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Reframing Service Delivery through People Centred Governance



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Reframing Service Delivery through People Centred Governance

 ^{1*} Dr. Kalisa Edward, ² Mr. Niyikora Sylevere

^{1*} Secretary General, Rwanda Governance Board

² Research Specialist, Rwanda Governance Board

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2308-7609>

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Abstract

Purpose: The essence of this study was to highlight the linkage between people centred governance and effective dispensation of services to the people using Citizen Report Card as a catalytic tool.

Methodology: the study employed mainly relevant secondary data. Primary data was also collected in form of interviews to gather ideas on the linkages between people centred governance and the effective dispensation of services and how Citizen Report Card reinforces this linkage. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Graphs were developed to allow easy presentation and interpretation of the data. The findings were then interpreted based on the research objectives to reach conclusions and appropriate recommendations.

Findings: The experience with Rwanda's people centred governance model shows that, it nurtures a culture of accountability and responsiveness within the public institutions and this leads to greater efficiency. CRC has had a catalysing effect on linking people centred governance and service delivery improvement particularly in the local government. CRC acts as a link between people centred governance approaches and service delivery. Citizens not only participate in decision making and development but also strongly take part in evaluating the performance of their leaders in form of people centred accountability.

Contribution to Theory, Policy, and Practice: Analysing and describing catalysing effect of Citizen Report Card in the linkage between people centred governance and services delivery is essential for both policy makers and practitioners. It offers great lessons that will continuously drive the transformation based on good governance practices and effective service delivery. It is recommended that the government ensures that service design is constantly informed by the needs and priorities of the people to ensure that they are effective, relevant and user friendly

Keywords: *People Centred Governance, People Centred Governance Approaches, Service Delivery, Home Grown Solutions, Citizen Report Card.*

INTRODUCTION

In the post genocide Rwanda, citizen centred governance became one of the fundamental governance principles. In the past 30 years Rwanda achieved tremendous progress in the political, economic and social governance. Some of the drivers of the transformation that happened in Rwanda are; unity of Rwandans, security, transformational governance and the generation and use of Home-Grown Solutions. These drivers alone could not help to achieve much without active participation of the people. Rwanda's post genocide governance model is one that puts the citizen at the centre of everything planned and implemented.

Governance is a fundamental part of any transformational efforts and Rwanda is a witness to this statement. Governance refers the ways in which countries exercise authority in the management of public matters and resources (Kar, 2023; World Bank, 2021). It involves the approaches countries employ to interact with private sectors in making decisions. Governance involves the processes of choosing leadership of a country, the way actions and decisions are monitored and how governments are changed (Schäfer, & Henn, 2019; UNDP, 2020). Additionally, governance encompasses the ability of governments to utilize public resources efficiently and effectively as way as the nature of interaction between the state and citizens.

There are many definitions of governance from different authors but the above definition by UNDP has many elements that fit within the context of this article. The emphasis on economic, political and administrative in the management of a country at all levels resonates well with Rwanda's wholistic transformation approach that is centred on the needs to the people. It focuses on an integrated approach to addressing the needs of the people public institutions acting to empower citizens to be active participants rather than passive recipients. A number of Home-Grown Solutions were also initiated in response to unique challenges that faced the post Genocide Rwanda that have significantly contributed to Rwanda's rebirth and spurred national transformation (Bolin & Nkusi, 2022). They have shaped the governance framework into one that promotes transformance centred on the real needs to the people. Gacaca, Imihigo, Umuganda and others were thought about in response to that need. This model of governance has shaped the way service delivery framework is constructed and implemented in Rwanda.

Problem statement

The Rwanda's model of governance is one that promotes effectiveness and efficiency in the dispensation of services to the citizens. Since 2006, Rwanda started the implementation of decentralisation to promote a governance system (Bajohr, & Meyer, 2019; Seetharam, 2021) in which people actively participate in their development. The decentralisation policy is aimed at not only ensuring that services are close to the people but also to ensure that services delivered to the people effectively and efficiently. Many innovative reforms both at the central and local government levels have been initiated and implemented to ensure that the goal of attaining people centred governance that enhances service delivery is achieved. Citizen centred service delivery was the driving force of the reforms; the reforms agenda highlight their participation in the design of the service delivery framework and to hold those providing services accountable when they are

not satisfied with the delivery. An integrated framework and people centred governance approach is essential to achieving all-inclusive service delivery (Hazarika, 2019). Additionally, the environment surrounding service delivery forms a significant part of the drivers of quality services.

