorities and continue to do so even if the circumstances change.</p>	<p>1. To what extent were the Project activities responding to justice recipients/target beneficiaries and identified needs and priorities defined by the justice system in Rwanda</p> <p>2. What was the relevance of the designed project activities to the project overall objective and outcomes? Furthermore, were they relevant to the project theory of change and the identified outcomes and outputs?</p> <p>3. How far does the project respond to priorities in the justice sector in Rwanda and on the achievement of SDG 16.3?</p> <p>4. What do you think about the strategy used by RCN in judgement execution particularly Gacaca?</p>	<p>Desk review Including: project progress report, CSO reports, project completion report and other relevant publications.</p> <p>FGD sessions with targeted community members</p> <p>KIIs with RCN and institutional partners and Consortium members</p> <p>KIIs with district stakeholders at district levels</p>

OECD – DAC Criteria	Evaluation Guiding Questions	Proposed Data Sources
<p>Efficiency – the extent to which the intervention delivers or is likely to deliver results in the economic and timely manner.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent has the project delivered results in an economic and timely way? 2. Did the project face any accountability issues with the consortium members? What made ARAMA to be dropped? 3. Was the project designed and/or amended throughout the implementation period to provide the best value for money? 4. Was this project the most cost-effective as compared to similar projects? 	<p>Desk review Including: project progress report, financial reports, CSO reports, project completion report and other relevant publications.</p> <p>KIIs with institutional partners and Consortium members</p> <p>KIIs with project staff from RCN</p>
<p>Effectiveness – the extent to which the intervention achieved or is achieving its objectives and results</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To what extent has the project achieved its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across different groups? 6. What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended project outcomes and set objectives? 7. How did the project activities respond to any changes that might have happened during the project duration? 8. Have the M&E system delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning? 	<p>KIIs with institutional partners and Consortium members</p> <p>KIIs with project staff from RCN</p> <p>Focus group discussion with project beneficiaries</p> <p>Desk review of available documents</p>
<p>Sustainability – the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue after the project has ended.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To what extent have stakeholders taken ownership of RCN J&D's strategies and practices? More specifically, how can CSO partners, without the direct intervention of RCN J&D, continue certain implementations with the same or better performance recognized in the field? 2. To what extent can the activities of the project continue after donor funding ceased? Is there an exit/sustainability strategy in place or planned? 3. Is it likely that the benefits of the project (capacities developed; linkages, mutual learning and knowledge and experiences shared) would be sustainable or is there any action required at the endpoint? 4. What recommendations with regard to sustainability should be considered? 	<p>FGD sessions with targeted community members</p> <p>KIIs with institutional partners and Consortium members</p> <p>KIIs with project staff from RCN</p>

OECD – DAC Criteria	Evaluation Guiding Questions	Proposed Data Sources
Coherence- <i>evaluate the extent to which the project activities by RCN J&D are compatible to other interventions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do the interventions by RCN J&D correlate with the other intervention to the target beneficiaries and the target community? 2. How did the project activities complement and align to similar activities and influence efforts implemented by local and national actors? 	KIs with institutional partners and Consortium members, KIs with project staff from RCN
Future project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did RCN use all the strategies that are envisaged in the Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for all by 2030? This includes solving problems by transforming justice institutions and services through a broad range of justice providers , Improve the quality of justice journeys by empowering people to understand, use and shape the law through fair informal and formal justice, use justice for prevention by methods such as mediation and providing people with means and access to services and opportunities by breaking down legal administrative and practical barriers people face to obtain documents, access public service and participate in society and economy and promoting gender equality. 2. How has the project addressed the gaps and challenges in accessing justice in Rwanda especially for the vulnerable? What future activities should be undertaken and how should this be done and by who? 3. What is in the policy that RCN believes should be carried forward? 	Round table discussions with the technical and steering committee members, KIs with institutional partners and Consortium members, KIs with project staff from RCN

2.4 Sample Size and Sampling Design

A total of 29 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)(Annex i) and 70 Key Informant Interviews (KIs)(Annex ii) was achieved from 420 justice recipients and 150 justice providers. This was distributed in 9 Districts that comprise of the 7 intervention Districts and 2 control Districts. At least 3 case studies (Annex iii) were conducted to explore changes in the lives of beneficiaries as a result of the Project. PARS used these human stories to show the resulting change as a result of the UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project through a contextual analysis of the circumstances and the relationships between the beneficiaries and UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project goals. PARS in collaboration with RCN Justice & Démocratie used purposive/judgmental sampling to target respondents who took part in the interviews. Inclusivity was adhered to in order to ensure all project stakeholders and beneficiaries were represented in the sampling.

2.5 Data Collection Methods/Instruments

As reported before, data collection was done through qualitative methods comprising of the KIIs, FGDs and case studies. This was done by locally trained moderators as well as the evaluation team members. KIIs were conducted both physically (face to face) and virtually depending on availability and convenience of the interviewee.

i) Key Informant Interviews

Both virtual and physical methods were used to conduct key informant interviews. Some Key Informants Interviews were conducted virtually with the Project donors, Project staff and CSOs representatives. In some instances, physical interviews were done with the executive secretaries, IBUKA and AVEGA

ii) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Case Studies

FGDs and case studies were conducted physically by locally trained moderators. Note taking was done during the FGD and case study sessions and information enhanced further through note taking. The FGDs were all conducted in Kinyarwanda by trained local moderators using an unstructured discussion guide.

2.6 Data Processing, Analysis and Management

Synthesis and Feedback Phase

Even through data collection was purely by qualitative methods, some quantifications have been made on the different themes. Some secondary data was also collected in quantitative format.

2.7 Ethical Consideration and Quality Assurance Plan

The evaluation team ensured that the highest ethical standards were met during the entire process of data collection, analysis and report writing as follows:

Informed Consent

The consent seeking entailed:

- The name of the researchers and their role in the project/study;
- The purpose of the study.
- The voluntary nature of their participation in the study, informing them that they could choose to participate, refuse to participate, or withdraw from the study with no negative repercussions;
- An explanation of the process and format of the study;
- The anonymity and confidentiality of their participation in the study;

The researchers then inquired as to whether the respondent had any questions or reservations which needed to be addressed before the commencement of data collection. Any respondent who did not consent to the interview was not coerced or bribed to assent.

Data Security

All documents containing any informants' identification information was stored in password-protected folders. All data obtained during the survey was treated wholly as property of RCN Justice & Démocratie and not used for any other purposes except for the purposes drawn out in the final evaluation.

The team also ensured that;

- The respondents were never sold anything or asked for money under the guise of research,
- Respondents were only contacted at reasonable and convenient times
- The respondents were assured the highest professional conduct standards upheld during the collection and reporting of information they provided.
- Throughout the research, the evaluation team members adhered to the ethical principle of 'Do no Harm'.

2.8 Limitations and Challenges Faced.

The following challenges and limitations are noted for this evaluation:

1. Delayed approval by NISR. The two weeks anticipated approval period for the VISA by NISR took more time. This delayed all the Project activities including the training and appointment bookings with the various Districts.
2. Delayed approvals from Mayors of the control Districts: Mayors of control Districts took more time to validate the authenticity of the evaluation before providing their approvals because the Project had not been conducted in those Districts. This led to the delays in reporting and presentation of the final report.

Chapter Three: Key Findings From The Final Evaluation

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the consultant's response to the evaluation questions, and more specifically, the findings of the project's evaluation drawn from the desk review, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. These findings were triangulated to provide objectively verified and actionable results. The chapter also discusses the extent to which the results have been met. Some generalizations have been made using the secondary data and from the views received from the key informants and from FGDs.

The findings are summarized and discussed under the relevance and appropriateness, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability and future project design. The evaluation also looks at the challenges faced by RCN and its partners in the Project implementation and gives recommendations.

3.2 Relevance and Appropriateness

This evaluation finds that the UBU ITUZE IWACU Project was relevant to the needs of the justice recipients as well as those of the justice providers and that the project design was relevant.

3.2.1 Relevance to the needs of the justice recipients

Evaluation Question: To what extent were the project activities responding to justice recipients/target beneficiaries and identified needs and priorities defined by the justice system in Rwanda

One of the barriers and gaps to accessing justice for justice recipients, in this case the community members and especially the vulnerable groups, had been the lack of knowledge on their basic rights, the functioning of the proximity justice system as well as community-level conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms. The UBU ITUZE IWACU project proposal analysed the needs relating to the Rwandan justice sector for the justice recipients and the justice providers and found the following challenges:

1. Lack of public knowledge of rights and how to claim them through the justice system. Citizens were unaware of how to access and navigate the justice system and the process of having a decision executed.
2. Backlog in the execution of decisions due to lack of knowledge of having a decision executed. This delay had been as a result of lack of resources and information for the community members while the justice providers at times lacked information on the correct procedures or were unable to follow through to the execution of the judgement.
3. Lack of understanding the roles of the proximity justice actors (MAJ, CSOs, Executive Secretaries, Abunzi and JRLOS) by the community

The National Legal Aid Policy of 2014 noted that while the Constitution and other laws provide for equality of all persons before the law, poverty, limited access to lawyers and lack of knowledge on legal matters largely constrained access to justice. The Republic of Rwanda is also party to the Nairobi Declaration on Justice and Good Governance which was signed by Ministers of Justice in the Great Lakes Region, Rwanda included, in Nairobi 2019. The Declaration aimed to promote and protect human rights, pursue justice and fight against impunity for serious crimes under international law and other serious human right violations and abuses.

In addition, among the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to which Rwanda is a signatory, SDG 16.3 seeks to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, ensure equal access to justice for all. Under this SDG, it is then important to consider access in terms of those who need to access justice and those who dispense justice in order to ensure that the goal is achieved.

In order to address these gaps, the UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project developed various mechanisms such as community dialogues, justice caravans, legal aid clinic activities, among others. All these mechanisms provided avenues where the community members were able to learn about the rule of law and were informed on their rights.

3.2.2 Relevance to the needs of the Proximity Justice Providers (Actors)

Proximity justice is a concept that was defined by RCN to indicate the need to bring institutions of justice to the people. This concept includes timeliness of justice delivered within a reasonable time, affordability, geographic accessibility, legitimacy, and citizen participation. The actors therefore within this definition being proximity justice actors included Government institutions and CSOs. In the delivery of justice, the UBU-ITUZE IWACU proposal noted that they faced the following challenges:

1. Lack of capacity development in advocacy for CSOs in JRLOS
2. Weak capacity of justice providers (Abunzi, MAJ and local authorities)
3. Backlog in the execution of decisions and court judgments

The challenges were addressed through intensive judgment execution and coaching workshops of Conciliators committees and Executive Secretaries by judges and MAJ for their capacity development.

3.2.3 Relevance of the Project Design

The Project design took on the form of a supply-side; focusing on the justice providers and a demand side which focused on the justice recipients. The UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project dealt with the challenges faced by the supply side and the demand side. This enabled the recipients of services to know what they can demand for (their rights) and the supplier of justice (PAJ) to know which services to supply and how to do it. UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project also worked with existing CSOs who work with JRLOS to build their capacity and therefore enhance their capability to create advocacy with the aim of influencing positive change in the justice system.

The relevance of the Project is also seen through the strategies that were used in the implementation of this Project which relied on analysis carried out of previous project SPGR through which RCN J&D was aware of the gaps in community with regard to information on laws and rights. RCN J&D employed the following strategies which were not seen in isolation but were interlinked and expected to contribute to the achievement of the two project goals which were also interlinked in reaching the targeted groups through:

- Raising public awareness, especially amongst vulnerable groups, about their rights in relation to existing laws, and the functioning of the justice system. This was done through community dialogues, large edutainment road shows (Justice Caravans), IEC materials and mobile technologies.
- Enhancing public and civil society oversight of the implementation of justice legislation and policy (particularly those aspects which protect the rights of vulnerable groups) and participation in its

reform by building the capacities of a cadre of CSOs to conduct evidence-based advocacy, increasing the provision of legal aid services and enhancing the capacities of Abunzi

- Improving the implementation and operationalization of existing laws and policies, particularly those that protect the rights of vulnerable groups.

