

Learning Route preparatory phase. Stories of Change –Draft

The interviews proposed here in continuation have been taken from 5 key stakeholders involved in the preparation of the Learning Route in Rwanda few days before the beginning of the international exchange.

The stories have been collected to conduct apply the Most Significant Change evaluation technique . The methodology that will be applied is an adaptation of the “Most Significant Change Technique”¹(MSC). Our stakeholders are telling us which changes occurred on their view as a result of the Learning Route preparatory activities.

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LR preparatory phase, context: In this specific case we are looking at the period from April to October 2016, the preparatory phase of the Learning Route. Key moments and activities undertaken during this phase have been: 1) application for the LR, 2) broad collection of best practices and selection of 5 best practices 3) facilitation and logistical preparation of the participatory documentations (Systematization) of the best practices; 4) development of sub-grant for the LR; 5)final round of methodological and logistical preparation for the international exchange. The activities have been conducted in partnership among SUN CSN, Procasur and SUN Alliance, where the first two partners have been providing methodological and coordination expertise and the Alliance played the key role of coordination and mobilization at national level with its member organization and external stakeholders (UN, donors, Ministries, media).

¹ The MSC [methodology available here](#). We are adapting the methodology for the SUN CSN Learning Route evaluation and learning purposes.

Title of the Story #1:

Together we can!

Interviewed: Butera John Robert Mugabe, Chairperson of SUN Alliance, Scaling up nutrition Alliance in Rwanda

Date of interview: 28/10/2016 - [Link to the Audio interview](#)

Involvement in the LR and Role:

- I have been involved in so many activities since the beginning. The most important is oversight of the process. I also contributed to the write ups from the beginning.
- I provided inputs to the budgeting and planning of the project (sub-grant).
- As chairman of the SUN Alliance I take full responsibility for whatever happens.

In your opinion, which changes occurred as a result of the Learning Route preparation?

- The Learning Route helped us in “building and increase *momentum*” for our members, people are now very much motivated and happy to be part of the SUN Alliance, they are very much enthusiastic.
- The activities helped us in strengthening our togetherness, ownership, acceptability of the Alliance.
- The Alliance itself the staff is now equipped (more staff involved to implement the activities).
- It is kind of a training, as the staff was involved we picked a lot of learnings as per the methodology.
- We are sharing similar training and knowledge with other members that didn't participate.
- We hope to do our very own local learning route.
- More visibility really happened across different sectors and levels, at local, district and national level, because we share a lot of information.
- Now everyone is very motivated and activated other stakeholders. We have been also supporting the private sector to establish their own.
- We have seen so many good practices that even us we didn't consider so important. The ones that have been picked up now, will be a model for other cases. We already started replicating sharing the good practices in other districts.
- Building the team work.
- Limited staff, because of limited financial resources, affected the way we work: overwork.

In your opinion, among the changes mentioned, which could be considered the “most significant” and why is so important?

All the changes mentioned are for me important, but if I had to choose only one, I would chose “*building the momentum*”: now everyone is talking about the Alliance from the Ministry to the civil society. Everyone from the Alliance is very proud to be part of it. People are very excited to host 11 countries and everyone now thinks that we are doing a great job. To build the momentum, we reached out many people. While we were reaching out we raised their interest in the Alliance, now everyone knows about the Alliance. Another added value is picking out the champions to tell their stories that are great to learn from.

Title of the Story #2:

Communities host of international guests ²

Interviewed: Alphonse Karabaranga, ADECOR Programme Manager (Consumers Right Organization). I am also in the board of directors and secretary of the Rwanda National Dairy Platform.

Involvement in the LR and Role: Champion and focal person for the best practice on milk Value chain and multi sector approach.

Interview date: 27 October 2016 - [Link to the audio interview](#)

In your opinion, which changes occurred as a result of the Learning Route preparation?

- I appreciated very much the methodology which was quite innovative for me. It captures all aspects in a participatory way. We looked at all the steps of the best practice. And as result of using this methodology the champions, the farmers were more confident and we had positive interactions.
- The coaching mechanisms, every time the team was in touch there was a kind of coaching, mentoring in a very friendly manner.
- For myself, I can tell, I learned a lot. It was the first time using the Learning Route methodology, even if I am used to work with communities and do exchanges and learning approaches. I gained more skills and competencies. I am empowered for the next time to replicate.
- Involving various CSOs, together through different best practices we learned from each other. We had the opportunity to be together.
- Increased the visibility of the SUN Alliance.
- Linking SUN Alliances with other CSAs from other countries, it is great opportunity.

In your opinion, among the changes mentioned, which could be considered the “most significant” and why is so important?

For me the most significant change is that the communities, for example Nyanza, learned how to interact with international actors. They improved how to communicate in a friendly manner, using simple techniques which are easy to use and adapt for the future.

Title of the Story #3:

The togetherness

Interviewed: Laurien Kubwimana, SUN Advisor in Education, project coordinator within the Pentecost Church of Rwanda organization.

² The title was not suggested by the interviewed.

Interview date: 28 October 2016 - [Link to the audio interview](#)

Involvement in the LR and Role:

*Laurien is part of the SUN Alliance executive committee, he participated to the all the discussions and decisions taken within the committee in relation to the Learning Route.*³

Since we heard the news the executive committee gathered very often. We were excited to know that despite we were young as alliance we have been chosen because of the commitment. And we all get even more committed because of this opportunity.

