

INTEKO Z'ABATURAGE

Overview

The initiative referred to as "Inteko z'Abaturage" involves meetings used as a mean of discussing and resolving issues within the community and brings together representatives from the district, sector, army, police and citizens. The meetings take place once a week in "every cell" throughout the country.

Since the adoption of decentralization in 2000, Rwanda's quest to find an appropriate governance model to deal with the enormous post-genocide challenges led to the restoration of "home grown solutions". Citizens' assemblies known as Inteko z' Abaturage were part of this process. Inteko z' Abaturage were initially established throughout the Ministerial Instruction N° 002/07/01 of 20/05/2011, intended to guide decentralized entities to handle citizens' concerns.

Objective of Inteko z'Abaturage

The aim of Inteko z' Abaturage is

- to promote good governance principles,
- to implement decentralization process, and
- to enhance social cohesion, transparency and citizen participation in the leadership of Rwanda.

Organization and function of Inteko z'Abaturage

Inteko z' Abaturage are attended by Cell residents and leaders from various structures who should come to provide the citizens with advice , share ideas and resolve citizen's complains.



Local leaders, Police and Army help citizens to address their concerns in Inteko z'Abaturage (Rubavu District)

As one of the different mechanisms put in place to examine and solve citizens' concerns at the grass root level; communication and information exchange is done in a timely manner, through official letters and telephone calls between cells, sectors, districts, provinces and the Ministry of Local Government. Local leaders work as a team; in planning and coordination at district level, and citizens are reminded about the next "assembly". The leader of the assembly (usually the Cell Executive Secretary) chairs the meetings and provides resolutions and direction on different issues addressed before the meeting is concluded. Reports of what has been resolved and what is pending are consolidated every week and issues not resolved are sent to the sector and district level or concerned institutions for an appropriate solution.

The importance of Inteko z'Abaturage in the Rwandan communities

- Inteko z'Abaturage is a powerful initiative for resolving conflicts and issues in the community that would have taken long time;
- The forum enables citizens to be more informed on things happening not only in their village but also in the country at large. They get to know where to access different services of citizens. It is a strong mobilization avenue for various

development initiatives that enable the population to learn and grow with no one left behind;



Rwandan Police informing the citizens on their operations (Kayonza district)

- Citizens have confidence and trust in Inteko z'abaturatione, as conflicts are resolved openly and transparently in the presence of leaders at village, cell and sometimes sector and district leaders;



An old woman very happy after her conflict has been resolved in Ngororero district

- With Inteko z'Abaturage, citizens are empowered as they participate in the identification of priorities in area that affect their living conditions and commit to improve their wellbeing;



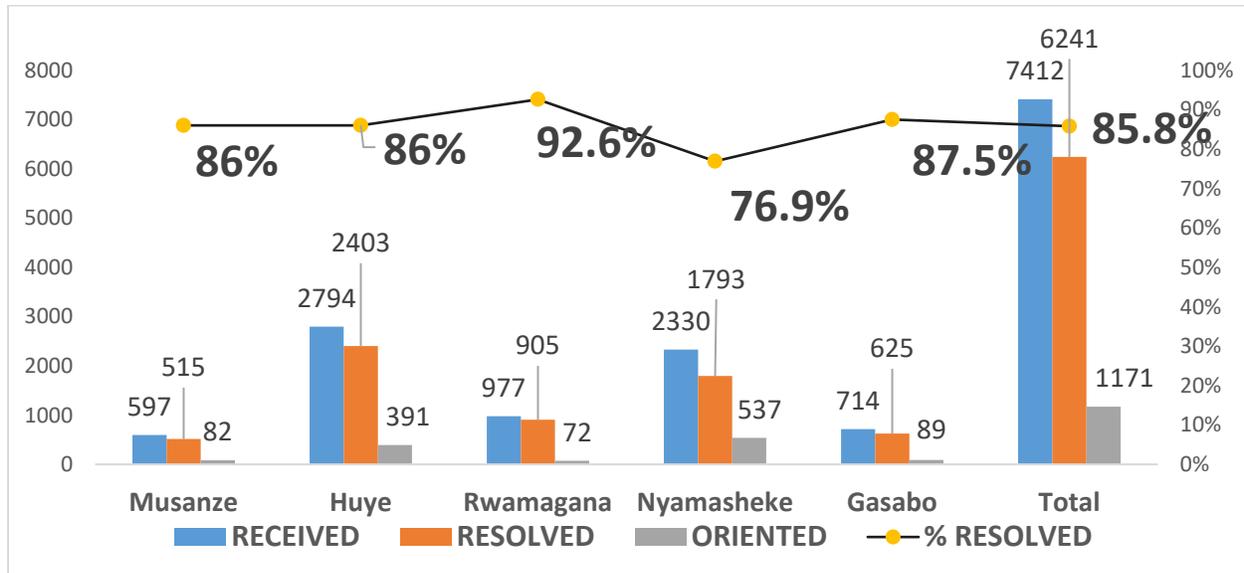
- With Inteko z' Abaturage, the level of accountability is increased and corruption is reduced considerably as all is done openly;
- In places where citizens, leaders and community volunteers such as Community Health Workers and Abunzi work very closely, Inteko z' Abaturage work very well and citizens consistently turn up in big numbers because they expect to learn a lot and to get their problems solved.



- Inteko z' abaturage promotes social cohesion, as citizens get to meet, socialize, help each other and share their opinions on different areas of interest. Citizens' capacity building and standards of living have been increasing as a result of Inteko

z'Abaturage gathering as they learn from each other how to develop themselves and share knowledge on a number of things contributing to their development;

- **Achievements of Inteko z'abaturage in five sampled districts, 2018**



Key issues discussed during inteko z'abaturage in the recent years

- Ubudehe categorization
- Issues pertaining to security and crimes such as robbery, drug or alcohol abuse,
- Gender Based Violence,
- Family and land disputes,
- School drop out ,
- Community Based Health insurance

Some key information shared during inteko z'abaturage

- Development programs (e.g.: new agricultural and livestock products),
- Hygiene
- Entrepreneurship

- Different laws (e.g.: Laws on property, decentralization law)

Good practice of Inteko z'abaturatione

Flexibility in conducting Inteko z'abaturatione: in order to facilitate citizen some cells conduct Inteko z'abaturatione in the morning to facilitate citizens living in remote areas, others meet on the day chosen by the citizens themselves.

Citizen complaints solving model:

In some sectors, solving citizens' issues during sessions of Inteko z'abaturatione is given great importance which motivate citizens to attend and participate.

In other sectors, the sector officials attend Inteko z'Abaturatione in a cell identified to have more requests for service and serve citizens on the place eg: the civil notary to register the birth, Land officers to sort out land issues and issue land certificates.

Conclusion

- Inteko z'Abaturatione stand out as forums designed from Rwanda's transformational leadership; they are drivers of socio economic transformation in Rwanda.
- Inteko z'Abaturatione have proved to address citizens' conflicts and issues in a different way through simpler and more effective approaches, they empower citizens; leaders work together with the citizens to identify their needs and resolve their issues.
- During Inteko z'abaturatione, justice is provided, conflicts are resolved, and cases going to courts have been reduced significantly, saving money and time citizens would spend pursuing cases in courts.