Lastly, the project reflected the mission of the RCN which is:

“In support of the vision, the project will support citizen participation in proximity justice, (especially for women and vulnerable groups) facilitating constructive dialogue and raising awareness about the rights and duties of the population, the law and the functioning of proximity justice. It will seek to safeguard the rights of women and vulnerable groups, in particular their access to justice and participation in decision-making. The project will provide capacity building and opportunities for exchange to PJA to enable them to collaborate better and fulfil their mandates, particularly in relation to advocacy by CSOs (especially for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment) and proximity justice by all PJA (including CSOs).

The Project was therefore relevant in ensuring access to justice by raising awareness of the population on their rights and procedures to use in accessing justice services correctly and quickly.

Evaluation Question: How did the Project activities complement and align to similar activities and influence efforts implemented by local and national actors?

The Republic of Rwanda has been in the process of delivering justice in the aftermath of the Genocide against the Tutsi perpetrated in 1994. The classical and Gacaca courts have contributed to the implementation of this justice process that involved the entire nation as either victim, witness or perpetrators. However, as of 2018 decisions resulting from over 54,000 cases judged by Gacaca courts had yet to be executed. Rwanda has also adopted technology in service provision to improve access to justice by implementing an online case management solution to streamline the process of filing and following up the claims and cases. This service unfortunately faces the challenges of unavailability of computers/smartphones, internet access, decent network speeds and the know-how to use the technology by both users and those offering the services.

An assessment that was carried before the implementation of UBU-ITUZE IWACU project found that the Executive Secretaries, Abunzi and agents who were expected to aid the justice process did not have the technical capacity to help in the legal processes. Victims were also unable to access justice since they had insufficient knowledge or resources on how to access justice. Although there were dozens of CSOs in Rwanda providing legal aid services, their institutional and technical capacity was weak and their geographical coverage varied and therefore they were unable to satisfy the demand of citizens, especially those unable to reach the legal aid centres run by these CSOs.

RCN was able to conduct the capacity building activities for the existing CSOs and Proximity Justice Providers to better carry out their justice-related mission and roles respectively. Through the UBU-ITUZE WACU Project, RCN was also able to disseminate knowledge to community members on how to access justice. As such, RCN established an informal network involving CSOs members of the JRLOS at central level (Legal Aid Forum and RCN & JD) in six Districts and were well connected to their constituents.

The various CSOs contributed to a specific activity that resonated with their area of work and expertise as below.

1. **Public awareness:** Viamo raised awareness via MTN845 phone, Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro and Lawyers of Hope organized the community dialogues in their respective areas of intervention, while Mashirika conducted the Tour of the Justice caravan.
2. **Legal Aid:** The Project supported Legal Aid Clinics (LAC) of CSOs members of the Consortium. Haguruka had, long before the Project, two LACs in Nyanza and Kayonza Districts. The Project opened another LAC in Ngoma District for Haguruka. Both LACs run by Tubibe Amahoro were created by the Project in 2019. Lawyers of Hope took over in early 2020, one LAC that was managed by ARAMA in Kicukiro District when its MoU was terminated. LoH' LAC was created in Nyabihu with funding from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), close to the end of 2021. The lawyers and paralegals organized community dialogues, participated in the justice caravans and in the execution of judgements.
3. There was **collaboration between the CSOs and state actors** in the LAC (the working environment). This included collaboration between the clinics and the district, especially with MINIJUST through the MAJ and the collaboration of paralegals with the entities in which they intervene.

The UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project also tapped into the significant specialist experiences of the consortium partners in different fields such as Gender, SGBV and children rights (Haguruka), advocacy, good governance, and citizens' scorecard (Tubibe Amahoro), prevention and reporting of torture (Arama), behaviour change communication (Viamo and Mashirika), Proximity Justice (RCN J&D). Trained Paralegals who were based in the communities were also used to facilitate the delivery of community dialogues and ensure follow-up.

Evaluation Question: What was the relevance of the designed project activities to the project overall objective and outcomes? Furthermore, were they relevant to the project theory of change and the identified outcomes and outputs?

RCN and its partners’ theory of change was based on identified development problems which **were:**

Development problems	Development Hypothesis and Project Outcome	Project impact
<p>Justice recipients had limited understanding of basic rights, the laws which confer those rights and the functioning of the justice system designed to uphold those rights</p> <p>The Proximity Justice actors who had the role of upholding the justice recipients’ rights had limited capacities to fulfil their mandates. These actors also need to improve their collaboration within themselves. These Justice actors were varied and included the Abunzi, Executive Secretaries and the MAJ who needed coaching and mentoring. The actors also included CSOs who needed the space to discuss the role of civil society and play that role and to advocate for change to state authority, particularly in support of equality and the empowerment of women.</p>	<p>If the population understands the law and how to access the available justice system, if PJA functions according to their mandate and collaborate effectively, and if CSOs in the justice sector engage in evidence-based advocacy, then the project will have contributed to improving the population’s access to fair community justice mechanisms.</p>	<p>If the project succeeds in contributing to improving citizen’s knowledge of their rights and access to fair community justice mechanisms and if the decisions taken by community justice mechanisms are implemented in accordance with the law, and if CSOs act as a watchdog, advocate to address any problems in the system and defend citizen rights, then the project will have contributed to strengthening the quality of Proximity Justice in Rwanda.</p>

The strategy employed was mostly capacity building for the two sectors using various strategies that would meet the needs of each. The expected output (change of state) included having an effective transfer of knowledge and tools to do so. This was done through the dissemination of knowledge on how community members could access and pursue justice while justice proximity actors and CSOs were capacity built through training to enable them to implement their duties. The expected outcome (change in behaviour) was having an enabling environment or contribution to fair access to local justice and whose impact would be a contribution to strengthen the quality of proximity justice in Rwanda for all. As a result of project activities, some of the cases were resolved and victims redressed in their rights and community members were also able to learn how they could access justice. Proximity Justice actors and CSOs also benefited through trainings which increased their ability to enhance the delivery of justice.

How far does the Project respond to priorities in the justice sector in Rwanda and on the achievement of SDG 16.3?

RCN J&D ensured that its projects were fully in line with Rwanda’s medium- and long-term political strategies, including the MINIJUST’s strategic plan (2013–18), the JRLS Strategy and the

Government's seven-year plan (7YGP).

Part of UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project intervention was to strengthen the capacity of local partners (MINIJUST, MAJ, Abunzi, PC Judges, CSOs). The main aim was to empower them as 'grassroots legal advocates' or paralegals that can propagate long term peaceful and inclusive coexistence. Community based paralegals often work as negotiators and mediators for disputes. They also participate in awareness raising on laws. In particular, UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project trained them on mediation as alternative dispute resolution (ADR) method in a traditional context. ADR resonates with customary laws and emphasizes on reconciliation and community cohesion rather than punishment. It is therefore more accessible, culturally-sensitive alternative to formal justice in many communities. In fragile and conflict-affected settings, given the lack of infrastructure and resources to deal with minor disputes, amicable resolution of disputes, including in traditional systems, is often an efficient solution. As stated in the Declaration on Collaboration Between the Judiciary and Indigenous/Home-Grown Community Justice Institutions in 2017, community-based paralegals "play a critical role as enablers of healing, reconciliation, peace-building and mediation at the community level". Hence, this initiative resonates well with the SDG declaration.

The Project supported Legal Aid Clinics (LAC) of CSOs members of the Consortium. LACs are pillars of legal aid within the local communities. UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project collaborated with MAJ (Justice Bureau, Maison d'Accès à la Justice in French) to offer legal aid clinics in the intervention Districts. Within the Districts, they further collaborated with one paralegal from each Sector of their respective districts. The LACs organised community dialogues, with the technical support from RCN J&D. Based on this initiative more than 5682 cases were received and executed. This supports SDG Declaration on Collaboration Between the Judiciary and Indigenous/Home-Grown Community Justice Institutions towards access to justice for all.

The Ministry of Justice and JRLOS strategic plan and National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024 (NST1) acknowledges that the problem of capacities of Abunzi and executive secretaries is not only a Justice Sector issue, but rather a multi-institutional challenge that requires all institutions, public or private, to work together in a synergistic manner to deliver a comprehensive capacity-building package. UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project tried to address this capacity issue by offering the capacity building initiatives that was conducted in two phases: (1). organising coaching of Abunzi committees and Es of Sectors by the judges and MAJ and (2). The outcome was the increased capacity where the performance increased from 34.47% during the baseline level to 76.05% at the end of the Project. This outcome also had some other benefits like the reduction of Gacaca cases. Follow-up visits to shape the achievements of each committee in their workplace and to gauge whether there is improvement is still needed. It can hence be concluded that UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project has played a crucial role on the SDC declaration of building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

As per the SDG declaration of access to justice by all and Ministerial Declaration on justice, UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project used various ways to increase knowledge of justice recipients' (especially women and vulnerable groups) to strengthen their accessibility to justice and improve the ability of justice providers to deliver high quality justice services. This resonates with the SDG declaration for access to justice for all and provides a future opportunity for RCN to build on successful public awareness methods in their future project planning.

3.3 Project's Effectiveness

Hypothesis: *Used strategies were adequate to address identified specific issues and have well achieved the project objectives and can be extended to other zones of intervention.*

3.3.1. To what extent has the Project achieved its objectives and its results, including any differential results across different groups

Goal 1: Strengthen access to justice by increasing Justice Recipients' (especially vulnerable groups) knowledge of their basic rights and the functioning of the proximity justice system, allowing them to claim their rights. The Project also aimed at improving the ability of Justice Providers (including state actors and CSOs) to deliver high quality justice services, to inform the population of their rights and the functioning of the justice system, and to support citizens (especially vulnerable groups) to exercise and claim their rights. As a result, it was envisioned that public satisfaction with the services of justice providers would consequently increase.

The UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project used two main approaches to increase knowledge of justice recipients (especially women and vulnerable groups) to strengthen their accessibility to justice:

- i. Raising public awareness through community dialogues, radio programs, justice caravan, Information Education Materials (IEC) and Mobisodes;
- ii. Strengthening legal aid through training (legal aid service staff and paralegals) and funding.

Outcome indicator 1.1. Proportion (%) of informed citizens through UBU- ITUZE IWACU project's Public awareness claimed/exercised rights

Raising public awareness involved the use of public outreach means that could increase the level of knowledge and public awareness on the justice system as well as alternative dispute resolution. The public awareness activities were conducted in the 7 project districts (Kicukiro, Nyanza, Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngoma, Kayonza and Nyabihu). The suitability of this approach in promoting judicial independence was limited to creating awareness and increasing knowledge among the justice recipient. The project sought to increase the awareness of the community members on their rights and how to claim them which would then translate into them being able to respect the rights of their fellow community members. The community members who became aware of their rights through the project were then referred to as informed citizens. The completion report shows that an average of about 20% became informed citizens between year one and year three.

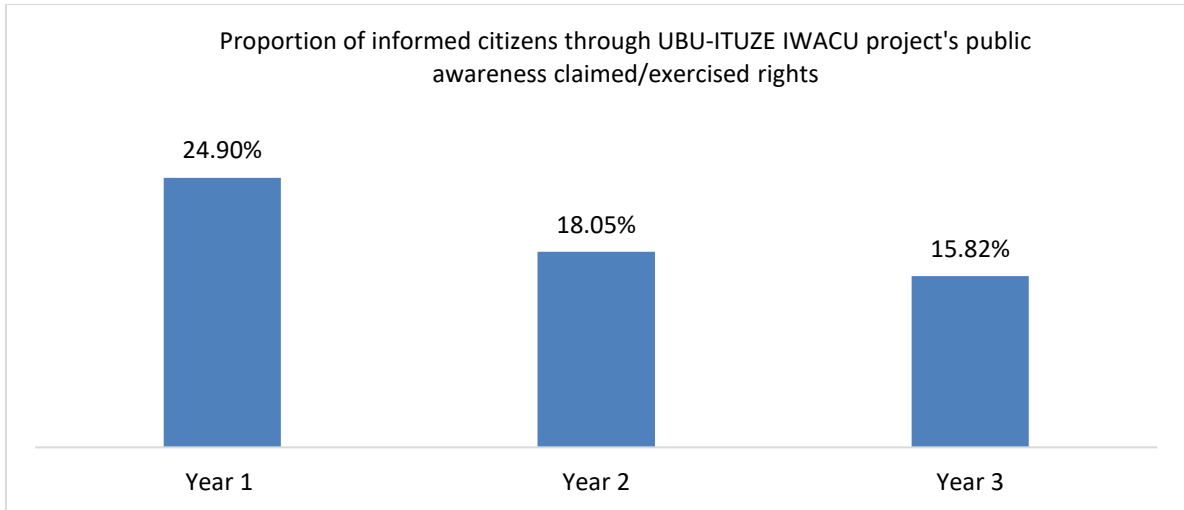


Figure 2: Proportion of informed citizens through UBU-ITUZE IWACU project's public awareness claimed/exercised rights

Out of 1353 respondents who were interviewed in 2020, 2021 and 2022, 39.84% used to receive messages to increase their awareness via mobile telephones. Similarly, 14.26% reported positive change in GBV areas, where 697 couples were able to resolve their conflicts, 95 developed dialogues with their spouses, 20 stimulated reconciliations, 86 had paternity recognized, 503 obtained land titles and 254 children were registered in civil status.

