

Regional HR Workshop participants experience *Umuganda* in Rwanda

The Office of the Auditor General of Rwanda welcomed the 45 participants from 16 member-SAIs in Kigali, Rwanda from 24 – 28 June 2019 for the annual AFROSAI-E HR Workshop.

The theme this years' workshop was: "*Establishing a culture of staff engagement to improve individual and SAI performance*"

In addition to intensive sessions on the development and implementation of Wellness, Recognition, Induction and Career Planning programmes, the eventful week also included activities to share cultural perspectives and strengthen the community of HR practitioners.



In the spirit of sharing and celebrating the different cultures in the AFROSAI-E region, the AG of Rwanda hosted participants for a cultural evening and a visit to the Genocide Memorial in Kigali.

Participants also had the wonderful opportunity to experience *Umuganda*.

Although SAI Rwanda staff spends most of their time absorbed in audit activities, they also find time to make a difference in their community.

Umuganda - translated as "*coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome*" is a concept that is embedded in the culture of SAI Rwanda. In the spirit of *Umuganda*, all SAI staff, from top management to junior members of staff, gather on the last Saturday of each month to spend the morning helping the community in a chosen village in the Bugesera District, 56 kilometres from the capital Kigali.

Since 2012, SAI Rwanda has renovated 12 houses, connected them to electricity and offered other social economic support to genocide survivors in need. The SAI has also connected the village to a communal water tap. So far, the SAI has invested 26,755, 000 Rwandan Francs (approximately USD 30,000) in this important project. As this is a staff-supported initiative, the funds come from primarily from the personal salaries of staff.

"Every year we plan and determine who in the village will benefit the most from our efforts. We look at the vulnerable, poor and especially the elderly who do not have children to look after them. The beneficiaries are survivors of the Tutsi Genocide of 1994" – Scovia Katarbarwa, HR Director, OAG Rwanda.



UMUGANDA

The concept of Umuganda originates from the Kinyarwanda word meaning woods used to construct traditional houses. It can be translated as 'coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome'.



Mr Innocent Rugambwa and Mrs Scovia Katarbarwa, OAG Rwanda



The HR Workshop participants were privilege to be part of this initiative and joined the SAI Rwanda team to support the Akagasera Village in the Bugesera District. The main objective of the day was to help the community connect the existing road to the Akagasera village to the main road. The AG also handed over renovated houses to three elderly genocide survivors.

"We arrived at Akagasera Village with the staff of SAI Rwanda, after leaving our bussed some 700 meters behind. I was astonished that in less than three hours, together with inhabitants of the village, we had carved out a road linking two adjoining communities. After three hours, the busses we had left behind, could drive right up to the village. We felt we achieved something huge!"



That for me, that is pinnacle of community service and teamwork, where all levels of society join forces to do something for the common good with the understanding that it was beneficial to everyone involved. To borrow the words of the Auditor-General of Rwanda, that was "ISSAI 12 in action" and I was privileged to be a part of this wonderful initiative" - Mr Esmond Botchway, SAI Ghana

"The way the OAG Rwanda has organised their staff to pull together resources to help improve the lives of others citizen is outstanding. This is like what we call in Kenya "Harambee" whereby people contribute to accomplish projects" Mr Maurice Odhiambo, SAI Kenya

"Umuganda and the OAG Rwanda's commitment to this initiative was a touching experience for me.



OAG Rwanda Staff getting ready to work on building the connecting roads in the Akagasera Village

The dedication that each staff member has, to spare a day in a month to give back to the community and help the needy is a great initiative from which other SAIs should learn. What I have taken back home, is that for an initiative like this to be sustained, every citizen should take ownership in participating. I want to congratulate our beloved OAG Rwanda especially the HR Practitioners Scovia and Innocent for exposing the HR Workshop participants to this great experience. I will never forget our unique experience in the beautiful country of a 1000-hills."

Mrs Wazha Makosha,

SAI Botswana

"On behalf of AFROSAI-E and the HR Practitioners of 16 SAIs, I want to express our gratitude to SAI Rwanda for introducing us to the concept of Umuganda and involving us in your community work. I was personally touched by the wonderful work you and your office are doing in terms of community upliftment and



making a difference to the lives of citizens. ISSAI 12 in action indeed!” Mrs Marianna van Niekerk, AFROSAI-E.



The workshop ended on a high note when the AG of OAG Rwanda, Mr Obadiah Biraro, handed out the certificates to the participants of the HR Workshop.