The Role of **Civil Society** in **Enhancing Citizen** Participation in **Governance** and **Development** Processes in **Post-Genocide** Rwanda

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About Never Again Rwanda

Never Again Rwanda, is Peace building and Social Justice organisation that arose in response to the 1994 Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi. Guided by a vision of a nation where citizens are agents of positive change, working together towards sustainable peace and development.

Never Again Rwanda's mission is to enhance citizen's capacity to analyse the root causes of conflict and facilitate dialogue among peers in order to generate ideas and activities that work towards sustainable peace and socio-economic development.

Driven by creative, involved and critical-thinking citizens, Never Again Rwanda aims to empower young people and ordinary citizens with opportunities to become active and engaged citizens.

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Interpeace is an international Peacebuilding organization that supports divided and conflicted societies to build sustainable peace. Interpeace focuses on reinforcing local capacities to overcome deep social divisions and to address conflict in non-violent ways. It works with local peacebuilding teams to facilitate dialogue between all sectors of society. Building on twenty years of field experience, Interpeace has learned that peace is sustainable only if all parties involved in a conflict forge it, with local actors playing the lead role. Moreover, lasting peace cannot be built by force, but must be based on understanding, trust and a common vision for the future.

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The Researchers are staff of Never Again Rwanda.

Preface

'Citizen participation' is not an empty term. Both scholars and practitioners in the governance sector have established that a positive correlation exists between citizen participation and ownership and sustainability of development endeavours. In Rwanda, passive citizenry contributed to the way and the pace at which the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis occurred.

After the genocide, the new government, with the support of relevant stakeholders including civil society, endeavoured to harness good governance among many other pillars of the reconstruction and development process. Despite impressive commitments and achievements made in this regard, various assessments have highlighted a gap in effective citizen participation in governance and development processes, particularly in the planning and evaluation phases.

Never Again Rwanda (NAR) was established with the vision of contributing to a nation where citizens are agents of positive change and work together to achieve sustainable peace and development. It aims to empower Rwandans with opportunities to become active citizens through peace-building and development.

In 2016, NAR and Interpeace, under their joint "Societal Healing and Participatory Governance" programme, conducted research on citizen participation in the governance process of Rwanda. The findings of this study questioned the vitality of civil society organisations (CSOs) in enhancing citizen participation. The study highlighted that, "CSOs are largely involved in direct service delivery...and seem to pay less attention to collecting citizens' concerns and priorities for advocacy" (NAR and Interpeace, 2016, p. 36). This led to the recommendation to conduct a follow-up in-depth analysis of civil society's role in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development processes of post-genocide Rwanda.

This report is the outcome of the abovementioned recommendation. The research, again undertaken by NAR and Interpeace, aimed to understand the issues associated with civil society's role in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes in post-genocide Rwanda. It is our hope that this research makes a modest but tangible contribution to making effective citizen participation a reality.

This research would not have been possible without the input and collective effort of numerous people and organisations. We are grateful for the support of the Swedish International Cooperation Agency and Interpeace, whose funding and expertise respectively made this research possible.

We are likewise indebted to the Rwanda Governance Board and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda for reviewing the research proposal and providing invaluable advice that improved the output of the research.

A special word of thanks goes to the members of the Technical Working Group as well as the Technical Sub-working Group for their timely guidance on the methodology, concepts, and data analysis and interpretation, which allowed NAR's research team to work with confidence and achieve its goals.

We would also like to thank NAR's various departments: Senior Management Team; Research and Advocacy; Audio-Visual; Governance and Rights; Peace-building, Impact and Strategy; Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning; Communications; and Finance and Administration.

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Finally, our sincerest thanks goes to the research participants for their time and willingness to share their views and experiences with us. Without their support, this study would not have been possible.

Dr. Joseph Nkurunziza **Ryarasa**
Executive Director, Never Again Rwanda

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and rationale

Citizen participation in decision-making processes is an important component of a vibrant democracy. When citizens participate in the development process of their nation, they not only benefit from it but also own the challenges of that process, and are able to make recommendations around best practices for the future.

In 2016, Never Again Rwanda (NAR) and Interpeace conducted participatory action research (PAR) and produced a subsequent report entitled *Governing with and for Citizens: Lessons from a Post-Genocide Rwanda.* This study suggested that civil society organisations (CSOs) are "largely involved in direct service delivery…and seem to pay less attention to collecting citizens' concerns and priorities for advocacy" (NAR and Interpeace, 2016, p.36). Participants[1] of a National Stakeholders' Meeting reviewed and validated the findings of this study and recommended follow-up research to examine the effectiveness of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda.

The recommended research, conducted by NAR and Interpeace, has been undertaken since 2017. Entitled The Role of Civil Society in Enhancing Citizen Participation in Governance and Development Processes in Post-Genocide Rwanda this report is the outcome of the research.

1.2. Research questions and objectives

The study endeavoured to answer the following questions:

- What are citizens', decision-makers', and CSOs' perspectives on and expectations of civil society's role in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of post-genocide Rwanda?
- Which mechanisms are in place for CSOs to enhance citizen participation in the governance and development of post-genocide Rwanda?
- How effective are CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development through the existing mechanisms?
- What are the major challenges and limitations faced by CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development of post-genocide Rwanda?
- Which opportunities exist for CSOs to harness citizen participation in the governance and development of post-genocide Rwanda?

[1] These included citizens, decision-makers (at both local and national government levels), CSO representatives, and donors.

The primary objective of the research was to examine civil society's role in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development of post-genocide Rwanda. Specifically it aimed to:

- examine the perspectives and expectations of citizens, governments, CSOs, and donors relating to civil society's role in enhancing citizen participation;
- explore the existing mechanisms for CSOs to harness citizen participation in post-genocide Rwanda;
- assess qualitatively the effectiveness of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development through the existing mechanisms; and
- identify and analyse the major challenges and limitations faced by CSOs in enhancing citizen participation, and formulate actionable recommendations to mitigate these.

2. Methodology

This qualitative research adopted a PAR approach, which is a core intervention strategy used by the organisations that conducted this research (Interpeace and NAR).

At the outset of the research, NAR and Interpeace engaged a variety of stakeholders to support and advise the research team throughout the entire process. In this regard, a Technical Working Group and a Technical Sub-Working Group were set up. The latter provided technical support from conceptual, contextual, methodological, and analytical perspectives.

The research was conducted in 10 districts: Karongi and Rutsiro (Western Province); Musanze and Burera (Northern Province); Ngoma and Nyagatare (Eastern Province); Nyanza and Gisagara (Southern Province); and Kicukiro and Gasabo (City of Kigali).

The target population for this study was mainly Rwandan citizens aged 18 years or older who are core recipients of civil society interventions. CSOs operating in Rwanda as well as decision-makers both at the national and local levels were also included.

This research used three main data collection methods:

- desk research, first conducted to inform the research problem and conceptual framework pertaining to civil society and citizen participation, and then used throughout the study, especially to inform data interpretation and discussion;
- focus group discussions (FGDs), conducted with ordinary citizens from sampled cells; members of selected CBOs; representatives of selected CSOs working in the sampled districts; people representing special interest groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities; academia; journalists; and CSOs intervening in governance areas, such as participatory governance, human rights, legal aid, the fight against corruption, etc.; and
- key informant interviews (KIIs), conducted at both district and national levels with individuals knowledgeable on issues pertaining to the role of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation, as well as governance matters at large.

Both thematic and content analysis techniques were used for the data analysis. Interpeace and NAR took a number of measures to assure quality of research. A pre-authorisation permit and a final research permit were secured from the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) and National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, respectively.

3. Definitions of key concepts

NAR conducted a literature review on CSOs and citizen participation that informs the definition of key concepts and provides insight into how civil society functions in relation to citizen participation. It also identifies relevant challenges, including internal, institutional, environmental, legal, or policy related challenges impeding CSOs' capacity to enhance citizen participation. The literature review additionally provides a foundation for this study's conceptual framework.

The terms 'governance', 'good governance', 'participatory governance', and 'citizen participation' are firstly defined, based on a range of literature. Following this, civil society is examined through an analysis of how literature defines the concept of 'civil society' and its functions. The relationship between civil society and citizen participation is then explored. Lastly, civil society is looked at from the Rwandan context: a historical overview of civil society is provided, and the current role of civil society in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda is delved into, based on official legal documents, institutional frameworks, as well as other literature.

As such, citizen participation refers to "a process which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decision making processes and, has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process" (Parker, 2003, n.p.). Various citizen engagement instruments exist, including public debates, public meetings, campaigns, citizens' polls, citizens' advisory committees, petitions, written notices, hotlines and mailings, online forums, and scorecards (Smith, 2003).

As the 2016 report produced by NAR and Interpeace shows, citizen participation can be direct or indirect. This report highlights the following major components of citizen participation: "(i) putting leaders in offices and holding them accountable, (ii) consultations, (iii) voicing [citizens'] priorities, (iv) taking ownership of government interventions, and (v) implementing government programs" (2016, p. 15).

Concerning CSOs, we refer to all formal and informal organisations that emerge from the wider civil society to serve specific purposes on behalf of their respective constituents. This study considers civil society as being composed of NGOs (local and international), faith-based organizations (FBOs), the media, think tanks and academia, trade unions, and community-based organizations (CBOs), both formal and informal.

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4. Findings

4.1. Definitions and functions of civil society in post-genocide Rwanda: A participants' perspective

The views and perceptions of participants pertaining to the themes discussed in this study are partly informed by the way citizens understand the notion of civil society and its functions. Various definitions of civil society emerged from discussions, with some commonalities. The most important emphasised the origins of CSOs, with civil society seen as emanating from citizens as opposed to any state or military-made establishment. The second core element of what defines civil society was found to be in terms of the functions of CSOs (i.e. what people expect from these organisations).

It emerged from discussions with participants, in both FGDs and KIIs, that CSOs have four major functions relating to boosting citizen participation in governance and development. These are: (1) shaping citizens' lives through service delivery, (2) citizenship education, (3) providing a voice for the voiceless and demanding accountability from decision-makers, and (4) shaping public policies.

The role of civil society in service provision was found to be of paramount importance in a post-genocide context such as Rwanda. It emerged from discussions that the genocide and violent conflicts that Rwanda went through created psychological, social, economic, and material conditions that requires the provision of various services to specific categories of people, such as orphans, widows, the homeless, people with psychological trauma, those who are ill, and those living in abject poverty. These conditions compound the poverty many people already face in Rwanda, as well as emerging development issues concerning the country.

Regarding citizenship education, participants unanimously believe that this is a function of civil society. It was argued that if the primary role of the state is implementing laws and policies, and taking the lead in public service delivery, then civil society should play a vital and complementary role in enhancing citizenship education and capacity-building. This can take the form of assisting mainly with income-generating activities and job creation; awareness-raising on selected laws and policies, critical thinking, leadership, public speaking, confidence-building, community problem analysis and advocacy techniques; as well as building basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Moreover, it emerged that in a context where citizens are not aware of their civil rights and duties, and are not skilled to articulate and channel their needs and concerns directly to decision-makers and/or through mandated representatives, the role of civil society proves to be especially vital. This also holds true when it comes to demanding accountability from leaders at various levels of government, a process known as social accountability. Participants almost unanimously believe that CSOs should serve as the voice of the voiceless and exert the prerogative of social accountability.

Last but not least, in their capacity to represent citizens' interests, CSOs are also expected to shape public policies. This goes beyond voicing the short-term concerns of citizens or communities, and spills over into setting the policy agenda for both medium- and long-term issues.

Participants argued that on the basis of assumed or proven technical skills, expertise, understanding of the policy-making process, and knowledge of priorities and concerns of their respective constituencies, CSOs can engage citizens and other relevant stakeholders in regular analysis of selected policies. This can then result in policies being further discussed and considered by policy-makers.

4.2. A diversity of state-established and civil society-led mechanisms for enhancing citizen participation in governance and development

The study found that there are a range of mechanisms or channels through which CSOs are meant to interact with citizens and decision-makers, which have the potential to enhance citizen participation in governance and development processes. These mechanisms are either state established, such as inteko z'abaturage, umuganda, the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF), parliament, National Umushyikirano Council, sector working group forums, and ad hoc consultations; or CSO led, which include research, school and community spaces and clubs, training and workshops/seminars, media outlets, umbrella organisations, and ad hoc meetings with decision-makers.

4.3. Enhancing citizen participation in governance and development through the existing mechanisms

4.3.1. Service provision: most widespread function of CSOs in Rwanda

Citizens, local leaders, and CSOs alike unanimously consider service delivery as the sector wherein civil society has been the most effective, regardless of important limitations and challenges. In this regard, civil society not only complements governmental efforts in terms of development, it also addresses specific needs created by the genocide and its consequences.

Depending on their respective areas of intervention, CSOs provide services mainly around health, education, livelihoods, and farming. However, although service delivery emerged as the area in which CSOs intervene more widely and more effectively compared to their other functions, service provision is still far from optimal. Citizens, local leaders, and CSOs agreed on the fact that due to limited resources, CSOs have been unable to adequately address the needs of their respective target constituencies.

Although there is a paucity of relevant literature on the relationship between service delivery and citizen participation, some participants contended that there is a positive correlation between the two, arguing that people whose basic needs are not met are unlikely to fully participate in the country's decision-making processes. Meeting people's basic needs was found to help build their confidence, which, in turn, may boost participation.

It also emerged that many CSOs actually prefer working in the sphere of service delivery over other functions for two reasons:

- it is seen as less risky and does not predispose CSOs to challenge decision-makers or hold them accountable; and
- it complements local government performance contracts (imihigo) related to the provision of public services to citizens in a more tangible way than in other areas.

The research also revealed the challenges and limitations that hamper the effectiveness of CSOs in the provision of services and thus in boosting citizen participation in governance and development. These include: favouritism in terms of recipient selection, individual business syndrome that is likely to incite embezzlement, limited financial and human resources, and an unbalanced geographical coverage of interventions.

4.3.2. Awareness-raising and skills-building: successes and gaps in citizenship education

The research found that some CSOs effectively raise their constituents' awareness on their civic rights and duties, and relevant laws and policies, as well as building their capacity in areas of vocational skills, income generation, critical thinking, peace education, analysis of community issues, conflict resolution, advocacy, life skills such as literacy and numeracy, among others.

However, it was also found that CSOs execute the function of citizen education more from a development perspective, more specifically, for socioeconomic development purposes. Participants revealed that there are few CSOs whose work focuses – at least partly – on public education from a governance perspective. A governance perspective, however, is crucial for a sustainable political culture of participation, given that citizens need to possess attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enable them to be active citizens.

Furthermore, although a few CSOs educate citizens on certain laws and policies, namely those related to succession, land rights, gender-based violence, women's rights, and other citizens' rights, this was not found to be widespread. Citizens in many of the locations covered by this study complained that their respective CSOs – irrespective of their area of intervention – do not educate them on the laws and policies that affect their lives.

As with service delivery, the function of citizenship education comes with its own challenges. These include: limited participation of beneficiaries in defining their capacity-building needs, limited financial and human resources, focus on project-based interventions, and citizens' dependency on compensation when participating in CSO events or activities.

4.3.3. Giving a voice to the voiceless and shaping policies: the weaker side of civil society

Although serving as a voice for the voiceless and shaping policies emerged among the core expectation of civil society, participants in all categories perceive this as the least effective function of CSOs in Rwanda.

Only a few CSOs are effectively involved in advocacy. CSOs engaged in this area conduct research and consult citizens in order to collect evidence that eventually informs advocacy endeavours. Some broadcasting media outlets were also said to be effective in this regard. Furthermore, government institutions sometimes consult CSOs on selected policy matters, although the majority of CSO representatives in this study had not had such an experience. CSOs are sometimes invited to decision-making platforms, such as the National Umushyikirano Council, and may use them to voice the voiceless or attempt to shape policies. However, the JADF, the core avenue of interactions between CSOs and district authorities, does not seem to serve any advocacy purpose.

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Major challenges and gaps were identified to explain why the majority of CSOs are not successful in this regard, including: differing understandings of civil society functions, the perceived risk of advocacy, lack of collaboration

between CSOs, limited resources, underestimating the cost of advocacy activities, secret diplomacy and lack of feedback, limited follow-up of advocacy interventions, donor-driven nature of CSOs which comes at the expense of local needs, competing roles between umbrella and member organisations, unstable strategic orientations of CSOs, the new law governing the RGB leading to potential conflicts of interest, and a reactive rather than a proactive civil society emerging as a side effect of a 'strong' and 'resilient' government.

4.3.4. Enhancing the participation of women: women's organisations ahead of other CSOs

Gender considerations related to CSO interventions aimed at enhancing citizen participation in governance were also examined. Given the historical gender imbalance due to the patriarchal system in Rwanda, a women-oriented analysis rather than a classic gender analysis was adopted. The following were explored:

- efforts made by women's organisations to harness women's participation in both local and national rebuilding efforts; and
- civil society's efforts in enhancing citizen participation through the lens of gender integration at both institutional and intervention levels, with a particular emphasis on gender-specific needs.

It was found that the majority of women's organisations were established in the post-genocide context to contribute to specific women's needs and their participation in governance and development processes. A few organisations have taken the lead in advocating against discriminatory laws aimed at women, while many others have been effectively involved in promoting the participation of women by empowering their constituents. This manifests in service delivery, awareness-raising on relevant laws and women's rights, confidence-building, vocational training, and income-generating activities. Thanks to this empowerment process, women have progressively acquired the knowledge, skills, and capacity that helped some of them compete for leadership positions, claim their rights, and participate in socioeconomic development processes.

However, the study revealed critical gaps relating to non-women-oriented CSOs to cater for women's needs. Most of the participating CSOs were found to not have internal gender policies/strategies in place, both in terms of their structures and interventions. In addition, the gender strategies that they do have focus solely on numbers and not on a qualitative gender analysis, particularly in relation to needs. Furthermore, they tend to integrate gender considerations because it is a donor requirement. Some explaining factors for this include: (1) many CSOs lack the relevant awareness and skills to include gender analysis, gender budgeting, and gender integration in their interventions; (2) a lack of standardised gender indicators to mainstream gender across all areas of CSO interventions; and (3) a lack of gender considerations in both planning and budgeting processes.

4.3.5. Smaller but stronger: the effectiveness of CBOs in enhancing citizen participation

A lesser-known category of CSOs in Rwanda are community-based organisations (CBOs). These are formal and informal organisations initiated either by community members or other CSOs to address social and economic issues of specific groups at the community level. One category of CBOs, referred to as "ibimina" or "amatsinda", focuses mainly on micro saving and credit schemes, as well as actions of solidarity and livelihoods.

Both local leaders and members of CBOs unanimously commended the role that ibimina/amatsinda are increasingly playing in community development and enhancement of citizen participation in development processes.

Furthermore, local leaders regularly seek these organisations' support to mobilise their members to pay

contributions for mutuelle de santé (health insurance), attend public meetings, and conduct community work. As far as women-based ibimina are concerned, they not only raise their members' awareness on playing an active role in governance, they also encourage them to acquire positions both in the National Women's Council and local government (mainly village, cell, and sector levels).

Despite this promising dynamic in harnessing poverty reduction, social cohesion, and citizen participation, ibimina/amatsinda, like many other CBOs, face the challenge of lacking a regulatory framework. Some consequences of this include the incapacity to take legal action (e.g. in cases of embezzlement) or apply for bank loans. As ibimina/amatsinda are driving socioeconomic transformation with a potential to enhance citizen participation, mainly at the community level, the national law on non-governmental organisations currently undergoing revision should therefore consider providing a legal framework for these types of CBOs.

4.3.6. Comprehensive interventions for greater CSO effectiveness in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development

Considering all areas discussed on CSO effectiveness in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development, it is worth noting that while some organisations focus on one area (for instance service delivery), there are a few organisations that combine two or three areas, which make their interventions more comprehensive in terms of harnessing citizen participation.

The study found evidence that intervening in service delivery can be an opportunity for CSOs to become aware of related issues faced by their recipients and eventually contribute to solving them or conducting relevant advocacy. Similarly, service delivery can serve as an opportunity to interact with citizens and identify capacity-building gaps, and therefore help to address them. In the long run, such empowerment should aim to enable citizens to plan and conduct advocacy on their own.

4.4. Opportunities for CSOs to enhance citizen participation in the governance and development of post-genocide Rwanda

Despite the challenges that this research found in terms of civil society's effectiveness in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development processes, CSOs in Rwanda operate in an environment that offers them opportunities. These include: an evolving legal and policy framework, a donor community that supports participatory governance initiatives, and a developing media sector.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The report presents a summary of what the research explored and found. Considering the challenges facing CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development processes, the report concludes with recommendations aimed directly or indirectly at the government, government institutions, the donor community, CSOs, and the private sector. The recommendations are presented per major challenge: CSOs' sole dependency on donor funding, the new law governing the RGB leading to potential conflicts of interest, the perceived risk of conducting advocacy, no law governing CBOs, unbalanced geographical coverage of CSO interventions, non-women-oriented CSOs unable to cater for women's needs due to a lack of gender policies/strategies, and the donor-driven nature of some CSOs coming at the expense of local needs and priorities in both planning and budgeting.

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Abbreviations

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AERG	Association pour les Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide (Genocide Survivors Students' Association)
AJPRODHO	Association de la Jeunesse pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme et développement (Youth Association for the Promotion of Human Rights and Development)
AMI	Association Modeste et Innocent (Modest and Innocent's Association)
AVEGA	Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo (Association of Genocide Widows)
CBO	community-based organisation
CCOAIB	Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (Umbrella Organisation of Rwandan Local NGOs in Development)
CESTRAR	Centrale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Rwanda (Rwandan Workers' Trade Union Confederation)
CLADHO	Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits Humains (Umbrella Organisation of Leagues and Associations for the Defence of Human Rights)
CSO	Civil society organisation
FBO	faith-based organisation
FGD	focus group discussion
GBV	gender-based violence
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
IRDP	Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
KII	key informant interview
LAF	Legal Aid Forum
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NAR	Never Again Rwanda

NGO	non-governmental organisation
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NUDOR	National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda
NWC	National Women's Council
PAR	participatory action research
PWDs	people with disabilities
RCSP	Rwanda Civil Society Platform
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RWAMREC	Rwanda Men's Resource Centre
SEVOTA	Solidarity for Widows and Orphans for Work and Self-Promotion
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

01 Introduction

1.1. Background and Rationale

participation process as a transformative tool for social change", while Beierle and Thomas argue that "citizen involvement is intended to produce better decisions, and thus more efficiency benefits to the rest of society

Citizen participation is an important part of how democratic states function, with literature consistently highlighting the importance of citizen participation in different aspects of human life, namely: social, economic, and political development. Nelson and Wright (1995) consider the citizen "participation process as a transformative tool for social change", while Beierle and Thomas argue that "citizen involvement is intended to produce better decisions, and thus more efficiency benefits to the rest of society" (in Irvin and Stansbury, 2004, p. 56). Never Again Rwanda (NAR) and Interpeace (2016) posit that citizen participation forms the engine of a country that is undergoing a peace-building process. In a post-conflict context, citizen participation has the potential to enhance the relationship between citizens and local leaders.