The initiation of IMIHIGO (literally translated as performance contracts) for public institutions was also aimed at creating a basis for holding local government leaders accountable on how effective they deliver services to the people. It also aimed at effectively involving people in planning and implementation of the IMIHIGO geared toward improving their livelihoods. All the above governance initiatives are necessary but not sufficient to guarantee quality services. Regular assessments to gauge the satisfaction of citizens with service delivery and governance practices are equally essential in ensuring that the people centred governance approaches result in effective service delivery.

One of the key measurement tools used is the Citizen Report Card (CRC). The CRC aims to contentiously assess the perception and experience of citizens with the quality of services received as well as governance practices to inform continuous improvement. The Citizen Report Card offers quantified responses from citizens on the level of appreciation of services they receive from local government entities. It offers an understanding of what citizens appreciate, what they think needs to be improved, the challenges they see to be hindering effectiveness in service delivery and recommendations for improvement. The measurement has happened for more than a decade now but there has been no prior analysis of trend and their catalysing effect between people centred governance approaches and service delivery. The essence of this study is to highlight the linkage between people centred governance and effective dispensation of services to the people mainly focusing on how systematic measurement of people's appreciation of performance local government entities using Citizen Report Card.

Research objectives

- To identify and describe people centred governance approaches employed in Rwanda
- To describe how people centred governance supports dispensation of services to the people

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the contemporary world, public service delivery and governance are inseparable; this is because without an effective governance system, quality service delivery would be a dream. The post genocide leadership of Rwanda recognised the need to foster people centred governance as foundation to all other development initiatives including effective service delivery to the people. Governance involves making decisions that impact the life of the people in many ways and ensures that these decisions are implemented (Sari, 2023). The UN continues to assert that for a governance system to be considered good, it should demonstrate essential aspects such as participation, responsiveness to its people, consensus centred, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency; focus on rule of Law and as well transparency and accountability. Good governance is people centred, promotes transparency and active participation, consultation and consensual democracy, shared power and trust by the people being served (OECD, 2021a).

People Centred Governance

People-centred governance is an approach to governance that prioritizes the needs, rights, and aspirations of individuals and communities. It emphasizes inclusive participation, transparency, equity, and accountability, seeking to empower citizens and promote their well-being (OECD, 2021b). The people centredness ensures that, all categories of citizens (men, women, youth, people with disabilities....) actively participate in decision-making processes. Additionally, it promotes collaboration and partnerships between government and other development actors such as civil society, private sector, academia, the media to mention but a few. It fosters transparency in government operations and decision-making to ensure that people trust what is being done so they can feel encouraged to participate. Acting transparently and being accountable also involves promoting access to information by the public and instituting open data system. It should establish mechanisms that promote citizens' participation in governance to hold leaders accountable for their decisions and actions.

OECD (2021a) emphasises that People Centred Governance ensures that policies and strategies reflect future generations, ensures economic growth, environmental sustainability and social equity. It should also emphasize community resilience against any form of shocks whether social, economic or environmental related. It promotes the protection of people's rights and fundamental freedoms with a view that a good governance system should serve to promote and protect these rights (Mugumbate et al., 2022). It should also promote social policies and strategies that address the root causes of inequality and injustice.

In summary, the notion of people-centred governance describes the relationship between the government and the people focusing on the needs and aspirations of individuals and communities. It seeks to create a more just, equitable, and sustainable society through active participation, transparency, and accountability, ultimately aiming to enhance the quality of life for all. Implementing this philosophy requires commitment from governmental institutions and active engagement from the populace to forge a governance model that truly serves its people.

The meaning of service delivery relates to the process of how service provider offers a service to the one who is seeking that service in order to satisfy a need of the service seeker (Ramya et al., 2019). The delivery process is expected to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of service for both customers and service providers. Kalisa and Jain (2024) define service delivery as "*the process of giving the right service to someone seeking the service in the right time and with the right attitude*". This means that, the interaction between the customer and the service seeker during the service delivery process should cause the customer to want to come back (it should create a desire to do repeat purchase). It is argued that, effectiveness in delivering public services is an essential contributor to poverty reduction (Aloui et al., 2024). Ease and equitable access to services such as health care, water, sanitation and hygiene are a precursor for achieving sustainable development (Hutton & Chase, 2017).