Legal awareness was promoted through community dialogues, justice caravans, sketches/mobisodes and radio programs.

Community dialogues

Community dialogues of up to 40 participants were organized and led by a skilled technical facilitator through a participatory discussion on a particular topic. The final project report indicates that out of 9021 expected participants in the community dialogue, **8723** participated, of which **3883 (44.51%)** were women. This demonstrates that the project performed slightly below its target on community dialogues by 3%. This was attributed to the failure of some few invited individuals to attend dialogues due to personal reasons. Future projects can consider increasing the target during actual recruitment for the community dialogues (by factoring attrition) in order to achieve the desired outcomes by the end of the intervention.

Figure 2 shows the achievement of community dialogue.

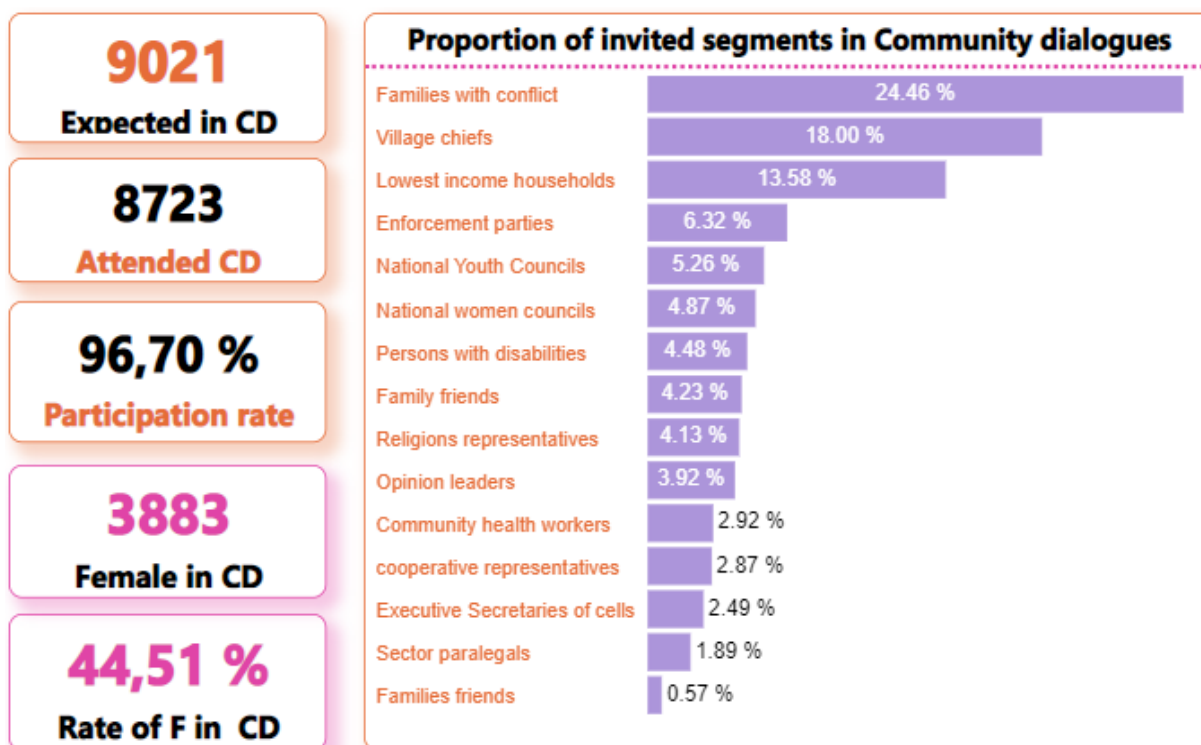


Figure 3: Successful Community Dialogue Conducted.

Source: Project final report

The dialogues were complimented with IEC materials (pamphlets with UBU-ITUZE IWACU messaging) which were given to the participants. Insightful posters were also given to the administrators who placed them in strategic places that were easily accessible to the public.

Findings based on primary data project beneficiaries (such as those in family conflict, NWC, Cooperative representatives, village chiefs and other purposively recruited participants) show that an average of 60% had participated in various public awareness sessions such as drama *ipfundo ry'Ubutabera* through radio Rwanda, Justice Caravan (**Umuriri w'ubutabera**) or community dialogue (**Ibiganiro Ku Butabera Mu Kagali**). The findings further show that 35% of those who had participated in various public awareness activities also participated in community dialogues processes. The key contributions of community dialogues processes to the justice system include understanding the fundamental rights and legal procedures for accessing justice (30%), gaining knowledge and skills to handle family conflicts (20%), gaining the capacity to solve land dispute (20%) and recognizing children paternity (10%) among others. Tables 3 and 4 below demonstrate the participation in community dialogue and lessons learnt from community dialogues respectively.

Table 3: Participation in Community Dialogues

Frequency per question from total FGD participants				
Respondent's Segments (role in society)	Have you participated in any event like drama <i>ipfundorw'Ubutabera</i> through radio Rwanda, Justice Caravan (Umuriri w'ubutabera) or community dialogue (ibiganiro ku butabera muri Kigali)?		Those who have participated in Community dialogue (After probing)	
<i>n=294</i>				
	Yes	No	Community dialogue	Other Public awareness campaigns
Family in conflict	206 (70%)	88(30%)	132(45%)	162 (55%)
NWC	118 (40%)	176(60%)	65 (22%)	229 (78%)
Cooperative representative	118 (40%)	176 (60%)	88 (30%)	206 (70%)
Village chiefs	244 (83%)	50 (17%)	112(38%)	182(62%)
Opinion leaders	226 (77%)	68 (13%)	121(41%)	173 (59%)
PWD	147 (50%)	147 (50%)	76 (26%)	218 (74%)
Family friends	250 (85%)	44 (15%)	147(50%)	147 (50%)
NYC	103 (35%)	191 (65%)	71 (24%)	223 (76%)
Percentage	60%	40%	35%	65%

Source: FGD data from 7 intervention districts

Table 4: Issues Addressed Through Community Dialogues

If Yes, what have you learnt in the event/activity you participated in (filtered to community dialogue?)	Frequency (%)
<i>n= 103</i>	
Fundamental rights and legal procedures for accessing justice	31 (30%)
How to handle family conflicts	21 (20%)
Land dispute resolution	21 (20%)
Recognized paternity	10 (10%)
Stimulated reconciliation	8 (8%)
Process of obtaining land ownership	6 (6%)
Marital disputes among couples	4 (4%)
Other issues	2 (2%)
Total	100%

Source: FGD data from 7 intervention districts

The community dialogues processes were meant to:

1. **Inform citizens of their fundamental rights and legal procedures for accessing justice:** The evaluation established that community dialogues were mostly effective in increasing the knowledge of citizens who directly and actively participated in the project.
2. Give participants the opportunity **to share their personal experiences and communicate knowledge** gaps about justice issues.
3. Encourage the informed **population to share information with their community peers**, especially vulnerable groups including women, people with disability, children, low-income categories and people at risk of domestic violence;

During the focus group discussions, respondent provided varied opinions and perspectives on community dialogues processed as follow,

*“I attended one (community dialogues) of those sessions where a judge was training us on our basic rights. What I liked about the session is that I was informed that as a woman I can also inherit my father’s land and not only my brothers. From my family, it was only our brothers who inherited our father’s land “. Member of a **Family in conflict***

*“... I also attended one (community dialogue session) in our area. I left with a lot in my head on legal procedures. Including even the process to follow when someone was not paying my debt. Instead of threatening the person or taking matters in my own hands, I can involve Abunzi or local authorities who can handle it softly “. **Family friends***

“... They (community dialogue processes) were very nice sessions especially on family conflict resolutions. Instead of families going to courts, due to internal conflicts, we were able to learn how to handle those conflicts at a family level...”. **Village chief**

Justice Caravans

This activity was carried out by contracted private companies such as Mashirika Performing Art and Media Company Limited. The caravans were strategically situated in market places and used some form of drama and IEC to raise public awareness on the justice system and human basic rights. Participants in the justice caravans were so many that the exact number could not be established. The completion report estimates approximately 83,500 participants. The message was delivered through drama in a very attractive and recreational way. At the end of the drama, a question-and-answer session was organized to assess the level of the reception and understanding of the message. The rewards for those who answered correctly included bags, umbrellas/parasols and T-shirts on which important messages were engraved.

Based on primary data from beneficiaries (family in conflict, NWC, Cooperative representatives, village chiefs and others purposively recruited participants), the evaluation finds that an average of 60% participated in various public awareness sessions such as drama *ipfundo ry’Ubutabera* through radio Rwanda, Justice Caravan (Umuriri w’ubutabera) or community dialogue (**Ibiganiro Ku Butabera muri Kigali**). The findings further demonstrate that 51% of those who attended various public awareness activities had also participated in Justice Caravans. Specifically, respondents revealed that through justice Caravans, they learned many things, including information on their basic rights (14%), acquired knowledge on key laws and functioning of the Rwandan justice system (14%), understood mechanisms for solving land disputes resolution (13%), acquired knowledge on how to solve marriage conflicts with their spouses (12%) learnt and how to solve family conflicts with children and relatives (11%) among others. Interestingly, 19% attended justice caravans for entertainment purpose. Table 5 and 6 show the participation and contribution of justice caravans respectively.

Table 5: Participation in Justice Caravans

Frequency per question from total FGD participants				
Respondent's Segments (role in society)	Have you participated in any event like drama ipfundo ry'Ubutabera through radio Rwanda, Justice Caravan (Umuriri w'ubutabera) or community dialogue (ibiganiro ku butabera muri Kigali)?		Those who have participated in Justice Caravans (After probing)	
	Yes	No	Justice Caravans	Other Public awareness campaigns
	n=294			
Family in conflict	206 (70%)	88 (30%)	191 (65%)	103(35%)
NWC	118 (40%)	176 (60%)	118 (40%)	176 (60%)
Cooperative representative	118 (40%)	176 (60%)	129 (44%)	165 (56%)
Village chiefs	244 (83%)	50 (17%)	176 (60%)	118 (40%)
Opinion leaders	226 (77%)	68 (13%)	162 (55%)	132 (45%)
PWD	147 (50%)	147(50%)	118 (40%)	176 (60%)
Family friends	250 (85%)	44 (15%)	206 (70%)	88 (30%)
NYC	103 (35%)	191 (65%)	88(30%)	206 (70%)
Average /percentage	60%	40%	51%	49%

Source: FGD data from 7 intervention districts

Table 6: Lessons Learnt from Justice Caravans

If Yes, what have you learnt in the event/activity you participated in (filtered to justice caravan)?	Frequency (%)
n=150	
Just went there for entertainment	29 (19%)
Information on my basic rights	21 (14%)
Information on Key laws and functioning of justice system	21(14%)
Land dispute resolution	20 (13%)
How to solve marriage conflicts with spouse	18 (12%)
How to solve family conflicts with children and relatives	17 (11%)
Process of obtaining land ownership	11 (7%)
Where and how to seek justice at a local level	9 (6%)
Others	6 (4%)
Total	100%

Radio Program

To further enhance communication outreach on awareness about one’s rights and how to claim them, conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution including the concept of UBUHUZA, RCN J&D in partnership MASHIRIKA, LOH, Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro, MINIJUST and Supreme Court developed a radio program meant to reach a wider population. The program was broadcasted via Radio Rwanda in 23 drama episodes conveying the chosen messages on Sunday from 6:50 pm. The target audience of the radio program was not actively tracked throughout the project period thus the actual numbers may have been higher in a rural setting. This lack of tracking undermines the likely impact the radio program had in terms of reach. Future programs should ensure an effective monitoring of the audience during program broadcast which can be easily obtained from the radio station.

