

**The Contributions of Co-operative Societies to Members' Economic Wellbeing
A Case of UMWALIMU Savings and Credit Co-operative in Rwanda
By
Eugine Byansi
Master of Arts in Co-operative and Community Development
Sokoine University of Agriculture, 2013**

The objective of this study was to investigate on how Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Rwanda contributed to members' economic wellbeing. The investigated research problem was to establish the contribution of SACCOs to members' economic wellbeing; despite their known advantages and conducive policy; financial support; and various interventions. Specifically, the study considered UMWALIMU SACCOs in Huye District as a case study. The researcher looked at financial services as well as the benefits that members have got from the use of these financial services, and assessed the economic wellbeing of members after their entry into SACCOs. The study employed questionnaires, interviews, and documentations as data collection tools. A sample of 200 randomly selected respondents from UMWALIMU SACCOs in Huye branch was used during this study and, it was supplemented by the information from the representatives from this SACCOs. The data of this research were analyzed by using both qualitative and quantitative analysis through software of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The research results showed that despite the rapid development of financial services, a majority of members of UMWALIMU SACCOs remain without access to the services they need to improve their livelihoods and their economic wellbeing has not significantly marked a positive change. Therefore, it is recommended that UMWALIMU SACCOs should put in place the credit policy that facilitates members to access the long-term loans at a smaller interest rate. Education and training to the members about new income generating activities and business management, should be organized by this SACCOs in partnership with its stakeholders, which would contribute to lift the members' income level.