In promoting citizen participation in Rwanda, much emphasis has been placed on good governance. For instance, Articles 27 and 48 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015, manifest the will of the Rwandan government to encourage the shift from passive to active citizenry. The National Decentralization Policy and Vision 2020 also highlight a political willingness to enhance citizen participation, with the latter stressing the importance of "construct[ing]…[a] nation… [with]…its social capital anchored on good governance, underpinned by [a] capable state" (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000, p. 4).

Meanwhile, one of the specific objectives of the National Decentralization Policy is "to enhance and sustain citizens' participation in initiating, making, implementing, monitoring and evaluating decisions and plans that affect them by transferring power, authority and resources from central to local government and lower levels, and ensuring that all levels have adequate capacities and motivations to promote genuine participation" (Ministry of Local Government, MINALOC, 2012, p. 24). Similarly, looking toward Vision 2050, the Government of Rwanda considers community participation and contributing to local innovation as its core values (Gatete, 2016).

Such a context has therefore created the means by which civil society can develop good governance for the benefit of the people. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are perceived as the essential 'third' sector to the state and private sector, and an important agent for promoting

the principles of good governance, transparency, effectiveness, openness, responsiveness, and accountability (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004, p. 6). Other roles of CSOs include being able to analyse national policies, engage in advocacy activities, and regulate and monitor state performance, among others. Hyden, Court, and Mease likewise observe that a vibrant civil society supports "the way citizens become aware of and raise political issues" (2003, p. 235), while Keane (2004) proposes that civil societies put forward the everyday rights of individuals and aim to protect them from violence and other incivilities.

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) (2011) accentuates that civil society in its modern sense has been developing in the country since 1956, when its first segment was established in the form of farmers' associations answerable to the church. It has since grown to incorporate community-based organisations (CBOs), labour unions, women's organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and umbrella organisations. The rise of CSOs has been especially remarkable in post-genocide Rwanda, with their primary aim of responding to the vulnerabilities and needs resulting from the genocide against the Tutsi.

Many available studies on CSOs explore their role in social and economic development; peace-building, including reconciliation and healing; and environmental support. However, very few have analysed the role of CSOs in the governance arena in post-genocide Rwanda. Three quantitative assessments have measured civil society development in a range of areas, thus forming the major civil society assessment frameworks for Rwanda. These are the CSO Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan Africa (United States Agency for International Development, USAID, 2016); the Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer (Transparency International Rwanda, 2012, 2015); and the Civil Society Index (CCOAIB, 2011). While these frameworks provide valuable information on the state of civil society and its level of development, they tend to be more descriptive than explanatory. This is because they focus on measuring and scoring selected variables pertaining to civil society's development, while providing little analysis on why things are the way they are. Furthermore, while some studies have been conducted on citizen participation in Rwanda, there is a paucity of research on civil society's role in boosting citizen participation in governance and development processes in post-genocide Rwanda.

While the Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer placed the level of civil society's influence on public policies at 72.3% (Transparency International Rwanda, 2015), civil society participants in a recent study on citizen participation questioned the vitality of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in decision-making processes. This study suggested that, " CSOs are largely involved in direct service delivery…and seem to pay less attention to collecting citizens' concerns and priorities for advocacy" (NAR and Interpeace, 2016, p. 36). Participants[2] of a National Stakeholders' Meeting reviewed and validated the findings of this study and recommended a follow-up in-depth study to examine the effectiveness of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in the governance of Rwanda.

The recommended research, conducted by NAR and Interpeace, has been undertaken since 2017. Entitled The Role of Civil Society in Enhancing Citizen Participation in Governance and Development Processes in Post-Genocide Rwanda, this report is the outcome of the research.

[2] These included citizens, decision-makers (at both local and national government levels), CSO representatives, and donors.

1.2. Research Questions and Objectives

> **CSOs are largely involved in direct service delivery... and seem to pay less attention to collecting citizens' concerns and priorities for advocacy"** **(NAR and Interpeace, 2016, p. 36).**

This research endeavoured to answer the following questions:

- What are citizens', decision-makers', and CSOs' perspectives on and expectations of civil society's role in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of post-genocide Rwanda?
- Which mechanisms are in place for CSOs to enhance to citizen participation in the governance of post-genocide Rwanda?
- How effective are CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development through the existing mechanisms?
- What are the major challenges and limitations faced by CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda?
- Which opportunities exist for CSOs to harness citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda?

The research's main objective was to examine civil society's role in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of post-genocide Rwanda. Specifically, it aimed to:

- examine the perspectives and expectations of citizens, governments, CSOs, and donors relating to civil society's role in enhancing citizen participation;
- explore the existing mechanisms for CSOs to boost citizen participation in post-genocide Rwanda;
- assess qualitatively the effectiveness of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development through the existing mechanisms; and
- identify and analyse the major challenges and limitations faced by CSOs in enhancing citizen participation, and formulate actionable recommendations to mitigate these.

02 Methodology

This chapter outlines the study approach, sampling of the targeted population, data collection and analysis techniques, how quality was assured, and ethical considerations.

process through which people investigate meaningful social topics, participate in research to understand the root causes of problems that directly impact them, and then take action to influence policies through the dissemination of these findings to policy makers and stakeholders"

2.1. Study Approach

This qualitative study used a participatory action research (PAR) strategy, which is defined by Powers and Allaman as a "process through which people investigate meaningful social topics, participate in research to understand the root causes of problems that directly impact them, and then take action to influence policies through the dissemination of these findings to policy makers and stakeholders" (2012, p. 1). Watters, Comeau, and Restall (2010, p. 5) underline the uniqueness of the approach in that it considers participants as experts and co-researchers "due to their lived experiences related to the research topic", which ensures that relevant issues are being studied.

As highlighted earlier, the topic for this research was recommended by participants of a National Stakeholders' Meeting who reviewed and validated the findings of a 2016 study jointly conducted by NAR and Interpeace on citizen participation in the governance of post-genocide Rwanda. Both organisations use PAR as one of their core intervention strategies.

At the outset of the research, NAR and Interpeace engaged a variety of stakeholders to support and advise the research team throughout the entire process. In this regard, a Technical Working Group composed of 15 people (from government institutions, CSOs, and academia) was set up. Members were recruited purposively on the basis of their knowledge and expertise on issues pertaining to CSOs and participatory governance. In the same vein, five members (with outstanding experience in the areas of research, civil society, and governance) were selected to form the Technical Sub-Working Group, which worked more closely with the research team and provided technical support from conceptual, contextual, methodological, and analytical perspectives.

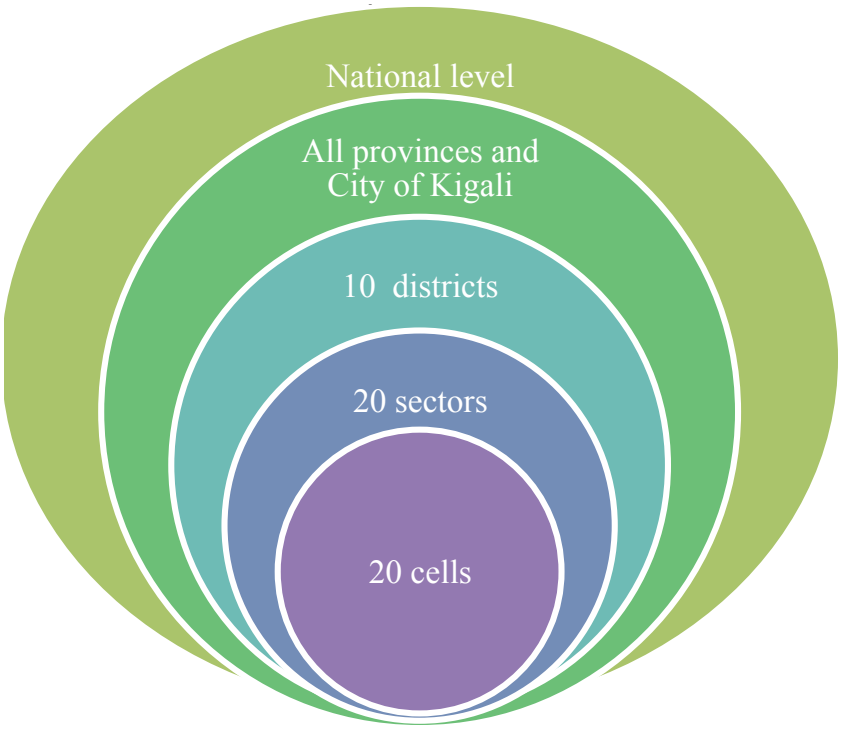
The Technical Sub-Working Group provided input on the research rationale and objectives, methodology, and tools prior to data collection. Furthermore, it provided guidance on data analysis and reviewed the draft research report prior to pre-validation by the Technical Working Group and validation by the National Stakeholders' Meeting.

2.2. Target Population and Sampling

This study mainly used the purposive sampling technique to select study sites and participants. Two districts (one urban and one rural) were specifically selected from each province and the City of Kigali. At the district level, two sectors (one with the district office and one rural sector) were selected. At the sector level, the cell with the sector office was selected. In the City of Kigali, two districts were randomly chosen (as all three districts have urban sections). However, at the sector level, one purely urban sector and one partly rural sector were included.

Overall, a total of 10 districts, including 20 sectors comprising 20 cells were covered by this research. The districts are: Karongi and Rutsiro (Western Province), Musanze and Burera (Northern Province), Ngoma and Nyagatare (Eastern Province), Nyanza and Gisagara (Southern Province), and Kicukiro and Gasabo (City of Kigali).[3] 'Urban' locations and those with administrative offices were purposely targeted based on the assumption that CSO interventions are more likely to focus on urban areas, business centres, and entities geographically close to major trunk roads. However, the sampling included rural settings not only to ensure that the perspectives of their residents are taken into account, but also to determine whether or not CSOs actually operate there.

Figure 1: Sample stratification (study sites)



[3] For a detailed list of the study sites, see Appendix 1.

2.3. Data Collection

This research used three main data collection methods: desk research, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs). All FGDs and KIIs (except if otherwise requested by participants) were videotaped to ensure that data were captured optimally for exploration at the debriefing, coding, and analysis stages. A documentary film was produced from the videotapes, which will be used as a dissemination and advocacy tool.

2.3.1. Desk research

Desk research was firstly conducted to inform the research problem and conceptual framework pertaining to civil society and citizen participation. It also included a review of existing literature on the history of civil society and its functions, as well as the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks of civil society and citizen participation in Rwanda. It was also instrumental in reviewing research that assessed – directly or indirectly – the vitality of civil society in Rwanda. Desk research was used throughout the study, especially to inform data interpretation and discussion.

2.3.2. Focus group discussions

Nagle and Williams put forward that FGDs "are group interviews that give the researcher the ability to capture deeper information more economically than individual interviews", and that "group interaction between members of the target population during focus groups may encourage participants to make connections to various concepts through the discussions that may not occur during individual interviews" (n.d., p. 2).

In this study, FGDs were conducted to get views and experiences of homogeneous groups of participants on the role of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda. Different categories of people participated in the FGDs. These included ordinary citizens from sampled cells aged 18 years and over who are or were recipients of CSO interventions, members of selected CBOs, and representatives of selected CSOs working in the sampled districts. At the national level, FGDs were conducted with people representing special interest groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities (PWDs); academia; journalists; and CSOs intervening in governance areas, such as participatory governance, human rights, legal aid, and the fight against corruption, among others.

While some scholars argue that the ideal number of participants in a FGD is 6–12 (Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook, 2007), the experience of NAR and Interpeace programmes, applying a PAR strategy, reveals that for the sake of inclusiveness, there can be up to 15 participants in a FGD for it to remain productive.[4] In this study, FGDs had 10–15 participants. Whenever possible, recruitment of participants considered equal representation of men and women, as well as a number of people from other categories of interest, such as youth, PWDs, and members of the Batwa community.

[4] Whether a FGD is effective or not depends largely on the facilitator's skills, which include impartiality/neutrality, keeping a track of time without being driven by it, equitable distribution of participants, etc.

The research team included a facilitator, a co-facilitator, a note-taker, and an audio-visual researcher. At the local level, participants were identified, selected, and invited by individuals serving as local focal points on the basis of criteria established by the research team and stakeholders. These focal points were recruited based on their integrity, familiarity with NAR work, and knowledge of the field.

2.3.3. Key informant interviews

Kumar states that KIIs serve the purpose of "interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject" (1989, p. 1). These interviews were conducted at both district and national levels with individuals knowledgeable on issues pertaining to the role of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation, as well as governance matters at large.

At the district level, KIIs were conducted with the executive secretaries of targeted sectors, cooperative officers, Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) officers, and the mayor/vice-mayor. At the national level, KIIs were conducted with representatives of the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), the RCSP, and parliament. Two researchers, a note-taker, and an audio-visual researcher facilitated the KIIs.

For both KIIs and FGDs, interview guides were developed, piloted, and approved. See Appendix 2 for a summary of all FGDs and KIIs conducted.

2.4. Data Management and Analysis

Both thematic and content analysis techniques were used for the data analysis. Regarding the former, data from various sources were coded and classified by theme and sub-theme, which made it possible to pinpoint commonalities, differences, relationships, and explanations. As for the latter technique, it served not only as a means to understand the participants' non-verbal communication (e.g. facial expressions and hand gestures), but also to understand the data from various categories of participants (citizens, women, youth, local leaders, CSOs, etc.) and locations/entities (districts, sectors, etc.).

2.5. Quality Assurance

For the purpose of assuring quality, the following measures were taken.

- Interpeace and NAR senior management, heads, and programme officers reviewed the research documents (concept note, methodology, data collection tools, draft report). This ensured that quality was not only audited, but also that the work was progressively owned by both organisations as part of their internal learning processes.
- Members of the Technical Working Group and Technical Sub-Working Group provided technical support to the research team. These groups were instrumental in providing guidance on concepts, policy and legal frameworks, context analysis, in reviewing and validating the research methodology and tools, as well as in reviewing the draft report prior to the National Stakeholders' Meeting.
- The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) and the RGB reviewed the research protocol and eventually granted permissions to carry out the research.

- The National Stakeholders' Meeting will be convened to review and validate the findings. Participants will include high officials from selected government institutions (whose work relates to good governance, citizen participation, and civil society); local government; various components of CSOs; development partners; as well as members of the Technical Working Group and Technical Sub-Working Group.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, NAR requested and secured a research pre-authorisation permit and a final research permit from the RGB and the NISR, respectively. Verbal informed consent was sought from and granted by participants after the study objectives were clearly explained to them, and what the data would be used for, as well as their rights. Participants were also assured of data confidentiality. Researchers explained the use of audio-visual equipment in the research process and participants were asked to be videotaped on a voluntary basis. Participants were given time to ask questions or raise any concerns about the research. Researchers answered the questions after which the actual discussions began.

03 Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature on CSOs and citizen participation in order get a better understanding of key concepts, how civil society functions in relation to citizen participation, and the different challenges that exist, whether internal, institutional, environmental, legal, or policy related. The literature review informs the conceptual framework upon which this research is based.

> governance is the capacity of the state (Government) to make and implement policies, in other words to steer the citizens"
>
> **Kjaer (2004, p. 10).**

3.1. Definitions of Key Concepts

3.1.1. Governance and good governance

There is no universally agreed upon definition of the term 'governance'. Toksöz defines it as "a transformation of power from the leaders to citizens where mutual interaction takes place in order to make desirable choices for the citizens" (2008, p. 5). Meanwhile, according to Ramakant Rao, governance is the process of both making and implementing decisions (2008, p. 10–11). Similarly, Kjaer suggests that "governance is the capacity of the state (Government) to make and implement policies, in other words to steer the citizens" (2004, p. 10).

The World Bank defines governance as the "exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs" (Landell-Mills, Agarwala, and Please, 1989, p. 60). According to NAR and Interpeace, this definition emerged after it was noticed that, "countervailing power has been lacking and state officials in many countries have served their own interests without fear of being called to account" (2016, p. 5).

The term 'good governance' was first used in 1989 when the then president of the World Bank, Barber B. Conable, referred to it as a "public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to its public" (Landell-Mills, Agarwala, and Please, 1989, p. xii). Fifteen years later, the World Bank further unpacked the concept, defining it as encompassing a "predictable, open, and enlightened policy-making (that is, transparent processes); a bureaucracy imbued with a professional ethos; an executive arm of government accountable for its actions, and a strong civil society participating in public affairs; and all behaving under the rule of law" (Stevens, Gonzalez Cofino, Betancourt, and Gnanaselvam, 1994, p. vii).

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights points out that the main features of good governance include "transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation, as well as responsiveness to the needs of people" (2013, p. 5). Landell-Mills and Serageldin argue that

> **public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to its public"** **(Landell-Mills, Agarwala, and Please, 1989, p. xii).**

while "good governance implies the presence of rule of law, safeguard of human rights, and existence of honest and efficient government, accountability, transparency, predictability and openness" (1991, p. 23), bad governance does the contrary. The East African Community adds a few other principles to the definition of good governance, defining it as "a process whereby public and private institutions manage resources in a manner that promotes development, human rights, justice, peace, accountability, responsiveness, inclusiveness, democracy and adherence to the rule of law" (2014, p. 4).

Good governance is analysed through different lenses and with regard to a diversity of actors. This study focuses on participatory governance and citizen participation with a particular emphasis on the role of civil society.

3.1.2. Participatory governance

Participatory governance is a subset of governance that emphasises democratic engagement. In most countries, political and apolitical movements and citizens alike are increasingly demanding a greater say in policy-making processes. Edwards coined this as being the "shift from government to governance", which involves engaging different stakeholders through "structures and arrangements that support effective relationships across the public, private and community sectors as they collaborate in decision making" (2005, p. 56).

Putnam, in Aulich and Artist, describes participatory governance as "social connectedness" (2011, p. 48), which involves putting more emphasis on capacity-building at the community level for citizens to actively participate rather than just being mere implementers of public policies and programmes.

3.1.3. Citizen participation

Proponents of citizen participation have argued that meaningful participation is important in order to guarantee that outcomes respond to citizens' real needs (Esau, 2007, p. 2). A successful citizen participation programme is integral to the planning process and must focus on its unique needs; designed to function within available resources of time, personnel, and money; and be responsive to citizens (Wampler, 2012).

As such, citizen participation refers to "a process which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decision making processes and, has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process" (Parker, 2003,n.p.). Various citizen engagement instruments exist, including public debates, public meetings, campaigns, citizens' polls, citizens' advisory committees, petitions, written notices, hotlines and mailings, online forums, and score cards (Smith, 2003).

From a Rwandan perspective, participants in a study by NAR and Interpeace highlighted the following major components of citizen participation: "(i) putting leaders in offices and holding them accountable, (ii) consultations, (iii) voicing [citizens'] priorities, (iv) taking ownership of government interventions, and (v) implementing government programs" (2016, p. 15).

Citizen participation may be direct or indirect. Direct citizen participation takes place when citizens, without intermediaries, contribute ideas and perspectives for the sake of influencing the making, implementing, or evaluating of policies (Roberts, 2008). It is the process by which ordinary citizens advocate for participation in decision-making pertaining to issues that affect their daily lives. Indirect citizen participation occurs when citizens exercise their rights to influence policy processes through representatives who make decisions for them (Roberts, 2008).

Callahan (2007) posits that direct and indirect citizen participation mechanisms do not contradict each other, but are mutually supportive. As a result, they can be combined. In some countries both mechanisms are used. The Government of Rwanda, for example, has guaranteed both mechanisms in the 2003 Constitution (revised in 2015). Article 27 states that all Rwandans have the right to participate in the governing of the country, either directly or through their freely chosen representatives, in accordance with the law. Furthermore, Article 48 notes that the state has an obligation to put in place development strategies for its citizens: "All Rwandans have the right to participate in the development of the country through their dedication to work, safeguarding peace, democracy, equality, and social justice, as well as to participate in the defence of their country."

In addition to constitutional provisions, the MINALOC's Decentralization Policy Implementation Plan (2011–2015) emphasises that citizens should participate in local governance (MINALOC, 2011, p. 5). In the same vein, one of the strategic objectives of the National Decentralization Policy is to "enhance[e] and sustain citizens' participation in initiating, making, implementing, monitoring and evaluating decisions and plans that affect them by transferring power, authority and resources from central to local government and lower levels, and ensuring that all levels have adequate capacities and motivations to promote genuine participation" (MINALOC, 2012, p. 8).

The abovementioned laws and policy documents clearly imply the political will to boost citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda.

3.2. What is meant by Civil Society?

3.2.1. Definitions of civil society

The concept of 'civil society' does not have a single universally agreed upon definition. Kaldor (2003) asserts that it is incorrect to equate civil society with NGOs. The World Bank defines civil society as a "wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations" (2005, p. 3).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), civil society is "an arena of voluntary collective actions around shared interest, purpose and values distinct from families, state and profit seeking institutions" (2009, p. 6). The UNDP emphasises that civil society comprises a range of informal and formal organisations that

are outside the state and the market, instead including social movements, volunteer organisations, mass-based membership organisations, faith-based organisations (FBOs),[6] NGOs, as well as communities acting individually or collectively (2009, p. 9).

The UNDP definition is closer to that of the RCSP: "a succinct operational definition of CSOs in this context includes all non-state actors excluding the market" and consists of "formal organisations or institutions existing in the intermediary space between the states on the one hand and the lowest unit of social life, the family, on the other" (2011, p. 2).

Although the definitions above are not the same, they do have some similarities, most commonly (1) that CSOs are non-state bodies and (2) their non-profit-making nature. Apart from the World Bank definition, however, the abovementioned definitions do not clearly state the purpose of CSOs. Therefore, for this study, we use the World Bank definition of civil society as the operational definition. Concerning CSOs, we refer to all formal and informal organisations that emerge from the wider civil society to serve specific purposes on behalf of their respective constituencies. This study considers civil society as being composed of NGOs (local and international), FBOs, the media, think tanks and academia, trade unions, and CBOs, both formal and informal.

