

**minority
rights
group
international**



Final Evaluation of the project “Strengthening the capacity of CSOs, HRDs and Media Houses to challenge discrimination against historically marginalized people (HMP) and promote their rights in Rwanda”

With the Financial support of the European Union



**Evaluation report(Final)
Prepared and submitted by
Educational Consulting Success, ECOS**

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Thanks to all,

Evaluation Team

Educational Consulting Success,ECOS

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List of Abbreviations and acronyms

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AIMPO	African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization
AJPRODHO	Association de la Jeunesse pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme et Développement
A.R.D.E	Association Rwandaise pour le Développement Endogène
CBHI	Community Based Health Insurance
CGFT	Centre for Growth Family Tyazubwenge
COPORWA	Community of Potters in Rwanda
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease-19
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
ECOS	Educational Consulting Success
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
FPDO	First People Development Organization
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HH	Household
HMP	Historically Marginalised People
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination
IP	Implementing Partner
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
KII	Key Informant Interview
LF	Logical Framework
LIPRODHOR	Rwandan League for Promotion and Defense of Human Rights
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion

MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MRG	Minority Rights Groups
MRGA	Minority Rights Group Africa
MRGI	Minority Rights Group International
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights
NCPD	National Council of People with Disabilities
NUDOR	National Union of Disability Organizations of Rwanda
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RBA	Rwanda Broadcasting Agency
RIB	Rwanda Investigation Bureau
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WOPU	Women’s Organization for Promoting Unity
YWCA	Young Women’s Christian Association

Executive Summary

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) and Rwandan based organizations African Initiative for Manking Progress Organization (AIMPO) and Women’s Organization for Promoting Unity (WOPU) secured EU funding to implement a three-year project (June 2018-June 2021) entitled “Strengthening the capacity of CSOs, HRDs and Media Houses to challenge discrimination against Historically Marginalized People (HMP) and promote their rights in Rwanda”. To achieve this, the action strengthened the capacity of CSOs, HRDs and Media to effectively challenge discrimination and advocate for greater respect and promotion of the rights (political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights) of HMPs through a number of trainings and advocacy campaigns at local, national and international levels.

The current evaluation exercise assessed the relevance of the project, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The report has also explored and discussed lessons learned challenges and formulated recommendations. The evaluation used a mixed approach from the desk review of the project documents and primary data collection through key informants’ interviews and one Focus Group Discussion was conducted in Nyabihu district. Due to COVID-19 and lockdown, remote data collection was done from 27th July to 18th August 2021. At least 70 key informants (34 females and 36 males) were purposively selected and participated in the evaluation.

Key findings

Project relevance

- This EU funded project is aligned with Rwanda country priorities and social protection programs international human rights conventions and instruments and EU mandate
- Implementing Partners have played an active role in terms of sharing country context data with MRG and setting priorities and specific activities
- Issues and voice of Historically marginalized people (HMPs) were captured and integrated in the project through a baseline survey

Project efficiency

- Kick-off meeting with MRG, EU delegation in Rwanda, WOPU and AIMPO was organized to discuss the project documents and the terms of its implementation, monitoring and donors’ requirements
- Project budget was well executed and in agreement with EU, a portion of money was converted into other activities and food items and sanitary materials in response to COVID-19 effects on HMPs households. The HMPs, being heavily reliant on casual labour for income, were, on average, worse affected than many others by the restrictions on movement and trade.

Project effectiveness

Despite COVID-19, tremendous achievements were reported:

- Project launch and dissemination of survey findings in 2019. The event was successfully attended by 60 people (41 men & 19 women) from government institutions, EU delegation in Rwanda, CSOs, HRDs, Media houses, HMPs representatives and other key stakeholders
- MRG and implementing partners have trained 30 participants (17 males and 13 females) from CSOs, HRDs and community activists; 30 journalists (15 females and 15 males); 52 paralegals

(19 males and 33 females). The trainings focused on international human rights instruments, HMPs issues and reporting sensitive cases

- Knowledge and experience sharing network meeting was successfully organized around the theme “Connecting Human Rights Activists to share knowledge and experience on advancing the rights of historically marginalized people in Rwanda”. In year 2 at least 30 (19 males and 11 females) participants attended and shared their respective experiences to promote the rights of HMPs. In the 3rd year, 30 participants (16 women and 14 men) from CSOs, Human Rights Defenders have attended a Knowledge and sharing experience Network meeting.
- Media coverage through more than 12 articles were published about HMPs issues and call for support. Radio talk, TV talk shows and Radio programmes were performed after the training of journalists. Article entitled ‘Historically marginalized people in Rwanda require a particular attention’ was awarded by Rwanda Governance Board in 2019 as the Best Feature/Magazine of the year 2019 as part of Development Journalism Awards
- Inclusive community awareness meetings were facilitated in six targeted districts during 2nd and 3rd years of the projects whereby 681(57%) out of 1193 participants were females, 512(43%) were males. From the total number of 1193 participants 88 (7 %) were people with disabilities.
- Four organizations all together: Minority Right Group International (MRG), African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization (AIMPO), First People Development Organization (FPDO) and Women’s Organization for Promoting Unity (WOPU) jointly elaborated and submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council a Shadow Report for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Rwanda recommendations focusing on concerns related to social and economic rights that Batwa indigenous communities are facing.
- Other new activities were performed in replacement of those that could not be carried because of COVID-19:
 - a survey on establishment the HMPs youth employment database for future advocacy basis in Rwanda (AIMPO)
 - training staff on project elaboration and follow-up (AIMPO)
 - advocacy on registration of new born babies (WOPU)
 - digital training on cyber security (WOPU)

Project contribution to impact results

- Improved capacity of project management (both technical and financial) for Implementing Partners (WOPU and AIMPO) in Rwanda
- Improved knowledge and advocacy skills of the participants at the trainings to advocate and promote the rights of HMPs communities
- Improved knowledge and awareness on fundamental rights to health, child rights, child registration at sector office, freedom of expression, rights to public service, rights to education and property by paralegals, HMPs and non HMP community members
- Increased knowledge and self-esteem to fight for rights of HMPs with disability
- Improved community awareness and behavior change about the rights of HMPs and the roles of non HMPs community members to eliminate negative attitudes and perceptions towards HMPs
- Improved engagement and collaborative approach for government officials, HMPs focused organizations, CSOs and experts
- Improved social integration of HMPs within Rwandan society