In your opinion, which changes occurred as a result of the Learning Route preparation?

- We get involved a lot to better prepare what we have to share, for the benefit of the alliance and other countries.
- Since we started I can say that we are not equally committed, some invested more time than others.
- On my side I understood better and saw the importance of gathering in the Alliance. We learned more about the member organizations, who does what.
- We learned much about ourselves. It can be a great resource for me, to work with member organizations and to collaborate more.
- The Learning Route brought us together in a better way; the togetherness is growing much more.
- Now we can see the future of our alliance, we are not isolated. I enjoy and feel blessed to feel part of the SUN Movement.

In your opinion, among the changes mentioned, which could be considered the “most significant” and why is so important?

The most important change is the togetherness that will lead to a better coordination. We now enjoy more working together, putting efforts together, because we share.

Getting together we discover the potential there is in each other, building the friendship, increase of commitment, we belong to the same group, we feel more attached to SUN. Now we feel we want to work together, before her were just brought together everyone with different expectations. As we get more understanding of each other we really feel we are 1 team and we have to work together. We are overcoming our background and individual identity/differences and becoming one SUN. The contributed to that a lot.

Title of the Story # 4:

Involvement of the community in fighting Malnutrition

Interviewed: Jean Paul Mushumba, Field extension officer, in partnership with concern

³ This is not transcript; the info was added as clarification for the reader.

Interview date: 4 November 20016 - [Link to the audio interview](#)

Involvement in the LR and Role:

I have been in touch since the preparation (systematization) in July. My role, as usual task, I coordinated the community. I brought the community and worked with them about the subjects, preparation of the songs, the messages, poems, cooking, kitchen gardens, saving skills.

In your opinion, which changes occurred as a result of the Learning Route preparation?

- The community of Gishubi have been very welcoming and excited for this exchange to happen.
- During the preparation we entered more in detail with the community about savings. We did practice a lot on how to explain about savings and their knowledge increased because of that.
- I didn't have to insist with them to get prepared; they were really enjoying and looking forward to meet international guests.
- Personally I worked hard, I never gave up. Even if sometimes it was tough, at the beginning I underestimated the event, but when I realized I started working tirelessly.
- All the community wanted to be part of the event, but we did not have a lot of time/resources/logistics to involve everybody so some of them are very sad.

In your opinion, among the changes mentioned, which could be considered the “most significant” and why is so important?

The most significant change is the effort the Gishubi community put into the event. From July till the day of the event they invested so much energy. This element is important because it shows that they acknowledge the importance of nutrition and work of the supporting organization. If they would not acknowledge they would have not put so much efforts.

Title of the Story #5:

Practice to Shine!

Interviewed: Venuste Muhamyankaka, Secretary General and coordinating the SUN Alliance activities

Interview Date: 30 October 2016 – [Link to the audio interview](#)

Involvement in the LR and Role: I am the Learning Route focal person. I proposed the motivation statement to host the Learning Route. My role has been to work with the Learning Route CSN coordinator to mobilise all the people to collect the best practices, to document the best practices.

In your opinion, which changes occurred as a result of the Learning Route preparation?

- Starting for myself, the Learning Route motivated me to commit more: we had tight schedule and I had to go through all member organizations to collect best practices. I worked more than before. The best practices collection was a new activity for us, we never collected stories in such a way, with that purpose.

- I learned how to define and look for specific characteristics, criteria of a best practice, how to collect them, how to document them.
- Members of the Alliance are more active in this period because aware of the fact that they would have received grants. They are more engaged and proactive than before.
- CSOs were surprised the SUN Alliance was selected to host many other international CSAs. It has been motivating for them.
- For external stakeholders: they become more attentive than before.
- The SUN Alliance attracted more interest and some stakeholders started investing in the Alliance. For example Catholic Relief Services donated some amount to operational costs. SNV included the alliance in an Advocacy project because heard about our best practice on advocacy in Gisagara.
- Our staff members were more appreciative because of some operational finance thanks to the LR grant.
- More partners, ex. more engagement with the Ministry of Local Government (now with the mandate of the Nutrition).
- On the internal management: the LR increased our staff and capacitated the existing staff. It increased our human resources and capacity of the existing ones

In your opinion, among the changes mentioned, which could be considered the “most significant” and why is so important?

In my opinion, the increased visibility of the Alliance is the most important change. After hearing that we were selected we communicated it to the board members, they have been very appreciative and started to be more proactive in our meetings. Normally in our regular meetings they were not much participating, but when they find out we were hosting they become more active. The same thing for the members’ organizations: they engaged more and were more interested. Their interest was reflected in their manifestation of interest in participating to the LR. Another effect of the visibility is the increased interaction and collaboration with external stakeholders, some have already contracted us in partnership. To be more effective before receiving the LR sub-grant instalment, we complemented the LR with the New Venture fund. We implemented the two projects in synergy; we have been using the NVF as a springboard to inform everybody about the LR. Another way to raise interest and visibility has been through the recruitment. We advertised the jobs for the LR services through the media, in this way many people became more aware of SUN Alliance, this approach increased our credibility in front to the public.