People Centred Governance approaches employed in Rwanda

After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda's leadership committed to a governance model that is people centred and promotes effective and efficient service delivery (Ndagijimana, 2019) in the pursuit of its three strategic choices of unity, accountability and thinking big. Since the first objective of this study is to describe people centred governance approaches employed in Rwanda to enhance service delivery (Sari, 2023). The most common people centred approached employed by the government of Rwanda are described below:

Decentralisation

The governance system in the pre-Genocide Rwanda was highly centralised and did not provide any room for citizens to participate in any decisions that affected their livelihoods. In the post Genocide period, the government of Rwanda designed approaches that would facilitate the active involvement of the people in their governance and one of these approaches is decentralisation. The first policy to guide decentralisation implementation was adopted focusing on promoting citizens' participation in decision making, enhance service delivery, transparency and accountability (Wall, 2016). Phase one focused mainly on enhancing citizen participation in governance and strengthening effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery; the second phase put emphasis on putting in place democratic and community development structures at the local government levels and election of local leaders. The service centre during this phase was largely the district. The third phase focused on consolidating the achievements of the first two phases. Here, more emphasis was placed on sectoral decentralization, service delivery, fiscal and financial decentralization, strengthening capacity of institutions and personnel as well investing in local economic development (Ministry of Local Government, 2017). The implementation of priority interventions in each of the first two phases went hand in hand with territorial reorganisation to ensure proximity of the people to service delivery centres and effective citizens participation. Decentralizing decision-making powers to local governments and communities allows for more contextually relevant decisions and enables communities to tailor solutions to their unique challenges (Alcorta et al., 2020).

Citizens' Participation

In addition to introducing and implementing decentralisation, the government of Rwanda emphasised citizens' participation approach that employs home grown initiatives to re-enforce people centred governance for effective national transformation. Holdar and Zakharchenko (2002) asserts that, the participation of citizens is "a community-based approach, where citizens organize themselves and achieve their goals at the grassroots level and work together through non-governmental community organizations to influence the decision-making process". Emphasizing participation of citizens in decentralised entities is an essential approach to attain inclusive development, citizen empowerment and promotion of local accountability (Otieno et al., 2022; Singla, 2024). Participation of citizens in decision making by providing their opinions, needs and aspirations enables policy makers adopt informed decisions and their implementation becomes simpler (Oe and Yamaoka, 2024). Intentional involvement of the people of all categories (women,

youth, people with disabilities...) in decisions and actions that affect their wellbeing makes the ensuing results more sustainable, ensures effectiveness in service delivery and increases trust of the people in public institutions (Oe, & Yamaoka, 2024; Yadav, 2024). Governance that promotes participation of citizens offers an enabling environment for service providers to enhance service delivery to the people by ensuring the right thing is done at the right time. The key home-grown forms of citizens' participation in development and decision making are: Imihigo, Umuganda, Inteko z'Abaturage, Abunzi Committees and National Umushyikirano Council. These have been at the forefront of promoting unity, resilience, service delivery and active participation of citizens.

Home Grown Solutions

Homegrown Solutions (HGSs) are initiatives implemented by the government of Rwanda to local challenges using innovative and culturally relevant approaches. They are based on Rwandan culture and traditions and were employed after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to deal with the enormous challenges that faced the country (Ndahiro et al., 2015). HGSs have been contextualised to the contemporary and emerging realities as community driven responses. HGSs demonstrate a commitment to community-driven development, empowerment, and self-reliance as they rely on the use of local knowledge and resources (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2017; Shafana, 2020; Rutikanga, 2019). They seek nurture local capacity, promote inclusive and equitable development, and support context-specific problem-solving that addresses the unique needs and challenges (Tangwe et al., 2023). Some of the HGSs that promote people centred governance are described below:

Inteko z'Abaturage

Inteko z'Abaturage is a Kinyarwanda term that translates to "Citizens' Assemblies" in English. It refers to a system of local governance in Rwanda where citizens come together to discuss community matters, make decisions, and participate in the democratic process (Munyaneza, 2018). These assemblies play a significant role in decision-making at the grassroots level, emphasizing issues of development, governance, and community well-being (Mugisha, 2020). Inteko z'Abaturage is centred on participatory governance, community empowerment, and collective decision-making (Munyaneza, 2018; Uwitware, 2019). It represents a foundational aspect of Rwanda's local governance system, aiming to foster direct engagement between the government and citizens. Inteko z'Abaturage have been very instrumental in promoting people centred governance; community empowerment and ownership; transparency and accountability; collective decision making; national unity; community conflict resolution and peacebuilding as well as fostered sustainable development (World Bank, 2016a).