3.2.2. Functions of CSOs

According to Ghaus-Pasha (2004), the functions of CSOs correspond to the roles they play in the community. The role of CSOs has been increasing in all spheres of life in general and in governance in particular, with civil society widely recognised as an essential 'third' sector alongside the state and private sector (2004, p. 3). Civil society can enhance good governance in areas such (1) policy analysis and advocacy; (2) regulation and monitoring of state performance, and the actions and behaviours of public officials; (3) building social capacity and enabling citizens to identify and articulate their values, beliefs, civic norms, and democratic practices; (4) mobilising particular constituencies to participate fully in politics and public affairs; and (5) developmental work to improve the wellbeing of their own and other communities.

Court et al. (2006) categorise CSOs according to the functions they perform in a development context, as follows:

(1) Representation: organisations that aggregate citizens' voice

(2) Advocacy: organisations that lobby on particular issues

(3) Technical inputs: organisations that provide information and advice

(4) Capacity-building: organisations that provide support, including funding, to other CSOs

(5) Service delivery: organisations that implement development projects or provide services

(6) Social functions: organisations that foster collective recreational activities

[5] Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015

[6] The Rwandan laws refer to these as 'religious-based organisations'.

> a succinct operational definition of CSOs in this context includes all non-state actors excluding the market" and consists of "formal organisations or institutions existing in the intermediary space between the states on the one hand and the lowest unit of social life, the family, on the other" (2011, p. 2).

The World Economic Forum (2013, p. 9) outlines a number of specific functions including:

- "Watchdog: holding institutions to account, promoting transparency and accountability
- Advocate: raising awareness of societal issues and challenges, and advocating for change
- Service provider: delivering services to meet societal needs such as education, health, food, and security, and implementing disaster management, preparedness, and emergency response
- Expert: bringing unique knowledge and experience to shape policy and strategy, and identifying and building solutions
- Capacity-builder: providing education, training, and other capacity-building
- Incubator: developing solutions that may require a long gestation or payback period
- Representative: giving power to the voice of the marginalized or underrepresented
- Citizenship championing: encouraging citizen engagement and supporting the rights of citizens
- Solidarity supporter: promoting fundamental and universal values
- Definer of standards: creating norms that shape market and state activity"

Some of the abovementioned functions are closely linked to the enhancement of citizen participation in governance and development processes, especially watchdog, advocacy, capacity-building, citizenship championing, service delivery, representation, and shaping policies. In this study, the functions of service delivery, capacity-building, shaping policies, and holding leaders to account are analysed in the context of civil society's effectiveness in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda.

[7] Generally, most media houses are established as profit-making organisations and are thus seen as being part of the private sector. However, some media organisations are set up with a social purpose, which is to promote the interests of citizens (or specific groups) or certain values. Pax Press, community radios, and media established by religious denominations are some examples in Rwanda. In addition, functions of the media include citizenry education as well as voicing the concerns of the voiceless, making it a civil society component. Moreover, some media houses combine to form associations aimed at promoting and defending their shared interests. Considering the above and based on the views of many participants, it is these types of media outlets that were included in the operational definition of media for this study.

3.2.3. Civil society and citizen participation

Proponents of participatory governance claim that citizen participation brings citizens closer to the government. In this regard, Arnstein (1969) argues that citizens cannot participate on their own, unless it is in a participatory government that fosters a shift from government to governance, the latter implying an array of actors involved in the making and implementation of public policies.

Civil society is therefore regarded as one of the key features of good governance, as it provides a framework for citizens to voice their concerns, needs, and priorities. Civil society plays the role of promoting good governance by limiting and controlling the power of the state over citizens. As Bratton (1994, p. 10) puts it: "CSOs have a duty to protect citizens against excesses by the state by creating a buffer against possible state predatory behaviour as well as monitoring public performance, human rights abuses and corruption".

3.3. Civil Society in Rwanda

3.3.1. Historical overview

As a nation moves from being non-democratic to democratic in terms of its style of leadership, its relationship with society often becomes more intentional, transparent, participative, and collaborative (United Nations, 2008). Rwanda is no exception. As highlighted in a study conducted by NAR and Interpeace (2016), there has been tremendous improvement in citizen participation in the implementation of public policies. Civil society is a key feature of good governance, providing an important framework and channels for citizens to voice their concerns, needs, and priorities to governments. Civil society is also key to holding public institutions accountable.

In Rwanda, civil society can be divided into "five categories: cooperatives, farmers' organizations, tontines and informal associations, foreign and local development NGOs, and the churches" (Uvin, 1998, p. 164). The first cooperative (milk) was established in Nyanza in 1943 (Uvin, 1998). "At independence, there were eight cooperatives, linked to specific state offices for the extraction of natural resources (coffee, minerals), or to the church" (Uvin, 1998, p. 164).

Nkubito (2001) reveals that by 1990, a good number of CSOs working in the domain of human rights emerged. These included Ligue Rwandaise pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'Homme (Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, LIPRODHOR); Association Rwandaise pour la défense des droits de l'Hommes (Rwandan Association for the Defense of Human Rights, ARDHO); womens' groups such as Réseau des Femmes Oeuvrant pour le Développement Rural (Women's Network for Rural Development) and Haguruka; and labour unions such as Conseil National des Organisations Syndicales Libres au Rwanda (Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Rwanda, COSYLI).

Other CSOs were created following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi to respond to its consequences. These included: Ibuka, Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP), Association des Veuves du Génocide Agahozo (Association of Genocide Widows, AVEGA), and NAR, among others. This period was also characterised by the emergence of other women's organisations and CSOs intervening specifically in areas such as HIV/AIDS and environmental protection (Mukamunana and Brynard, 2005).

According to Transparency International Rwanda (2012), prior to the 1994 genocide, a number of CSOs established umbrella organisations to more effectively and synergistically advocate on behalf of their constituencies. These included Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Defense des Droits Humains (Umbrella Organisation of Leagues and Associations for the Defence of Human Rights, CLADHO), Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (Umbrella Organisation of Rwandan Local NGOs in Development, CCOAIB), the Rwandan Workers' Trade Union Confederation (CESTRAR), and Press House of Rwanda. In 2004, these and others formed the umbrella group RSCP to encourage dialogue between member organisations and their partners, which includes the Rwandan government. According to the RGB, the RSCP is composed of 14 national umbrellas and one individual NGO, and has more than 800 member organisations (Rwanda Civil Society Platform, 2017).

3.3.2. Civil society's role in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda

In Rwanda there is no overall law governing civil society, however, a series of laws govern major components of civil society, such as national NGOs, international NGOs (INGOs), the media, and FBOs. Law No. 04/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing NGOs allows them to conduct a range of interventions including those pertaining to citizen participation in government policies and programmes. In Article 28, the law provides NGOs with the following rights:

1. to put forward their views on the design of national policies and legislation related to the operations of national NGOs;
2. to advocate, protect, and promote human rights and other national values; and
3. to enter into contracts with other organisations and entities.

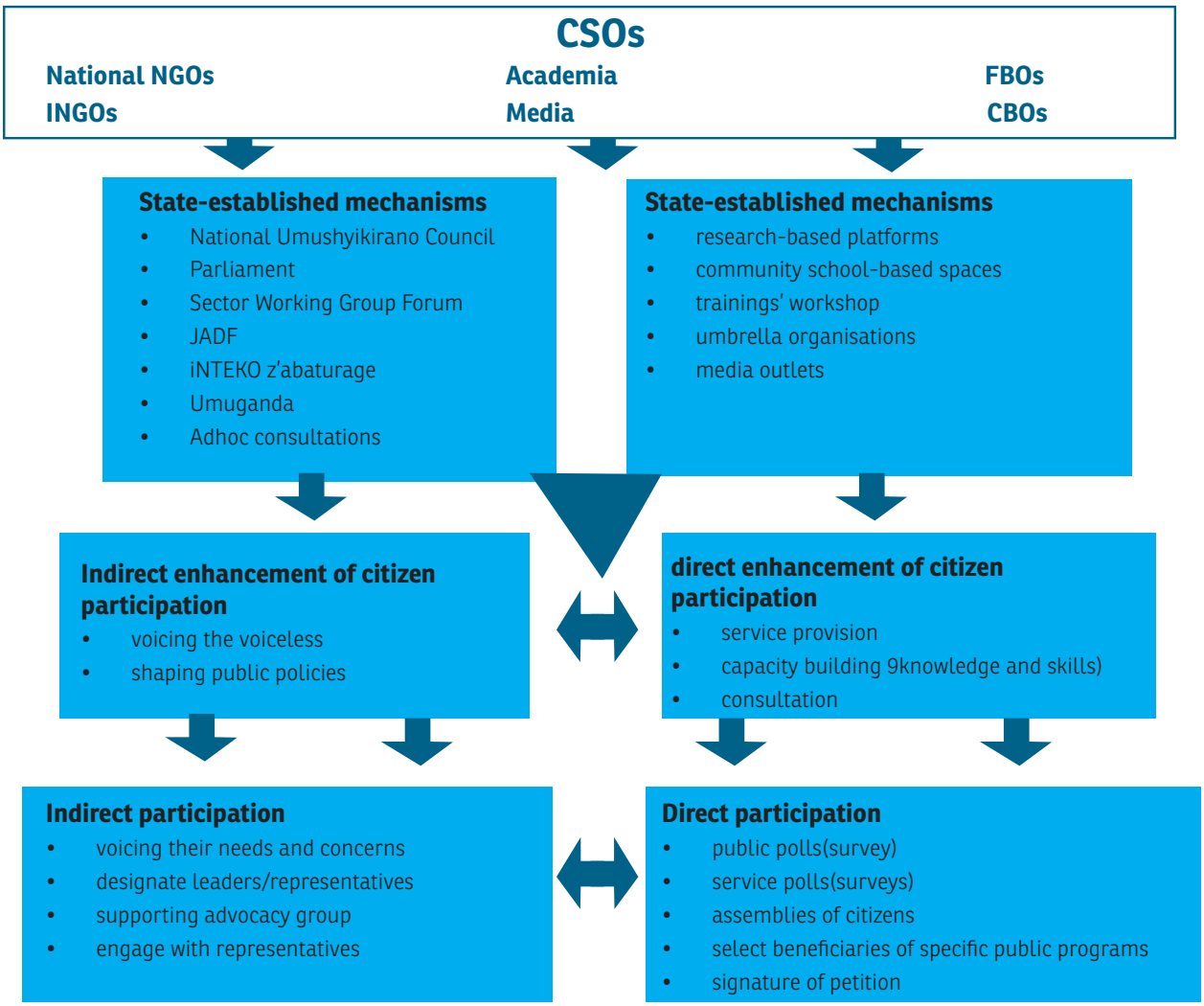
The same rights are granted to INGOs as per Article 31 of the Law No. 05/2012 of 17/02/2012. In the same vein, Article 31 of the Law No. 06/2012 of 17/02/2012 allocates similar rights to FBOs.

In addition to the above, at the national and local government levels, there are spaces through which CSOs are meant to engage with decision-makers and through which they can thus enhance citizen participation. These are the parliament, National Umushyikirano Council, the national media, and the JADF, specifically established as a stakeholders' forum at the district level and inteko z'abaturage at the local level. The JADF was established by a ministerial order[8] and brings together all district stakeholders for dialogue and information-sharing, and to inform them of peer development activities.

Although some sort of legal and institutional framework exists to govern civil society in Rwanda, various studies (CCOAIB, 2011; Nizeyimana, 2013; NAR and Interpeace, 2016) point to the limits of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation. CCOAIB (2011) highlights the presence of a conducive environment for CSOs in terms of laws and regulations, but also decries the low level of collaboration between CSOs and the central government.

[8] Prime Minister's Instructions No. 003/03 of 03/07/2015 establishing the Joint Action Development Forum and determining its responsibilities, organisation, and functioning

Figure 2: How civil society enhances citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda



Source: this conceptual framework was designed by the authors on the basis of existing literature

This conceptual framework depicts the way civil society enhances citizen participation in governance and development of Rwanda. First and foremost, it shows major components of the civil society and main channels (both state and CSOs-led) that the latter organisations can use to play this role. It also lists core areas through which, by both direct and indirect participation, CSOs can enhance citizen participation in governance and development processes.

04 Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the research findings. More specifically, it discusses participants' understanding of civil society and its functions in post-genocide Rwanda; existing mechanisms that CSOs can use to enhance citizen participation in governance and development processes; and the effectiveness of CSOs in this regard. It also explores existing challenges to and opportunities for civil society to enhance citizen participation in governance and development. Views from participants were at times compared in order to triangulate and validate the data and related findings.

4.1.Definitions and Functions of Civil Society in Post-Genocide Rwanda

The views and perceptions of participants pertaining to the themes discussed in this study are partly informed by the way citizens understand the notion of civil society and its functions. It was therefore deemed relevant to engage participants in a discussion exploring the definitions of civil society and its expected functions in Rwanda.

4.1.1. Civil society, as defined by participants

Various definitions of civil society emerged from discussions, with some commonalities. The most important emphasised the origins of CSOs, with civil society seen as emanating from citizens as opposed to any state or military-made establishment:

> "Civil society is a family of citizen-based bodies, independent from the government, and operating for the good of their members and/or other groups of interest." –
> **Participant in a FGD with academia at the national level**

> "CSOs are organisations borne out of ideas generated by people from within to solve a problem they are facing without waiting for anyone to solve their problems. They may come up with initiatives to alleviate poverty or solve conflicts." –
> **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Karongi District**

> "CSOs are non-state organisations that support citizens to solve their problems in various domains including the economy, health, and development at large." –
> **KII with the mayor of Gisagara District**

The majority of participating citizens and some local leaders tend to understand CSOs as being NGOs above all. This is evidenced by what they call them, for example: "imishinga" (projects), "imiryango nterankunga" (donor/ support organisations), and "imiryango itegamiye kuri leta" (NGOs). Furthermore, some local leaders just call them "abafatanyabikorwa" (partners). However, other participants, especially the intellectual elite, have a wider understanding of what encompasses CSOs, also including CBOs, FBOs, the media, and academia in the definition.

The second core element of what defines civil society was found to be around the function of CSOs (i.e. what people expect from these organisations). The following sub-section explores the functions of CSOs from the participants' perspectives.

4.1.2.Civil society's functions

This section examines the views of participants (including citizens, decision-makers, CSOs, and the donor community) regarding what civil society should be doing, particularly in a post-genocide context. Participants' core expectations of CSOs were found to reflect the major functions of civil society as discussed in the literature review. They include shaping citizens' lives through service provision; citizenry education (awareness-raising and skills-building); voicing the concerns of the voiceless and demanding accountability from leaders; shaping public policies; as well bridging the gap between leaders and citizens.

It is encouraging that such expectations are also largely reflected in the laws governing national NGOs, INGOs, and FBOs, which form the nucleus of civil society in Rwanda. These consist mainly of "putting forward views in designing national policies and legislation in relation to the functioning of respective organisations; advocating, protecting and promoting human rights and other national values; as well as expressing opinions and views on national policies and legislation".

4.1.2.1.Improving citizens' lives through service provision

Unlike some developed countries that have adopted the welfare state [10], governments in developing countries, including Rwanda, may not be able to meet the basic needs of their people, without partnership with relevant stakeholders.

The role of civil society in service provision thus proves to be of paramount importance in a post-genocide context such as Rwanda. It emerged from discussions that the genocide created psychological, social, economic, and material conditions that requires the provision of various services to specific categories of

[9] See Law No. 04/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organisation and functioning of national non-governmental organisations; Law No. 05/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organisation and functioning of international non-governmental organisations; Law No. 06/2012 of 17/02/2012 determining the organisation and functioning of religion-based organisations

[10] A welfare state is a system whereby, as according to Briggs, "organized power is deliberately used in an effort to modify the play of the market forces in at least three directions (1) by guaranteeing individuals and families a minimum income irrespective of the market value of their work or their property; (2) by narrowing the extent of insecurity by enabling individuals and families to meet certain "social contingencies" (for example, sickness, old age and unemployment) which lead otherwise to individual and family crisis; and (3) by ensuring that all citizens without distinction of status or class are offered the best standards available in relation to a certain agreed range of social services". (Andersen 2012, p. 4)

people, such as orphans, widows, the homeless, people with psychological trauma, those who are ill, and those living in abject poverty. These conditions compound the poverty many people already face in Rwanda, as well as emerging development issues concerning the country. Thus, the reconstruction process – both emergency and development phases – requires the participation of various stakeholders, including citizens. One of the biggest challenges is instilling hope in citizens, a great proportion of whom are vulnerable, by providing them with basic services and empowering them to become active citizens with the ability to contribute effectively to national rebuilding. Service provision is therefore among the core responsibilities of the government, the civil society, and the private sector.

It emerged unanimously from all categories of participants that service provision is a core function of civil society in Rwanda. In the words of one participant, CSOs should

> "help people through income-generating activities, then they can pay for medical insurance [mutuelle de santé], pay school fees for children, water and sanitation...and by so doing they can contribute to solving the problems along with the government." –
> **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Karongi District**

Local leaders share this view, with the following statement made by the vice-mayor of social affairs of Musanze District:

> "CSOs are meant to partner with us on the development journey, through the provision of shelters for the homeless, building schools, health centres, paying mutuelle de santé for the needy."

The research also sought to determine whether a relationship exists between service delivery and citizen participation in the management of public affairs. Although there is a paucity of relevant literature on this topic, participants, including citizens, contended that there is a positive correlation between the two, arguing that people whose basic needs are not met are unlikely to commit and fully participate in governance and development processes.

> "It's not common to see a poor person standing before the sector executive secretary and claim his/her rights, because when you are poor you can hardly be self-confident. Therefore we empower them to be aware of their rights and effectively stand for them, the laws that protect them, and provide them with income generating opportunities which also are a foundation for effective citizen participation",
> **FGD, women's organisations, Kigali.**

> "Helping citizens meet their basic needs provides them with minimum self-confidence, hence a sound ingredient for participation. What we expect from our partnership with CSOs – at least those with relevant resources – is that they can support us in our service provision endeavours – health centres, ambulances, schools, livelihoods, among other things." –
>
> **KII with the district mayor of Nyagatare District**

4.1.2.2. Citizenship education: awareness-raising and skills development

Citizen participation in Rwanda is a constitutional duty. Article 48 of the 2003 Constitution (revised in 2015) stipulates that, "all Rwandans have the duty to participate in the development of the country through their dedication to work, safeguarding peace, democracy, equality and social justice as well as to participate in the defence of their country". However, participation in governance is likely to only be effective when citizens have the minimal required knowledge, skills, and competences. Citizenship education is a tool used to instil those ingredients into citizens.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (1998), citizenship education is defined as "educating children, from early childhood, to become clear-thinking and enlightened citizens who participate in decisions concerning the society". For the purpose of this study, citizenship education is not understood as restricted to children only, but extended to the citizenry at large. It is the permanent process of shaping citizens' attitudes, knowledge, and skills through which they increasingly become aware and skilled with regards to their rights and duties, and get actively involved in influencing decision-making in their society.

Various scholars and think tanks consider public education among the core conditions for effective and inclusive citizen participation. For instance, the Hague Academy for Local Governance (2018) states that successful inclusive participation depends partly on "citizens who have the skills, knowledge and attitudes to participate, including the ability to organise themselves". Holdar and Zakharchenko similarly argue that "before citizens express their opinions, and participate in the public decision making process, they need information about the subject at hand" and that "a civic participation process cannot be built unless those who participate have a high level of education and information about the issue(s)" (2002, p. 88). These authors conclude that, "public education is the first step in involving citizens in the life of their community and in creating a participative culture" (2002, p. 91).

Similarly, participants in this study unanimously believe that citizenship education is a function of civil society. It was argued that if the primary role of the state is implementing laws and policies, and taking the lead in public service delivery, then civil society should play a vital and complementary role in proliferating citizenship education and capacity-building. This can take the form of assisting with income-generating activities and job creation; awareness-raising on selected laws and policies, critical thinking, leadership, public speaking, confidence-building, community problem analysis and advocacy techniques, conflict resolution, human rights, history of the genocide and related ideology; and life skills in the areas of HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, and basic literacy and numeracy, to name a few.

> "Sometimes there are conflicts among the population[...]Nowadays, the process of lodging a case in court is sophisticated; it requires computer literacy. At times, some people just give up on their rights because of this process. My expectation of CSOs is to raise citizens' awareness of their rights and duties as well as procedures to execute them." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Karongi District**

> "CSOs are expected to focus on youth mobilisation in governance and the development process, among other things." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Burera District**

> "One of our expectations of CSOs is to shape citizens' understanding of their duties vis-à-vis their country's development, their rights and duties in electoral processes, and their participation in the overall and inclusive change we strive to induce in Rwanda." – **KII with the vice-mayor of social affairs of Musanze District**

It should also be highlighted that CSO interventions in citizenship education may foster socialisation, which is an important element of citizen participation. In this regard, CSOs can become agents of socialisation by instilling into citizens knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are conducive to citizen participation. NAR and Interpeace (2016) argue that the culture characterised by centralism and blind obedience was nurtured partly through the socialisation process and this eventually resulted in a major hindrance to citizen participation. Thus, CSOs are expected to contribute to deconstructing that culture through citizenship education.

4.1.2.3. Voice and accountability

In a context where citizens are not aware of their civil rights and duties, and are not skilled to articulate and channel their needs and concerns directly to decision-makers and/or through mandated representatives, the role of civil society proves to be vital. This role is referred to by scholars as an advocacy function. Reid and Fox, in Miller-Steven and Gable, define advocacy as "influencing public opinion, defending the interests of entire groups of excluded or disenfranchised people, and encompassing efforts to defend against abuses of public power" (2012, p. 23).

This also holds true when it comes to demanding accountability from leaders at various levels of government, a process known as social accountability. Participants almost unanimously believe that CSOs should serve as the voice of the voiceless and exert the prerogative of social accountability, as demonstrated by the comments below:

> "CSOs are expected to voice citizens' needs through advocacy. For instance, they should serve as our representatives and advocate on the issue of high taxation, land-related issues..." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Musanze District**

> "CSOs are expected to serve as a bridge between citizens and leaders. If the government puts in place and implements a public policy or a programme, CSOs should engage citizens to check whether they are happy with it and, if the latter, voice their concerns to the decision-makers." – **Participant in a FGD with academia, Kigali**

> "CSOs should be advocates of citizens; a particular CSO may not have advocacy in their mandate but they can still collaborate with others for advocacy purposes." – **KII with a development partner, Kigali**

Advocacy-related expectations, however, come with prerequisites, with participants arguing that CSOs should possess the following assets: human resources with relevant capacities to conduct participatory research, community/group facilitation skills, policy analysis skills, and advocacy techniques. Whether or not CSOs have these prerequisites and actually use them will be examined later.