Project sustainability

- Community based paralegals who are conversant with the social economic conditions of HMPs and who provide assistance on regular basis such as legal orientation and family conflicts resolution
- Well established HMPs focused organizations such as AIMPO, WOPU, COPORWA and working relationships with the government institutions, CSOs and other key stakeholders through Joint Action Development Forums at the district levels and other platforms for a common voice around HMPs rights and voice,
- Trained journalists and other category of groups to advocate and promote the rights of HMPs
- Research findings and report available to be used as reference and documentation to learn more about HMPs concerns
- Established Partnership and collaboration among MRG, WOPU, AIMPO and other stakeholders

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the project

The action ending early June 2021 sought to “contribute to the elimination of discrimination against Historically Marginalized Peoples (HMPs) in Rwanda by empowering Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and the Media so that they would be able to effectively defend and promote their human rights”. In order to achieve this, the action strengthened the capacity of CSOs, HRDs and Media to effectively challenge discrimination and advocate for greater respect and promotion of the rights (political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights) of HMPs through a number of trainings and advocacy campaigns at local, national and international levels. Members of HMP communities from 6 target districts (Nyabihu, Musanze, Gicumbi, Burera, Gatsibo and Nyagatare) were also sensitised on their rights and how best they could engage stakeholders to ensure such rights are respected and fulfilled.

In order to independently verify its own reporting and learn from the project interventions, MRG commissioned this evaluation that focused on assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the project in relation to the objectives and supporting outputs set out in the proposal documentation.

1.2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation used mixed methods combining a desk review of the project documents as shared by MRG, AIMPO and WOPU and primary data collection through KIIs and one FGD that took place in Nyabihu district. After an extensive desk review, researchers elaborated evaluation questions per category of the respondents and consent form that were reviewed and validated by MRG. The tools were translated from English into Kinyarwanda before the data collection period. The consultants discussed the most significant changes resulting from the project activities. The evaluation was guided by OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria for evaluation with a particular attention to relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact of the project interventions. The evaluation also explored the lessons learnt and areas of improvement and formulated recommendations.

1.3. Selection of the Respondents

At least 70 key informants (34 females and 36 males) were purposively selected based on their prior experience and knowledge about the project activities, their availability and willingness to participate to the evaluation. They are categorized into CSOs, HRDs, Media houses, government officials, community activists, donor agency (EU), paralegals, experts in subject matters, Historically Marginalized People (HMPs) and non HMPs community members who are living in the districts of the project interventions and beyond.

1.4. Data collection

Virtual kick-off meetings and orientation sessions were organized between MRG, implementing partners (WOPU and AIMPO) and the consultants. Useful guidance and clarification were given to the consultants’ team before they started the work.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and lockdown, remote data collection was conducted from 27th July to 18th August 2021. Kinyarwanda language mostly used for Rwandans and English was used for other respondents outside Rwanda. When the travels were relaxed in August 2021 following the government’s

new guidelines, consultants planned and facilitated one FGD of HMPs in Mukamira sector, Nyabihu district, in Western Province on 7th August 2021. Participants to the FGD observed in-country health guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19 that included wearing face masks, social distancing and use of hand sanitizer.

1.5. Ethical consideration

The evaluation team took into consideration Ethical Principles: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Efforts were made to protect individual autonomy, minimize harm by using procedures that were consistent with sound research designs. After explaining the purpose of the evaluation and methods, the consultant team asked the respondents to provide a verbal consent before participating to interviews to ensure an environment of trust and good communication. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the evaluation process by never using their actual names in reporting. In some cases, an introduction letter issued by AIMPO was shared with the respondents ahead of the interview schedule with the key informants in various institutions.

1.6. Data management and analysis

Phone calls and remote interviews were conducted by the two consultants of ECOS. Notes were developed and some recorded interviews transcribed in Kinyarwanda and then translated into English in Microsoft Word. Researchers have read the transcripts and thematically analyzed data according to the evaluation questions and emerging key themes. In presenting the results, relevant verbatim quotes were translated from Kinyarwanda into English by observing anonymity of the respondents.

1.7. Evaluation limitations

The evaluation team observed and noted the following key limitations:

- The study was carried out within COVID-19 pandemic context in Rwanda with travel restrictions and lockdown measures. Therefore, to cope with the situation, careful remedial adjustments had to be made by shifting from in-person data collection to remote approach that included phone calls and use digital platform such as zoom and skype
- Though the researchers missed out the opportunity to make field observations in HMPs communities, they determined to explore and maximize remote communication means with rigorous measures to ensure maximum results from the respondents. With that challenge therefore, the research team relied heavily on verbal feedback from the respondents and the findings were supplemented with data from other secondary sources
- Network connectivity was a key issue especially in the remote areas; the researchers used various channels and follow up calls to capture ideas of the respondents. Where possible the research team rescheduled extra call rounds to adapt to the availability of the respondents
- Some respondents had competing priorities including monitoring of the implementation of COVID-19 health guidelines. To overcome this limitation, some interviews were postponed, and extra days were added to the interview timeline
- The evaluation team acknowledged that bias could arise from the qualitative data collection by the respondents. To address this concern, the findings and data analysis were backed by secondary data analysis and quotes from the Key Informant Interviews
- Considering the nature of this evaluation, the study results are not generalizable. Report findings should be understood and interpreted within this EU funded project evaluation context.

CHAPTER 2: KEY FINDINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

This part summarizes the key findings of the primary data collection interviews supplemented with the data analysis from the desk review of the project documents, report, and policies. Where possible, tables and direct quotes are presented in this report to explain the evaluation results.

2.1. Project relevance

2.1.1. Project design

This EU funded project was developed in response to an open and competitive call for application released by European Union in Rwanda. Drawing on its experience in capacity building and advocacy interventions for the minority groups in the region, as a leading applicant MRG partnered with WOPU and AIMPO to bid and was successfully awarded the project grant. MRG took the lead in proposal writing following the requirements and application guidelines issued by the Europe Union mission in Rwanda. The project is aligned with the country priorities and social protection programs and international human rights conventions and instruments.

2.1.2. Engagement of implementing Partners

Implementing Partners have played an active role in terms of sharing country context data with MRG and setting priorities and specific activities. Based on the knowledge and working experience with HMPs in Rwanda, AIMPO and WOPU managed to state the critical issues HMPs are facing in order to enjoy their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. For an informed project implementation and monitoring purpose, MRG collaborated with AIMPO and WOPU to conduct a baseline survey¹ on the status of inclusion and involvement of Historically Marginalized People (HMP) in various socio-economic and political programmes and promotion of their human rights in Rwanda. Key issues were highlighted and enabled the implementing organizations to design advocacy activities.