Umuganda

Umuganda is a traditional Rwandan practice of community service that typically takes place on the last Saturday of each month. Its philosophical underpinnings can be explored through several lenses, including collectivism and social responsibility. The philosophy of Umuganda is grounded in the principles of community solidarity, unity, and collective responsibility

(McDonald, 2018; Mpyisi, 2020). Umuganda emphasizes the idea that working together for the common good strengthens social bonds and enhances the development of the entire community (Gasana, 2013; Nzeyimana & Imanishimwe, 2017; Sayinzoga, 2019).

The significant philosophical elements of Umuganda include community cohesion, civic engagement, self-reliance and national development; respect for the environment and building a strong national identity (Nzeyimana & Imanishimwe, 2017).

In short Umuganda is not just about physical labour; it's about cultivating a culture of collaboration, responsibility, and nation-building, with the broader goal of creating a more cohesive, self-reliant, and thriving society (Musoni et al., 2018). It fosters a sense of community that encourages individuals to come together for the common good, highlighting the importance of active participation in communal life (Mpyisi, 2020)

Natinal Umushyikirano Council (NUC)

The National Umushyikirano Council, often referred is an important platform in Rwanda aimed at promoting dialogue between the government and its citizens (Nzeyimana, 2016). The term *Umushyikirano* means "dialogue" or "consultation" in Kinyarwanda, and the council embodies the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and active citizen participation in governance. Established to facilitate participatory governance and enhance citizen engagement in the decision-making process, the council plays a key role in the country's governance framework (Bamwita & Twahirwa, 2021). The NUC is designed to involve Rwandan citizens from all walks of life, including community leaders, government officials, civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens. This inclusive approach ensures that a wide range of perspectives are heard in national discussions.

The council serves as a platform for dialogue between the government and the population, allowing citizens to raise concerns, offer solutions, and engage directly with policymakers (World Bank, 2016b). It's an opportunity for the government to update the public on progress and challenges related to development, governance, and social welfare. Through engaging citizens in discussions, the NUC fosters accountability within the government (Kagabo & Murekezi, 2020). Leaders are held responsible for their actions and policies, and citizens can provide feedback that shapes future decisions. The National Umushyikirano Council is thus a reflection of Rwanda's commitment to participatory governance and its goal of involving citizens in shaping the country's future (Niyonsenga, 2019). It complements other forms of citizen engagement, such as *Inteko z'Abaturage* (Citizens' Assemblies), by ensuring that citizens have multiple channels through which they can influence decision-making at the national level.

Abunzi Committees

The Abunzi committees are traditional mediation systems in Rwanda, established to resolve conflicts and disputes at the community level, focusing on restorative justice and social cohesion (Tangwe et al., 2023). Since the establishment of the post-genocide recovery framework, Abunzi committees have been recognized by the government of Rwanda as legitimate conflict

resolution mechanisms, complementing the formal judicial system (Strasheim, 2012). Each committee typically comprises a mix of men and women, ensuring a balanced perspective in mediation. Members often receive training in conflict resolution, negotiation, and communication skills to effectively facilitate discussions.

The philosophy behind Abunzi committees reflects a commitment to community empowerment, restorative justice, and cultural values (Munyani, 2019). Through the use of local knowledge and fostering inclusive dialogue, these committees play a significant role in promoting social cohesion and mitigating conflict in Rwandan society. They are not only a means of resolving disputes but also a vital part of rebuilding and maintaining community relationships in the wake of Rwanda's complex history (Munyani, 2019).