Tables 7 and 8 show the participation and respondent’s lessons learned from radio program respectively.

Table 7: Participation in Radio Programs

Frequency per question from total FGD participants				
Respondent's Segments (role in society)	Have you participated in any event like drama <i>ipfundo ry’Ubutabera</i> through radio Rwanda, Justice Caravan (Umuriri w’ubutabera) or community dialogue (ibiganiro ku butabera muri Kigali)?		Those who have participated in Radio program (After probing)	
	Yes	No	Radio programs	Other Public awareness campaigns
Family in conflict	206 (70%)	88 (30%)	6 (2%)	288 (98%)
NWC	118(40%)	176(60%)	6 (2%)	288 (98%)
Cooperative representative	118 (40%)	176 (60%)	3 (1%)	291 (99%)
Village chiefs	244 (83%)	50 (17%)	47 (16%)	247 (84%)
Opinion leaders	226 (77%)	68 (13%)	29 (10%)	265 (90%)
PWD	147 (50%)	147(50%)	3 (1%)	291 (99%)
Family friends	250 (85%)	44 (15%)	9 (3%)	285 (97%)
NYC	103 (35%)	191 (65%)	6 (2%)	288 (98%)
Average	60%	40%	5%	95%

Source: FGD data from 7 intervention district

Findings from the evaluation show that 5% of those who had participated in various public awareness activities had followed UBU- ITUZE IWACU radio program through **Radio Rwanda**. Specific lessons learnt by respondent from the radio program include: Family/community/friends or land mediations (35%), how to claim one’s rights (20%) and importance of having good relationships with family and neighbours (20%).

“... I could say that the program was very short though the messaging was clear, I was informed about my rights and how to claim them... “. **Opinion leader**

Table 8: Lessons Learnt from Radio Program

If Yes, what have you learnt in the event/activity you participated in (filtered to radio program?)	Frequency (%)
<i>n=15</i>	
Family/community/friends or land mediations	5(35%)
How to claim one’s rights	4 (25%)
Importance of having good relationships with family and neighbours	3 (20%)
Others	3 (20%)
Total	100%

Source: FGD data from 7 intervention districts

Outcome Indicator 1.2: Proportion (%) of informed citizens through UBU-ITUZE IWACU public awareness helped others to claim/exercise rights M/F/V)

During the compilation of the completion report, 324145 citizens had been mobilized to participate in public awareness with 27.27% of them supporting their neighbours to claim their rights through appropriate mechanisms. This surpassed the 10% target in the 36th month of the project. According to the completion report, 38.2% (59.8% Female, 41.2%) in year 1 and 22.61% of informed citizens in year 2 were able to help others to exercise or claim their rights as a result of the UBU-ITUZE IWACU public awareness.

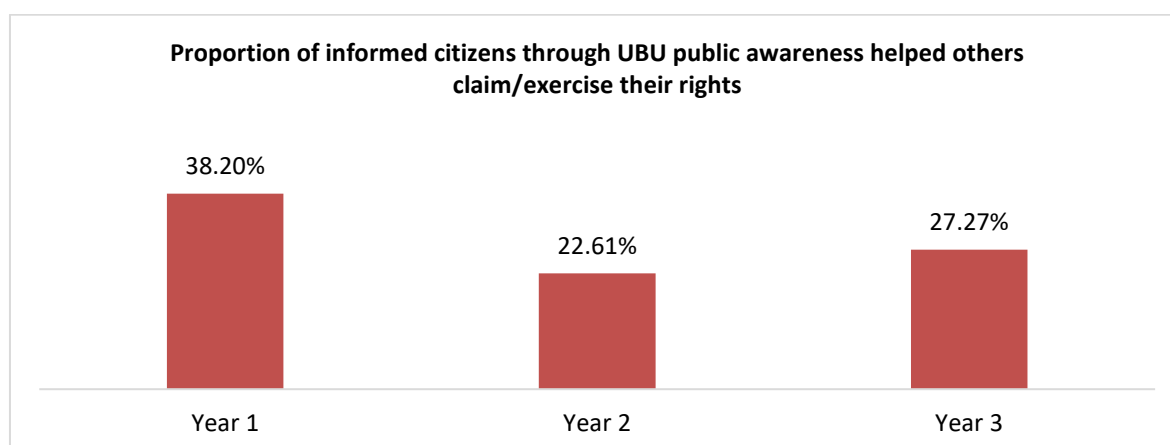


Figure 4: The % of citizens informed through UBU-ITUZE IWACU public awareness

Outcome indicator 1.2b: Proportion of informed citizens have used received messages to solve conflict themselves by changing behaviors claim/exercise their rights

Findings show that 9.98% of respondents in year one and 14.26% of respondents in year two had used the received messages to solve or prevent conflict themselves by changing behaviors. This demonstrates that the awareness campaigns messages were effective in promoting legal awareness to justice recipients and allowed them to make decisions on conflict resolution.

Goal 2: *Build the capacity of CSOs in the justice sector to conduct advocacy to influence positive change in the justice system, especially for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the rights of vulnerable groups.*

The key target under the second goal was to build the capacity of CSOs and enable them to conduct more advocacy. The main activities by UBU-ITUZE IWACU project on this initiative was: Capacity development in advocacy for JRLOs CSOs through networking, dialogue on role of CSOs, capacity building, developing advocacy policies and strategies, formal/informal meetings with DMI and rapid response funds as well as their participation in mass execution processes to reduce backlog in Execution of Decisions.

The UBU-ITUZE IWACU project used two main approaches to improve the ability of justice providers to deliver high quality justice services:

- i. Building capacity in *Abunzi* and LA through training, coaching and development of on-demand educational resources for mobile;
- ii. Training workshops for Nonprofessional Bailiffs

Outcome Indicator 2.1: Number of CSOs led advocacy initiatives

The UBU-ITUZE IWACU project sought to build the capacity of the already existing CSOs and empower them to discuss and promote the role of CSOs in Rwanda. This would include advocating for public reforms, particularly in supporting gender equality and empowerment of women. The CSOs were already implementing or had plans to implement various advocacy initiatives. As per the completion report, 10 CSO-led advocacy initiatives were accomplished at the 48th month of the project. Among those initiatives, 5 were led by Hagaruka, 1 by ADI and 4 by Tubibe Amahoro.

CSOs were engaged through capacity building events on advocacy in three types of events; two-phase dialogue on the role of civil society organization in the Justice Sector, three networking meetings and three thematic trainings including detention standards and legal framework, gender mainstreaming, advocacy policy and strategy development. Through these project activities, 20 CSOs members of district JRLOS committees were represented.

Capacity development in advocacy

CSOs members of the Consortium with support from RCN J&D prepared and animated the network meetings and thematic training workshops. Although this initiative was meant to develop the capacity of the CSOs, especially CSOs members of District JRLOS, the strategy was not effective. This is based

on disinterested participation of the CSOs leading to low attendance of CSO leaders who preferred to send ordinary staff, and the one coming in the first meeting would not be the one to attend the next meeting. Hence, it was very difficult for organizations to apply for the advocacy initiatives with funding from the project. Therefore, due to the lack of interest, this activity did not contribute to increased activity by CSOs in advocacy as was expected. Since no results can be established under this goal, there is need to prioritize engagement of CSOs at a higher level to gain commitment before project launch.

Nonetheless, the project supported in organizing network meeting between CSOs sitting in the JRLOS District Committees and other CSOs working on justice and rights issues in their respective districts and encouraged them to continue networking through different channels including WhatsApp groups etc. Despite the mentoring from RCN J&D they could not strengthen their network.

Legal Aid Clinics

The project supported Legal Aid Clinics (LAC) of CSOs members of the Consortium. Haguruka had, long before the project, two LACs in Nyanza and Kayonza districts. The project opened another LAC in Ngoma District for Haguruka. Both LACs run by Tubibe Amahoro were created by the project in 2019. In early 2020, Lawyer of Hope took over one LAC that was managed by ARAMA in Kicukiro district when its MoU was terminated. LoH LAC was created in Nyabihu with funding from Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) towards the end of 2021.

LoH collaborated with MAJ and one paralegal from each Sector of their respective districts (Justice Bureau/ *Maison d'Accès à la Justice*). Lawyers and paralegals of the LACs organised community dialogues, among other activities with the technical support from RCN J&D. LACs' services were also included in justice caravans where people who required legal advice could approach paralegals and during the execution of judgments for legal representation. Tracked data for legal aid clinics indicate that out of the targeted 7,440 cases, a total of 5,682 cases were presented during Legal Aid Clinics. The average clinic performance was reported at 69.72% (RCN database, 2022). Figure 3 shows the legal aid clinic performance.



Figure 5: Performance of Legal Aid Clinics

It was observed that the CSOs administering the district Legal Aid Clinics did not have the resources to coordinate the sector paralegals as there was no budget line provided to facilitate the coordination of sector paralegals who have an important role in the proximity of legal aid and justice in general.

Findings from this evaluation based on primary data with beneficiaries of Legal Aid Clinics who were purposively selected show that an average of 51(80%) from intervention districts and 11(60%) from control districts confirmed that they had received legal aid clinics. Figure 4 demonstrates the proportion of population who had received legal services.

Specific types of legal aid clinics received as attested by respondents include: Conflict resolution through mediation between families, friends and even for other institutions at 30% in both the intervention and control districts, free legal assistance and legal representation in Court at 27% in intervention districts and 30% within control districts respectively. Other legal clinic services received were advice on individual rights and process of seeking justice as well as advice on how to handle GBV.

Figure 6 shows the types of Legal Aid Clinic services received from both the intervention and control groups. The findings also demonstrate that majority of the legal aid clinic cases were fully handled leading to higher satisfaction rates as demonstrated in figure 5 and 6.

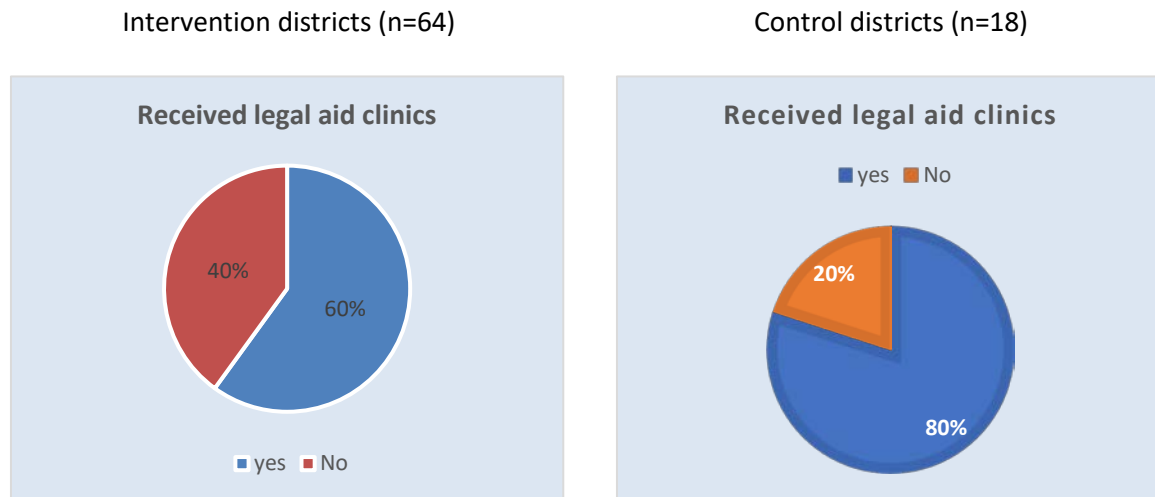


Figure 6: Those who have received legal aid clinic services.

As indicated in figure 6, intervention districts had more persons who benefited from legal aid clinics (n= 51, 80%) compared to control districts (n= 60%, 10) demonstrating that a higher population was able to benefit in the intervention areas. Despite the lack of UBU-ITUZE IWACU project intervention in control districts, more than half of those interviewed from control districts (60%) still confirmed that they had received legal aid clinics indicating that there were interventions besides RCN intervention in providing legal aid clinics.