As reported by various respondents throughout the evaluation exercise, issues of HMPs communities in Rwanda include but are not limited to; limited knowledge about fundamental human rights, negative attitudes and perceptions of some community members about HMPs, discrimination, high rate of illiteracy, extreme poverty, lack of land, limited access to education and health services, poor housing and living conditions, limited number of HMPs families who register children at sector civil office at birth, school dropout, insufficient support to HMPs with disabilities, unwanted pregnancies, sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), family conflicts, lack of decent job, limited participation in community meetings such as community work “umuganda²” and parents’ evening (Umugoroba w’umuryango), citizens’ council (Inteko Rusange y’abaturatione) just to mention a few. All these challenges informed the EU funded project programmatic activities.

2.2. Project efficiency

2.2.1. Project management and accountability

MRG, WOPU and AIMPO worked hand in hand to implement the project. At the beginning of the project, a two-day kick-off meeting was held in August 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda, to discuss the project

¹ MRG, AIMPO, WOPU (2019). Report on the status of inclusion and involvement of historically marginalized people (HMP) in various socio-economic and political programmes and promotion of their human rights in Rwanda

² Umuganda is mandatory nationwide community work taking place on the last Saturday of every month from 08:00 to 11:00. Participation in umuganda is required by law, and failure to participate can result in a fine.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umuganda>

documents and the terms of its implementation, monitoring and donors' requirements. The meeting was attended by MRG Africa Regional Manager, MRG Europe Managing Director, WOPU Coordinator, WOPU Finance Officer, AIMPO Executive Director, AIMPO Deputy Director, AIMPO Finance Officer and EU Delegation representatives.

During the implementation phase, regular meetings and virtual communication took place to ensure the smooth running of the project activities. Despite the effects of Covid-19, IPs respondents confirmed that they have received a remote support and coaching from MRGA and MGRI in London.

2.2.2. Financial and technical reporting

As reported by the Implementing partners in Rwanda, they got the necessary and agreed budget to run the planned activities. With the budget, IPs availed the required logistics and materials for field staff and office operations.

Generally, the money was transferred on time except some isolated delays that were communicated and successfully managed by MRG to ensure that there was no gap to fulfill their responsibilities. Following the feedback of IPs, there was no overspending or under spending of the budget that was allocated to the project. As reported and discussed with the project teams, this was a result of prior training, regular monitoring, and constructive feedback by MRG staff in charge. This was despite the fact that the context shifted significantly with the outbreak of COVID-19 which meant that many plans had inevitably to be changed.

2.3. Project effectiveness

2.3.1. Project launch and Dissemination of Study report

Project launch event was jointly organized by MRG, WOPU and AIMPO in May 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda. The event was used to disseminate and discuss the findings of the survey report ³ titled "Status of Inclusion and Involvement of HMP in Various-Economic and Political Programmes and Promotion of their Human Rights in Rwanda".

The event was successfully attended by 60 people (41 men & 19 women) from different sectors. They included 5 representatives from government institutions, 2 EU Rwanda Delegation representatives, 16 representatives from national CSOs (including AIMPO & WOPU), 14 from international organizations (including MRG), 2 representatives from foreign missions based in Kigali, namely for Germany and United States of America, 7 representatives from the HMP communities from the areas where the study was conducted as well as 11 representatives from the media and 3 private individuals.

Following the feedback from the respondents, the event was well appreciated in terms of content and open space to discuss HMPs issues and experiences sharing.

"I was so happy to see the discussions taking place in Kinyarwanda, our local language. The presence of CSOs, government officials, EU and other stakeholders was sign of visibility and recognition of HMPs focused organization and interventions in Rwanda", a respondent said.

The report was shared with and welcomed by the participants. Referring to the survey findings, a representative of the Ministry of Justice expressed her gratitude to the amazing assessment of MRG,

³ EIDHR/2018/396-163(2019). ANNEX VI. Interim narrative report

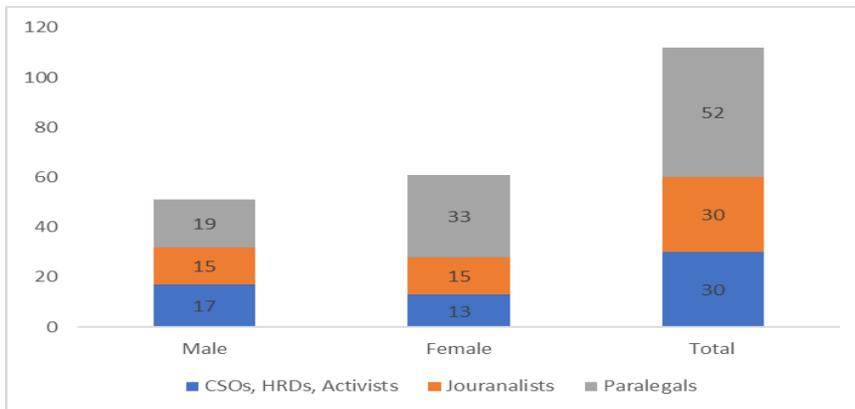
AIMPO and WOPU. She said, “When we have such facts and information, it helps the leaders to know the gaps and establish measures to address them based on the evidence”. In her speech, she reminded the audience that the government of Unity and Reconciliation treats all people equally without discrimination: ‘Our government is not happy to see that some community is left behind, we work for all citizens and ensure that no one is left behind.’”

As reported by one of the respondents of the evaluation who received a copy, the report was very informative as it reflects the real situation and challenges HMPOs are facing in the community. The report will be added in their database of research materials for reference and guidance throughout the course of her project activities and for monitoring purposes.

2.3.2. Training organization and delivery

Prior to the trainings, trainers were interested in exploring the level of knowledge of the participants so as to tailor the content and for adaptation of methodologies. As reported and confirmed by contacted trainees during the interviews, the training was interactive and open to share experiences and knowledge about HMPs social economic conditions. During the training, joint field visits were conducted in Kamonyi district to learn about local reality by talking and discussing with HMP at community levels. Trainings were jointly organized by MRG in collaboration with WOPU and AIMPO. The training targeted CSOs, HRDs, paralegals, community activists, Media houses and journalists.