4.1.2.4. Shaping public policies

In their capacity of representing citizens' interests, CSOs are also expected to shape public policies. This goes beyond voicing the short-term concerns of citizens or communities, and spills over into setting the policy agenda for both medium- and long-term issues. Ferris argues that CSOs that undertake policy advocacy "aim to influence the outcomes of the public policymaking process by shaping the policy agenda, offering and analysing policy options, and monitoring the implementation of adopted policies" (1998, p. 145).

Some participants, especially those from academia, civil society, and development partners, argued that on the basis of assumed or proven technical skills, expertise, understanding of the policy-making process, and knowledge of priorities and concerns of their respective constituencies, CSOs can engage citizens and other relevant stakeholders in regular analysis of selected policies. This can then result in policies being further discussed and considered by policy-makers. In the words of a participant of a FGD with academia in Kigali:

> **Not all policies should be initiated by government structures; CSOs should also be proactive in this regard."**

Furthermore, it emerged that by being the voice of the voiceless, shaping public policies, and holding leaders to account, CSOs can connect citizens and the state (decision-makers). Some scholars likewise believe that a healthy civil society can build a bridge between the grassroots level of society and state institutions at any, level of governance (Sydow, 2013). The European Commission argues that, "it is through CSOs that citizens can engage in policy dialogue, collectively voice their opinions and rights and hold authorities and other stakeholders accountable" (2014, p. 6). This is relevant in Rwanda, which has a legacy of a highly centralised political system and a history of exclusion as well as ethnic and regional discrimination that eventually contributed to the outbreak of genocide.

4.1.2.5. Converging participants' views on civil society's functions

Despite some commonalities, not all participants share views on each of the core functions of civil society as far as enhancing citizen participation is concerned. For instance, some CSO representatives believe that their organisations should solely focus on service delivery and not on other areas such as advocacy or shaping public policies because there are other CSOs that intervene specifically in those areas.

However, many participants, especially members of academia and some other representatives of CSOs, challenged this view. They argued that even though each CSO has specific areas of intervention, the functions of CSOs are not mutually exclusive, but complement each other. In the words of a women's organisation representative in Kigali:

> **Providing services to your constituency implies a certain level of interaction with it. Therefore, it is when you provide services to them that you are in a better position to be aware of critical issues on which they need advocacy. The two functions therefore go together."**

This intertwined nature of CSO functions was likewise illustrated in a KII conducted with a CSO representative in Kigali:

> **"If my organisation pays contributions to mutuelle de santé on behalf of some poor families...we should also check whether the beneficiaries actually have access to quality health services. If not, then we should conduct advocacy accordingly."**

Overall, while citizens, academia, and the donor community tended to converge on all the functions of CSOs, decision-makers (especially local leaders) and some CSOs gravitated to the opinion that service delivery and citizenry education/capacity-building are the core functions of CSOs. Furthermore, the donor community particularly favours the functions of conducting advocacy regarding citizens' concerns, demanding accountability, and shaping public policies.

Such a diversity in the understanding of civil society's functions and their role in enhancing citizen participation calls for the strengthening of policy dialogues 1) between CSOs and decision-makers at both central and local levels, and 2) between CSOs and their constituencies, in order to harmonise, readjust, and redefine the role of civil society in Rwanda depending on actual needs and the global context.

In addition to analysing the functions of CSOs, we also attempted to devise a typology of CSOs in Rwanda, disaggregated by areas of intervention, geographical coverage, target groups, organisational level, and establishment period (see Appendix 3).

4.2. A Diversity of State-Established and Civil Society-Led Mechanisms for Enhancing Citizen Participation in the Governance and Development Processes of Rwanda

Effective enhancement of citizen participation requires a set of clear mechanisms to enable interactions between citizens and those meant to facilitate the said enhancement. In this section, we explore existing mechanisms for CSOs to boost citizen participation in Rwanda's governance and development processes. Two types of mechanisms are described: state-established and civil society-led. The extent to which CSOs are effective in increasing citizen participation in governance through these mechanisms will be explored later.

4.2.1. State-established mechanisms

State-established mechanisms refer to channels, structures, or spaces initiated by public institutions, formal and informal, that may be used by CSOs to engage either citizens or decision-makers on issues pertaining to public policies, citizenship education, capacity-building, and accountability. The mechanisms that exist in this category in Rwanda are described in detail below.

Inteko z'abaturage: These are citizen assemblies established by Ministerial Instructions No. 002/07/01 of 20/05/2011 to assist local governments in handling citizens' issues. While in theory, inteko z'abaturage are based at the cell level, in practice they operate at both cell and village levels and, in many places, they tend to be more active at the latter, as they are combined with monthly community work (umuganda).

Participants asserted that in many rural villages, inteko z'abaturage operates on a weekly basis with the purpose of ironing out citizens' queries and issues. While such mechanisms are not initially meant for civil society, some participants referred to it as a channel used by CSOs to interact with citizens as both potential and actual recipients of their interventions.

> "Sometimes [a] few CSOs attend meetings of inteko z'abaturage to share information on their interventions prior to the commencement; they also use the same avenue to select and validate the lists of recipients for their interventions." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Rutsiro District**

Umuganda: Governed by Law No 53/2007 of 17/11/2007 establishing community works in Rwanda, this is "one of…Rwanda's home grown solutions to reinforce socio-economic development and to promote the use of cultural resources in mitigating effects of scarce resources as envisioned in Vision 2020" (Umuganda, 2017). Umuganda is organised countrywide on a monthly basis and brings together community members, local leaders (and sometimes national leaders, especially members of the parliament), as well as CSO staff who live in the village or cell. Considering that umuganda is often organised alongside inteko z'abaturage, that is, on the same day and in the same venue, it may therefore serve as a mechanism for CSOs to interact with their constituencies.

JADF: The Ministerial Instructions No. 04/07 of 15/07/2007 define the JADF as "a consultative level of information dissemination, promoting cooperation among people or actors in development and social welfare of the population". The aim of this forum is to "coordinate the activities of all development actors so as to promote coordination of efforts, efficiency and avoid duplication of efforts". The JADF's mission consists of "ensuring sustainable socio-economic development and improved service delivery through dialogue, active participation, accountability, information sharing; and coordination of stakeholders' interventions in decentralized entities".

The forum brings together all development actors that operate in the district. These consist of national NGOs, INGOs, FBOs, district administration, and public and private sector institutions.

> "JADF is an important avenue of interaction of district authorities and other stakeholders including CSOs; it helps us to consolidate resources and energies for our interventions across different administrative sectors and therefore minimises previous cases of duplication and disparities. We get time to discuss and improve our operations and coordination." – **KII with the mayor of Nyanza District**

As this forum serves as an official platform of interaction between CSOs and local authorities, among other actors, it is a relevant dialogue mechanism on local government, community, and citizens' issues.

Parliament: According to Article 64 of its Constitution, Rwanda has a bicameral parliament, consisting of the Senate (Upper Chamber) and Chamber of Deputies (Lower Chamber). Both deputies and senators act as citizens' representatives, though some of them represent specific categories of the population (i.e. women, PWDs, youth, historically marginalised people, and academic institutions). During the law-making process, CSOs are sometimes consulted by parliamentary commissions to get their views and inputs on specific matters relating to the bills of interest.

National Umushyikirano Council: As stipulated in Article 140 of the Constitution, the Council brings together the president and citizens' representatives, including government officials such as district representatives, Kigali council members, high ranking government officers, members of the judiciary, parliamentarians, governors, and the mayor of Kigali. Other representatives include members of civil society, representatives of the business community, Rwandans from the diaspora, as well as representatives of higher education institutions. The

Council meets at least once a year to debate issues relating to the state of the nation and national unity. The Constitution also states that, "resolutions of this Council are submitted to the relevant institutions to enable them to improve their service delivery to the population".

Given its profile and nature of the issues meant to be discussed, CSO representatives are expected to take advantage of this platform to voice the concerns and needs of their constituencies and, at the same time, shape public policies and demand accountability on behalf of citizens.

> "Some CSOs representatives, especially those of umbrella organisations, are invited to attend the National Umushyikirano Council, which is an important decision-making mechanism in Rwanda." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

Sector working group forums: These are technical working forums through which the Rwandan government and stakeholders meet to discuss sector and cross-sector planning and prioritisation according to strategic plans and development programmes. They are co-chaired by the permanent secretary of the relevant line ministry and a representative from the lead donor agency (Sector Working Groups (SWs), 2018). CSOs at the national level are among the core stakeholders that are part of these forums. They are therefore expected to use this important policy dialogue platform to enhance citizen participation through voicing the concerns and priorities of citizens, hence shaping public policies.

> "Our organisation is part of the justice and governance sector working group. It is a forum that brings together local and international CSOs, as well as the Ministry of Justice and relevant public institutions." – **KII with a representative of a human rights organisation, Kigali**

Ad hoc consultations on policy issues: According to their areas of intervention or based on their expertise and constituency, some CSOs are sometimes consulted by government institutions while designing public policies or during the planning phase. They are also sometimes consulted during research activities conducted by government institutions. Such consultations have the potential to provide CSOs with opportunities to shape policy and give a voice to the voiceless.

4.2.2. CSO-established mechanisms

Other than the state-established mechanisms discussed above, CSOs also have their own mechanisms or channels through which they interact with both citizens and decision-makers (both locally and nationally).

Research: Post-genocide Rwanda is characterised by complex and sensitive issues that require thorough investigation and analysis. Some of these have roots in the long history of structural and physical violence experienced by Rwandans and, as such, participatory and inclusive methodologies to analyse these issues are critical. CSOs intervening within this context have therefore included research among their core intervention strategies.

The objective of civil society research is generally two-fold. On the one hand it aims to gain insight into specific problems faced by particular communities or society at large in order to collect evidence and eventually implement informed and participatory solutions. On the other, it seeks to gather solid evidence from community members and other relevant stakeholders in order to carry out advocacy at policy- and decision-making levels. The research process therefore involves key moments of interaction between CSOs and citizens during the data collection phase (consultation) on the one hand, and CSOs and decision-makers during result validation workshops and advocacy meetings on the other.

> "Research stands among our major intervention strategies. We use it to collect evidence on real issues faced by citizens. Thereafter, we make efforts to conduct due advocacy." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

Organisations such as Transparency International Rwanda, Action Aid, Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe, CLADHO, the Legal Aid Forum (LAF), NAR, the RCSP, and Haguruka are among those that rely on research for planning and advocacy purposes.

School and community-based permanent spaces: In order to work closely with and build capacities of their constituencies, some CSOs use dialogue spaces (or clubs or associations) as a working strategy. Depending on the category of the recipients, such spaces are established at the community level (village, cell, or sector) or in schools (mainly secondary schools and universities).

Organisations such as *Association pour les Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide* (Genocide Survivors Students' Association, AERG); *Association de la Jeunesse pour la Promotion des Droits de l'Homme et Développement* (Youth Association for the Promotion of Human Rights and Development, AJPRODHO); *Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe;* International Alert; Prison Fellowship; IRDP; Association Modeste et Innocent (Modest and Innocent's Association, AMI); Solidarity for Widows and Orphans for Work and Self-Promotion (SEVOTA); NAR; and AVEGA used to or are still facilitating such spaces across the country.

> "Our organisation facilitates dialogue spaces in secondary schools, universities, and in some districts to instil critical thinking and a culture of peace and tolerance among youth." – **Participant in a FGD with youth organisations, Kigali**

Besides community members from diverse backgrounds, these spaces target youth, women, and genocide survivors, and it appears that most were established in the post-genocide context. Such spaces have the potential to boost citizen participation in governance and development through, for instance, dialogue sessions on different community/national issues; providing training on critical thinking, conflict analysis and resolution, advocacy techniques, and public speaking; and small business development and income-generating activities.

Training workshops/seminars: Some CSOs run training workshops (sometimes referred to as seminars) aimed at their constituencies. These serve as avenues for channelling information, raising awareness, and building the capacity of recipients, therefore potentially enhancing citizen participation in governance and development processes.

> Sometimes our interactions with CSOs take place through training sessions they organise with us on various themes of our interest." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Musanze District**

Media outlets: PParticipants see the media as a two-faceted mechanism for enhancing citizen participation: both through educating the public and voicing the concerns of the voiceless, and as a channel to be used by other non-media CSOs. Considering this definition, the media is itself an integral component of civil society as well as a mechanism used by CSOs to enhance citizen participation in governance and development processes. Broadcast media outlets, both radio and television, emerged as the major media outlets with the potential to boost interactions. According to the RGB (2016a), as of 2016, there were 36 radio stations, 12 television stations, 40 newspapers, and 80 online media outlets in the country. This is a significant rise in numbers in comparison to the recent past: in 2010 there were 23 radio stations and in 2013 there were only 2 television stations.

Umbrella organisations: Examples of these include Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe, CLADHO, CCOAIB, National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda (NUDOR), Ibuka (the umbrella body for genocide survivors' organisations), the RCSP, Rwanda Association of Private Institutions of Higher Education (ARIPES), CESTRAR, and the LAF. Considering their raison d'être – to make CSOs' voices louder, and for the sake of building the capacity of individual member organisations as well as working in a more coordinated manner – these organisations are expected to enhance citizen participation. Such an expectation was clearly echoed by some CSO representatives.

> My organisation is a member of a local [national] umbrella organisation. When we joined, our expectation was mainly to find a stronger platform for us to voice the needs of our organisation, and indirectly those of our constituency." – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Kigali**

Ad hoc meetings with decision-makers: Some CSOs organise meetings with decision-makers (public or custom) for either awareness or advocacy purposes. If planned in a timely manner and if the message is clearly defined, such meetings can serve as an opportunity for CSOs to inform leaders on issues facing their constituencies, voice the voiceless, and/or influence targeted policies.

> Engaging decision-makers does not always happen through planned and formal meetings. Depending on the nature, urgency, and sensitivity of the issue at stake, we may find it more appropriate to resort to ad hoc and informal avenues to have our voice heard." – **KII with an umbrella organisation representative, Kigali**

Table 1: Existing mechanisms for CSOs to enhance citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda

State-established	CSOs-established
Inteko z'abaturage	Research
Umuganda	Dialogue spaces/clubs
JADF	Training workshops/meetings
National Umushyikirano Council	Media outlets
Parliament	Umbrella organisations
Sector working group forums	Ad hoc meetings
Ad hoc consultations	

4.3. Enhancing Citizen Participation in Governance and Development through the Existing Mechanisms

Having the right mechanisms in place is only one piece of the puzzle. One of the specific objectives of this research was to examine the effectiveness of CSOs in harnessing citizen participation in governance through these mechanisms. A particular emphasis was placed on the core functions of civil society, as discussed in section 4.1.2.

4.3.1. Service provision: most widespread function of CSOs in Rwanda

This sub-section outlines the types of major services that CSOs in Rwanda provide, effectiveness of CSOs in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda through service provision as well as challenges and limitations.

4.3.1.1. What types of services do CSOs in Rwanda provide?

Citizens, local leaders, and CSOs alike unanimously consider service delivery as the sector wherein civil society has been the most effective, regardless of important limitations and challenges. In this regard, civil society not only complements governmental efforts in terms of development, it also addresses specific needs created by the genocide and its consequences. CSO service delivery may have contributed to the country's journey towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2: achieving universal primary education, 4: reducing child mortality, 5: improving maternal health, and 6: combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases (Ndagijimana, 2015).

While the JADF is the core body through which service delivery interventions are planned and coordinated at the district level (local government, CSOs and the private sector), CSOs sometimes make use of other mechanisms such as village general assemblies and local leaders at the village, cell, and sector levels, especially when it comes to selecting recipients of their services and their actual provision. In addition, some CSOs deliver services via existing platforms, such as schools and health facilities. Depending on their respective areas of intervention, CSOs provide services mainly around health, education, livelihoods, and farming.

In terms of healthcare, CSOs have been effectively providing medical services through their own or supported health establishments (hospitals, health centres, etc.), while others have assisted (or have been assisting) existing health establishments with equipment and financial support to provide mutuelle de santé (medical insurance) to the poor. Other CSOs and programmes (including AMI, NAR, Prison Fellowship Rwanda, SEVOTA, and community-based sociotherapy programmes) specialise in addressing mental health issues through the provision of psychosocial support. Key partners include FBOs such as the Roman Catholic Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Anglican Church, Association of Pentecostal Churches in Rwanda, and Presbyterian Church. Religious denominations have also founded faith-based NGOs that are effective in social and economic development. These include the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Compassion International, Caritas, World Vision, and African Evangelistic Enterprise, among others.

In terms of education, some CSOs run formal schools (pre-school, primary, secondary, and tertiary); others have built new schools or renovated existing ones; and an even larger number has contributed school materials and fees for needy children. The role of FBOs, including those mentioned above, has been vital in this regard. Participants concurred on how CSOs intervening in this area have been effectively boosting adult literacy and numeracy. They mentioned the Association des Eglises de Pentecôte au Rwanda (Association of Pentecostal Churches of Rwanda, ADEPR) and ADRA in particular:

> "Our [religious] denomination operates an adult literacy and numeracy programme intended for illiterate church members. Each intake lasts six months, after which graduates embark on vocational training aimed at translating the acquired knowledge into more practical life skills and effectively confronting the related challenges. We have observed that, to some extent, this service enables those graduates to switch progressively from passive citizens who blindly follow what they are told, to active ones who attend village meetings, ask questions, and make arguments as well as suggestions on community issues." – **Participant in a FGD with FBOs, Kigali**

Other CSOs provide services in the livelihoods and farming sector by facilitating access to seeds, livestock (e.g. Girinka Programme), land, and fertilisers, as well as related capacity-building. Participants mentioned organisations such as Imbaraga, Rwanda Development Organisation (RDO), Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (RISD), *Institut Africain pour le Développement Economique et Social* (African Institute for Economic and Social Development – African Training Centre, INADES-Formation Rwanda), and CCOAIB. CSO interventions in farming greatly complement governmental efforts and shape, to some extent, the livelihoods of target beneficiaries.

However, although service delivery emerged as the area in which CSOs intervene more widely and more effectively compared to their other functions, service provision is still far from optimal. Citizens, local leaders, and CSOs converged on the fact that due to limited resources, CSOs have been unable to adequately address the needs of their respective target constituencies. Therefore, efforts should be doubled concerning resource mobilisation to fill this gap.

It also emerged that many CSOs actually prefer working in the sphere of service delivery over other functions of civil society for two reasons:

- it is seen as less risky and does not predispose CSOs to challenge decision-makers nor hold them accountable; and
- it complements local government performance contracts (imihigo) related to the provision of public services to citizens in a more tangible way than other areas.

4.3.1.2. Effectiveness of CSOs in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda through service provision

The Rwandan proverb "*uwambaye injamba ntagira ijambo*" means that, "he/she who wears rags has no right to speak". It was cited by a participant to illustrate the link between service provision and citizen participation: meaning that helping people acquire basic human needs marks the beginning of turning passive citizens into active ones. Service delivery addresses citizens' essential needs, which gives them dignity, provides them with self-confidence, and empowers them to eventually have positive attitudes toward participation and civic engagement.

Participants claimed that the more their basic needs were addressed, the greater their need for development and the higher their aspirations for rights and freedoms became. Members of CBOs particularly emphasised how having their basic human needs being met has positively impacted their self-confidence and increased their openness to other community members, as well as to civic engagement.

> "Should we get more CSOs helping us get out of poverty...then our participation in governance would increase. Since CARE brought us together and assisted us in setting up and operating micro saving and credits groups, we have been seeing tangible changes in our ability to cater for daily meals, pay mutuelle de santé, and get decent clothing. This instils self-confidence in us and enables us to attend community meetings, take the stage, and speak our minds without fear." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Nyagatare District**

> "Contributing to nation-building makes sense when citizens are able to meet their basic needs. He/she who contributes to governance is the one who can provide for the household with food, shelter, clothing, and healthcare. Micro credits received from our CBO have shaped the socioeconomic situation of our households and eventually changed our attitudes on what we are able to do." – **Participant in a FGD with CBOs, Nyanza District**

> "Let me make my own example as a person living with disability. Before a CSO offered me these crutches, I would not leave our house to go to community events or meetings like this one you are facilitating now. But since I got them, I have been attending community meetings, training sessions, and other platforms in which I express my views, needs, and concerns." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Burera District**

4.3.1.3. Challenges and limitations

Although service delivery can seemingly enhance citizen participation in governance and development, it is characterised by challenges and limitations that hamper its effectiveness. These are discussed in detail below.

Selection of service recipients: Three major issues were reported in this regard: (1) use of controversial ubudehe lists, (2) favouritism, and (3) duplication of recipients. While the use of ubudehe categorisation is largely appreciated and viewed as a fair channel of selecting vulnerable people for CSO service provision, some participants complained that, in many places, the categorisation of citizens by village assemblies was not approved by the relevant authorities. Some citizens belonging in categories 1 or 2 would reportedly be placed in incorrect categories (3 or 4), which negatively affects the inclusion of vulnerable citizens.

Furthermore, favouritism is a form of corruption reportedly observed in the selection process. In some locations, citizens alleged that local leaders (mainly village and cell leaders) and some local opinion leaders tended to either corrupt CSOs or simply mislead them in such a way that their relatives or friends were unfairly included at the expense of the most needy.

> "The big challenge relates to how some CSOs select beneficiaries; some use their personal relationships with people, while others are influenced by power relationships. It is unbelievable to find a son or a daughter of a major [military rank] or a well-off pastor on the list above poor children." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Nyagatare District**

This corruption can result in the same people continuously profiting from interventions of different CSOs, which goes against the value of integrity that should characterise CSOs.

[11] "The Government of Rwanda (GoR) introduced Imihigo as a performance based management tool to strengthen strategic planning and management and improve service delivery in the Local Government system. During the design of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) in 2006, performance contracts were fully adopted as a critical tool to create efficiency in EDPRS implementation and to improve the quality of public service delivery" (Byamukama, 2012, p. 6).

[12] FGD with women's organisations at the national level

Individual business "syndrome": While many CSOs have been established by groups of people and have governing structures/bodies comprised of groups of people, some CSOs (mainly NGOs and FBOs) are, in reality, owned and governed by natural persons. Such organisations are largely managed as individual businesses, with participants arguing that this situation is widely associated with embezzlement of funds due to a lack of or ineffective checks and balances.