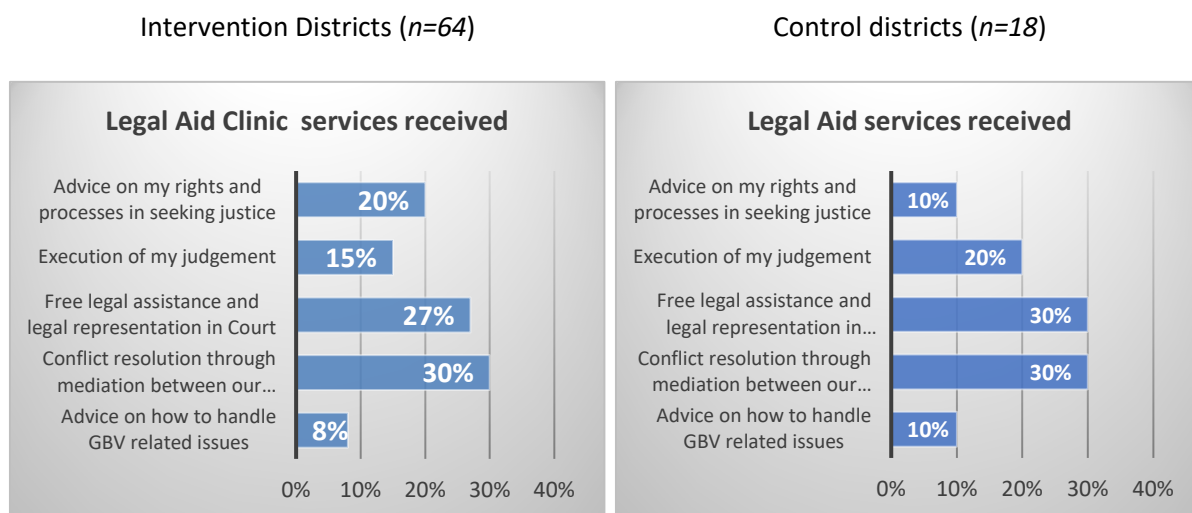


Figure 7: Types of Legal Aid Services received

Conflict resolution through mediation between families, friends and even for other institutions was unanimously cited by respondents from the control and intervention district at 60%. However, advice on person's rights and processes in seeking justice was more received from intervention district (20%) compared to control district (10%).

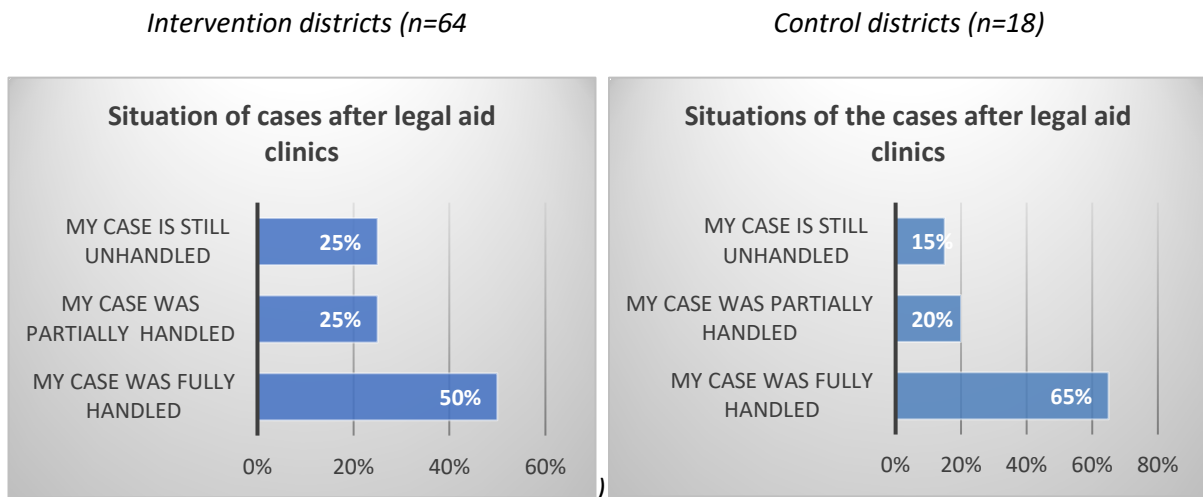


Figure 8: Legal Aid Clinic Performance

Findings on the situation of cases after legal aid clinics as indicated in figure 6 indicates a slightly higher affinity of intervention district on cases that were fully handled during legal aid clinics. This can be attributed to UBU- ITUZE IWACU project intervention.

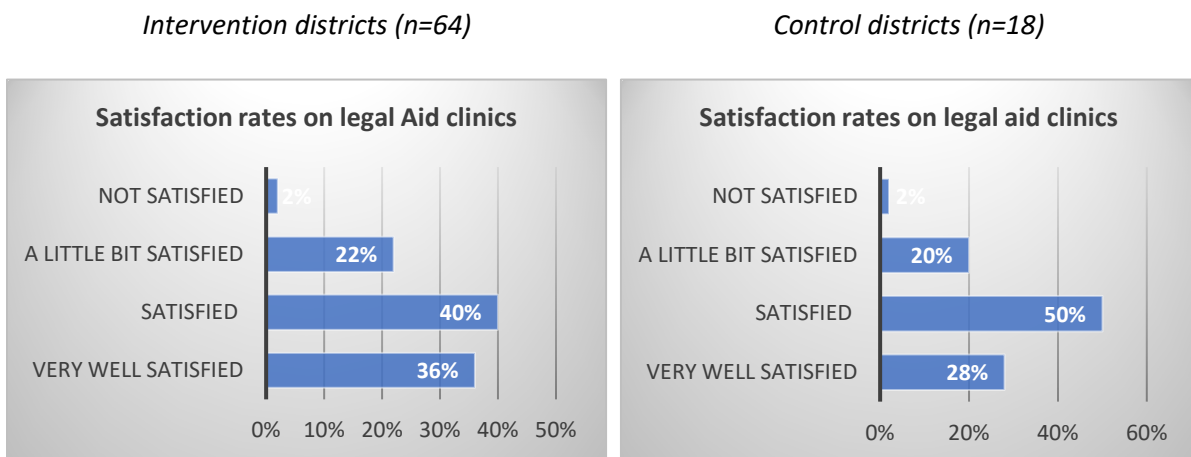


Figure 9: Satisfaction with Legal Aid Clinic

Findings on participants' satisfaction indicates that 36% from the intervention districts and 28% from the control districts were satisfied with legal aid clinics. Further, 50% from control districts and 40% from intervention districts indicated that they were satisfied.

“Yes, for me I interacted with one of the judges/paralegals of the legal aid clinic. He informed me on how we can resolve conflicts through mediation between our families, friends and even for other institutions around us “. **Beneficiary of legal aid clinic**

“.... I had a case whose judgement execution had delayed because I did not have money. When there were people in the market with drama in trucks, one of my friends introduced me to those who were solving cases. They helped in executing my case... “. **Beneficiary of legal aid clinic**

Outcome indicator 2.2: Average (%) performance of Conciliators Committees and Executive Secretaries (disaggregated by executive and Conciliators committees’ performances)

The first phase of project consisted of organising coaching of Abunzi committees and Executive secretaries of Sectors by the judges and MAJ. The coaching teams focused on the most recurring mistakes. After the coaching workshops by the judges and MAJ, the second step consisted of follow-up visits to monitor and review the achievements of each committee in their workplace and. This initiative by the project was geared towards ensuring that the Abunzi and executive secretaries at the sector level helped to deliver proximate justice and even provided alternative mechanisms for dispute resolutions.

The on demand educational resources for mobile capacity building were also used to train the Abunzi. This was carried out by Viamo. According to the final report, **128 (48.41%) Abunzi** took part in the training via their phone during the first phase. According to the VIAMO RCN J & D Remote Training Report of 2022, RCN partnered with VIAMO to digitize the Abunzi (Community mediators) training materials in audio format, and to provide a refresher training on key concepts in the syllabus. This training targeted 3000 Abunzi in the priority districts between 11th January 2022 and 23rd May 2022 and was later extended to all 30 districts between 15th June 2022 and 17th August 2022. This is one of the project areas that benefited the whole country. The achievements of the project were as follows:

1. 3,315 (100%) persons were sent the lesson calls representing
2. 3,251 (98%) persons started the lessons representing
3. 3,220 (97 %) persons completed at least one narrative which was
4. 2,859 (86%) persons completed at least one quiz which was
5. 1000 (30.2%) trainees completed all the 17 lessons which is

The average performance of the Conciliators committees and Executive secretaries at baseline was 34.47%, with the exception of Nyabihu district which joined the project in 2021. Performance then improved to 54.54% after phase 1 of coaching and further increased to 76.05% after phase 2 of coaching by judges and at the workplace. The district of Kicukiro did not benefit from the coaching as the authorities and the Abunzi were unavailable.

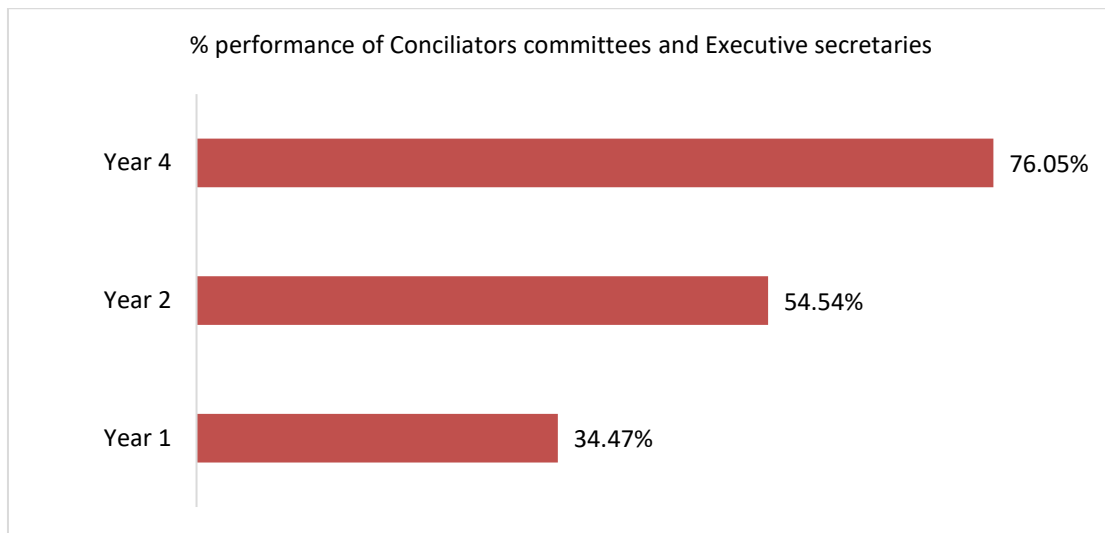


Figure 10: Performance of Conciliators Committees and Executive Secretaries

Outcome indicator 2.3: Proportion of beneficiary respondents recognizing satisfaction of proximate justice services (Conciliators committees, CSOs, MAJ)

According to the completion report, at baseline, 48.62% of 984 respondents were totally satisfied with the proximate justice services as provided by Conciliators committees, CSOs and MAJ against 11.57% who were not satisfied at all. A satisfaction survey that was conducted in November 2022 among beneficiaries on the execution of judgement revealed that 56 (68.29%) of the debtors and 63(76.83%) of the creditors were totally satisfied with the judgement execution which was an improvement from baseline.

Outcome indicator 2.4.a : Proportion (%) of Conciliation committees (Abunzi) decisions' enforcements formula provided in a judicial year

The judges of the Primary Courts affix the executory formula on the decisions of the Abunzi. In addition, when people are not satisfied with the Abunzi's appeal decisions they take their complaint to a primary court judge. Desk review of the completion report shows that in the judicial year 2017-2018, 63.27% of Abunzi's decisions were informed by the formula provided. The evaluation for the judicial year 2021 -2022 in 5 primary courts which was a year after coaching by judges found that 56.87% of the Abunzi's decisions were applied based on the enforcement formula provided.