Figure 1: Participants trained by Category



Source: *Source: Secondary data analysis, August 2021*

The selected and trained 30 journalists (15 females and 15 males) work for various public and private Media houses including but not limited to VALUENEWS, Radio/TV10, The Child Focus, Imvaho Nshya, Voice of Africa, REUTERS, Isango Star, RBA, Ukwezi.rw/Ukwezi.com, Intego newspaper, The Bridge Magazine, THE NEW TIMES, Imboni.rw, Radio ISHINGIRO, GoodRich TV, Radio Huguka, Ubumwe.com, Pax press, Umwezi newspaper, Le Matin d’Afrique, Kigali Today and Panorama.

Both men and women were trained as paralegals. 19 out of 32 participants were females, 13 were males. Two-day training for paralegals was conducted in Kigali on 16th to 17th January 2020⁴. Participants were carefully selected from HMP communities in six districts (Musanze, Gicumbi, Nyabihu, Nyagatare, Burera and Gatsibo). The training had objectives of providing trainees with a common understanding of a range of human rights standards in particular those concerning HMPs as well as national laws and legal processes and challenges HMPs face because of human rights violations in order to enable them to effectively advise HMPs in their respective communities. On 3rd May 2021, WOPU organized a one-day refresher training session for 20 HMPs communities' representatives (14 females and 6 males) on how to record and report human rights violations that might occur in their villages. The paralegals were selected from among HMP community members. As reported through interviews with paralegals and other respondents, paralegals play a key role in the lives of HMPs and non HMPs communities in terms of conflict resolutions and mediation, legal advice and respond to any other emerging request from HMPs.

"HMPs and other community members know about our roles. We work with village leaders and other local administration structure to ensure that people live in a peaceful environment. Though we have received forms to fill in for rights violation case, we should also have paralegal identity cards so that we can present it for our introduction to local authorities where applicable", Paralegal in Nyabihu district.

For an effective service delivery, interviewed paralegals reported the need of continuous training and refresher session about the new laws and policies with a particular focus on laws governing land in Rwanda and Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governing Persons and Family.

2.3.3. Knowledge and experience sharing Networking

A Knowledge and Experience sharing Network meeting was held in Kigali on 6th and 7th February 2020. The meeting was conducted under the theme: "Connecting Human Rights Activists to share knowledge and experience on advancing the rights of historically marginalized people in Rwanda." At least 30 (19 males and 11 females) participants attended the knowledge and experience sharing sessions⁵ in the 2nd year of the project. In the 3rd year, a Knowledge and sharing experience Network meeting attracted 30 participants (16 women and 14 men) of CSOs, Human Rights Defenders. The purpose of this meeting was to bring together CSOs and HRD to share their experiences, lessons learned, and challenges they are facing so as to protect and promote the rights of HMPs.

Some of the success stories shared by some participants, which stories could serve as lessons to others:

- The organization Corps Africa visited HMP households in Butamwa sector and helped them in their pottery activities. They also helped them to prepare and plant vegetables in the kitchen garden
- WOPU advocated for the HMP in Nyagatare district and got back their field where they used to extract clay for their pottery activities. The area was illegally taken away by a person for his personal gain.
- The Concern helped the poorest register in "TERA INTAMBWE PROGRAM," which aims to uplift the poorest from poverty.

⁴ MRG(2020) EIDHR/2018/396-163. Annex VI Interim narrative report, Yr2, June 2020

⁵ MRG(2020) EIDHR/2018/396-163. Annex VI Interim narrative report, Yr2, June 2020

- Centre for Growth Family Tyazubwenge (CGFT) launched a project “together we end discrimination” in Nyamirambo sector
- Activists advocated for fundamental human rights in Muhanga district targeting government officials in charge of people’s welfare.
- Human rights activists advocated for the case of a young girl from the HMP community who was impregnated and gave birth to twins. The twin’s mother managed to get financial support from the father to help raise her babies.

As reported by the respondents who participated in the networking event, they gained knowledge, built new contacts and got clarity about HMPs issues and what other colleagues and organizations are doing, challenges they are encountering and remedial actions.

“Through the knowledge sharing and networking meeting, I build new contact and learn how HMPs issues need more attention and interventions. Advocacy activity doesn’t require a lot of means. It’s a matter of individual passion and taking action at your level to advocate for HMPs rights”. Participant to networking session.

2.3.4. Contribution of journalist and immediate results

After the training of journalists, messages passed out to inform the community about the problems HMPs are facing with linked suggestions for actions. This was done through various channels such as social media messages, radio talk shows, TV talk shows and articles production.

During the period of COVID-19, it was also noted that media played a key role in informing the public about the situation of HMPs for action.

Following the interviews with journalists coupled with secondary data review, the following table indicates illustrative articles resulting from the project activities and trainings. Articles are not only calling for support but also informing the public the good initiatives and promising progress of the work of HMPs in the community.

Table 1: Published articles about HMPs

Articles	references
After the training of journalists	
Historically marginalized people in Rwanda require more consideration from government attention ⁶	http://imvahonshya.co.rw/abo-amateka-agaragaza-ko-basigaye-inyuma-bakeneye-kwitabwaho-byihariye
Journalists were invited to advocate for historically marginalized people	Abanyamakuru basabwe kuvuganira abo amateka agaragaza ko basigaye inyuma: http://imvahonshya.co.rw/abanyamakuru-basabwe-kuvuganira-abo-amateka-agaragaza-ko-basigaye-inyuma

⁶ This article was awarded by Rwanda Governance Board in 2019 as the Best Feature/Magazine of the year 2019 as part of Development Journalism Awards.