> "Some CSOs are owned by individuals who run them as personal businesses. In reality, most of those organisations stand as income-generating businesses for their founders, rather than serving officially declared constituencies." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Karongi District**

Although Law No. 04/2012 of 17/02/2012 outlines the official structures and operational requirements for NGOs, this does not necessarily translate into those structures and operations being transparent and accountable.

It is worth highlighting here that Article 5 of the above law also governs foundations that "can be established by one or several persons if one of them resides in or has activities in Rwanda". It appears that there are, however, very few NGOs with a foundation status in Rwanda.

Limited resources: As interventions are donor dependent and the demand from communities is high, most CSOs, in varying degrees, are limited in both financial and human resources. This is not specific to service delivery and cuts across all areas of intervention. Limited resources in turn lead to the incapacity of CSOs to optimally intervene according to the expectations of communities and other stakeholders, including the government.

Article 4 of Law No. 04/2012 of 17/02/2012 allows NGOs to "conduct commercial activities only when it is authorized to do so and the profit from such activities is meant to be used in activities related to its objectives". The same provision requires NGOs to "abide by laws which govern registration and functioning of the commercial activities carried out by companies or cooperative societies". However, the majority of CSOs have not taken advantage of this opportunity to contribute to the sustainability of civil society due to, primarily, a lack of relevant qualifications and expertise to meet available consultancy and business requirements, and the complexities of managing companies. In addition, it appears that annual membership contributions to CSOs remain low both in quantity and regularity of payments. According to CSO representatives, such contributions are too small to support a single activity of a CSO.

It also emerged that except for contributions made to FBOs (by followers), charitable giving to CSOs is not a common practice in Rwanda. According to Transparency International Rwanda, "around one fifth or 2 in 10

[13] The ubudehe categorisation classifies all households on the basis of their social and economic situation. The categorisation uses standardised indicators developed by the MINALOC. This categorisation process is "used especially for planning and targeting of beneficiaries in pro-poor programmes and need consideration by the cabinet for further implementation" (MINALOC, 2016).

[14] Categories 3 and 4 denote households that are better off socially and economically compared to categories 1 and 2.

respondents have donated to charity over the last 12 months". This is explained partly as "a result not only of the limited economic living conditions in which many Rwandans live, but also of the fact that a culture of giving to charity is not yet developed" (2015, p. 19).

Law No. 04/2012 of 17/02/2012 also stipulates that some CSOs can get financial support from the government. As per Article 12, "the government shall include in its national budget funds meant for supporting national non-governmental organisations". Since 2013, through a programme called "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance in Rwanda", three government grants have been given to CSOs via the RGB with the support of One United Nations Rwanda, on a call-for-proposals basis. Phase 1 commenced in 2013 with 45 CSOs, and Phase 2 was launched in 2017 (Gerald, 2017, p. 20). In October 2017, 12 CSOs were awarded a total of 300,000,000 Rwandan Francs (RWF) (25,000,000 RWF per organisation) (RGB, 2017). While CSOs commended the government and One United Nations for such grants, there was a feeling among some that the grants go to already healthy organisations, with the number of selected CSOs remaining low due to limited funds.

Although this financial support has been helping CSOs implement some activities, it is still far from relieving CSOs from high donor dependency. In addition, some grants allocated by the RGB to CSOs also come from donors (as the above example). Some participants argued that in a bid to increase such funding, the Rwandan government should consider allocating funds to CSOs via the national budget. Alternatively, some governmental institutions should collaborate with CSOs to implement selected programmes, such as ones concerned with social protection, human rights, reconciliation, local government capacity-building, and environmental protection. These institutions can provide financial support while CSOs can avail the technical expertise.

Moreover, limited finances are partly due to the incapacity of some CSOs to draft well-written and substantive proposals to meet eligibility criteria and thus be successful in obtaining grants. Donors especially consider this an important hindrance.

> "We set criteria and guidelines to fund certain projects, but some CSOs fail to articulate their activities due to different reasons. They include language barriers: English is new in Rwanda; sometimes the time frame for proposals is quick; some proposals are not quite informed by citizens' needs; lack of gender mainstreaming in the proposals." – **KII with a donor, Kigali**

[15] Article 2 defines a NGO as "an organisation which is comprised of natural persons or of autonomous collective voluntary organisations whose aim is to improve economic, social and cultural development and to advocate for public interests of a certain group, natural persons, organisations or with the view of promoting common interest of their members". Furthermore, Article 5 states that, "national non-governmental organisations may be founded by at least three (3) persons". Article 6 further stipulates that every NGO should have, among other things, an organ and mechanisms for conflict resolution, an organ in charge of administration and financial audit, a hierarchy of organs, and competence in making decisions. Article 18, meanwhile, mentions "the general assembly which appoint[s] the legal representative of the organisation and the signatures of all the members that attend such a general assembly meeting".

Some CSOs lack staff members with the relevant skills to develop quality proposals, signalling an urgent need for CSOs to be empowered in proposal writing.

Unbalanced geographical coverage: While efforts are increasing to coordinate CSO interventions through the JADF, it emerged that some locations (cells and sectors) have no experience with CSO interventions, except for FBOs, the focus of which is mainly on spiritual matters. In the words of the executive secretary of the Rwerere sector in Burera District:

> **"To the best of my knowledge, there has not been any NGO interventions in this sector, not until two years ago when Save the Children and Umuhuza [mediator] started operating here."**

Article 3 of the Prime Minister's Instructions No. 003/03 of 03/07/2015 stipulates that one of JADF's mission is to "*coordinat[e]…stakeholders' interventions in decentralized entities*". However, this finding challenges JADF's effectiveness in fulfilling this mission.

4.3.2. Awareness-raising and skills-building: successes and gaps in citizenship education

This sub-section examines the effectiveness of CSOs in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda through citizenship education and capacity-building, as well as related challenges and limitations.

4.3.2.1 Effectiveness of CSOs in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda through citizenship education and capacity-building

Citizen participation in governance and development processes is not automatic. Citizens need to meet minimal requirements to effectively participate in those processes. Public or citizen education stands among the core conditions to effective and inclusive citizen participation.

It emerged that some CSOs make tangible efforts in building the capacity of their constituencies in matters pertaining to their areas of intervention through various channels and forms of public education, including training sessions and awareness-raising campaigns (via community meetings such as umuganda and village assembly meetings). Some CSOs also use platforms such as broadcast media, and community and school dialogue spaces/clubs.

However, it was also found that CSOs execute the function of citizen education more from a development perspective, more specifically, for socioeconomic development purposes (livelihoods, poverty alleviation, quality healthcare, social cohesion). This is a legitimate and relevant approach for a poor country striving to overcome the consequences of genocide and other destructive mass atrocities. Participants revealed that there are few CSOs whose work focuses – at least partly – on public education from a governance perspective.

A governance perspective, however, is crucial for a sustainable political culture of participation, given that citizens need to possess attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enable them to be active citizens. In other words, citizens need the capacity to help them identity, articulate, and communicate their needs and concerns;

designate their leaders democratically; demand accountability; and take relevant actions accordingly. This is particularly relevant in Rwanda where many citizens obeyed and 'blindly' followed leaders at different levels to carry out the genocide against the Tutsi, which claimed around a million lives and destroyed a lot of social and economic infrastructure.

One example of a CSO that adopts a governance perspective in respect to citizenship education is NAR, which facilitates youth clubs and competitions in secondary schools and higher learning institutions with the aim of instilling critical thinking attitudes and practices, public speaking, and civic participation. Since 2015, NAR has been facilitating community citizen forums in 10 districts with the aim of raising citizens' awareness on their role in governance and development processes, and empowering them with the relevant skills to identify and objectively analyse community issues, propose solutions, and engage in dialogue with decision-makers to advocate for desired change.

In a similar vein, organisations such as Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe, Haguruka, Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), CLADHO, Transparency International Rwanda, and LAF have been educating citizens on laws and policies, namely those related to succession, land rights, gender-based violence (GBV), women's rights, and other citizens' rights.

> "CSOs educate us in various matters. I attended training sessions organised by World Vision, CARE, and Red Cross on hygiene and sanitation, environmental protection, and group formation and facilitation. This has shaped my knowledge, attitudes, and confidence vis-à-vis the environment and civic engagement. At times local leaders and community health workers request my support in community mobilisation on various issues. I also facilitate the community's engagement with local leaders on community issues." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Gisagara District**

However, although these few CSOs educate citizens on certain laws and policies, this was not found to be widespread. Citizens in many of the locations covered by this study complained that their respective CSOs – irrespective of their area of intervention – do not educate them on the laws and policies that affect their lives.

4.3.2.2 Challenges and limitations

A number of challenges were identified relating to civil society's effectiveness in raising the awareness of their constituencies and thereby boosting their participation in governance and development. These are summarised in detail below.

Beneficiaries' limited participation in defining their capacity-building needs: The content of capacity-building is mostly defined by CSOs rather than being beneficiary oriented. Some CSOs do not conduct needs assessments prior to planning and implementing capacity-building activities. Moreover, needs assessments alone do not necessarily address actual priority needs of target groups in a particular period of time, as the latter are not involved in determining the content.

Limited financial and human resources (both in quality and quantity): Raising citizens' awareness on specific issues and building their capacity from a participation viewpoint requires both human and financial resources. Considering the high donor dependency and limited permanent staff with expertise in relevant areas of capacity-building, some CSOs carry out such efforts on an ad hoc basis, hence not intervening consistently in this area.

Focus on project-based interventions: CSO representatives highlighted that the majority of donors provide funding on a project basis (for 1–2 years). These short-term interventions can hamper, to some extent, the continuity and consistency of interventions. This is because most of the time ends up being spent on CSOs searching for and pursuing funding opportunities and reporting at the expense of conducting a recipients' needs assessment and investing in the sustainability of their interventions' outcomes.

"Is there any allowance?" – Compensation dependence: Working with and for communities in both poor and post-genocide contexts has always been challenging. One of the critical issues relates to citizens' socioeconomic vulnerability. After the genocide, this vulnerability was so acute that most of the then existing and emerging CSOs felt it was unethical to spend half or a full day working with citizens without compensating them for their time. This compensation, generally called "insimburamubyizi", took the form of a transport allowance.

While activities requiring the attendance and participation of citizens (constituents) are meant for the same people (hence, profitable to them), attendance is increasingly dependent on compensation. Even focal points and some local leaders that are asked to help identify and recruit participants/beneficiaries tend to question whether there will be compensation prior to inviting citizens to attend CSO activities. Generally this happens when such activities do not include service delivery. Awareness-raising campaigns, capacity-building workshops, FGDs, community dialogue sessions, among others, are particularly affected by the 'compensation syndrome'. Compensation is depended on to such an extent that in many cases, citizens – especially those with previous experience with CSOs – will not attend activities without a guarantee of compensation.

> "Citizens' dependence [on compensation] is a big challenge for CSOs. When some citizens are called to attend a meeting or a training they ask if there will be compensation in terms of money." ¬– **Participant in a FGD with youth organisations, Kigali**

16 A local NGO that "aims to foster a culture of peace through education focusing on educating parents of young children to promote improved childhood development and create peaceful citizen" (see About, 2017).

17 Some examples of these include human rights organisations (AJPRODHO, CLADHO); governance-oriented organisations (Transparency International Rwanda, NAR); women's and children's rights organisations (Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe, Haguruka, Rwanda Women's Network); and organisations that promote and defend the rights of special groups such as genocide survivors, PWDs, and historically marginalised people (Ibuka, AERG, NUDOR).

As a result, many CSO budgets for field activities generally include a transport fee line. While in some cases, citizens' attendance incurs actual transport costs that should be refunded, some compensation fees can rightfully be disputed. The challenge is around determining whether citizens have an actual interest in such activities or are merely in it for the compensation.

While there was not any consensus on the compensation issue, there was a high level of consensus among participants that citizens' dependence on compensation has the potential to jeopardise both ownership of CSO interventions and their sustainability.

> "Some of our members that we invite to attend training sessions aimed to build their capacities do not show up when they know there will not be any transport compensation. This not only hampers our planning but also challenges the sustainability of our work. There is no hope that community-based spaces that we facilitate will keep operating and impacting after the project phase-out." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

4.3.3. Giving a voice to the voiceless and shaping policies: the weaker side of civil society

In this sub-section we examine the effectiveness of civil society in influencing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda through voicing the voiceless and shaping policies, as well as related challenges and limitations.

4.3.3.1. Effectiveness of civil society in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of Rwanda through giving a voice to the voiceless and shaping policies

Although providing a voice to the voiceless and shaping policies emerged among the core expectation of civil society, participants in all categories perceive this as the least effective function of CSOs in Rwanda.

First and foremost, many participants concurred on the fact that voicing the concerns of the voiceless does not appear to be among the priority areas of intervention or major intervention strategies for the bulk of CSOs. Interestingly, some CSOs that have advocacy among their core intervention strategies or approaches do not seem to apply it in practice. Participants, almost unanimously, claimed that just a few CSOs – whether at the local or central government levels – play this role in a way that eventually brings about solutions to issues faced by citizens. These include a few national NGOs, INGOs, and a few broadcast media houses.

The following CSOs were among those mentioned: Transparency International Rwanda (on issues of corruption and injustice); Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe and Haguruka (on women's and children's rights, land issues); CLADHO (issues pertaining to citizen participation, human rights, and early pregnancy); Action Aid Rwanda (GBV, citizen participation, access to quality services); Imbaraga (farmers' issues); CARE (voluntary saving and lending associations); LAF (legal matters); and NAR (citizen participation). Most of these organisations conduct research and community dialogue to collect evidence-based information to back their advocacy endeavours. They also hold customised and public meetings with targeted decision-makers and participate in media talk shows, among other advocacy channels and strategies.

> "We contribute in mitigating the issue of corruption in public sector staff recruitment. We advocate for the use of a camera during recruitment interviews, as there have been many allegations and accusations of injustice, bribery, and nepotism. This was eventually adopted and I think that there is significant improvement in this regard. Of course, this cannot be imputed to our own efforts. Many stakeholders were involved." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

> "We took the lead in advocating for the change from the six weeks maternity leave, as stipulated in the 2009 labour law, to at least 12 weeks. This change was recently effected in the new labour law. I would not claim that we achieved it alone, we synergised with many actors." – **KII with a women's CSO representative, Kigali**

> "Our organisation has started advocating for the integration of sign language in public events such as meetings, conferences, and in local government structures. This will help the hearing impaired and the mentally challenged to interact with others, participate in discussions, share their concerns, and request services." – **Participant in a FGD with PWDs, Kigali**

Some broadcast media outlets are also playing an increasingly important role in voicing the concerns of the voiceless on both individual and community issues. Participants mentioned, for example, TV and Radio One, Radio Isango Star and Isango TV, Radio and TV 10, Flash FM, Rwanda Broadcasting Agency TV, Radio Rwanda, Pax Press, and selected private and community radios. This concurs with the study by NAR and Interpeace (2016), which also commends the progressive efforts of these media outlets to serve as relevant channels for citizen participation in governance;

> "Some media outlets do advocate for citizens' issues. We engage them on issues pertaining to their daily life and to public policies that affect them. For example, at TV One we constantly reach out to community members; they tell us the issues they face and request us to advocate for them. In turn, we engage relevant decision-makers through phone calls, and we conduct due follow-up." – **Participant in a FGD with journalists, Kigali**

Some of these media outlets produce specific talk shows that are citizen centred, using call-ins, short messaging systems, and social media (Facebook, Twitter) to engage citizens on both community and national issues.

Furthermore, some CSOs are contacted individually or sometimes collectively on policy issues at the national level. These include: Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe, Haguruka, CLADHO, LAF, the RCSP, and NAR. The latter organisation was among those contacted to provide comments/inputs on the draft National Policy on CSOs during the course of this study (June 2018).

Some CSOs may also take advantage of the National Umushyikirano Council to channel citizens' needs and concerns. For example, the Roman Catholic Bishop, Servilien Nzakamwita brought to the attention of the 14th National Umushyikirano Council held in December 2016, the issue of rising domestic violence. This sparked active discussions that extended to other official platforms. For instance, one of the resolutions of the 14th National Leadership Retreat was to "develop strategies to promote family moral authority and to prevent and fight against gender-based violence and eradicate violence against children" (Prime Minister's Office, 2017, p. 3). More tangible actions aimed at addressing the issue of domestic violence are still being awaited.

However, not many CSOs have been able to resort to such high profile decision-making mechanisms to shape policy-making and be the voice of the voiceless. The selection of CSOs (among other eligible categories) to attend the National Umushyikirano Council is a prerogative of the president (Article 140 of the Rwandan Constitution), which results in a limited number of CSOs attending this platform. There is also no evidence to suggest that many CSOs act proactively to collect citizens' needs and concerns and use other available options such as social media and phone calls to feed the agenda and discussions during the Council. And whereas CSO representatives commended the fact that civil society is recognised by the Constitution as far as the National Umushyikirano Council is concerned, they highlighted a further representation gap.

> "Those who attend it in the name of CSOs, especially umbrella organisations and the RCSP, do not conduct prior consultations with member organisations to collect and agree on major issues to present to the council. In such a context, I do not think that CSO representation is effective." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

In addition, despite the National Umushyikirano Council proving itself as a credible national dialogue and decision-making platform, some CSOs do not consider it as the most preferred mechanism to conduct their advocacy due to the large number of participants and short time span (two days). CSOs should therefore take advantage of other state-established mechanisms or their own spaces as complementary channels of advocacy.

Alongside the use of research as an advocacy strategy, Transparency International Rwanda, whose work aims to contribute to the fight against corruption and injustice in Rwanda, introduced an innovative way of providing a voice for the voiceless and shaping public policies:

> "As part of our advocacy strategies, we successfully resolved to the signing of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with key actors in the public sector. As of now, we have MoUs with the Rwanda National Police, National Public Prosecution Authority, Office of the Ombudsman, and district authorities. We provide those institutions with useful information from the citizens and the former use it to make further steps and take relevant actions accordingly. For instance, citizens trust us and give us information on actual or potential cases of corruption and injustices, but we do not have power to arrest and prosecute the suspects. This approach has been fruitful to both our organisation and those institutions." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

Overall, the study revealed that even the few CSOs that are actively involved in advocacy do not necessarily act as policy agenda setters. Very few initiate policy debates that eventually result in actual policy formulation or revision, while others only get involved when they are invited or approached by relevant policy-makers. They are therefore considered as being reactive rather than proactive. Moreover, participants largely believe that the majority of CSOs, be it at the national or local level, do not take advantage of existing state-established citizen participation mechanisms (both direct and indirect) through which they interact with decision-makers to voice the voiceless or spark policy-oriented discussions. For example, CSOs are not represented in district councils, which are the primary decision-making networks at the local government level. The only official framework in which CSOs interact with district authorities is the JADF, which is a planning and coordination forum and not a decision-making one, resulting in weak influence of CSOs on decision-making at the local level.

Some CSOs claimed that they only obtain knowledge about new or revised policies after they have been adopted.

> "In many cases, we do not get timely information on laws and policy drafts which relate to citizens' lives. We get to know about them after they have been passed by the parliament or adopted by the cabinet, that is when it is too late to influence them." – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Kigali**

4.3.3.2 Challenges and limitations

Despite providing a voice for the voiceless and shaping public policy being recognised among the core functions of civil society, a number of challenges and limitations can explain why the majority of CSOs are not successful in this regard, resulting in citizen participation being curtailed. These are outlined in detail below.

[18] Law No. 66/2018 of 30/08/2018 regulating labour in Rwanda

Differing understandings of civil society functions: It emerged from discussions that different categories of participants do not have the same understanding of what CSOs owe their respective constituencies and citizens at large. While citizens have a great range of expectations including expressing the concerns of the voiceless, holding leaders to account, and shaping public policies, some CSO representatives, especially those at the district level, confessed they are not aware of these. Some believe that their role is limited to service provision and capacity-building, while others think that there are specific organisations that are meant to deliver on such expectations. Due to this, the CSOs interviewed as part of this study committed to consider integrating these functions in their strategic planning:

> "In our capacity as FBOs, let us confess that we have not focused on voicing the voiceless so far. We have primarily invested in evangelisation and service provision. Why do citizens resort, through phone calls, to Transparency International Rwanda or broadcast media such as TV One, but not to FBOs or other CSOs, on advocacy issues? It is because they find them relevant and effective in this regard. Let us now reconsider our responsibilities towards citizens and act accordingly." – **Participant in a FGD with FBOs, Kigali**

Future assessments should reveal whether or not this commitment was translated into action.

Conducting advocacy and demanding accountability from leaders considered risky: As some leaders are not receptive to reports or information on issues they have not addressed – whether by choice or unwittingly – they therefore perceive CSOs bringing those issues to their attention as confrontational. In other cases, CSOs that rely on actual or expected support of leaders deliberately avoid working on 'confrontational' or 'challenging' areas, including advocacy and demanding accountability:

> "There is fear which induces self-censorship when it comes to conducting advocacy on citizen issues or holding some leaders accountable. Owners of some media houses consider only publishing news that has no potential to attract retribution or jeopardise interests of their TV or radio outlets." – **Participant in a FGD with journalists, Kigali**

> "There are some risks associated with conducting advocacy. A fellow CSO carried out research that revealed that there was a serious malnutrition problem in their area. The finding challenged the official figures and narrative, and the leaders nearly harassed that organisation. Do you think that such an incident sends an encouraging message to other CSOs to conduct advocacy?" – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Northern Province**

Lack of collaboration between CSOs: Considering the skills, expertise, and experience required for and the risks associated with advocacy activities, collaboration and coalition of actors offers arguably greater likelihood of credibility and success. This proves to be more relevant in a post-conflict and post-genocide context like Rwanda, where there still may be some suspicion between individuals on the one hand, and between institutional actors on the other. Some CSO representatives confessed that there is no collaboration between CSO actors to conduct collective action including advocacy on citizens', community, and national issues.

> "Even the few that carry out advocacy efforts often tend to do it on an individual basis rather than with fellow CSOs. This is due mainly to limited trust among those organisations and the risk associated with advocacy." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

> "We, as CSOs, still operate in isolation and have no collaboration especially in the area of advocacy. Besides the JADF, CSOs have no other platform to share information and synergise, particularly on advocacy matters." – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Musanze District**

This concurs with a recent study by AJPRODHO on CSOs' cooperation and engagement with other CSOs to influence decisions in Rwanda. It suggests that: "the general perception is that there seems to be more competition among NGOs than cooperation, and that donors tend to find that activities undertaken by organisations working in consortia are better able to take advantage of the various strengths of each organisation" (2018, p. 150). Similarly, Costantini, Verdecchia, and Rutayisire argue that, "even if platforms and umbrella organisations exist, it is difficult to perceive a 'civil society voice' in Rwanda. Each CSO seems to be alone when the need emerges of having support from other CSOs" (2013, p. 29).