Imihigo

The philosophy of Imihigo is deeply rooted in Rwanda's tradition of accountability, performance, and collective responsibility. In its contemporary form, Imihigo is a goal-setting and performance-based system used by the government of Rwanda to track progress in development and governance at local and national levels (Iyer, & Abegaz, 2019; Baikirize & Muyobokeye, 2020). Through Imihigo, leaders and institutions set clear, measurable goals (often annual targets) that they must achieve. At the end of the year, they are held accountable for the results, ensuring that actions are taken seriously and that there is a transparent review of performance (Iyer, & Abegaz, 2019).

Imihigo cultivates a sense of ownership, collaboration and active participation in the development process (Urusaro, 2021). Citizens, local leaders, and institutions all play a role in setting the goals (Imihigo) and working together to achieve them (Munyaneza, 2019). This participatory approach strengthens the relationship between government and the people, as everyone is involved in shaping the country's future (IPAR, 2020). Imihigo is centred around results rather than just intentions or plans. The emphasis is on achieving concrete outcomes and measurable progress, particularly in areas such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development, education, health, and governance. By focusing on results, the system helps ensure that efforts are truly driving positive change. It reflects Rwanda's commitment to self-reliance, national unity, and continuous progress, with a focus on improving citizens' lives through tangible, measurable actions. To ensure that the voice of the citizens is continuously heard and informs the next Imihigo, the results of Citizen Report Card (CRC) contribute 10% to IMIHIGO evaluation where citizens' satisfaction with their participation contributes 5% and citizens' satisfaction with service delivery contributes another 5%.

The people centred governance approaches described above have been so instrumental in improving the delivery of services to the people (Kabera & Rukundo, 2018). However, for them to be effective, continuous measurement of their performance from the perspective of citizens played an essential role. This was done using the Citizen Report Card (CRC) which acted as a catalyst for continuous improvement. CRC is a tool that enables citizens to evaluate governance practices and the quality of public services in their communities (Bule & Ndung'u, 2020). It is

often used as part of participatory governance initiatives and serves a variety of purposes. The essence of a Citizen Report Card lies in its ability to generate credible data, strengthen the relationship between citizens and their government, promote transparency and accountability, enable evidence-based advocacy, and foster civic engagement. By putting citizens at the centre of the evaluation process, CRCs not only improve public services but also enhance governance practices and social justice. CRC empowers citizens by giving them a platform to express their views on the quality of services they receive (Bule & Ndung'u, 2020). This participatory approach helps in amplifying citizen voices in governance through generating information from citizens on the service performance to inform necessary improvements (Hamina & McGee, 2013).

Over the past decade, the CRC has been conducted and results generated discussed with concerned local government leaders, stakeholders and citizens' representatives to devise strategies to address issues of governance and service delivery. CRC has proved to be a strong tool to enhance people centred governance by generating reliable data to inform necessary improvements. It has also raised the voice of citizens to hold their leaders accountable for their decisions, actions and service delivery gaps.

Conceptual Framework

The linkage between people-centred governance and service delivery is a crucial one, as effective governance structures are essential for ensuring that services are delivered in a way that meets the needs and expectations of the people they are intended to serve. People-centred governance ensures that service design is informed by the needs and preferences of the citizens. This means that services are more likely to be relevant, effective, and user-friendly. When citizens participate in the design process, the resulting services are more likely to meet their specific needs and address any existing gaps. For this study, the people centred approaches are the independent variables, Citizen Report Card is the intervening variable while effective dispensation of services is the outcome variable as shown in the diagram below.