They wish to shift from traditional pottery, but they lack the capital to do other economic activities	Kamonyi: “Bifuza kureka ububumbyi ariko babura igishoro cyo gukora indi mirimo”: https://panorama.rw/index.php/2019/05/29/kamonyi-bifuza-kureka-ububumbyi-ariko-babura-igishoro-cyo-gukora-indi-mirimo
There is still a lot to do to ensure that HMPs are educated	Haracyakenewe ingufu ngo abo amateka yasigaje inyuma bige: https://www.kigalitoday.com/amakuru/amakuru-mu-rwanda/article/haracyakenewe-ingufu-ngo-abo-amateka-yasigaje-inyuma-bige
In Kamonyi districts, there are people living in very poor conditions of hygiene and sanitation	Kamonyi : Hari abaturage babayeho mu mwanda ukabije http://www.valuenews.info/2019/05/30/kamonyi-hari-abaturage-babayeho-mu-mwanda-ukabije
Rubengera; Historically marginalized people said: “even animals in a park are in a better conditions than us”	Rubengera: Abo amateka yasize bati “N’inyamaswa zo muri Pariki ziturusha kwitabwaho”: https://www.umuseke.rw/rubengera-abo-amateka-yasize-bati-ninyamaswa-zo-muri-pariki-ziturusha-kwitabwaho.html
Violence and hardship are common issues for historically marginalized people in Gacurabwenge sector, Kamonyi district	Ihohoterwa, ubuzima bushaririye nicyo abasigajwe inyuma n’amateka bo mu murenge wa gacurabwenge akarere ka kamonyi bahuriraho: http://imboni.rw/2019/05/31/ihohoterwa-ubuzima-bushaririye-nicyo-abasigajwe-inyuma-namateka-bo-mu-murenge-wa-gacurabwenge-akarere-ka-kamonyi-bahuriraho
Articles linked to COVID-19	
Food and sanitary materials that were distributed to HMP in Gicumbi district	kigalifesta.com
Pottery based job is no longer helping HMPs to live	Umurimo w’ububumbyi ntugitunze abo amateka agaragaza ko basigaye inyuma https://www.thebridgemagazine.net/umurimo-wububumbyi-ntugitunze-abo-amateka-agaragaza-ko-basigaye-inyuma
Historically marginalized people are coping with negative effects of Covid-19 by doing modern pottery	https://thebridge.rw/aba-amateka-agaragaza-ko-basigaye-inyuma-bahanganye-ningaruka-za-covid19-babumba-kijyambere
In Kamonyi districts, HMPs were supported and invited to	https://igihe.com/amakuru/u-rwanda/article/kamonyi-abasigajwe-inyuma-namateka-bahawe-ubufasha-basabwa-

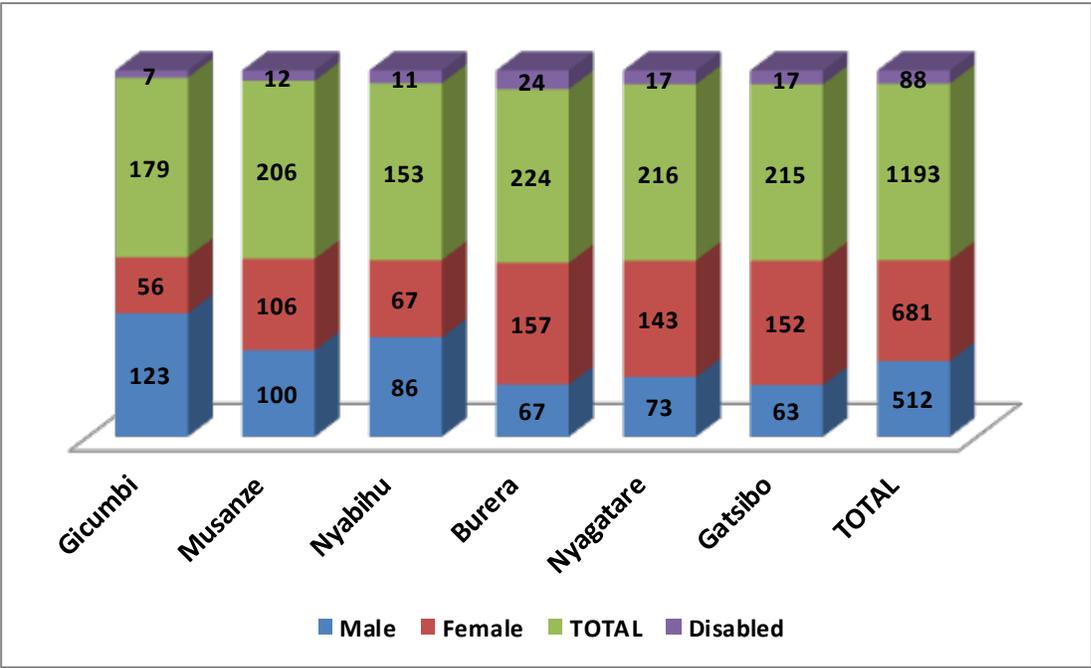
self-reliance	kubuheraho-bivana
In Kagina, historically marginalized people have improved their living conditions	Ab’i Kagina amateka agaragaza ko basigaye inyuma ubu babaye abasirimu basobanutse: http://ukwezi.rw/mu-rwanda/Ubuzima/Ab-i-Kagina-amateka-agaragaza-ko-basigaye-inyuma-ubu-babaye-abasirimu-basobanutse

Source: secondary data analysis, August 2021

2.3.5. Community awareness meetings

Community awareness meetings were conducted and facilitated in 6 target districts of Nyabihu, Musanze, Gicumbi, Burera, Gatsibo and Nyagatare. As reported by HMPs and non HMPs who attended the meetings, they learned more about their rights and how they can claim them if they face any problem. Doing the interview, it was noted that HMPs more often consult paralegals, local leaders from the village up to the sector levels when their rights are violated. As shown in the figure below, 681(57%) out of 1193 participants were females, 512(43%) were males. From the total number of 1193 participants 88 (7 %) were people with disabilities.

Figure 2: Community awareness meeting in six Districts, 2020-2021



Source: Secondary data analysis, August 2021

Though interview findings are showing that respondents know about their rights, it was reported that the problems continue to occur at the implementation level whereby HMPs cases are not well received and handled by some local leaders who have negative attitudes and perceptions about HMPs (difficult people, thieves, etc). Because of the lack of quality care service, it was noted that some HMPs do not speak out and claim their rights for appropriate action. This underlines the usefulness of the paralegals as they can help support those who may have lost faith in the process or may be dissuaded by an initial negative reaction.

2.3.6. Advocacy efforts

Advocacy activities were part of the projects plan. However, due to the unexpected global pandemic of COVID-19, MRG and implementing partners didn't manage to carry out this activity as it was planned. In this area of advocacy, the consultants noted that four organizations all together: Minority Right Group International (MRG), African Initiative for Mankind Progress Organization (AIMPO), First People Development Organization (FPDO) and Women's Organization for Promoting Unity (WOPU) have jointly elaborated and submitted to the United Nations Human Rights Council an Shadow Report⁷ for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Rwanda focusing on concerns related to social and economic rights for Batwa indigenous communities and recommendations.

Through interviews and discussions with respondents, isolated cases of advocacy and support were reported as a result of the training and field visits organized for the trainees.

“Through the training, I discovered new things about HMPs and learned how HMPs need a special advocacy. I did a personal visit in Kamonyi district to see the living conditions of HMPs, advocated for them by reintegrating some children in collaboration with local leaders including sector and cell levels. Through this advocacy effort, some HMP children got school materials from Crimson Academy and reintegrated [into] the school”, said a community activist in Kamonyi.