A question worth posing in this regard is who should take the lead in initiating advocacy networks. In the case of Rwanda, umbrella organisations may be in the best position to do this. In the same vein, CSOs working in the same thematic area may initiate a collaborative approach with voluntary membership.

Although the collaborative approach also has some disadvantages (such as slower decision-making processes, limiting individual organisation visibility), it remains suitable for a context in which advocacy is perceived by CSOs as being risky. However, it is important to consider the credibility of CSOs. As a Southern Voices on Climate Change report puts it, "if one member has problems, there can be guilt by association; one member can hurt the coalition as a whole" (n.d., p. 2).

Limited resources: As advocacy comes with specific aims, techniques, and methodologies, it therefore requires relevant resources (human, financial, time). More importantly, advocacy makes sense when it is backed by strong and reliable evidence. However, according to CSO representatives, some CSOs are not equipped with staff members who have the skills and experience to conduct research or collect quality and reliable evidence, or staff members with the technical skills and experience to undertake an advocacy exercise. These types of limited human resources can result in CSOs being ineffective in their research and advocacy work. This

[19] AFor example 2,000 people physically attended the 2018 Council, excluding those who participated through social media and phone calls from Rwanda and abroad (*see President Kagame opens Umushyikirano 2018, delivers State of the Nation Address, 2018*).

concurs with a finding from a study by Nizeyimana, which suggests that CSOs in Rwanda face "a lack of skilled and competent staff in charge of policy research and public policy advocacy" (2013, p. 66). The same study highlights that a lack of advocacy strategy, a written public policy monitoring plan, and advocacy plans and budget for their implementation are among the major challenges for CSOs to shape public policy in Rwanda (Nizeyimana, 2013).

Underestimating the cost of advocacy exercises: Some CSOs are not aware of what it takes to conduct a successful advocacy exercise. They think it is just about 'meeting the decision-maker in the office and making a request on the intended change'. Therefore, CSOs may not consider including real costs of intended advocacy in their planning, hence eventually giving up on it in the course of implementation, as it becomes too expensive.

'Secret diplomacy' – the civil society feedback issue: In democratic governance, citizen representatives and other groups that are mandated to represent citizens and advocate for them owe the latter feedback ¬– regardless of whether their endeavours have been successful or not. Most of the citizens involved in this research complained that the few CSOs that carry out advocacy efforts often do not provide feedback to their respective constituencies. This lack of feedback may be contributing, to some extent, to the general opinion that CSOs are not sufficiently involved in providing a voice for the voiceless and influencing policy-making in Rwanda. In response to this, some CSO representatives argued that they choose 'secret diplomacy' as a modus operandi:

> "What matters for us is the change we bring about or contribute to, rather than publicity about it. We engage with decision-makers face-to-face and strive to influence policies. Providing feedback [to our constituency] would be perceived as popularising and self-attributing the impact, yet we worked closely with government officials. Secret diplomacy helps avoid any confrontation and it is our choice as it fits better with the post-genocide context." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

While the sentiment captured in the above quote may be understandable, there is a need for CSOs to find a balance between the two imperatives. An advocacy approach that seeks to be successful without (or with less) confrontation is ideal. However, CSOs that are involved in such efforts owe at least minimal feedback to their constituencies, which, in turn, should confer credit to those CSOs, hence resulting in greater legitimacy.

Interestingly, although they tend to practise 'secret diplomacy', some CSOs complained that on Accountability Day, organised by districts, their role in the implementation of the district imihigo was not acknowledged;

> "CSOs are among the key stakeholders in the implementation of imihigo at the district level. However, when district authorities communicate their achievements [through imihigo] to citizens, often they do not recognise our role. This is one of the reasons as to why some citizens are not aware of what we do." – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Kigali**

Limited follow-up: When conducting advocacy and influencing policy, ultimate success comes when the change eventually happens. However, some CSOs that embark on advocacy activities tend to confuse some outputs – such as personal meetings with leaders or convening big policy dialogue events – with expected changes. These CSOs are often excited about reporting on such outputs and commitments and fail to plan for follow-up actions to ensure that they translate those commitments into tangible changes. Although such advocacy activities may not be conducted completely in vain – as they can at least raise awareness – there is a danger of them ending halfway through the process due to a lack of follow-up.

Belief of leaders that CSOs are donor driven: CSO interventions depend largely on donor funding, mainly due to a lack of effective internal revenue generating mechanisms for CSOs, hardly any funding from the private sector in Rwanda, and insufficient funding from the government (currently channelled via the RGB).

Generally, CSOs draft and submit their funding proposals following calls for proposals from interested donors. Once the funding is successfully secured, CSOs embark on a planning and implementation phase. Only at this stage do CSOs start involving various stakeholders, including authorities of the districts in which the funded projects are meant to be implemented. Government officials, particularly local leaders, complained that sometimes such projects do not reflect local realities and when some inputs and suggestions are made, CSOs are not flexible, justifying it with the fact that projects are already approved by donors and funded. Local leaders unanimously feel that the donor-driven nature of CSOs comes at the expense of local needs and priorities in both planning and budgeting.

While CSOs recognise their high dependency on donor funding, they claim that their proposals are not informed merely by calls for proposals, but also by their constituencies' needs, as well as by various research and institutional reports. It also emerged that donors are aware of and recognise the primacy of citizens' needs in CSO interventions, and assert that they lodge their strategic plans for approval with the Rwandan government and that these respond to national priorities.

> "We tailor our programmes to the needs of the country we are working in; we get information from government officials like the MINALOC, local NGOs, police, and research reports. We get money from taxpayers and we may not have a lot of freedom to spend it anyhow, they give us money and tell us where to orient it. We are accountable to our tax payers." – **KII with a donor, Kigali**

[20] AJPRODHO's study (2018) also explored the major factors hampering such collaboration, which include: (1) vulnerability of CSOs and networks due to competition for funding; (2) lack of research, advocacy, and networking skills; (3) inadequate/lack of consultation of CSO members by their networks on advocacy projects and decision-making concerning network members; (4) inadequate engagement of CSOs with their networks on advocacy projects that relate to the mandate of the network; (5) mechanisms of existing collaborations are not mutually beneficial; (6) insufficient financial resources to support the cooperation; (7) lack of communication and coordination between organisations within the umbrella group; and (8) lack of cooperation due to social tensions and mistrust among CSOs.

Competing roles between umbrella and member organisations: According to CCOAIB, "umbrella groups in Rwanda are generally formed to encourage cooperation as well as to serve as a space for CSOs to exchange information, coordinate activities and present a united voice in interactions with the government and donors" (AJPRODHO, 2018, p. 13). However, representatives of umbrella member organisations claimed that, in practice, some umbrella organisations focus less on those functions and instead design and implement projects that compete with those implemented by member organisations.

> "I do not see any reason as to why our organisation should keep the membership with and pay an annual membership fee to [name of umbrella organisation no. 1 omitted], while we compete over donors' funding opportunities to implement projects initially meant for member organisations! Instead, we are proud of our membership with [name of umbrella organisation no. 2 omitted] as the returns are obvious in terms of both advocacy and capacity-building." – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Kigali**

> "Some umbrella organisations are largely intervening in service delivery as member organisations do, at the expense of their core functions of advocacy, coordination, and capacity-building. This questions their relevance to us." – **Participant in a FGD with women's organisations, Kigali**

Although some representatives of umbrella organisations acknowledge this challenge, they justify it by claiming that donors often do not financially support proposals in some areas of their focus.

> "Donors are not largely excited to support funding proposals on coordination and research activities. For the sake of ensuring the survival and functioning of the organisation, we mobilise funds on service delivery projects that are most likely to be funded." – **Representative of an umbrella organisation during a FGD with CSOs, Kigali**

The same argument was echoed by the chairperson of one umbrella organisation during a FGD held in Kigali:

> **"Umbrellas' work should primarily focus on advocacy and not on service delivery, which is the function of single organisations. However, due to funding limitations [umbrellas] switch to service delivery. Furthermore, donors tend to grant funding to CSOs without distinguishing umbrellas from single organisations in terms of areas of interventions; this constitutes an important challenge."**

Donors, meanwhile, acknowledged that when proposals come in, they consider CSOs equally. In other words, they do not make a distinction between umbrella organisations and single organisations. However, they reject the claim that they discriminate on some areas of umbrella organisations' interventions.

> "Our calls for proposals and our selection criteria give priority to a proposal's relevance, substance, and potential impact. No distinction is made between umbrella and member organisations." – **KII with a donor, Kigali**

> "Research is the core component of calls for proposals for our programmes and a big budget is oriented toward it. It always comes first. We fund research for exploration; projects in my office are informed by research. We prefer research activities to inform the implementation. I would not agree with umbrellas that contend that we do not grant funding to research activities." – **KII with a donor, Kigali**

> "Some umbrella organisations are not relevant, particularly in advocacy areas. It is hard to know what they stand for. Should they be relevant and submit substantial proposals, they would arguably get our funding." – **KII with a donor, Kigali**

Perspectives of various participants thus challenge the relevance of umbrella organisations. Umbrella organisations should not be mere additions to CSOs. They need to make a difference by emphasising the intervention areas they were established for. However, it is the responsibility of member organisations to hold their umbrella organisations accountable if expectations are not met. Donor organisations should also consider making a distinction between umbrella and single organisations when developing calls for proposals to ensure that funding does not promote competition between the two categories. An emphasis should be placed on scrutinising the areas of intervention that umbrella proposals intend to focus on. Additionally, the National Policy on CSOs (in review) should provide clear guidance on the roles and responsibilities of umbrella organisations and single organisations.

A particular challenge emerged in relation to the RCSP. In the words of one participant:

> "In the past, members of the platform used to be single organisations. These were grouped by clusters or areas of interventions. This had the potential to be useful to members. Recently, membership to the platform became open only to umbrella organisations, hence excluding single organisations. As a result, its legitimacy and moral authority gradually eroded given that not all single CSOs are necessarily members of those umbrella organisations." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

The legitimacy of the RCSP is at risk if membership is restricted to umbrella organisations in a context wherein some umbrella organisations have limited legitimacy toward their members on account of failing to fulfil their expected functions. A single organisation-based membership may have the potential to increase the platform's inclusiveness and legitimacy. However, it is the effectiveness of the RCSP to advocate for members' needs, build their capacity, and coordinate their interventions that will largely confer real and sustainable moral authority and credibility to it in the eyes of member organisations, the government, and the donor community.

Unstable strategic orientations of CSOs: All CSOs are expected to have a specific vision, mission, strategic pillars or areas of interventions, and core values. A clearly defined mission serves as the foundation and frame of reference for all activities and organisational planning of the CSO. However, some participants, especially local leaders and donors, accused some CSOs of having unstable strategic orientations (i.e. constantly changing their areas of interventions in a way that compromises their focus and identity). It was argued that this situation is caused primarily by a lack of or limited financial resources, which challenges the sustainability of those organisations.

> "Some CSOs do not have a stable focus; they change their mission according to the funds available." – **KII with a donor, Kigali**

Changing the mission and strategic orientation may hamper citizen participation, given that switching from one mission or strategic focus to another entails changing constituencies. Thus, CSOs lack consistency and their recipients are likely to be confused, not being able to figure out which service or assistance they should request from which organisation.

In addition, it should be the responsibility of CSO general assemblies or other oversight organs and institutions (e.g. the RGB) to ensure that CSOs abide by their missions and strategic orientations. Although there is no legally binding provision against CSOs changing their mission/focus, the laws governing national NGOs, FBOs, and INGOs specify three important points in this regard:

(1) statutes of a national NGO shall provide the mission and activities of the organisation, among other things;

(2) the application letter for a temporary certificate of registration for a national NGO shall be accompanied by the authenticated statute, among other things; and

(3) every organisation shall have the responsibility "to notify the competent authority changes concerning the statute, the legal representative and the head office".

Based on the above, it is clear that CSOs should notify the RGB of changing missions and strategic orientations. Likewise, member organisations should hold umbrellas to account when they intervene in areas other than

[21] A day that happens biannually during which leaders at different levels have to transparently account to the public how different government programmes have been implemented (Premier on "Government Accountability Day", 2011).

those that they were established for. However, flexibility should apply, for example, in a situation whereby the issues initially faced by CSO target groups are no longer relevant for the mission, or when there are critical emerging social problems that call for a societal response. Similarly, when a CSO has grown in size and work output, it can expand its strategic orientation without necessarily changing its mission.

Hard versus soft interventions of CSOs: differing understanding between CSOs and local authorities:

It emerged that some local authorities expect CSOs to focus more on service delivery in terms of tangible or "hard" interventions (for example education, health, socioeconomic) rather than "soft" interventions (for instance) awareness raising, rights, critical thinking, public speaking, problem analysis, advocacy);

> "When you meet with some local leaders to tell them that you are coming to empower citizens in how they could better participation in public affairs, these leaders argue that this is not tangible", **FGD with CSOs, Gisagara District**

> "Many local leaders get excited when CSOs interventions contribute to one cow per poor family programme, building classrooms or mutuelle de santé, but feel reluctant when you come to promote citizen participation", **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

Such an attitude is mainly driven by the need for local authorities to see CSOs contribute to the implementation of district imihigo (contract performance). Participants representing CSOs maintained that in many cases, district imihigo include outputs-based targets which generally relate to tangible (hard) deliverables, while some CSOs work consists in changing attitudes and or behaviours of boundary partners vis-à-vis specific policy issues. This attitude therefore discourages some CSOs that intend to intervene in citizenship education and advocacy. This calls therefore for local authorities to understand the relevance of "soft" interventions for both governance and development processes. CSOs should advocate for the change of this understanding.

The new law governing the RGB leading to potential conflicts of interest: In Rwanda, three major components of civil society – national NGOs, INGOs, and FBOs – register with and are monitored by the RGB. Initially, this institution was governed by Law No. 41/2011 of 30/09/2011 establishing the Rwanda Governance Board and determining its mission, organisation and functioning. In 2016, this law was replaced by Law No. 56/2016 of 16/12/2016. One of the major merits of the new law is its potential to strengthen the independence of RGB based on its nature, mission, and powers. According to the former law, RGB was "a public agency with legal personality, administrative and financial autonomy" and was " managed in accordance with laws governing public institutions". However, the new law describes this institution as "independent" and states that "in the exercise of its mission, RGB shall not receive instructions from any other institution". The major peculiarities of the RGB's mission, as per Article 5 of this law, include the following:

- "grant legal personality to local NGOs and FBOs and to monitor whether their operations comply with the law;

- register INGOs and monitor their operations;
- give pre-authorization and follow up studies and research carried out in Rwanda on governance and home grown solutions whether by a Rwandan or foreigner; submit annually to the president, to the parliament, and both chambers its action plan and activity report with a copy thereof to other public institutions provided for under this law."

Despite the advantages of this law, it also raises some concern. Some participants, especially representatives of CSOs that put an emphasis on research, said that the mission to "conduct research on governance in Rwanda" and, at the same time, to "give pre-authorization and follow up studies and research carried out in Rwanda on governance and home grown solutions", has the potential for conflicts of interest.

> "Playing the two roles is like being the judge and jury. It may not be fair that an institution has the mandate to conduct research on a specific area and be the one to grant authorisation to other researchers in the same area." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

> "It has not happened yet, but the risk for conflicts of interest is high. It might happen in case a research conducted by a CSO or any other researcher comes up with findings that do not support those from a study by the RGB. It is not definite that the RGB will grant that CSO or researcher another research permit in the future." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

> "This is a serious hindrance to CSO work. There is definitely a conflict of interest. The NISR has been effectively reviewing research protocols and granting authorisation to researchers and research institutions. The same institution should keep doing so instead of the RGB." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

Commenting on this concern, the RGB's head of political parties and CSO department argued that there is a big gap in research areas in Rwanda due a small number of professional policy researchers/analysts. This has led to government institutions carrying out research to fill this gap. He highlighted that the more professional and independent research Rwanda has to inform its policies, the less the government will be involved in conducting research. Concerning the issue of pre-authorising other researchers, both institutional and individual, he stated that:

> "The RGB regularly conducts two specific governance assessments, that is, the Governance Score Card and Citizen Report Card, which is in connection with our mandate to monitor service delivery in Rwanda. There are no independent organisations that have such assessment frameworks. The former framework draws largely from credible research reports conducted by other institutions and organisations. The very fact that we consider using those reports is a sound indicator that we cannot compromise the research undertaken by those institutions because we complement each other... Additionally, it is not only the RGB that issues research authorisation; the NISR and some other institutions also do on topics that relate to their respective mission."

Considering the "one stop centre" approach that the Rwandan government has adopted as a strategy to boost quality service delivery, and the need to avoid potential conflicts of interest, the NISR could serve as one stop centre for all research permit applicants without pre-authorisation requirements from other public institutions. This would therefore imply that NISR staff is technically equipped to play this role more effectively. However, this should not compromise the usual practice of consultation with line institutions that also have the responsibility to monitor research conducted in their respective fields. In addition, this one stop centre might not be responsible for issuing ethical clearance, which would remain within the scope of the National Ethics Committee.

'Strong' and 'resilient' government versus a reactive rather than a proactive civil society: Both CSOs and governments in Rwanda operate in an environment striving to address the bitter legacy of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis. Since the end of the genocide, the new government (which resulted mainly from a revolutionary force) alongside its partners undertook the challenging journey of national rebuilding and development. It emerged from this study that to overcome the legacy of the genocide and the development challenge, the government not only resorts to home-grown approaches, but also endeavours to promote self-reliance by reducing its dependence on foreign aid. In many regards and despite obvious challenges, various assessments suggested government's progressive effectiveness especially in service delivery, economic development and reconciliation processes (RGB, 2016c; 2017; National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

Some participants especially from academia argued that this is a resilience strategy the government has adopted to act effectively and in a timely manner. While participants commend this government strategy which makes it "strong" and "resilient", they highlighted that it has produced side effects for CSO effectiveness in terms of providing a voice for the voiceless. Such progressive effectiveness instils government self-confidence and high citizens' confidence in the government in a way that, to some extent, affects negatively the legitimacy and moral authority of the civil society.

> "This strategy has made the government so strong and resilient that CSOs lag behind and tend to be reactive rather than proactive. In such a situation, the moral authority of CSOs proves to be low in terms of citizen participation especially in advocacy area." ¬–
> **FGD with academia, Kigali**

Yet the role of the civil society in enhancing citizen participation is highly needed because previous assessments showed that despite government effectiveness in service delivery, citizen participation in the formulation of public policies and performance contracts (imihigo) remains low (NAR, 2016; 2018; RGB, 2016c).

This side effect of a "strong" and "resilient" government does not imply that the government should slacken its speed. Instead, CSOs need to be more relevant to citizens (for example by voicing concerns of the voiceless) and redesign strategies to engage the government in a more constructive partnership.

4.3.4. Enhancing the participation of women in governance and development: women's organisations ahead of other CSOs

The participation of both men and women has been an imperative for development, governance, and peace-building processes in the 21st century. The growing women's empowerment movement that emerged from the Beijing Conference in 1995 informed related policies and laws aimed at promoting gender equity and eventually paved the way for gender equality in many countries.

The Government of Rwanda has made various commitments in this regard, both national (laws, policies, institutions) and international (ratification of related international and regional conventions). In practice, efforts have been increasingly made to concretise those commitments into actions.

In this section, we examine gender considerations related to CSO interventions aimed at enhancing citizen participation in governance and development processes. Given the historical gender imbalances in Rwanda due to a patriarchal system, we adopt a women-oriented analysis rather than a classic gender analysis. It focuses mainly on:

- efforts made by women's organisations to harness women's participation in both local and national rebuilding efforts; and
- CSO efforts in enhancing citizen participation through the lens of gender integration at both institutional and intervention levels with a particular emphasis on gender specific needs.

It was discussed earlier that as a result of a history of violence in Rwanda (for example, the war and the 1994 genocide), the country has special categories of people with particular vulnerabilities and therefore specific needs. Women were among those who were particularly affected. While very few women's organisations – for example, Réseau des Femmes oeuvrant pour le développement rural, Haguruka, Duterimbere, and Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe – were established before the genocide, the large majority of women's organisations were formed after 1994. Today, Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe is an umbrella organisation composed of 58 member associations that promote women's rights, peace, and development. Many other women-oriented organisations exist across the country, especially in the form of CBOs.

Participants argued that these organisations play a critical role in promoting women's participation in governance, peace-building, transitional justice, and development processes in post-genocide Rwanda. They focus on service delivery (post-genocide specific needs and ordinary human basic needs unmet for women), awareness-raising, skills development, and advocacy. CSOs such as Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe, CCOAIB as an umbrella organisation, Haguruka, Réseau des Femmes oeuvrant pour le développement rural, Duterimbere, AVEGA, Rwandan Association of Trauma Counsellors (ARCT – Ruhuka), Rwanda Women's Network, and RWAMREC, have played a leading role in this regard. Taking advantage of a politically conducive environment, some of these organisations were at the forefront of advocacy endeavours that induced key policy, legal, and institutional changes in favour of women.

> "Women's organisations played a vital role in advocating for the revision of discriminatory laws against women, anti-women laws, and adoption of the anti-GBV law, inheritance law, Girls' Education Policy, National Gender Policy, the constitutional minimum quota of 30% of women representation in all decision-making organs, to name a few." – **KII with a women's rights activist, Kigali**

> "One of the characteristics of the genocide against the Tutsi was the unprecedented rape of women. In the beginning of the Gacaca trials, this crime was placed as the fourth least serious. Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe, in collaboration with other women's organisations and genocide survivors' organisations, advocated successfully for this crime to be considered as a crime of genocide and crime against humanity, resulting in it being placed in category 1." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

Moreover, women's organisations have been raising awareness and building the capacity of women.