Conceptual Framework of the study

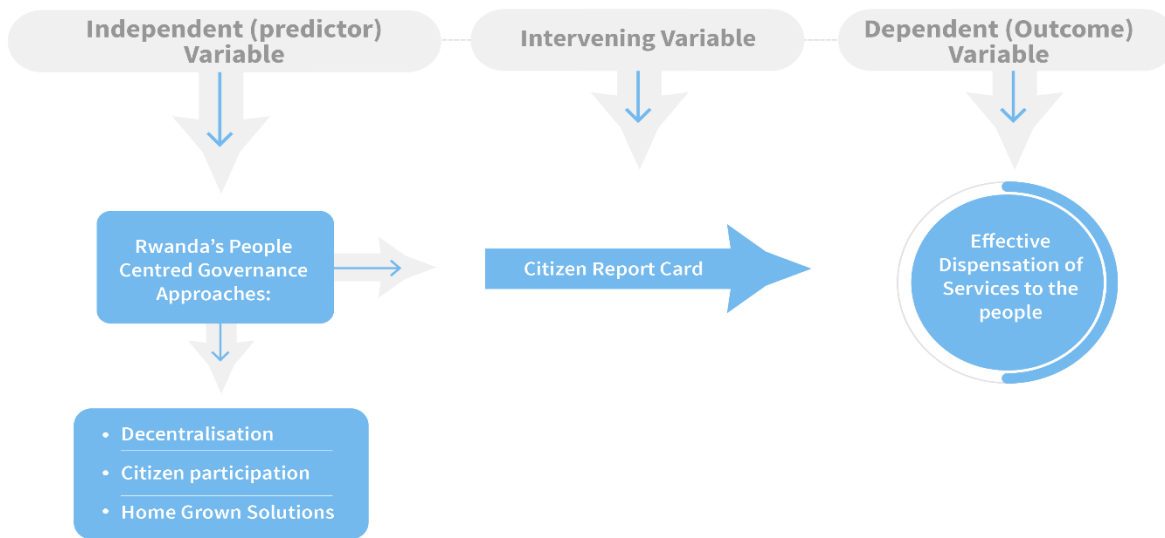


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2025)

METHODOLOGY

The study is related to citizen centred governance approaches and service delivery and on how Citizen Report Card acts as catalyst for people centred governance approaches to impact service delivery. Most of the data were obtained from secondary sources. The use of secondary data makes research much easier since the data is readily available in its original form (Niraula, 2019). The available data in secondary format allowed the researcher to sympathetically examine and understand the research problem (Unachukwu et al., 2018).

The process started by identifying the sources of the information mainly related to people centred governance approaches and CRC reports. The CRC reports for the last seven years were reviewed to understand the performance trends in the sectors assessed. Reviewing these reports involved a critical and systematic approach to gain insights about their effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement. The CRC uses a sample size of over 10,000 people obtained using random sampling approach to select villages as Primary Sample Unit (PSU) in all 30 districts and systematic sampling is employed to select the respondents from the PSU (Rwanda Governance Board, 2024).

The literature identified to contain the data related to the study were reviewed and ideas related to the study objectives were generated. The data was checked for quality and relevance to ensure that it aligns to the study objectives.

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. Content analysis was employed to examine themes and patterns in people centred governance and how these relate to service delivery particularly using data from key informant interviews. A comparative examination of the data was done to analyse the variations in performance using CRC generated data across

different years and sectors measured. Data was tabulated and graphs generated to show performance trend in governance and service delivery in the past seven years. The graphs are categorised according to the three pillars of Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation showing the performance trend of sectors under each pillar.

The findings were then interpreted based on the research objectives to reach conclusions and make appropriate recommendations. The secondary data provided a powerful approach to explore people centred governance and service delivery as it offered access to a large amount of data and was more efficient (Dunn et al., 2015). It helped to methodically analyse data on governance and Citizen Report Card and how this helps to enhance the quality-of-service delivery to citizens.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe how people centred governance supports the effective dispensation of services to the people. The linkage between people-centred governance and service delivery is very essential because active governance structures and systems are crucial in ensuring that services are delivered in a way that meets the needs and expectations of the people they are intended to serve. With people centred governance, the design of services is informed by the needs and preferences of those to be served which implies that, there is a prospect that services are effective, relevant and user friendly (Bule & Ndung'u, 2020). People centred governance also promises that, citizen participation in the design of services ensures that they meet their specific needs and minimize service delivery gaps. The government of Rwanda has put in place mechanisms for citizens to play a role in the service delivery design and to continuously provide feedback to inform necessary improvement in service delivery.

To ensure that the reframing of service delivery takes root, regular assessments using CRC that collects citizens' feedbacks on services and governance practices was initiated in 2010. Since then, CRC has been done every year to measure the satisfaction of citizens with service delivery and governance practices to inform continuous improvement. The regularity of CRC aims to maintain consistency in citizen centric governance to drive the needed change in transforming the livelihoods of the people. CRC is conducted on 16 sectors that are indicated in the table below. The table shows the trend of citizens' satisfaction with governance practices and service delivery in the past seven years (2018-2024).