Outcome indicator 2.4.b: Proportion (%) of Primary courts' judgements confirming Conciliation Committees' decisions in a judicial year

In the judicial year of 2018 to 2019, 53.05% of Conciliator committees' decisions were confirmed through judgements by the primary courts. In the year after coaching of the Conciliation Committees, 34.34% of respondents from 5 primary courts reported that they had confirmed through judgement the decisions that had been made by Conciliation committees. Additionally, the completion report noted that 5 primary courts had confirmed through judgement 55 (33.13%) out of 166 decisions that had been made by the Abunzi.

Outcome indicator 2.5: Proportion (%) of Justice decisions enforcements compared to total requests in a judicial year

In the judicial year 2018-2019, 29.9% justice decision enforcements had been made out of all the requests that had been filed within the year. In 2019-2020, this proportion increased to 32.03% due to the contribution of RCN J&D through mentoring and coaching of nonprofessional bailiffs on execution of judgement. According to RCN J&D's completion report in 2023, the proportion of justice decisions that were enforced increased to 63% in 2020. It was reported that there had been no published annual MINIJUST report since 2020 thus no updates or comparisons could be made.

Observation:

There was a decrease in the number of informed citizens who had used their learning from the UBU ITUZE IWACU project awareness from 24.9% in year 1 to 15.82% in year 3. On the other hand, the number of informed citizens who had used received messages to solve conflict themselves increased from 9.98% year 2 to 14.26% in year 3. In regard to the justice proximity actors, there was a notable increase in the quality of work and service delivery, especially for the Abunzi. The capacity of CSOs was also improved to enable them implement project activities – for Consortium CSOs – while non-consortium members were guided on how they could more effectively participate in delivering justice to the people.

The Justice Caravans (51%) had the highest outreach of all the public awareness interventions followed by community dialogues (35%) and lastly the radio program (5%). The estimated audience of the justice caravans was 324145. The community dialogue processes also reported high attendance rate at 96.7% out of the targeted 9021. On the contrary, the radio program reported the lowest outreach with only 15 people in the FGDs confirming to have listened in. It is worth noting that village chiefs (16%) and opinion leaders (10%) were the main listeners of radio program. However, the listenership of the radio program was not constantly tracked throughout the project implementation. Thus the actual figures may be higher considering the rural setting of the implementation areas.

Under justice caravans, the main areas of learning were information on basic rights and key laws and the functioning of the justice system 14% and land dispute resolution at (13%). Those who attended community dialogues were able to gain knowledge on fundamental rights and legal procedures (30%), handling family conflicts (20%) and land dispute resolution (20%) whereas the radio program provided an avenue to learn on family/friends or community land mediation (35%) and provided awareness on how to claim one's rights (25%).

3.3.2. What factors have contributed to achievement or failure of planned project outcomes and set objectives

The following are some of the factors that contributed to the achievement of the project's planned outcomes;

Partnerships/ Synergy

UBU-ITUZE IWACU project worked with MINIJUST and local authorities. This ensured that there was less resistance from the communities and support from the local authorities was assured. RCN tapped

into the existing knowledge of the local CSOs in the relevant project areas and coupled with the training sessions, the smooth running of the project was undoubtable. RCN also provided financial support for the consortium CSOs to enable them to run their internal activities and advocacy projects. The CSOs were however required to be accountable for the funds that were provided to them.

Capacity building

The project was also able to train MAJ agents, PC judges, bailiffs, executive secretaries and Abunzi. Besides, with the support of MINIJUST, it was able to gauge how well they had performed. This in turn helped CSOs and various proximate justice providers to understand their tasks and perform their duties much more effectively. UBU ITUZE WACU worked in collaboration with local government authorities to ensure smooth running of the project.

Environmental Conditions

There were long rains during the course of the project which hindered justice caravans, one of the legal awareness mechanisms. The rains rendered some roads impassable and consequently, the performances and acts by the Mashirika Arts Company were not possible.

3.3.3. How did the project activities respond to any changes that might have happened during the project lifecycle?

A few challenges were encountered during the project implementation;

COVID 19

The UBU ITUZE IWACU project was implemented during the COVID 19 period. Restrictions on movement and gatherings in Rwanda were imposed. This meant that avenues for public awareness through community dialogues were limited in terms of the number of people who were expected to attend. Most of the project partners closed the physical offices as a COVID 19 mitigation measure. In some districts, the *Abunzi* were requested to continue to take part in public awareness and follow up with cases though they were part of the community. A hotline was also established to offer guidance on legal matters to community members.

COVID 19 also affected coaching workshops with the Abunzi. The initial plans were to have 2 workshops per district which was not possible due to social distance measures. In order to mitigate this, the sessions were split to admit less people per session thus 4 to 5 coaching sessions were held per district.

“The COVID affected all the projects that Haguruka was running especially those that needed to be led on field. Because we have the community paralegals who are based at the grassroots level, that was only the best way through which we continue coping with the implementation taking account of how our paralegals at the community level are performing their work as they continued to carry out their duties at the village levels, while at the organizational level, we continued to serve at the toll-free line.”

CSO Haguruka

Delays

There were unprecedented delays from various partners such as MINIJUST who took long before giving the go ahead for project activities to commence. MINIJUST also made some significant changes to the project scope including increasing the project scope from 6 to 30 districts which in turn tripled the number of participants from 1000 to 3000. VIAMO also had some technical issues that Airtel was required to integrate. This also took some time which meant that training of the Abunzi could not resume before the end of 2021.

At times, there were also delays from consortium partners in terms of report delivery. This was partly resolved when RCN J&D provided guidance to the consortium members on how to come up with the reports. Delays were also experienced when local authorities resisted to offer the authorization for some project activities to start. This was mitigated by explaining to the local authorities on the importance of the project activities to the community members.

Technical Adjustments

After the training of the Abunzi started, it was realized that participants were not able to call the number that had been provided to access the training content, MINIJUST suggested consequently that it should be used as a hotline so that the Abunzi could call free of charge. The training thus had to be suspended until these issues were addressed.

3.3.4. Has the M&E system delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning?

The M&E system for the UBU-ITUZE IWACU project encompassed several important components that would be necessary to track the progress of the project activities. Some of these components were: a logframe, the M&E guidelines required that data should be collected both qualitatively and quantitatively, the reflective workshops would be carried out with consortium members and RCN J&D would, as per their internal audit system that plans to conduct audits once a year.

In order to keep track of what project activities were implemented, the three CSOs implementing the project were required to come up with quarterly reports of the project activities and achievements in their respective working districts as well as their budget spending. RCN provided a template for reporting to each of the CSOs who would then fill in what they had been able to accomplish per the project outcomes. In addition, the CSOs were also required to attach photographic evidence of the activities that were carried out, for example, the justice recipients who approached them and got assistance.

A baseline survey was carried out in 2020 in order to determine the situation at the start of the project and the targets that had to be met by the closure of the project. The baseline survey also served to issue recommendations in areas of the RCN also made monthly visits to the different districts of the project implementation to follow up on the activities and offer advise where required.

3.4 Coherence

UBU-ITUZE IWACU project was implemented by RCN J&D in partnership with the Ministry of Justice Rwanda (MINIJUST) alongside consortium members including Rwandan CSOs Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro and Lawyers of Hope (LOH) as well as 2 service providers Mashirika – a Performing Arts and

Media Company and Viamo (an expert in mobile technology solutions) under the funding of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Rwanda (EKNR) and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC).

Prior to project implementation, 34 CSOs working with Justice, Reconciliation, Law and Order Sectors (JRLOS) were identified, 33 of them were given questionnaires and only 20 came up with their feedback. The information provided was used to segment the CSOs based on the districts in which they operated and their areas of work. For example, advocacy and whether were CSOs or FBOs. This approach was vital as regard to avoid the duplication of roles among the different stakeholders. Out of the 20 CSOs, 3 were chosen - Tubibe Amahoro, ARAMA and Haguruka. The CSOs were then assigned different districts depending on their geographical coverage. Haguruka led interventions in Ngoma, Kayonza and Nyanza districts, Tubibe Amahoro led interventions in Karongi and Rutsiro districts while LoH (taking over from ARAMA) led interventions in Kicukiro and later in Nyabihu district. All CSOs worked in different districts therefore there was no duplication of project activities.

An earlier SPJR analysis found that there was a gap in terms of knowledge and other capacities required by proximate justice actors in order to carry out their activities. In response to this, the UBU-ITUNZE IWACU project sought to capacity building of already existing CSOs which would in turn allow them to take up space to discuss the role of civil society in Rwanda and therefore play that role. This would include advocating for change to government authority, particularly in support of equality and the empowerment of women.

CSOs were engaged through capacity building events on advocacy in three types of events; two-phase dialogue on the role of civil society organisation in the justice sector, three networking meetings and three thematic trainings including detention standards and legal framework, gender mainstreaming, advocacy policy and strategy development in which 20 CSOs members of district JRLOS committees were also represented.

When the UBU-ITUNZE IWACU project started, further project duplication was avoided and proper coordination was ensured through;

- a. **District selection:** The initial six districts (Kicukiro, Nyanza, Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngoma and Kayonza) and later Nyabihu were selected based on the following criteria:
 1. The district did not carry out similar activities being funded by EKNR under the Good Governance and Justice call for proposals to which UBU-ITUNZE IWACU project had applied.
 2. The district was not already covered by community dialogues and coaching of Abunzi by Primary Court Judges during RCN J&D's SIDA's-funded SPJR project.
 3. The district was not anticipated to be covered by USAID/Chemonics Duteze Imbere Ubutabera (DIU) project.
 4. CSO partners (Arama, Haguruka or Tubibe Amahoro) had offices in their respective districts.

- b. Consultation of all relevant stakeholders at the various stages of the project design, and redesign. The partners liaised with MINIJUST and other partners working on justice and good governance as well as members of JRLOS including donors.
- c. Proactively informing other partners about the project and ensuring complementarity of efforts of all actors in the justice sector
- d. Continuous sharing of information and collaboration with other CSO in the wider justice sector to share project lessons and to ensure complementarity and synergy.
- e. There was training of all new staff members of organizations on the UBU-ITUZE IWACU project to ensure similar understanding its design and implementation process.

RCN also took the initiative of introducing its stakeholders and CSOs to the local authorities as well as other existing stakeholders to enhance their cohesion. For instance, in 2020, Haguruka was introduced as the new RCN's partner to the administration of Ngoma district. Haguruka and MAJ staff who work at the community level, met and discussed their respective areas of collaboration. Lawyers of Hope was also introduced to other stakeholders in the consortium. Lastly, the partners and RCN met yearly during work plan workshops intended to design the annual action plan where each team gave their action areas which were later approved by the concerned committee.

In general, the working relationship between various partners was found to have been cordial. Some consortium members such as ARAMA and the University of Sheffield dropped out of the project during its initial years. ARAMA was replaced by Lawyers of Hope (LOH).

3.5 Efficiency

The project was valued for money taking into consideration the funding and the outcomes of activities that were geared towards the attainment of project goals:

1. Strengthen Access to Justice (A2J) by increasing Justice Recipients' (especially vulnerable groups) knowledge of their basic rights and the functioning of the proximate justice system, allowing them to claim their rights. Improving the ability of Justice Providers (including state actors and CSOs) to deliver high quality justice services, to inform the population of their rights and the functioning of the justice system, and to support citizens (especially vulnerable groups) to exercise their rights.
2. Build the capacity of CSOs in the justice sector to conduct advocacy in the interest of influencing positive change in the justice system, especially for the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, for the benefit of the population (especially women and vulnerable groups). CSOs would then undertake more advocacy initiatives. This was not achieved as expected and thus the evaluation suggests the need to look into how funds can be better unlisted to gain by in of CSOs for better cooperation.

Financial Efficiency: The project was funded by two donors including the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Rwanda who funded the project from the beginning and the Swiss Development Cooperation in the Great Lakes region which were co-opted in the third year of the project.

The initial project budget was 2,721,966,933 RWF. The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Rwanda was solely financing the budget before SDC was co-opted. Based on the eligible costs of USD. 850,000 for SDC equivalent to 1,673,638,133 RWF, the participation of EKN and SDC is estimated to be 60% versus 40% funding distribution between EKN and SDC respectively.