Some interviewed journalists reported that they reached out to HMPs in very remote area for Radio talk shows and documentary films aiming at advocating for HMPs issues. This is the case reported in Rutsiro district (mental health issues among HMPs communities) and Burera district (about family planning and reproductive health among historically marginalized people).

As reported through the interviews, the common limitations journalists are facing to report and ensure media coverage on HMPs problems is the lack of financial resources to reach rural areas and limited knowledge and information about Historically Marginalized People (for non-trained journalists).

⁷ AIMPO, FPDO, MRG and WOPU (2021). Universal Periodic Review (UPR) stakeholder submission. 37th Session of the Working Group on the UPR

2.3.7. Effects of COVID-19 and adaptive measures

Early March 2020, Rwanda took preventive measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon the confirmation of its first case on 14th March 2020, measures were taken gradually to contain its spread. On the 21st of March 2020, a nationwide lockdown was imposed and accompanied by other measures including the closure of airspace and land borders, the banning of non-essential outdoor movements, the banning of inter-District movements, the imposition of curfew hours and closing or suspension of non-essential business activities, the closing of schools and temporary suspension of court hearings to contain the spread of the pandemic. Those measures were taken gradually based on the daily national health assessment situation reports⁸.

The global pandemic and measures to contain it did affect the project activities and lives of HMPs. At operational level, it was difficult/impossible for the project team to do international, regional and in-country travels for meetings, monitoring and supervisory work due to lockdowns and other restrictions. Despite these unexpected environmental changes, MRG and implementing partners managed to continue some activities through email, virtual meetings and phone calls.

Due to COVID-19 and related health guidelines put in place, a limited number of HMPs and non HMPs attended the awareness meetings by respecting social distancing, wearing masks, and washing hands. As reported by the respondents, HMPs accessed information about COVID-19 preventive measures through local administration, radio and community sensitization with loudspeakers at village levels.

At community levels, in agreement with EU⁹, MRG, AIMPO and WOPU, some funding for suspended activities was converted into other activities and humanitarian aid following the identified issues of food insecurity and poor hygiene and sanitations among the HMPs communities. MRG observed that:

“MRG and partners did receive reports of HMP HH being “skipped” when aid was distributed, meanwhile, being heavily reliant on casual labour for income HMPs were, on average, worse affected than many others by the restrictions on movement and trade. It is also important to say that delivering aid in this way and publicizing it was in itself symbolic of what the authorities needed to also be doing and was intended to model inclusion/shame any actors who discriminated in aid dissemination against HMP HHs”.

So, in responding to the outcry of the HMP communities, implementing partners in Rwanda collaborated with local leaders to distribute food items (maize, flour and beans) and sanitary materials (soap, jerry cans and basins) to the most vulnerable HMPs households (589) in six districts.

⁸ RNCHR (2020). Assessment of the impact of anti covid-19 pandemic measures on human rights in Rwanda: from march to October 2020. http://www.cndp.org.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Assessment_of_the_impact_of_anti_Covid-19_pandemic_measures_on_Human_Rights_in_Rwanda_Final_Report.pdf

⁹ MRG (2020) EIDHR/2018/396-163. Annex VI Interim narrative report, Yr2, June 2020

Table 2: Distribution of Food and Sanitary materials, June 2020

District	N° of HHs	Members in HH			Food items					Managed by
		M	F	Total	Beans (Kg)	Maize flour (Kg)	Jerry cans (Tins)	Basin (PC)	Soap (Bar)	
Gicumbi	67	155	144	366	1196	1794	67	67	134	AIMPO
Musanze	204	395	519	1118	3656	5484	204	204	408	AIMPO
Nyabihu	72	130	173	375	1212	1818	72	72	144	AIMPO
Burera	90	97	133	320	460	1380	90	90	180	WOPU
Gatsibo	132	157	171	460	656	1968	132	132	264	WOPU
Nyagatare	24	48	77	149	250	750	24	24	48	WOPU
Total	589	982	1217	2788	7430	13194	589	589	1178	WOPU & AIMPO

Source: Secondary data analysis, August 2021

Because of delays, postponing the activities schedules and lockdowns from time to time, project team reported difficulties in monitor the effectiveness of the interventions including trainings and community awareness meetings.

As reported through the evaluation exercise, new activities were performed and they were not in the original plan. These activities were proposed to replace that could not be implemented due to COVID-19:

- A survey titled “Inclusion of Historically Marginalized People in Workforce” with a focus on young people in May 2021 to provide estimates of youth's primary labor market indicators from historically marginalized people. The findings of this survey will inform future advocacy on employment of qualified HMP.
- Training in project elaboration and follow-up (AIMPO). This training was designed for the AIMPO staff who everyday work on project for grants and implementing it. FPDO member representatives have also joined the training so as to increase their capacity and skills in proposal writing, project development and implementation. In total 10 staff members and volunteers (5 males and 5 females) participated in the training.
- Training in Cyber security for WOPU staff (June 2021). Four staff members (3 males and 1 female) of WOPU were trained in cyber security and consequently increased their level of digital literacy and computer skills
- Advocacy on registration of new born babies (WOPU). Community awareness and advocacy on child birth registration were conducted among HMPs living in Gatsibo district, Ngarama and

Nyagihanga sectors. Leaders of WOPU collaborated with local authorities from the village to sector levels so as to mobilize HMPs families to understand their obligations and rights to register new born babies.

Other key activities that were not conducted as per the project plans include advocacy campaigns and conferences at national, regional and international levels.

2.4. Project contribution to impact results

2.4.1. Expected positive effects

As reported through the key informant interviews, one FGD and our field learning visit, the project interventions led to commendable positive changes in targeted districts and beyond. The results are attributed to the combined efforts of the government programs, national and local level public administration, MRG team, and project implementing partners, CSOs, HRDs, Media houses, paralegals, and other key stakeholders.

Key recorded positive changes include:

Improved capacity of project management (both technical and financial) for Implementing partners (WOPU and AIMPO) in Rwanda

“Through EU funded project, not only our turnover has increased but also our capacity of managing the project has improved. Thanks to MRG team and EU for trusting us to carry out the project activities”, said an IP respondent.

Improved knowledge and advocacy skills of trainees to advocate and to promote the rights of HMPs in the community.

“I am serving as a registrar at university campus. Because of the training I received as community activists I gained knowledge and a better understanding of critical conditions HMPs are living in in our communities. Because of this background information, I managed to assist HMP student who was about to drop out of the university by advocating for him and he is studying free of charge”. Trained community activist.

