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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



A young mother in Muyinga targeted for participation in monthly nutrition meetings practices improved agricultural practices promoted by the Amashiga lead farmer in her community. Photo: CRS, 2017.

The USAID/FFP-Funded Amashiga Program:

SUSTAINABLE, NATIONALLY REPLICABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN CHILD NUTRITION

Program Context

Launched in September 2014, *Amashiga* works in the Muyinga Province of Burundi to address the underlying causes of chronic malnutrition. According to the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey, 66% of children in Muyinga suffered from chronic malnutrition for a variety of reasons, including poor infant and young child feeding practices, low agricultural productivity and small plot sizes (90% of Burundians engage in subsistence agriculture), lack of knowledge of improved hygiene and sanitation practices, and inequitable gender norms.

In response, CRS launched the *Amashiga* Program in consortium with International Medical Corps, Réseau Burundi 2000+, Organisation Diocésaine pour l'Entraide et le Développement Intégral de Muyinga, Bioversity International, the World Food Programme and Fond de Développement Islamique de Muyinga. The USAID/FFP-supported program operates in all seven communes of Muyinga, across 230 hill communities. With the goal of leading sustainable, nationally replicable improvements in child nutrition, the program is designed around three integrated purposes – nutrition, agriculture, and governance – with CRS' signature gender approaches implemented for cross-cutting impact.

To ensure sustainable change, the program supports the immediate nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under age 5 (CU5) while working to strengthen systems with leaders at the local, communal, and provincial levels. At the national level, *Amashiga* supported the Government of Burundi (GoB) to launch a national Fall Army Worm strategy drawing on expertise developed in Muyinga and in 2019, the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs, and Gender nationally validated *Amashiga* gender approaches for wider replication.

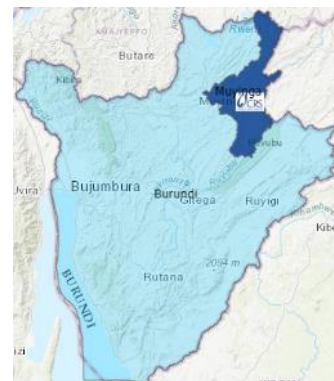
Amashiga leverages information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) including CommCare which enables field staff to scan uniquely coded ID cards at food distribution sites and enter data for remote analysis as well as ArcGIS which creates online maps to the activity level to inform programming decision-making.



PROGRAM DURATION
5 Years

TOTAL PROGRAM
BUDGET
\$49M

GEO TARGETING:
ALL 7 COMMUNES IN
MUYINGA PROVINCE



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CRS
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

**International
Medical Corps**



PURPOSE 1: Improved CU5 nutrition

Amashiga uses an integrated approach to improve nutrition for children and PLW. 427 *Amashiga*-trained lead mothers host monthly FAN (*foyers d'apprentissage nutritionnelle*) sessions with PLW in their community to demonstrate key nutrition and hygiene practices and encourage parents to cultivate home gardens with nutritionally rich vegetables. *Amashiga* also hosts monthly supplementary food ration distributions, strengthens gender-sensitive service provision at local health centers, and builds the capacity of water point committees to improve access to clean, drinking water.

PURPOSE 2: HH access to nutritious food

Amashiga focuses on improving agricultural production to reduce malnutrition both through improved local access to nutritious food as well as increased income among vulnerable households to purchase these foods. 230 trained lead farmers teach and monitor adoption of good agricultural practices at the local level while seed multipliers and cooperatives forge sustainable market linkages. Between 2017 and 2018, the average *Amashiga* farmer increased the number of unique crops produced from five to six, supporting household-level resilience. Additionally, a study conducted by ISABU found that the potential for Fall Army Worm infestation in Muyinga marshlands (previously 100%) was reduced to an infestation rate of 6% or less by the end of the 2018 agricultural season C. After three years of *Amashiga* support, 74 private service providers continue to support over 1,200 saving and internal lending community (SILC) groups which have collectively saved over \$500K to-date.

PURPOSE 3: Government & civil society nutrition leadership

Amashiga supports decentralized governance structures including Colline and Commune Development Committees (CDCs), civil society, and other private sector actors to improve their ability to mitigate natural disasters and economic shocks, ensure gender-responsive and equitable delivery of nutrition and food security services, and contribute to and use lessons and best practices from *Amashiga* for policy implementation. To-date, CDCs have planted 32 tree nurseries, constructed 33 public latrines, and rehabilitated 205 water points, all addressing their community's obstacles to improved nutrition.

CROSS-CUTTING: Joint decision-making

Amashiga strengthens gender relations between couples, aiming to improve communication and decision-making at the household level with the ultimate goal of reducing malnutrition. The program leverages a network of 3,746 model couples (Ab'IRs) throughout the province to implement CRS' *The Faithful House* and *Islamic Family Life* approaches. Between 2017 and 2018, women's participation in HH decisions on the sale of crops rose from an average score of 6.88 to 9.28 (score between 0 and 12). Recent participants in a gender learning study noted improved harvest and income management as results of Ab'IR support.

Key Results:

- **142,584** households reached directly in FY18 across all 7 communes of Muyinga
- **427** lead mothers engaging over 12K PLW monthly in nutrition dialogues & cooking demonstrations
- **191** producer organizations formalized into 14 sustainable agricultural cooperatives
- **1,202** SILC groups supported by 74 PSPs providing financial services and quality seeds
- **7** DRR & EWS Action Plans (1 per each commune in Muyinga)
- **3,746** trained model couples who have conducted over 61K house visits promoting joint decision-making

“Conflict in the home affects children and farm production. But if couples work together and communicate, you will see inclusive development.”

- NIYONZIMA AMADEE,
AMASHIGA AB'IR

PARTICIPANT KNOWLEDGE
OF THREATS TO OPTIMAL
NUTRITION FOR CHILDREN
UNDER AGE TWO
(SCORE BETWEEN 0-5)