Though the project kick-off delayed, the expansion of its duration and the innovative virtual implementation of some activities due to Covid -19 pandemic allowed the project team to achieve most of the results with a lower budget. It was also noted that most of planned activities were implemented and hence most of planned outputs delivered within a very good rate of budget expenditure with 100% of the disbursed amount spent as of December 2022.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL). The evaluation found that there was adequate monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning by the project. This involved the coordination of all monitoring, reporting and learning for the project including coordination of annual/operational progress report. In addition, it included holding of steering committee learning reflection meetings, reporting and coordination of Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) of project achievements.

Collaboration with local authorities - The project was implemented in a context where the administration has an eye on everything happening in the area and ensure that it responds to their administrative entity's needs and priorities. Without involving them from the beginning to the end of the project would hinder its implementation. During the Covid-19 period, consortium members and local authorities would find ways to continue carrying out some activities despite the existing measures to contain its spread as a result of trust developed by involving them at all stage of activities.

The involvement of CSO leaders in a framework of membership and the fact of that they have the mission of advocacy was key towards playing their role in the JRLS Committees: The unframed way of becoming members of the JRLS as representatives of other CSOs, the lack of guidance on the role (especially advocacy role) of CSOs in the Committee role, lead to the absence of their leadership involvement and the ineffectiveness as members of the Committee.

Challenges Experienced

There were however a few hiccups during the project implementation such as local leaders postponing meetings with the CSOs and other PJAs which dragged out the project's activities. Another challenge was with ARAMA – a consortium member who had to be dropped from the project due to misappropriation of project funds.

3.6 Sustainability

RCN had previously worked with Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro and Mashirika in other projects to which they had received training and were supervised/coached by RCN to conduct community dialogues on rights, laws and functioning of the justice system with 12,600 participants. Mashirika had also previously worked with RCN and some UBU-ITUZE IWACU partners including Arama, Haguruka and Tubibe Amahoro to design and implement the justice caravan and IEC materials (posters and leaflets) complimented with radio program on similar themes. The UBU-ITUZE IWACU project leveraged on the already implemented and successful methods with some new innovations. The project also worked

closely with local CSOs whom they had built their capacities over the years. This led to an all-inclusive project implementation.

Sustainability of Change

The UBU- ITUZE IWACU Project aimed at embedding sustainability into the project on various levels during the implementation. This was based on following general principles:

- RCN J&D ensured that its projects were fully in line with Rwanda’s medium- and long-term political strategies, including the MINIJUST’s strategic plan (2013–18), the JRLOS Strategy and the government’s seven-year plan (7YGP). Project designs were hence structured around long term benefits by having component for their self-sustainability even after the project has ended
- Whilst being careful to maintain independence and neutrality, RCN J&D worked closely with the MINIJUST and recognized and encouraged the Ministry’s central role to ensure a coordinated approach to project delivery, by all actors working to support the justice sector, which supported the MINIJUST’s priorities. Furthermore, RCN J&D adopted an open and transparent approach to sharing its experience, tools and plans with the MINIJUST and other development actors so methods, to ensure tools and actions were harmonized.
- Rwandan ownership of the changes influenced by RCN J&D was encouraged. For example, RCN J&D worked to ensure that any developed tools involved institutional stakeholders from the start and could be handed over once the project ended (for example on-demand mobile resources, or materials concerning the execution of decisions).
- RCN J&D would continue to advocate for the provision of adequate budget support to justice sector institutions by the central government, particularly to support the on-going costs of the Abunzi system such as training, material support.

The UBU-ITUZE IWACU project is focused on building the knowledge and capacity of PJA and Justice Recipients, and developing tools which can continue to be used by both groups beyond the project lifecycle in order to support long-term behavioral and systemic change. The project promoted sustainable behavior change in target groups (Justice Recipients) and local partners (PJA) as follows:

1. Building the capacity of Local partners (Including MINIJUST, MAJ, Abunzi, PC Judges, CSOs) by:

- Building the capacity of CSOs to conduct community dialogues which allows them to continue to raise awareness in their communities on citizen’s basic rights and how to claim them;
- Legal aid services (including the paralegal networks which extend from them) would continue to provide improved technical services once the project ends;
- The MAJ and the Primary Court Judges will have the skills to provide on-going training and coaching support to the Abunzi, if they have the necessary financial and administrative support from the government;

- The on-demand education resources for Abunzi and citizens developed with Viamo will continue to be available beyond the lifecycle of the project;
- Increased skills in, and commitment to, execution of decisions in non-professional bailiffs can help them to continue to erode the backlog of judgement execution and to take steps to avoid its resumption;
- The JRLOS network for CSOs will provide the ability to continue to share experiences, and self-coordinate after the lifespan of the project;
- Original research conducted by the project will remain as a resource to shape policy and other decisions;

2. Knowledge development of general community (Citizens from intervention districts)

- The knowledge gained by citizens on their rights and how they lodge complaints through the justice system will endure beyond the lifespan of the project;
- IEC Materials (especially the leaflets) distributed during different events will continue to help citizens better understand their rights and how to claim for them, and accurately share the message amongst friends, family etc.;
- Citizens will continue to benefit from improved justice services delivered by PJAs who have improved their knowledge, skills and behaviour through the UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project.

The mechanism flowing from above principles to ensure results of target groups and institutions continue beyond the project varied and included

- **Mainstreaming of project within the organization' programs.** Some of the organizations working with RCN have mainstreamed the UBU-ITUZE IWACU projects into their on-going programs. They include Haguruka and Lawyers of hope. These organizations have taken forward the results of target populations and institution beyond the UBU-ITUZE IWACU project although in some instances with funding challenges
- **Resources mobilization:** some consortium partners have already mobilized resources to continue the work which was being done under the project. This includes Haguruka, Tubibe Amahoro and Lawyers of Hope.
- **Volunteerism:** Paralegals working under the UBU-ITUZE IWACU project within organizations continued to provide their services beyond the project period.
- **Capacity building sessions** for organizations by RCN on matter such as advocacy, monitoring and evaluation and execution of judgment.

3.7 Looking Forward

Despite some challenges incurred during UBU-ITUZE IWACU project implementation, most of the intended activities responded to their respectful objectives to some extent. These activities can however be more impactful in future based on the following suggestions:

1. Legal Aid Clinic Services

The need for legal aid cannot be over emphasized. CSOs carrying this work still experience a large number of community members seeking these services. Findings from primary data indicate that there is still large demand for legal aid services. One of the key informants stated as follows:

"...There is a high demand for legal aid services even after the end of the project and which surpass the available human and financial resources..." MAJ KII

"...Legal aid is still required especially in the new era of use of technology to access justice services. A large number of the population is not aware of or lacks knowledge in the issue of the IECMS and IREMBO services that are expected to enhance access to justice..." ES KII

There is also need to have legal aid clinic services beyond the intervention districts. As attributed from Tubibe Amahoro report of July -September 2019, one of the challenges was that many of the complaints came from the operational area beyond designated districts. This is because the cases were received either from the cell meetings or at their offices. The challenge was on follow up of the case and distortion on the numbers especially when beneficiaries had moved outside the target areas.

2. Community dialogue

Community dialogue as a means of giving advice and assistance is still important. This has been one of the best ways used to ensure that information about laws and access to justice has been received at community levels. This should continue even after the project lifecycle. In future, there should be more recruitment and training of non-professional bailiffs such as paralegals who would continue with the work even after the project closure. Recruitment should be nationwide. Additionally, there should be the availability of continuous training programs such as virtual programs to further equip the non-professional bailiffs. Sample feedback from a *Abunzi* beneficiary is stated as follows:

"...I can say that, I really benefited from the training on mediation though I was still practicing. Some of the areas I was trained on like the GBV were new to me. Maybe we should have continuous trainings on new domains. This will make us more informed even as we carry out the community dialogue..." Abunzi beneficiary.

3. Justice Caravan

Justice Caravan was an effective strategy in reaching many people. Despite reported successes of the Justice Caravan, the project encountered the following challenges:

- a. Weather related challenge: This led to postponement of a number of activities due to rains. *"In some places it rained and the event had to stop for some time until when it stopped to rain and we*

*had to resume. This had impact on the message as some people could leave prematurely or some lose the connection from the part before the rains started” **Mashirika report***

- b. Technical related issues: *“Our machines worked on a daily basis and did not get time for servicing them which led to some technical problems which affected one of the performance but the problem was resolved by getting some spares from Kigali and work continued” **Mashirika KII***
- c. Unprepared local authority leaders: *“In some areas the authorities had not played their part in preparing the ground for us whereby some market managers wanted to stop Mashirika from accessing the market area to set the truck, however negotiations were diplomatically carried out and access was allowed” . **Mashirika KII***

For more effective implementation, the use of Justice Caravans should consider the following:

- (i) The scheduling of Justice Caravans- Preferably use the Justice Caravans during seasons where weather is more favorable to maximize on turn up and engagement by the public. Where alignment with seasons does not work, interventions should consider having temporary tents that can shelter people when raining.
 - (ii) Have scheduled maintenance for machinery used during implementation to avoid technical disruptions
 - (iii) Close collaboration with local authorities and support including continuous communication to ensure there is adequate awareness amongst targeted groups and critical actors on planned activities. This will help to avoid last minute negotiations with actors on the ground that are critical in ensuring that the activities run efficiently
 - (iv) Employ specific community recruitment strategies that would allow special interest groups such as persons with disability to participate. There should be specific tents and recruitment process for special interest groups.
- 3. Radio program:** Radio program was one of the most expensive awareness activities. However, there was lack of tracking of number of listeners reached by the program leading to under-reporting of the likely impact of this strategy. Adequate monitoring of audience reached can be done in partnership with the radio station engaged for effective reporting.

4. Continuous training of ABUNZI and Executive secretaries:

Abunzi and executive secretaries are instrumental on proximity justice within the local communities. Their knowledge development on justice systems is very instrumental. As a way forward, we recommend:

- 1. Training of Abunzi and ES should not be restricted to intervention districts rather the entire country if possible. This will increase collaboration with actors with varied geographical scope to help in reaching a large number of Abunzi and ES

2. Need for continuous training of Abunzi who are new to the project and need to understand the law and the working of Abunzi institutions.
3. Training should also cover new areas such as current technology in the justice system (**IECMS AND IREMBO**)

5. Skillset/capacity development of the partners

The partners worked alongside RCN and some were trained to organize and carry out workshops and follow up visits. These partners have acquired skills that will enable them to continue working without RCN. The only drawback would be financial support for field surveys. The recommendations would be to increase the funding. The people who have been trained can continue using the acquired skills in confidence.

6. Another key area of integration would be the issue of integration of released prisoners back into the community especially those who were accused of genocide crimes. This issue is undermining the cohesion in the community and is connected to the recommendation of ensuring the complete social cohesion beyond payment of any agreed compensation in execution of justice.