Improved knowledge and awareness on fundamental rights to health, child rights, child registration at sector office, freedom of expression, rights to public service, rights to education and property by paralegals, HMPs and non HMP community members: Respondents reported that HMPs built their self-confidence and are able to claim their rights to health and education of their children. Depending on the specific case, HMPs interact with local leaders at village (Village leader and Umutwarasibo), cell and sector levels. With regard to the child registration, in Gatsibo and Burera 80 and 40 HMPs children were respectively registered as a result of community awareness meeting and mobilization. It was reported that some cases are sent to RIB and high levels for resolutions and support.

“I have 2 girls victims of sexual violence. For the first daughter, I got support for high level administration and it required me efforts to reach there but I managed. For the second daughter, the time

I was about to look for a legal support service, COVID-19 came in and I am still waiting to proceed and advocate for the rights of my children.”, said an HMP mother in Nyabihu district.

HMPs with disabilities that got a chance to take part in the training increased their knowledge and self-esteem to fight for their rights. Throughout the field interviews, it was reported that HMP women and HMPs with disabilities are still lagging in terms of awareness and information about fundamental rights and they call for a particular attention and assistance.

As HMP, I am currently part of youth volunteers within COVID-19 pandemic. I am ensuring that people with disability receive food items during the distribution in our community. I take my disability as an opportunity to voice for our concerns and I managed to talk to local leaders so that I assigned specific tasks that are aligned to my disability, said a respondent

Improved community awareness about the rights of HMPs and the roles of non HMPs community members to eliminate negative attitudes and perceptions towards HMPs.

“HMPs are human beings like others. They deserve respect and specific assistance based on their needs for tailored development projects. School feeding programs can help in retaining HMPs children in schools since their families are facing poverty and food insecurity”, Respondent from CSO.

Improved engagement and collaborative approach from government officials, HMPs focused organizations, CSOs and experts: It was reported that HMPs are benefiting from government social protection programs despite some issues that would require a systematic analysis and reflection to ensure a comprehensive approach to support HMPs communities. For example, giving a cow to HMP without land means it may be difficult for HMP HH to manage this government offer. Through various communication channels and media, other stakeholders are engaged and supporting HMPs communities with home materials supplies. Human rights promotion and discrimination remain an issue to tackle in the community. As a result of the research findings and trainings, some CSOs, HRDs, community activists, paralegals and journalists are now eager to advocate for HMPs rights.

“In my daily work, I provide legal aid assistance to the population. From the training and my personal exposure to HMPs issues, I committed to dedicate particular attention to HMPs issues and I am ready to provide legal expertise to HMPs focused organization as applicable”, Legal expert said.

2.4.2 Unexpected positive effects

As reported during the evaluations, unintended positive effects were recorded as a result of the project interventions. In Burera, WOPU managed to mobilize resources and provided water tanks and sanitary materials to HMP families so as to improve their living conditions.

Throughout the community awareness meetings, not only HMPs participated but also their neighbors (non HMPs) attended the meetings. This integrated community meeting was highly appreciated by the respondents since it contributes to changing negative perceptions and attitudes of some community members about HMPs.

“We noted that non HMPs community members have also attended the awareness meetings on the rights of HMPs. This was a good opportunity to ensure that HMPs and non HMPs develop good relationships as Rwandans and improve their level of knowledge about human rights’. Respondent, AIMPO.

2.4.3. Project success factors

As reported and discussed with the respondents, despite the effects of the global pandemic of COVID-19, MRG, AIMPO and WOPU have achieved tremendous results regarding the promotion of the rights of HMPs and contribution to the elimination of discrimination. Key identified success factors contributed to the results:

- Track records and experience of MRG in capacity building and advocacy interventions in various country contexts
- Better understanding of socio-economic and cultural context of HMPs in Rwanda by locally based organizations (WOPU and AIMPO)
- Previous joint project implementation and working relationships between MRG, WOPU and AIMPO (for example they have been implementing Irish Aid project activities in Rwanda)
- Clear communication, climate of trust, transparency and management mechanism between MRG and Implementing Partners in Rwanda
- Good relationship between IPs, local administration, CSOs and other key stakeholders

The project has been successful through the trainings offered to CSOs, HRDs, community awareness and media through various radio and TV. Media has really reported HMPs sensitive cases; the challenge was about COVID-19 that reduced the activities that were planned. Since the project was very soft focusing on awareness. I would recommend other development projects for HMPs focusing on tangible activities to support to HMPs families such as school feeding, provision of school materials, economic empowerment like modernized pottery by shifting from the traditional to the modern way of doing. Access to land would enable HMPs to do farming activities and this should be given due attention and consideration during the project design and implementation. Said an IP respondent.

2.5. Project Sustainability

A number of community initiatives could be used to sustain the project achievements and promote rights of HMPs females, males and HMPs with disabilities and eliminate all types of discrimination. The community initiatives and opportunities to build include but not limited to:

- Education for all
- Social protection programs such as VUP, Girinka Munyarwanda, Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI)
- HMP focused organizations (MRG, AIMPO, WOPU, COPORWA), CSOs and other stakeholders working with vulnerable groups in Rwanda
- Continued interactions with Media houses, HRDs, community activists to ensure continued media attention to HMP positive role but also fighting against discrimination affecting them

- Community based paralegals who are conversant with the social economic conditions of HMPs and who provide assistance on regular basis such as legal orientation, support in taking complaints with duty bearer and family conflicts resolution

“COVID-19 has extremely affected everything. I hope that after the pandemic, based on the trainings we received, we will continue to assist HMPs in terms of legal assistance and guidance. If we could get any kind of incentives that would be helpful!” commented a trained paralegal in Gicumbi district, Rwamiko sector.

- Well established HMPs focused organizations such as AIMPO, WOPU, COPORWA and working relationships with the government institutions, CSOs and other key stakeholders through Joint Action Development Forums at the district levels and other platforms for a common voice around HMPs rights and voice,
- Trained journalists and other category of groups to advocate and promote the rights of HMPs
- Research finds and report dissemination to be used as reference and documentation to learn more about HMPs concerns
- Established Partnership and collaboration among MRG, AIMPO, WOPU, and other stakeholders
- Trained activists have created their WhatsApp group as a platform to share information, challenges, and success around HMPs.

A number of the project outcomes and results are sustainable but they are insufficient to completely solve the problems of entrenched discrimination and poverty entirely. It is important to highlight that considering the social economic conditions and particular issues (lack of land, education barriers, lack of health insurance, discrimination and exclusion, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, extreme poverty, lack of employment and decent jobs, SGBV, etc) that are hindering the full enjoyment of HMPs rights, there is a lot to be done to ensure the sustainability of the project interventions. Therefore, combined continuing efforts of governments, CSOs, development organizations and private sectors are highly recommended.