> "We promote women's participation through awareness-raising efforts. Awareness on issues they face and existing laws meant to protect them. We instil confidence in them and invite them to come and speak out on all types of violence they are subject to. This has been yielding fruit because, unlike in past years, women have been increasingly coming to our organisation to report cases of violence and seek our assistance. For example, over the past five years, our organisation alone received around 2,000 women in this regard. It is an indicator that we are progressively being successful in mobilising women regarding their rights." – **Participant in a FGD with women's organisations, Kigali**

Successful awareness-raising and capacity-building by women's organisations are echoed by other participants. The first quote highlights the role played by the participant's CSO in boosting economic empowerment of women as an ingredient of effective citizen participation and the second is a citizen's perspective on the benefits of such empowerment;

> "It is hard for a poor woman to come out and claim her rights, for example from the sector executive secretary. It does not happen often because when you are poor you can hardly be self-confident. We therefore provide [women] with economic opportunities through income-generating activities and use this space to also raise their awareness on their rights and laws that protect them. Both legal awareness and financial opportunities have been increasingly instilling self-confidence and participation in public life. In reality, she who has no economic power can hardly have a say." – **Participant in a FGD with women's organisations, Kigali**

> "As women, CSOs helped us develop economically and instilled self-confidence in us. This was vital for us to express ourselves in public meetings, speak our mind, attend the parents' evening forum. For example, Women for Women and Pro-femmes [Twese Hamwe] grouped us in voluntarily saving and lending associations and we use the same space to discuss family and community issues, and propose solutions." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Gasabo District**

In the same vein, women members of CBOs, particularly those that focus on informal micro saving and credit schemes, as well as solidarity and social cohesion groups (*amatsinda/ibimina*), emphasised the role of such organisations. Furthermore, some women's organisations, along with the National Women's Council (NWC), were instrumental in mobilising women to run for leadership positions in local councils, district executive committees, and the parliament;

> "Through the framework of itsinda, we were economically empowered and this instilled confidence in us. Thanks to that confidence, some of us campaigned and were eventually elected among members of the local structure of the NWC." – **Participant in a FGD with a women's CBO, Musanze District**

However, it appears that the majority of women's organisations focus on service provision and capacity-building, while only a few include advocacy in their areas of intervention. In addition, while much has been done by organisations to influence policy-making on behalf of women, there is no evidence that women's organisations are vocal enough at the district level to ensure that women's concerns are well catered for in both district development plans and imihigo, as well as in decisions made by local councils. So too have

[22] By definition, a one stop shop or centre refers to "a business or office where multiple services are offered; i.e., customers can get all they need in just one stop (see One stop shop, 2018). To ensure efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in Rwanda, the government has adopted this model especially at the local government level (districts and City of Kigali).

women's organisations not been effective enough in addressing gender-specific needs in their own interventions or advocating for their consideration in events organised by other CSOs or public institutions (for example, arrangements, whether budget-related or logistical, for breastfeeding mothers and their children to attend these events). Failure to cater for such specific needs is likely to hinder women's attendance and participation in events, which therefore leads to them missing out on services or capacity-building opportunities.

In a nutshell, women's organisations have played a pivotal role in enhancing citizen participation. Despite the challenges and shortfalls described above, some CSOs successfully took advantage of the political will to conduct pro-women advocacy at the policy level, raise awareness, and build capacity in a way that has increasingly instilled self-confidence in women to participate in public life. Additionally, a collaborative approach through Pro-femmes/Twese Hamwe as an umbrella organisation has added value on account of its advocacy efforts. Member organisations (most of which are women's organisations) have synergised through this platform to successfully advocate on various policy issues.

4.3.4.1. Gender considerations in the interventions of non-women CSOs

In this sub-section, we examine the effectiveness of other CSOs in enhancing women's participation.

Unlike women's organisations, other CSOs tend to be largely gender blind. The majority of participating CSOs do not have internal gender policies or guidelines, either for their institutional structures or interventions. As a result, gender-specific needs are not catered for. For example, the planning and budgeting of CSO interventions do not take into account specific logistical arrangements for pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers and their babies. While Rwanda has progressively made efforts to mainstream gender across all sectors, the consideration of these specific gender needs appears to be lagging behind in public and private sectors, as well as in CSOs. Failure to consider these needs runs the risk of excluding these categories of people, either deliberately or not, from the interventions that are intended for them. In the words of one participant:

> "Sometimes you would hear local leaders or focal points telling people to not bring pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, or people with disabilities to attend meetings or other CSOs events." – **Participant in a FGD with citizens, Rutsiro District**

Moreover, it appears that CSOs sometimes strive to consider gender aspects in their interventions simply because it is a requirement from donors as part of their reporting obligations so the latter can track inclusiveness and impact through a gender lens. In most cases, focus is put on numbers (as in how many men and women were targeted) with less consideration given to gender-specific needs (for instance, catering for breastfeeding mothers and their babies) and the meaning behind the numbers (for example, endeavouring to understand why there were more men than women who attended a training workshop). At least three factors may explain this gap:

- many CSOs are managed by men who may not be aware of the relevance of gender integration in their organisations;

- many CSOs lack relevant awareness and skills to conduct gender analysis, gender budgeting, and gender integration in their interventions; and
- there is a lack of standardised gender indicators.

This implies that there is still a long way to go in the integration of gender in CSO interventions. It is therefore critical that civil society addresses this challenge if it is to play a vital role in effectively boosting women's participation in governance and development processes.

4.3.5. Smaller but stronger: the effectiveness of CBOs in enhancing citizen participation

A category of civil society that exists in Rwanda that is less known due to a lack of a governing legal framework and breadth of interventions are CBOs. These are formal and informal organisations initiated either by community members or other CSOs to address social and economic issues pertaining to specific groups of citizens at the community level. One of the components of this category is referred to as "ibimina" or "amatsinda". They focus primarily on micro saving and credit schemes, as well as on actions of solidarity and livelihoods.

Both local leaders and members of these CBOs unanimously commended the role they are increasingly playing in community development and enhancement of citizen participation;

> "Our group was established at the right moment. It is comprised of 30 members. We meet on a weekly basis and each person contributes 300 RWF. We save a total of 3,000 RWF and grant a loan worth 6,000 RWF per week to a member on a rotation basis. This gradually shapes our socioeconomic condition to the extent that no member's household fails to pay for mutuelle de santé, or spends a night on an empty stomach. From this activity and our regular contact and interactions, our relationships improve and some solidarity actions between members are progressively observed." – **Participant in a FGD with a CBO, Nyanza District**

Furthermore, local leaders appeared to be supportive of these organisations and regularly seek their support, namely to mobilise their members to pay contributions for mutuelle de santé, attend public meetings, and community work. As far as women-based ibimina are concerned, they not only raise their members' awareness on playing an active role in governance, but also encourage them to compete for positions, both in the NWC and in local government (mainly village, cell, and sector levels);

[23] This refers to the liberation struggle launched on 1 October 1990 by the Rwandan Patriotic Army, a military wing of the Rwandan Patriotic Front from Uganda. The front comprised of Rwandan refugees, predominantly from the Tutsi ethnic group to whom the then Rwandan government denied the right to repatriation.

[24] RWAMREC is a NGO that works to promote gender equality and prevention of GBV. It was initially conceived exclusively as a men's organisation to advocate for gender equality by promoting positive masculinities and male engagement approaches in Rwandan development programmes.

> "In our district, ibimina are impacting on citizens in many ways: poverty reduction through micro saving and credit, rebuilding interpersonal relationships, confidence-building, etc. As district authorities, we have developed a concept note with the aim of replicating the ibimina model throughout the district." – **KII with the vice-mayor of Ngoma District**

> "As women, membership to ibimina has a particular impact on us. Some of us did not have confidence in ourselves. Small loans from ikimina help us contribute financially to the socioeconomic wellbeing of our households, which instils respect from our husbands and/or relatives and we get increasingly valued. In turn, this proves to us that we are capable. As a result, some of us started opening up and engaging more actively in community life and competing for positions, namely in local government."– **Participant in a FGD with CBOs, Nyagatare District**

Despite this promising dynamic in harnessing poverty reduction, social cohesion, and citizen participation, ibimina/amatsinda, as many other CBOs, face the challenge of lacking a regulatory framework. Currently, there is no law or instructions that govern them, which results in consequences such as an incapacity to take legal action in court (for instance, in cases of embezzlement) or apply for bank loans;

> "Our biggest challenge is that our ikimina is not registered with any public institution as there is no related legal framework. Such a framework would have granted us legal protection. Local leaders encourage us to become a cooperative in order to get legal status, but that is not our vision. We formed it primarily to nurture solidarity, facilitate dialogue, and solve our common problems." – **Participant in a FGD with women's CBOs, Musanze District**

The RGB, which is in charge of monitoring CSOs, is supportive of these CBOs, as illustrated by the below comment made by RGB's head of political parties and civil society department during a KII in Kigali;

> "People get together to form a working framework with a specific vision and an issue to confront. I do not see any reason they should be obliged to become a cooperative to get a status that would not help them achieve their goals. The law [NGO law] is currently in the process of revision. The debate is ongoing. Should NGOs understand the relevance of the concern expressed by those ibimina, they may support that request and have it considered in the new law."

> "When one of us faces an issue pertaining to life or marriage, we immediately meet to reflect and give advice or support. I have discovered from our interactions that being surrounded by people who are caring and supportive helps us to see ourselves as better capable of dealing with the challenges that life/marriage brings. This is enough for us. We are not very much interested in becoming a cooperative. Those people in cooperatives are always busy with financial matters while social interactions best fit our mission and goals." – **Participant in a FGD with CBOs, Gisagara District**

As ibimina/amatsinda are among the CBOs contributing to driving socioeconomic transformation with a potential to enhance citizen participation, mainly at the community level, the legal framework governing CSOs should therefore take them into account.

4.3.6. Comprehensive interventions for greater CSO effectiveness in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development

Considering all areas discussed above on CSO effectiveness in enhancing citizen participation in governance and development, it is worth noting that while some organisations focus on one area (for instance service delivery), there are a few organisations that combine two or three areas, which make their interventions more comprehensive in terms of harnessing citizen participation.

> "We provide legal advice and aid to needy women who report legal issues...we organise training of women on selected laws such those pertaining to inheritance, land...We also carry out research which informs our advocacy efforts." – **KII with a women's CSO representative, Kigali**

> "Our organisation facilitates farmers to access seeds, fertilisers; we also organise regular training sessions to help them acquire new farming techniques and related information, and conduct advocacy regarding some policies and programmes that affect agriculture and livestock negatively." – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Musanze District**

[25] Kinyarwanda name for group/groups that are the main category of CBOs. Ikimina and itsinda are the singular forms, and ibimina and amatsinda are the plural forms.

> "As a human rights organisation, we help young people develop income-generating activities; we also conduct research on issues pertaining to domestic violence, child labour, and carry out related advocacy accordingly." – **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Kigali**

This is evidence that intervening in service delivery can be an opportunity for CSOs to become aware of related issues faced by their recipients and eventually contribute to solving them or conducting relevant advocacy. Similarly, service delivery can serve as an opportunity to interact with citizens and identify capacity-building gaps, and therefore help to address them. In the long run, such empowerment should aim to enable citizens to plan and conduct advocacy on their own.

4.4. Opportunities for CSOs to Enhance Citizen Participation in the Governance and Development of Post-Genocide Rwanda

Despite the challenges and limitations associated with enhancing citizen participation, there are also opportunities for CSOs to harness citizen participation in the governance of Rwanda. They include: an increasingly conducive legal and policy environment, the existence of a donor community with participatory governance among the core areas of funding, and a progressively developing media sector.

4.4.1. An evolving legal and policy framework

The legal framework for various components of civil society has been progressively improving in a way that has impacted its development over time. For example, the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 (revised in 2015) provides for basic rights and freedoms, which are key to the development of civil society and citizen participation in governance and development processes. They include: (1) the right to participate in governmental and public services; (2) the right to form trade unions and employers' associations; (3) the right to activities promoting national culture; (4) the right to freedom of conscience and religion; (6) the right to freedom of press, of expression, and of access to information; (7) the right to freedom of association; and (8) the right to freedom of assembly.

In addition to the Constitution, the Rwandan government has signed and ratified major conventions that are relevant to the work of CSOs. These are:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 19 December 1966, ratified by the Decree Law No. 8/1975 of 12/02/1975
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 19 December 1966, ratified by the Decree Law No. 8/1975 of 12/02/1975
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 27 June 1981, especially Article 10, ratified by the Law No. 10/1983 of 17/05/1985

[26] On a weekly basis, the group (itsinda) collects members' contributions worth 9,000 RWF (30 x 300 RWF). The group saves 3,000 RWF, with the balance (6,000 RWF) given to a member as a loan.

In the same vein, until 2013, NGOs were successively regulated by Law No. 20/2000 of 26/07/2000 relating to non-profit-making organisations (O.G. no. 7 of 01/04/2001) and the Organic Law No. 55/2008 of 10/09/2008 governing NGOs. The latter was repealed in 2013 by the Organic Law No. 10/2012/OL of 15/01/2013. In order to improve the legal environment of non-profit-making organisations, three laws corresponding to three components of civil society were passed in 2012:

- Law No. 04/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organisation and functioning of national NGOs
- Law No. 05/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organisation and functioning of INGOs
- Law No. 06/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organisation and functioning of religion-based organisations

Media, as another component of civil society, is currently governed by two major laws:

- Law No. 02/2013 of 08/02/2013 regulating media
- Law No. 04/2013 of 08/02/2013 relating to access to information

Furthermore, the National Decentralisation Policy and related laws provided avenues for CSOs to play a role in local governance and development processes. The JADF is the most important platform in this regard. Through it, CSOs participate in planning and coordination with other stakeholders and participate in the implementation of imihigo at the district and sector levels.

Participants almost unanimously believe that the legal framework for CSOs in Rwanda has made sound progress since 1994. Major shifts in this regard concern registration, rights, obligations and appeal mechanisms, and resource mobilisation. For instance, Article 4 of Law No. 04/2012 of 17/02/2012 allows NGOs, for the first time, to conduct commercial activities provided that "the profit from such activities is…used in activities related to its objectives". Similarly, Article 12 of the same law stipulates that, "the Government shall include in its national budget funds meant for supporting national non-governmental organisations". This law is therefore innovative in that it provides for potential sources of funding for CSOs.

Furthermore, while Law No. 20/2000 of 26/07/2000 and the Organic Law No. 55/2008 of 10/09/2008 did not give NGOs any rights in relation to the enhancement of citizen participation in governance and development, the 2012 laws governing national NGOs, INGOs, and FBOs (Articles 28, 17, and 31, respectively) are clear in this regard. Important rights include:

- "to put forward views in designing national policies and legislation in relation with the functioning of national non-governmental organisations;
- to advocate, protect and promote human rights and other national values; and
- to express opinions and views on national policies and legislation".

It is also worth noting that the post-genocide context has been highly sensitive, both politically and socially, and as such it was initially challenging for civil society to work freely. Following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis, one of the biggest challenges facing CSOs was operating in a context whereby the exercise of freedom of expression and that of association on the one hand, and endeavours to rebuild national unity and reconciliation on the other, had to find common ground.

In this regard, the establishment of Law No. 18/2008 of 23/07/2008 relating to the punishment of the crime of genocide ideology, and Law No. 47/2001 of 18/12/2001 on prevention, suppression, and punishment of the crime of discrimination and sectarianism, was controversial. While the government claimed that these can

enhance the unity and reconciliation of Rwandans, some CSOs including human rights organisations, such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, alleged that these "laws criminalize speech protected by international conventions" (Amnesty International, 2010, p. 7).

Nevertheless, the legal environment has improved over time and is becoming progressively conducive to the development of CSOs. Participants believe that Law No. 02/2013 of 08/02/2013 and Law No. 04/2013 of 08/02/2013 grant more openness and freedom of expression, plurality, and diversity of media outlets and content, which therefore promotes citizen participation. These have a compounding effect with the laws described above including those governing national NGOs, INGOs, and FBOs. In the words of one participant;

> "The current legal framework on CSOs provides freedom for the latter to conduct their activities freely. By law, we are allowed to consult our constituency and advocate for their needs. It is up to us as CSOs to take advantage of this opportunity." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

Some participants, however, have concerns with the new Law No. 56/2016 of 16/12/2016 determining the mission, organisation, and functioning of the RGB, as outlined in section 4.4.3.2.

4.4.2. A donor community that supports participatory governance initiatives

Since the end of the genocide, the donor community – alongside the Rwandan government – has financially supported CSOs to implement their programmes and projects. Donor funding has been almost the sole source of financial resources for the majority of CSO interventions including those aimed at enhancing citizen participation in governance and development.

It emerged from this study that over the past decades, some funding agencies have been focusing on work concerned with good governance (civic engagement, citizen participation, advocacy, policy-making process, decentralisation, etc.) among other areas in Rwanda. Those organisations include, but are not limited to, the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the USAID, the European Union, the UNDP, Department for International Development (DFID), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation, GIZ), and the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA). Funding is issued for research activities, community-based interventions, advocacy, and capacity-building, to name a few;

> "Good governance in general and participatory governance in particular are among the core areas our CSO funding goes to. We want to see citizens' priorities at the centre of public policies." – **KII with a donor agency representative, Kigali**

Many CSO representatives claimed that the availability of such funding was and remains a core driver of their interventions and expected outcomes. Therefore, they consider the presence of such donor agencies a real opportunity for their endeavours. Without the presence of funding opportunities in governance areas (like in other areas), CSOs would not have been able to operate.

> "The effectiveness and impact of our advocacy work depends partly on the availability of donors' funding which enables us to conduct sound research. In the short and medium terms, we cannot be successful without such funds." – **KII with a CSO representative, Kigali**

However, although the donor community continues to exist and is a viable channel, CSOs should not continue to rely on its aid for the sake of sustainability. Donors should rather help CSOs to be relevant and credible towards their constituencies, the government, and the private sector to the extent that CSOs are able to raise significant internal resources as well as securing funding from other stakeholders, such as the government and the private sector.

4.4.3. A developing media sector

The media is part of civil society in Rwanda in a number of regards, as well as being an avenue of communication for various stakeholders, including CSOs. According to the 2016 Rwanda Media Barometer, "the amendment of the media law, migration from analogue to digital system of broadcasting and availability of affordable internet created a conducive environment for increased private investment in the media sector, leading to a drastic rise in the number of televisions, radio stations and online publications" (RGB, 2016b, p. iii).

Some participants argued that the development of the media, especially broadcasting and social media entities, constitutes a great opportunity for CSOs to boost citizen participation in the areas of citizenship education, providing a voice for the voiceless, and shaping public policies. In 2002, there was only one state-owned radio and one television station. In 2016, these numbers rose to 35 radio stations, 12 television stations, and over 80 web-based media outlets (RGB, 2016a, p. 1). Some of these media outlets, including TV and Radio One, Radio Rwanda and Rwanda TV, Isango Star, Flash FM, and some community radios provide airtime for CSOs to interact with citizens on various policy issues. In addition, various media outlets provide citizens with call-in opportunities with the aim of collecting and voicing their concerns and priorities. This is a real opportunity for interested CSOs to engage with the public instantly on both community and policy issues.

In a nutshell, despite the challenges faced by CSOs in boosting citizen participation in the governance and development of Rwanda, both the local and international environment in which CSOs operate offers them with opportunities that they should keep taking advantage of to move towards the fulfilment of their functions.

> **PAs a human rights organisation, we help young people develop income-generating activities; we also conduct research on issues pertaining to domestic violence, child labour, and carry out related advocacy accordingly." –**
>
> **Participant in a FGD with CSOs, Kigali**

05 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

This qualitative study examined the role of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development processes of post-genocide Rwanda. Applying a PAR strategy, participants included ordinary citizens (community members), CSO representatives (at local and national levels), decision-makers (at local and central levels), and donor community members.

CSOs have four major functions regarding boosting citizen participation in governance and development processes: (1) shaping citizens' lives through service delivery, (2) citizenship education, (3) voicing the voiceless and demanding accountability from decision-makers, and (4) shaping public policies.

It emerged from discussions with participants, in both FGDs and KIIs, that CSOs have four major functions regarding boosting citizen participation in governance and development processes. These are: (1) shaping citizens' lives through service delivery, (2) citizenship education, (3) voicing the concerns of the voiceless and demanding accountability from decision-makers, and (4) shaping public policies. Furthermore, the study found that there is a range of mechanisms or channels through which CSOs are meant to interact with citizens and decision-makers, which have the potential to enhance citizen participation. These mechanisms are either state established, including JADF, inteko z'abaturage, umuganda, the National Umushyikirano Council, sector working group forums, parliament, and ad hoc consultations of CSOs, or CSO led, which include research, workshops/seminars, media outlets, umbrella organisations, and dialogue spaces and clubs.

The study revealed that CSOs widely provide services to their constituencies, and are largely effective in this area. The primary focus of CSOs in the service delivery spectrum is explained by the unprecedented vulnerabilities and specific needs of people that arose following the 1994 genocide. CSO interventions in service delivery enhance citizen participation by addressing recipients' basic human needs, which builds self-confidence and thus has the potential to boost participation. However, the study also revealed factors that hamper the effectiveness of CSOs in the provision of services, including: favouritism in terms of recipient selection, individual business syndrome that is likely to incite embezzlement, limited financial and human resources, and an unbalanced geographical coverage of interventions.

It emerged from the research that some CSOs effectively raise constituencies' awareness on their civic rights and duties, and relevant laws and policies, as well as building their capacity in areas of vocational skills, income generation, critical thinking, peace education, community issue analysis, conflict resolution, and advocacy. However, this is not widespread. Recipients of CSO interventions and CSO representatives also

highlighted that citizenship education and capacity-building are important ingredients of citizen participation, however, these are often approached from a development perspective rather than a governance one. As with service delivery, providing citizenship education does not come without challenges. These include limited participation of beneficiaries in defining their capacity-building needs, limited financial and human resources, focus on project-based interventions, and a citizen dependency on compensation.

The study also revealed that only a few CSOs are effectively involved in advocacy, that is voicing the concerns of the voiceless and shaping public policies. NGOs performing this function conduct research and consult with citizens to collect evidence that eventually informs advocacy endeavours. Broadcasting media outlets were also said to be effective in this regard. Furthermore, government institutions sometimes consult CSOs on selected policy matters, although the majority of CSO representatives participating in this study had not had such an experience. CSOs are sometimes invited to decision-making platforms, such as the National Umushyikirano Council, and may use them to provide a voice for the voiceless or attempt to shape policies. However, the JADF, the core avenue of interactions between CSOs and district authorities, does not seem to serve an advocacy purpose. Overall, advocacy emerged as the area in which CSO effectiveness is most questioned. Major challenges and gaps include differing understandings of civil society functions, advocacy being considered risky, lack of collaboration between CSOs, limited resources, underestimating the cost of advocacy activities, secret diplomacy and lack of feedback, limited follow-up of advocacy interventions, the donor-driven nature of CSOs coming at the expense of local needs, competing roles between umbrella and member organisations, unstable strategic orientations of CSOs, the new law governing the RGB leading to potential conflicts of interest, and a reactive rather than a proactive civil society emerging as a "side effect" of a 'strong' and 'resilient' government.