3.8 Challenges Faced During UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project Implementation

The following were the challenges faced during the project implementation:

1. Covid-19 restriction including nationwide lockdown contributed to the delays in the kick off of some project activities such as justice caravans, community dialogues and legal aid clinics. However, some innovative measures such as virtual meetings were adopted by the steering committee to keep the project running. The challenge however was unstable internet and capacity issues on the use of virtual platforms by some of the project members. This led to less quorums in the meetings and less concentration from some online members. This affected the reporting quality on the different project milestones.
2. The project happened in the wake of legal reforms in Rwanda. This affected some of the project activities especially those related to Abunzi and Non-Professional Bailiffs as some of which had to be stopped and be adapted to the new legislation.
3. In some instances, partner activities were delayed due to other administrative requirements from the government which can at times be slow due to the bureaucratic processes. For example, a review of CSOs report from the Lawyers of Hope demonstrates some delayed administrative procedure as indicated below:

“Complicated administrative procedures. When conducting awareness of the project through the preparatory visits, it was noticed that some of the sectors were required to have a district recommendation letter as a prior condition to fulfil before we get to operate on their territorial places. This while the District’ in charge personnel himself insisted on the needless of such a recommendation letter, a fact that left UBU staff in a dilemma for some time and effectively delayed to some extent the implementation of the agenda. It is fortunate that this challenge has further been overcome through

*the efforts of both LOH and RCN J&D teams with assistance from the District Director of Good Governance” **Lawyers of Hope report March to June 2020***

4. Limited funds for some project activities. Some partners such as the University of Sheffield pulled out of the project because their activities were not budgeted for. The partners would have required funding for example for institutional support.
5. Use of technology especially the mobisodes using MTN was not an effective and reliable strategy for public awareness due to some members of the population that did not have phones. Some were sharing phone in their household. Future projects should hence consider more physical and face to face initiatives which will reach out to actual participants.
6. Lack of response to M&E reports and queries by RCN leadership
7. Reduction of M&E budget for survey (large costs taken away due to the fact that telephone was used to carry out survey). Our recommendation would be to factor in adequate budgets for future surveys
8. Limitation in time and funding during the implementation of the project. The project could achieve better results in the justice system if it could have run for more years.
9. Project did not reach some specific corners of the districts in comparison to the number of targeted people, they only had a small number due to the budget constraints because of the scope of the project.
10. With regard to Legal Aid, the following challenges were voiced by the partners in their reports:
 - i. Cases were to be received from the zone where the project was being implemented. However, cases were received from other districts. This involved being given false and limited information. This would handicap legal aid process and its effectiveness. This was a big challenge especially in making follow up of the case and moreover affected the project targets.
 - ii. While technology improves access to justice, to base cases in the courts (IECMS) today it needs different financial means which was not budgeted before during the project design.
11. The **Justice caravan** project faced some unique challenges in the implementation. This included:
 - a. Where the project was being conducted in agriculture area, this was done during the rainy seasons which hampered the participation of citizens in a number of ways; one difficulty in reaching the venue, and two the need to work in their farms. This affected the project from reaching its desired goals in terms of numbers. One solution suggested was to carry out the activity during the summer season.

3.9 Conclusions

Findings from the final evaluation confirm that the project has achieved the set-out goals of:

1. Strengthening Access to Justice (A2J) by increasing Justice Recipients' (especially vulnerable groups) knowledge of their basic rights and the functioning of the proximity justice system, allowing them to claim their rights, improving the ability of Justice Providers (including government actors and CSOs) to deliver high quality justice services, to inform the population of their rights and the functioning of the justice system, and to support citizens (especially vulnerable groups) to exercise their rights.
2. Building the capacity of CSOs in the justice sector so that they can conduct advocacy in the interest of influencing positive change in the justice system, especially for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, for the benefit of the population (especially women and vulnerable groups).

UBU-ITUZE IWACU project made some successes due to its effective implementation plan and clear roadmaps towards its relevance. The initial implementation plan was extended from 24 months to 48 months. Initially foreseen to cover six districts, the project was implemented in seven districts, though the radio program activity had a national coverage. Extending to 48 months and having budget framework that supported the extended timelines can be seen as a success factor.

Relevance

The UBU ITUZE IWACU project was implemented in a manner that was relevant to the needs of the justice recipients, proximity justice actors and the project design. Lack of knowledge on basic rights and during implementation of Gacaca courts' rulings had been major impediments to justice access for justice recipients and justice proximity actors respectively. The project therefore took on a design that was meant to address the needs for both sides through legal awareness for the justice recipients and capacity building for justice proximity actors such as CSOs, Abunzi, non-professional bailiffs among others. These activities were able to lead to a general decrease in the backlog of cases. The M&E system was also a relevant mechanism that ensured that there was no repetition of project activities and that the resource use could be accounted for. Regular workshops also provided an opportunity to reflect on what had been done and to plan for the project activities in the next period.

Efficiency

Value for time and money was ensured throughout the project implementation. This was done through regular reporting to ensure that the project was on course and that the finances were being used as per the budget stipulations.

Effectiveness

Through goal one of the project, Justice recipient were informed on their basic rights, the functioning of the justice system and other alternative mechanisms where to lodge their complaints and where to resort to for their disputes peaceful resolution. This was through planned project activities. For instance, Justice Caravans toured all the sites as planned were able to reach out to 97% of the target audience. Secondly, a lot of citizens invited in the Community Dialogues were able to attend with a

success rate of 96.7%. Community dialogues also reached out to more women with 46% attending. Back home, participants could use the IEC material distributed during the campaign to complement information they received and share them with non-participants. Citizens could receive tens of messages on judgment execution using the audio system and free of charge. In addition, information was broadcasted on RBA using drama episode for the variety of information channel and methodologies. Through legal aid clinics present in seven districts, citizens were able to receive information from legal aid officers. Beneficiaries of information used this legal information to resolve disputes and also to inform fellow community members.

Through goal two of building the capacity of CSOs and strengthening the justice proximity actors; Abunzi committee members were coached by Primary Court Judges and MAJ and had their performance improve from 34.37% before the intervention and 76.05% after the intervention of the project. During workshop trainings and training in situ, Executive Secretary of Sectors and Cells learned in-depth about their roles as Non-Professional Bailiffs. They learned how to execute judgment through IECMS system and how to conduct a voluntary execution judgment session. Coached by Professional Bailiffs they could amicably resolve 2959 cases still pending before the intervention. Not only judgment was executed but also parties were reconciled in many cases.

UBU- ITUZE IWACU project was also able to strengthen the capacity of CSOs members of the JRLOS district committees and others working on justice and rights as key actors of change in the justice sector. Various actors were able to network, meet and discuss on their responsibility in the Sector and how they can play their role more significantly through and outside the JRLOS District Committees to advocate for positive change. They attended formal and informal meetings, dialogue and network meetings. From the project, four CSOs developed their advocacy strategy documents.

Despite the major successes reported, there were some notable challenges met during the project implementation. Key challenge observed was the long bureaucracy towards the clearance on some project activities from local authorities as the key actor in the implementation of the project. The latter don't participate in the project design while the project has to meet their needs. In order to mitigate the challenge in relation to their resistance, it was necessary to find an alignment with either MINIJUST/JRLOS or District strategic plan or any other national policy document. The openness to their request helped to make some adaptation of activities to reflect the reality on the ground. In addition, a public presentation of the project to District authorities before its implementation was necessary for their approval.

Coherence

A memorandum of understanding was established by RCN with each CSO and letters of engagement were provided to the service providers. This helped to align on the duties and responsibilities of each partner. The CSOs selected for UBU ITUZE WACU project had reached in the proposed project implementation districts which allowed for better actualization of the intended project activities. In addition, all the CSOs worked in different districts. This ensured that there was no duplication of activities.

The project also worked in line with the laws and already existing regulations in Rwanda on conflict resolution and community harmonization. This made it easier for local authorities to provide support

and in the case of some PJAs, to train the Abunzi on how to better handle the backlog of cases. The overall relationship between the consortium partners was found to have been cordial.

Sustainability

There was a high level of ownership established through collaboration with various stakeholders in the justice sector including the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST) which ensured a coordinated approach to project delivery by all actors working to support the justice sector. There was also knowledge, tools and plans sharing which increased ownership of activities.

In addition, the project promoted sustainable behavior change among target groups (Justice Recipients) and local partners (PJA) through capacity building of local partners. Towards this end, the capacity building of CSOs, legal aid services (including paralegal networks), MAJ and Primary Court Judges will allow them to act as reference points for community members especially because they have a known presence. Other key resources developed during the project will continue to be available beyond the project life and include on-demand education resources for Abunzi and citizens developed with Viamo. Sustainability was further enhanced through the knowledge gained by the general citizens in the intervention districts through the various awareness strategies including IEC Materials which some community members were noted to have kept for reference.

The only challenge to sustainability was funding challenges experienced by the organisations while mainstreaming project activities and that the work of MAJ and Primary Court Judges in supporting Abunzi was reliant on government financial support.

3.10 Recommendations for future project design

The area of Access to Justice is still key to the people of Rwanda. This is seen from the whole issue of relevance which is still important today including the fulfilment of the declaration of the Ministers of Justice and the SDGs. UBU-ITUZE IWACU Project wanted to streamline access to justice under SDG 16 as part of its broader objective aimed at making progress under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This project was also in response to the Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for all by 2030 whose intention is to move justice from access for few to justice for all. Based on this context, the following recommendations are made for RCN's future project design as well as their linkages to declaration on the SDG:

1. RCN has the opportunity to build on its successes by designing a larger intervention covering all districts in the country. UBU- ITUZE IWACU's intervention was in 7 districts out of 30 which a small fraction is considering the SDG declaration on equal justice to all by 2023. Further, project concepts such as legal aid clinics are still in demand due to the ongoing justice reforms. A nationwide project intervention would enhance progress in the achievement of SDG 16 and Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All by 2030.
2. The project was intended to reach vulnerable groups including women, children and persons with disabilities. However, there is little data on how the project reached the children and persons with disabilities in the area of legal awareness and legal aid. There is need to have a deliberate monitoring of these two groups through capturing of disaggregated data by age,

gender, disability, marginalized groups etc. Thus all partners engaged in the implementation process should ensure their activities are designed to capture this information. This would also require that relevant capacity is built for staff engaged in this data collection/capture activity. This process would address the SDG declaration for universal access to justice.

3. There is need to establish M&E framework with a clear plan for measuring results and a data management system that produces reports, and links financial and project data. The current framework with dashboards are quite elaborate on field data reporting, however, they should be interlinked with the financial and project data systems to enable on time tracking on the project's efficiency.
4. Among the project activities, it can be concluded that radio program can be redesigned to expand its target audience category and that there is adequate capture of the numbers reached during the radio programs. Consideration should be made on the timing of the program as well as contents that would appeal to a larger section of the population
5. The involvement of CSO leaders, the need for a membership framework and having advocacy in the mission of CSOs was key towards them playing their role in the JRLOS Committees: The unframed way of becoming members of the JRLOS as representatives of other CSOs, the lack of guidance on the role (especially advocacy role) of CSOs in the Committee role, led to the absence of their leadership's involvement and the ineffectiveness as members of the Committee. In future, the project should consider having a structured framework for CSO membership to the JRLOS. The structures should also define different roles by each CSO and make it mandatory for CSO leadership to attend meetings and other important functions.
6. There should be some extended funding for post-project monitoring on some components that would continue being relevant even after the project has ended for example the support for Abunzi. Future budgets can therefore cater for post-project intervention support or in – lieu this role can be adapted by different CSOs, government (Ministry of Justice) or project-intervention reserves or savings which can be used for this purpose.
7. While the project largely achieved its outputs and outcomes, 4 years was found to be insufficient to produce tangible impact on behaviour change. The evaluation thus recommends a second phase in order to keep the momentum gained during the initial project phase and produce more long-term lasting solutions.

Annexes

1. Key Informant Interviews done

KII definition	Location	Completed KII	Mode
RCN Project staff	Kigali	3	Virtual
Project Donors	Kigali	2	Virtual
CSO representatives	Kigali	3	Virtual
Private companies (Viamo & Mashirika)	Kigali	2	Virtual
Executive secretaries	7 intervention districts	7	Physical
Presidents of primary court	From each district	9	Physical
Supreme court and court mediators	7 intervention districts	7	Both Virtual & Physical
Ministry of Justice	Kigali	1	Virtual
Court mediators	From each district	9	Physical
JLROs secretariat	7 intervention districts	7	Physical
IBUKA and AVEGA	Kigali	2	Physical
MAJ agents	From each district	9	Physical
Council for person with disability	Kigali	1	Physical
Rwanda Council for child rights	Kigali	1	Physical
International corporation and human rights reporting in the Ministry of justice	Kigali	1	Physical
Members of conciliators committees	From each district	7	Physical
Total		71	

2. Focus group discussions done

FGD type	Total with intervention districts	Total with control districts
District level FGDs	7	2
FGDs with beneficiaries of justice caravans and community dialogue	5	-
FGDs with legal aid clinics and Abunzi	5	1
FGDs with randomly selected citizens	7	2
Total FGDs done	24	5

3. Case studies

Category	Number of Change Stories from UBU-ITUZE IWACU project
With persons with disability	1
With beneficiary of intensive judgement execution	1
With beneficiary of legal aid clinics and Abunzi services at sector level	1
Total	3

4. Data collection tools

 Interview with presidents of primary	 INTERVIEW with Executive Secretary of	 FGD tool_Randomly selected citizens and
 FGD tool_legal and and Abunzi beneficiar	 FGD tool_community dialogues and justice	 FGD tool_at district level.pdf