2.6. Lessons learnt

Throughout the evaluation exercise, some lessons were identified and highlighted:

- **Visibility and branding of EU funded project and implementing partners:** MRG, AIMPO and WOPU have jointly implemented the project and communication materials highlighted logos of the consortium and EU. Through the project interventions, local organizations (AIMPO and WOPU) have been more visible through media and community-based activities
- **Knowledge transfer and capacity strengthening:** MRG has capacitated AIMPO and WOPU project team through in person and remote communication. In return, implementing partners reported an increase of technical and financial project management skills.
- **Learning and information sharing platforms and networks:** The project has enabled CSOs, HRDs, journalists, government officials and other key stakeholders to engage one another through the project launch event and project activities at community levels

- **Media coverage and community outreach on HMPs issues:** A good number of articles and publications around the social economic conditions of HMPs communities have been produced and shared by journalists from various media houses.
- **Adaptive management and collaboration:** EU and implementing partners have agreed to review the projects activities so as to respond to emerging issues of food insecurity and lack of hygiene and sanitation materials in HMPs communities during COVID-19
- **Creativity and innovative approach:** Implementing partners adopted remote approach by phone calls and virtual meetings coupled with compliance with health guidelines at community levels to deliver on the project in response to COVID-19 restrictions
- Despite the global pandemic of COVID-19, community awareness meetings were organized by observing health guidelines such as hand washing, use of sanitizers, wearing masks and respecting social distancing.

2.7. Challenges

The implementation of EU funded project had some challenges as follows:

- Impossibility to implement some of the planned activities due to the global pandemic of COVID-19. Within the context of travel restrictions, lockdowns, gatherings and meeting bans, advocacy activities, field monitoring and supervision were not performed as initially planned for
- There was insufficient use of social media and communication channels to make the project activities more visible and raise the voice of HMPs so as to enjoy their rights. Facebook, Instagram, twitter could have been used efficiently to reach out to a wide range of audience at local, national, regional, and international levels

CHAP III. Conclusion and recommendations

3.1 Conclusion

The Rwanda EU funded project was jointly and successfully implemented by MRG, and locally based organizations (WOPU and AIMPO). The project empowered Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and the Media so that they would be able to effectively defend and promote the rights of HMPs.

Despite the effects on the global pandemic of COVID-19, the project had tremendous achievements and successes. As shown through the evaluation, the baseline findings have been instrumental in project activity planning and implementation. Various categories of people were trained and, as a result, committed to advocating for HMPs issues so as to promote their rights and fight against discrimination. Journalists trained by the project have played a significant role in the community sensitization through a number of articles and radio talk shows. Trainings have been a source of connection, information sharing and networking opportunities to advocate for HMPs. The training of and support to paralegals is a promising initiative to empower HMPs so that they can raise their voice and claim their rights when they are violated. Because of COVID-19, advocacy activities didn't take place as was planned. Despite the spread of COVID-19 a good number of HMPs and non HMPs attended community awareness meetings in six targeted districts with compliance to health guidelines. Though there was a good progress and project results, HMPs are still facing critical issues that require actions from the government, CSOs and other stakeholders. These issues include but not limited to the limited knowledge and access to information about their rights, extreme poverty, and high rate of illiteracy, Sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), unemployment among HMP youth, and malnutrition among children and pregnant women.

3.2 Recommendations

Based on the key findings, the following actions are recommended to address some gaps identified throughout the evaluation

European Union should:

- Assess the impact of COVID-19 on the planned project activities and explore the possibility of the project extension with a focus on advocacy activities, community awareness meetings through media and in-person integrated meetings bringing together HMPs and non HMPs communities
- Invite locally based organizations working for HMPs community to bid for socio economic projects to empower HMPs families through diversified economic livelihood activities.

Government of Rwanda should:

- Assess the effectiveness of social protection programs and other citizen focused development initiatives in equitably reaching and benefitting HMPs communities and where there is evidence that exclusion is occurring ensure informed reviews and adaptations of prevailing systems take place.
- Sensitize and educate the whole of Rwanda's population on fundamental human rights at various levels.

- Promote citizen engagement and participation framework of HMPs with a particular attention to women and people with disabilities.

Minority Rights Group, AIMPO and WOPU should:

- Build on the lessons learned from the EU Funded project and design new projects to promote the rights of HMPs and fight against discrimination.
- Continue efforts of constructive engagement with public institutions, CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders for more synergy and coordination of interventions aiming at improving the wellbeing of HMPs.
- Plan and conduct research to generate accurate data on socio economic status of HMPs for evidence-based advocacy initiatives.

CSOs, HRDs, Media houses and other key stakeholders should:

- In a participatory manner, identify key issues HMPs are facing both men, women and people with disabilities to inform their planning and quality service delivery mechanisms

HMPs community should:

- Participate in community development programs and initiatives and voice for their concerns
- Build self-confidence and esteem and take advantages of existing opportunities and policies for self-reliance and enjoyment of their rights

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 46. Rubengera: Abo amateka yasize bati “N’inyamaswa zo muri Pariki ziturusha kwitabwaho”:
<https://www.umuseke.rw/rubengera-abo-amateka-yasize-bati-ninyamaswa-zo-muri-pariki-ziturusha-kwitabwaho.html>

47. *Kicukiro : Abo amateka agaragaza ko basigaye inyuma, gutera akabariro bisigaye ari inzoki kubera ubuzima babayemo: <http://ubumwe.com/kicukiro-abo-amateka-agaragaza-ko-basigaye-inyuma-gutera-akabariro-bisigaye-ari-inzoki-kubera-ubuzima-babayemo/>*
48. *Abo amateka agaragaza ko basigaye inyuma bakeneye kwitabwaho byihariye: <http://imvahonshya.co.rw/abo-amateka-agaragaza-ko-basigaye-inyuma-bakeneye-kwitabwaho-byihariye/>*
49. *Ihohoterwa, ubuzima bushaririye nicyo abasigajwe inyuma n'amateka bo mu murenge wa gacurabwenge akarere ka kamonyi baturiraho: <http://imboni.rw/2019/05/31/ihohoterwa-ubuzima-bushaririye-nicyo-abasigajwe-inyuma-namateka-bo-mu-murenge-wa-gacurabwenge-akarere-ka-kamonyi-baturiraho>*