Local farming development potentialities in Byimana Sector of Ruhango District are currently either fully or partially utilized, with local agricultural approaches emphasizing on the strategy of farmers working together to enhance their productivity, this attracts different stakeholders to offer support.

A great deal of better maize, beans and sometimes soya farming potential lies in Impakomu cooperative as it had and has good opportunities for its members.

According to the president of the cooperative, Emmanuel Renzaho “Impakomu as maize growers started in 2005, operating from Rugerero village, Kamusenyi Cell in Byimana sector, Ruhango district, it fully completed registration with Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA) in 2010.

Before, farmers in the area were disorganized where everyone cultivated a melange of crops which could not enhance productivity until the idea of creating the cooperative was hatched thus choosing to reorganize and decided to concentrate on maize and beans farming.

The first years of operation, the cooperative remained with challenges of limited land to cultivate, many who had joined left for lack of land to expand activities.

Renzaho notes that they started to make innovations in their approach and again attracted farmers, today the cooperative has 302 members cultivating 16 hectors of land and harvests at least 56.8 tons of maize as per last season.

“Even though some members left at the start, some ask to rejoin as well as new ones,” Renzaho attributes this to the improved livelihoods of members who stayed. Every year during the general Assembly of the cooperative, farmers who have applied and fulfills the requirements are submitted.

Judith Mukankusi, one of the founder members of Impakomu observes that, the aim of establishing the cooperative was to add value to farmers produce, the system of communal farming was formulated and many farmers joined in hope of raising productivity.

“We managed to pool resources together, contributing Rwf.15,000 per head and secured a loan of Rwf.2 million to buy land and started building with some members using other own hands because we had been operating under a tree.” She said.



This degree of willingness impressed some funders who came in to help the cooperative which led to the completion of the cooperative’s building.

One of the partners who came to support Impakomu was the Rural Sector Support Project (RSSP) that supported in the completion of their building and helped to train at least 120 members of the cooperative in different skills.

Impakomu Cooperative has been able to create new employment opportunities and reduction of women unemployment to alleviate poverty while promoting economic transformation and reducing many residents from subsistence agriculture, increasing income levels, thereby enabling people improve lives.

In a bid to improve the economic status of the women in the area, another project of basket weaving was launched by the cooperative and benefited 300 women who were trained for 30 days to specialize in weaving bowls from forest grasses and sisal fibers.

The President of the cooperative observes that members' lives have changed where they are able to afford basic necessities in live, pay fees for their children and build family houses. The cooperative also supports to pay for them in Community Based Health Insurance and facilitate to make savings in Ejo Heza saving scheme as well as access to finance in local micro-finance institutions.

The cooperative has been able to support members through Giritungo program where every member has some livestock within their homestead, members have been given livestock like cows, pigs and goats among others.



Acquiring skills is also central to needs at Impakomu, members of the cooperative have been able to get some trainings mostly conducted in collaboration with partners. Good Agricultural Practices have been introduced and skills like in agriculture like bio-intensive applied to green beans are given.

Through stakeholders, the cooperative has also been able to own four buildings in Byimana area.

The cooperative continues to empower its members and there are more ideas in the pipeline to further develop the area, as the committee of Impakomu emphasizes.

Renzaho calls upon government to help the cooperative acquire more land like expanding and developing marshlands to have land for cultivation in order to

increase output productivity and start value chain processes like building a maize factory in the area.

Given the importance of agriculture in Rwanda, and the potentialities for developing agro processing and production of agricultural products, Impakomu Cooperative has a potential and key role to play in facilitating the improvement of agriculture despite the challenge of lacking enough land.