

ADVOCACY CAN INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION: *By MUKAMUDENGE*

Beatrice



MUKAMUDENGE in her irish potato plot

For a long time Mrs. MUKAMUDENGE Beatrice was a struggling farmer. She is one of the EPGA/USAID Project beneficiaries and serves as a Community Committee member in GAKOKO Village, BIGUMIRA Cell, and UWINKINGI Sector in Nyamagabe District and has attended several trainings on policy, budget monitoring and advocacy conducted as part of the project funded by USAID and implemented by Trócaire in collaboration with UNICOOPAGI.

She lives with her family of three children; 11 years old boy, and two girls aged 9 and 3 years respectively. She makes a living by growing beans, vegetables, maize, peas, Irish potatoes and wheat. She used to be keeping quite on any issue that impacted on her agricultural production, but after being trained on agricultural policy, budget monitoring and advocacy as a member of Community Committee things changed. She realized that she could make an advocacy on any issue that could hinder the increase of agricultural production towards food security not only for her own interest but also for the general interest of Gakoko Village members.

All this was as a result of being a beneficiary of EPGA in collaboration with UNICOOPAGI, Trócaire and USAID for building her capacity on agricultural policy, budget monitoring and

advocacy where she acquired skills to engage into a discussion on agricultural issues. “Community Committee members in collaboration with EPGA staff in UNICOOPAGI have raised different agricultural issues that we analyzed as major causes of the reduction of agricultural production in our Village, we have been assured that the raised issues are going to be resolved”, says Beatrice. That is why it is so important that each of us in Community Committee in Collaboration with EPGA Project do our own part to educate ourselves on how to analyse the issues that can hinder the implementation of agricultural policy, which would reduce production and lead to poverty among farmers.

“Referring to what have been done through trainings and advocacy, I am sure the future of farmers is promising as we know how our advocacy mechanisms work”; *continues Beatrice.* Before this project, Beatrice said that she could not mention anything about the problems that farmers experience due to the delay of seeds and fertilizers, but now she has all it takes to ask any leader (at any level) why agricultural inputs have delayed..