The study also highlighted the role of women's organisations in harnessing women's participation in governance. The majority of women's organisations have been established in the post-genocide context to contribute to specific women's needs and their participation in governance and development processes. A few organisations have taken the lead in advocating against discriminatory laws aimed at women, while many others have been effectively involved in promoting women participation by empowering their constituents. This manifests in service delivery, awareness-raising on relevant laws and women's rights, confidence-building, vocational training, and income-generating activities. Thanks to this empowerment process, women have progressively acquired knowledge, skills, and capacity that has helped them compete for leadership positions, claim their rights, and participate in socioeconomic development processes. However, challenges and shortfalls exists, such as the fact that the majority of women's organisations were found to focus on service provision and capacity-building, with only a few including advocacy in their areas of intervention. In addition, there is no evidence that women's organisations are vocal enough at the district level to ensure that women's concerns are well catered for in both district development plans and imihigo, as well as in decisions made by local councils.

The study likewise revealed critical gaps relating to CSOs that are not women's organisations to cater for women's needs. Most participating CSOs do not have internal gender policies/strategies in terms of both their structures and interventions. In addition, the gender strategies that they do have focus solely on numbers and not on a qualitative gender analysis, particularly in relation to needs. Furthermore, they tend to integrate gender considerations because it is a donor requirement. Some explaining factors for this include: (1) many CSOs lack relevant awareness and skills to conduct gender analysis, gender budgeting, and gender integration in their interventions; (2) lack of standardised gender indicators to mainstream gender across all areas of CSO interventions; and (3) lack of gender considerations in both planning and budgeting processes.

Despite the challenges outlined above, CSOs in Rwanda operate in an environment that offers them opportunities. The opportunities are: a progressive legal and policy framework, a donor community that supports participatory governance initiatives, and a developing media sector.

5.2. Recommendations

We recommend the following actions to address the challenges and limitations of CSOs in enhancing citizen participation in the governance and development of post-genocide Rwanda. These recommendations are addressed to the major actors, including the MINALOC, RGB, local government authorities, CSOs, the private sector, and the donor community. The table below outlines the targeted institution, major challenge/gap, and related recommendations.

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
Government of Rwanda	CSOs are largely donor dependent and have no other relevant sources of funding for their interventions. Despite the existence of a donor community, the number of CSOs in need of funding and the quality of proposals that is required do not guarantee adequate and sustainable funding to all CSOs.	Assign CSOs to provide community-based services and support policy and programme implementation in areas that match their areas of interventions. Provide funds to CSOs, while the latter offer their technical expertise.
Prime Minister's Office	With reference to Law No. 41/2011 of 30/09/2011 establishing the Rwanda Governance Board and determining its mission, organisation, and functioning, the study showed a potential conflict of interest pertaining to RGB's mission to "conduct research on governance in Rwanda, explore citizens' perception with service delivery" and, at the same time, to "give pre-authorization and follow up studies and research carried out in Rwanda on governance and home grown solutions".	Improve the process by establishing a one stop centre (hosted by the NISR, for example) for processing research permits, without applicants (to) go through other pre-authorising institutions. However, this should be done without prejudice to the consultative role that relevant line public institutions are initially entrusted with.
MINALOC	CSOs are reluctant to intervene in advocacy areas, mainly due to the fact that advocacy is seen as risky.	[In collaboration with RGB and district authorities] Establish periodic policy dialogue between CSOs and the government at both local and central government levels. At the local level, besides the statutory JADF meetings, there should be a half-yearly district-CSOs dialogue to discuss issues pertaining to citizens' needs and priorities, institutional issues, and district expectations from CSOs. At the national level, there should be an annual government-CSOs dialogue to discuss issues pertaining to citizens' needs

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
		and priorities, policies and laws, institutional issues, the government-CSOs partnership, and government expectations from CSOs. Donors might also attend these sessions.
	Unlike other civil society components such as NGOs and FBOs, CBOs especially those in the form of ibimina and amatsinda have no law that governs their organisation and functioning. This hampers their full and effective functioning.	Put in place a legal framework governing CBOs. Specifically, the law should find a solution to the registration and legal status issue faced by CBOs For example, the NGOs law that is undergoing revision could consider addressing this issue..
RGB	The study revealed critical gaps for CSOs in terms of intervening in advocacy areas mainly due to the fact that advocacy is seen as risky.	[In collaboration with MINALOC and district authorities] Establish periodic policy dialogue between CSOs and the government at both local and central government levels. At the local level, besides the statutory JADF meetings, there should be a half-yearly district-CSOs dialogue to discuss issues pertaining to citizens' needs and priorities, institutional issues, and district expectations from CSOs. At the national level, there should be an annual government-CSOs dialogue to discuss issues pertaining to citizens' needs and priorities, policies and laws, institutional issues, the government-CSOs partnership, and government expectations from CSOs. Donors might also attend these sessions.
	CSOs are largely donor dependent and have no other relevant sources of funding for their interventions. Despite the existence of a donor community, the number of CSOs in need of funding and	Mobilise more resources to support NGOs in the implementation of their plans. Funds should be allocated based not only on the quality and relevance of proposals, but also in a way that promotes small CSOs to grow and become more impactful.

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
	the quality of proposals that is required do not guarantee adequate and sustainable funding to all CSOs.	
	In some locations, participants (both citizens and local leaders) claimed that there have never been any NGOs operating there (up to sector level). This brings about critical disparities and unfairness in responding to the needs of citizens and harnessing their participation in governance.	Conduct a mapping of CSO interventions at both district and sector levels in collaboration with the JADF. The mapping should clearly indicate which CSOs operate where and what their area of focus is. The mapping could be used to develop a database for JADF to better monitor and coordinate CSO interventions. In addition, the RGB and JADF should set up consultation networks of CSOs working in the same thematic areas to exchange information on gaps, opportunities, and successes.
	Unlike other civil society components such as NGOs and FBOs, CBOs especially those in the form of ibimina and amatsinda have no law that governs their organisation and functioning. This hampers their full and effective functioning.	Advocate for the set-up of a legal framework governing CBOs.
CSOs	CSOs are largely donor dependent and have no other relevant sources of funding for their interventions. Despite the existence of a donor community, the number of CSOs in need of funding and the quality of proposals that is required do not guarantee adequate and sustainable funding to all CSOs.	Mobilise their members with the relevant knowledge, skills, expertise, and financial resources that are required for CSO interventions on charitable giving through volunteerism and donations, as well as membership fees. This would complement other sources of funding to support their interventions.
		Design innovative projects that they can implement with or on behalf of the private

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
		sector (both the Federation and individual companies) in a way that generates financial resources from the private sector. This partnership should, however, be done in accordance with CSO ethics and deontology.
	CSOs are reluctant to intervene in advocacy areas. Not only is advocacy seen as risky, it also requires financial resources and specific skills and expertise. Following up advocacy interventions up to the desired change occurring also proves to be a significant issue for the few CSOs that actually focus on this area.	Support citizens (constituents) to identify, prioritise, articulate, and communicate their needs. This should be regularly done before the formulation of district development plans and district imihigo. CSO spaces and inteko z'abaturage at the village and cell levels are appropriate platforms for this process. This should not only aim to ensure that plans are citizen centred but also aim to build citizens' capacities to identity and analyse community and national problems, and conduct relevant advocacy.
		Conduct research to create a strong evidence base for advocacy purposes. Adopt participatory evidence gathering approaches (e.g. PAR), which not only increase the reliability of findings and ownership by various stakeholders, but also dispel any potential suspicion and confrontation between CSOs and state actors. Ultimately, engaging decision-makers in advocacy on the basis of such findings stands a greater chance of better influencing the design of citizen-centred public policies and in holding leaders to account.

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
		Define clearly all advocacy activities (from inception to the expected change), and include them in plans and budgets.
		Place focal point persons in government institutions to liaise between the institution and the CSO, and also help to acquire timely information pertaining to drafts on policy and laws, thereby facilitating timely advocacy.
	Non-women CSOs are unable to cater for women's needs with regard to their participation. Participating CSOs were found to not have internal gender policies/strategies in terms of both their structures and interventions. The fact that many CSOs lack relevant awareness and skills to include gender analysis, gender budgeting, and gender integration in their interventions; and the lack of standardised gender indicators to mainstream gender across all areas of CSO interventions were some of the explanatory factors.	Develop inclusive strategic and action plans that take into consideration specific needs of special groups such as women, PWDs, youth, etc. Develop and implement gender strategies across their interventions.
NAR, Interpeace, and other relevant CSOs	Non-women CSOs are unable to cater for women's needs with regard to their participation. Participating CSOs were found to not have internal gender policies/strategies in terms of both their structures and interventions. The fact that many CSOs lack relevant awareness and skills to include gender analysis, gender budgeting, and gender integration in their	Build CSOs' capacities in gender analysis and budgeting. CSOs with relevant experience in this field could not only conduct training workshops, but also hold experience-sharing sessions to engage other CSOs in mainstreaming gender in their interventions and operational activities.

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
	interventions; and the lack of standardised gender indicators to mainstream gender across all areas of CSO interventions were some of the explanatory factors.	
	CSOs are reluctant to intervene in advocacy areas. Not only is advocacy seen as risky, it also requires financial resources and specific skills and expertise. Following up advocacy interventions up to the desired change also proves to be a significant issue for the few CSOs that actually focus on this area.	Build CSO capacity in participatory approaches and advocacy techniques. This could be done by organising and co-facilitating experience-sharing sessions and training workshops, as well as by supporting individual CSO in planning and budgeting exercises.
National NGOs	CSOs are largely donor dependent and have no other relevant sources of funding for their interventions. Despite the existence of a donor community, the number of CSOs in need of funding and the quality of proposals that is required do not guarantee adequate and sustainable funding to all CSOs.	Take advantage of Article 4 of the law governing national NGOs – which allows them to "conduct commercial activities… and the profit from such activities…used in activities related to its objectives" – and become involved in consulting services, which would generate resources to support their interventions.
Umbrella organisations	CSOs are reluctant to intervene in advocacy areas. Not only is advocacy seen as risky, it also requires financial resources and specific skills and expertise. Following up advocacy interventions up to the desired change also proves to be a significant issue for the few CSOs that actually focus on this area.	Take advantage of their position – of being invited to selected policy and law revision processes and being consulted by policy-makers in their capacity as umbrellas – to involve member organisations in discussions about draft laws and policies, and eventually share the former's concerns and proposals with relevant decision-makers before the adoption of laws. Similarly, given the challenge related to CSO representation

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
		at the National Umushyikirano Council, the RCSP, representatives of umbrella organisations, and other CSOs should conduct consultations with their members to identify and agree on citizens' priorities to share with decision-makers in the Council for potential consideration. Orient their interventions in advocacy, coordination, and building technical capacities of their member organisations and leave with their member organisations the implementation of community interventions
Private Sector Federation	CSOs are largely donor dependent and have no other relevant sources of funding for their interventions. Despite the existence of a donor community, the number of CSOs in need of funding and the quality of proposals required do not guarantee adequate and sustainable funding to all CSOs.	As part of the corporate social responsibility principle, there is need for a private sector-civil society partnership. The Private Sector Federation, thanks to contributions from its members, should set up a fund to support CSO interventions. Objective and fair eligibility criteria should be defined for CSOs to access this funding.
Donors	Some participants, especially local leaders, complained that sometimes CSO projects do not reflect local realities and when some inputs and suggestions are made, CSOs are not flexible, justifying it with the fact that projects are already approved by donors who funded them. Local leaders unanimously feel that the	Keep funding CSOs while the latter strive to find alternative funding opportunities. Fund proposals that are citizen driven, among other criteria. Beyond evidence from institutional reports and research conducted by CSOs and public institutions, CSO proposals should be accompanied by recommendation letters from district

Institution	Identified gap	Recommendation
	donor-driven nature of CSOs comes at the expense of local needs and priorities in both planning and budgeting.	authorities (where the proposed project or programme will be implemented), which may require CSOs to discuss with local authorities and citizens the local priorities prior to the submission of proposals. Donors should consider granting enough time between announcing calls for proposals and submission deadlines to allow CSOs to gather the relevant evidence.
		In addition, for the sake of developing citizen-centred plans and programmes, donors should involve CSOs in the development of their strategic plans and country programmes. More specifically, donors should regularly include CSOs in their planning workshops to ensure that CSOs' needs and priorities are considered.

5.3. Suggestions for Future Research

- Conduct a specific study (mapping) on gender mainstreaming in CSO structures and interventions
- State-Civil Society Partnership for Participatory Governance in Rwanda: Achievements, Opportunities, and Challenges
- Democratisation process in Post-Genocide Rwanda: To What Extent are Voters' Needs Voiced by Parliamentarians?

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Prime Minister's Instructions No. 003/03 of 03/07/2015 establishing the Joint Action Development Forum and determining its responsibilities, organisation, and functioning (Rwanda)

07 Appendices

Appendix 1: Study Districts and Sectors, by Province

Province	District	Sector
City of Kigali	Kicukiro	Gikondo
		Masaka
	Gasabo	Bumbogo
		Kimihurura
North	Musanze	Muhoza
		Gataraga
	Burera	Rusarabuye
		Rwerere
South	Nyanza	Busasamana
		Busoro
	Gisagara	Mugombwa
		Kibirizi
East	Nyagatare	Nyagatare
		Rwempasha
	Ngoma	Kibungo
		Zaza
West	Karongi	Murambi
		Rubengera
	Rutsiro	Boneza
		Gihango

Appendix 2: Summary of FGDs and KIIs

FGDs			**KIIs**	
	No. of FGDs	**Total participants**	**RGB**	**No. of KIIs**
Citizens	20	300	CSOs (national level)	1
CBOs at sector/district level	10	150	District mayors/executive secretaries	4
CSOs at district level	10	68	Cooperative officers (district level)	10
Journalists	1	6	JADF coordinators (district level)	5
Academics	1	4	Parliament	7
CSOs – PWDs	1	23	Executive secretaries (sector level)	1
CSOs – Women's organizations	1	6	Donor community	8
CSOs – Youth organizations	1	7		3
CSOs – FBOs	1	7		
CSOs – Governance and service delivery	1	7		
Total:	**47**	**578**	**Total:**	**39**

Appendix 3: Towards a Typology of Civil Society in Rwanda

The research examined the configuration of CSOs, resulting in the development of a typology of CSOs, disaggregated by areas of intervention, geographical coverage, target groups, organisational level, and establishment period. This typology does not claim to be exhaustive, and does not name the CSOs nor present their geographical distribution. It is therefore an indicative typology that could be nuanced or modified by other civil society assessments. It is also worth highlighting that the various types of CSOs are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A CSO can belong to all four typologies and also appear in more than one type within the same typology.

1. Typology according to areas of intervention

A large number of CSOs implementing a wide range of interventions operate in various areas. These include, but are not limited to: peace-building; human rights; governance; specific group rights (e.g. women, children, youth, orphans, PWDs, minority groups, etc.); socioeconomic livelihoods; health; and education. Other areas include environmental protection, access to justice, promotion of religious values, promotion of intellectual/

cultural values, and research. It is worth noting that some of these areas are specific to the post-genocide context, for instance, peace-building activities (reconciliation, healing, etc.) implemented after the genocide and other forms of violence, or those concerned with the rights and wellbeing of genocide survivors, widows, and/or orphans.

2. Typology according to geographical coverage

Rwandan CSOs are also classified according to the geographical coverage of their interventions.

CBOs: These organisations' geographical coverage generally does not extend beyond a district. The majority are informal organisations based at the village or cell level (and sometimes at the sector or district level), with the primary goal of boosting solidarity and livelihoods, for example through local micro saving and credit schemes. In some places, there are also parent associations, student associations, youth associations, women's associations, churches, community radios, etc.

These organisations are often referred to as "ibimina (ibibina)", "amatsinda", "sosiyete", and "amatsinda ya CARE", the latter inspired by the fact that some of the amatsinda were initiated by CARE International as a strategy to advance the livelihood of citizens. These CBOs operate freely to the knowledge of local authorities, which commend their role in enhancing citizens' livelihoods, however, they are not legally/formally registered.

National CSOs: These organisations' interventions cover the national territory or a couple of districts. They are categorised into five main clusters: NGOs, FBOs, NGOs founded by FBOs, academic institutions (universities and institutes), and media houses. Another important component of this category is umbrella organisations, which are comprised of single local organisations that form a collective body to achieve common goals.

International CSOs: This type of CSO has international coverage (and origin) and undertakes specific interventions. This category encompasses mainly INGOs and international media – a large majority of which have Western origins – operating in Rwanda. Many of these CSOs work closely with or support national CSOs in their programming.

3. Typology according to the target group

Target group refers to the category or group of people that CSO interventions are intended for. From this viewpoint, CSOs in Rwanda are grouped into three categories:

Membership-based: These are CSOs founded by people who aim to promote and defend the interests of their members. Members are therefore the recipients of interventions.

Those that target specific groups (non-members): These organisations are founded with the aim of promoting and defending interests of specific people or categories of people. The latter are not necessarily members of those organisations, but are recipients of their interventions.

Those that target the general public: This category includes CSOs that target the general public. These are, for instance, human rights organisations the work of which focuses on all human beings rather than specific groups or categories of people.

4. Typology according to the organisational level

This typology was developed by Costantini, Verdecchia, and Rutayisire (2013, pp. 13¬–14), who group CSOs into four organisational levels:

CBOs: This is the first level, which includes grassroots groups, cooperatives, and informal savings and credit groups.

NGOs: The second level is composed of NGOs and other intermediary organisations that provide services or generate knowledge and policy actions, rather than aiming to benefit members.

Umbrella organisations: The third level comprises the aggregations of CSOs focusing on a sector, a geographical area, or a campaign. Examples include the NUDOR and the Rwanda NGO Forum on AIDS and Health Promotion.

Platforms: The fourth level consists of general aggregations of CSOs, such as national civil society platforms. Currently, there is one general aggregation of CSOs in Rwanda: the RCSP.

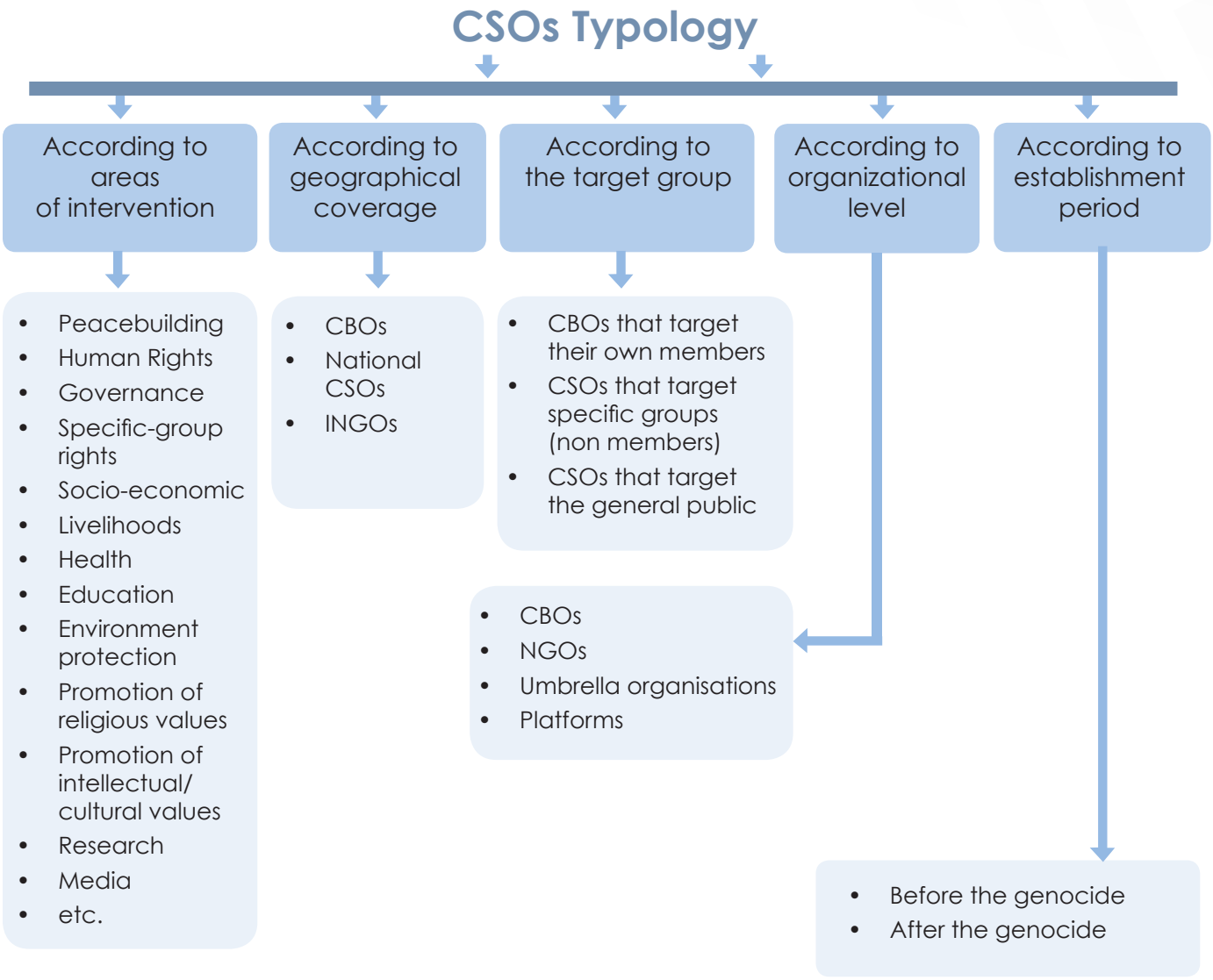
5. Typology according to the establishment period

This typology looks at CSOs in Rwanda according to whether they were established before or after the 1994 genocide. While a few CSOs existed prior to the genocide, it is believed that the majority was set up in the aftermath. Participants said that the creation of some organisations was motivated by the need to respond to the unprecedented and challenging legacy of the genocide and long history of violence. Moreover, the establishment of some CSOs was aligned with national efforts to tackle a range of global issues pertaining to health, poverty alleviation, gender imbalance, education for all, and environmental protection, to name a few.

Religious denominations are an integral part of Rwandan civil society and these were also set up in the post-genocide context. Some of these are run by Rwandans repatriated right after the genocide, while others took advantage of the despair and trauma that resulted from the genocide.

Additionally, there has been a sound proliferation of various media (print, broadcast, and social media), and secondary and tertiary teaching institutions. Their formation was largely motivated by prevailing societal needs and the progressive conducive environment created by the government.

Figure: Typology of Rwandan CSOs



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