Table 1: Performance of Sectors in CRC in 7 years (2028-2024)

SECTOR	CRC 2018	CRC 2019	CRC 2020	CRC 2021	CRC 2022	CRC 2023	CRC 2024
Security	88.0%	89.4%	91.6%	91.6%	91.9%	89.8%	91.3%
Respect for Governance principles and trust in Leadership	87.5%	88.5%	86.2%	87.6%	87.8%	89.4%	90.2%
Citizen Participation	75.9%	73.1%	77.2%	87.6%	88.7%	87.3%	89.2%
Justice	76.4%	76.4%	80.1%	79.6%	81.1%	81.8%	81.6%
Family Welfare	71.9%	77.1%	73.5%	74.7%	77.0%	75.1%	74.9%
Health	70.8%	72.9%	72.4%	73.7%	79.1%	77.9%	76.2%
Hygiene	68.2%	69.2%	73.9%	81.0%	76.3%	73.8%	74.1%
Local Government administration	72.0%	71.3%	67.7%	70.9%	78.8%	75.8%	74.9%
Livestock	57.7%	62.7%	74.9%	75.0%	77.7%	76.6%	76.8%
ICT	–	–	64.6%	68.3%	74.1%	72.8%	75.3%
Social welfare	68.2%	67.3%	68.0%	72.8%	71.8%	71.8%	74.0%
Private Sector	64.4%	63.8%	64.3%	67.5%	74.9%	76.2%	76.7%
Education	64.0%	63.6%	62.6%	68.8%	72.2%	76.4%	76.0%
Infrastructure	61.3%	61.7%	60.0%	65.9%	65.1%	71.0%	67.7%
Land and Settlement	63.4%	63.9%	65.7%	61.7%	60.5%	60.4%	64.2%
Agriculture	49.4%	55.0%	58.5%	59.5%	61.1%	63.2%	61.5%

Source: RGB (2024)

The three figures below show CRC Sector trend by pillar in seven years (2018 – 2024)

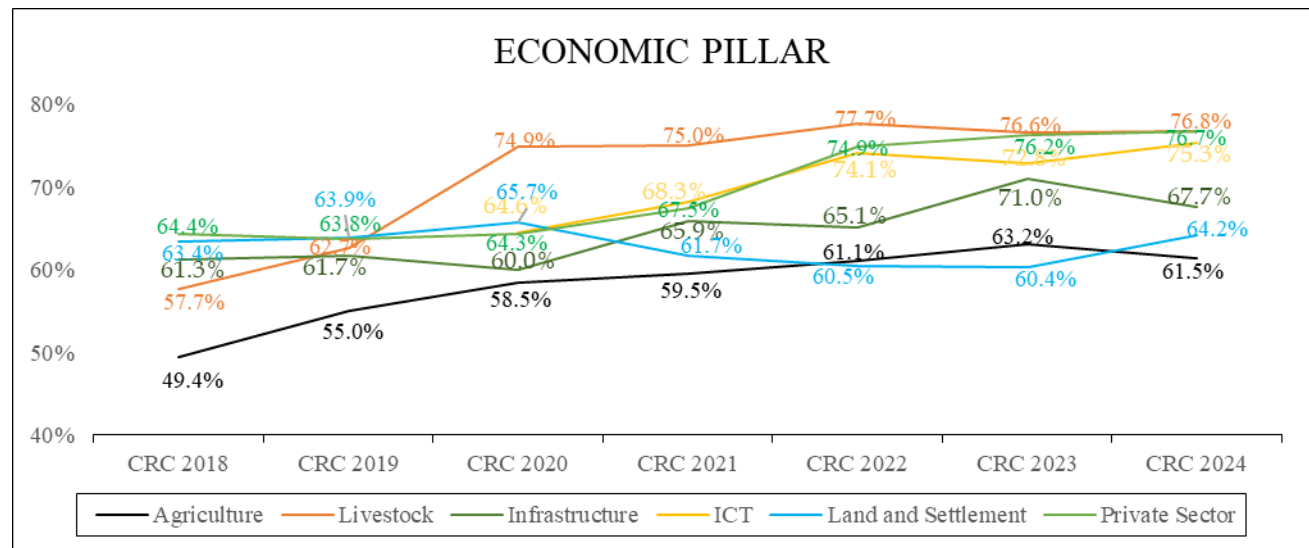
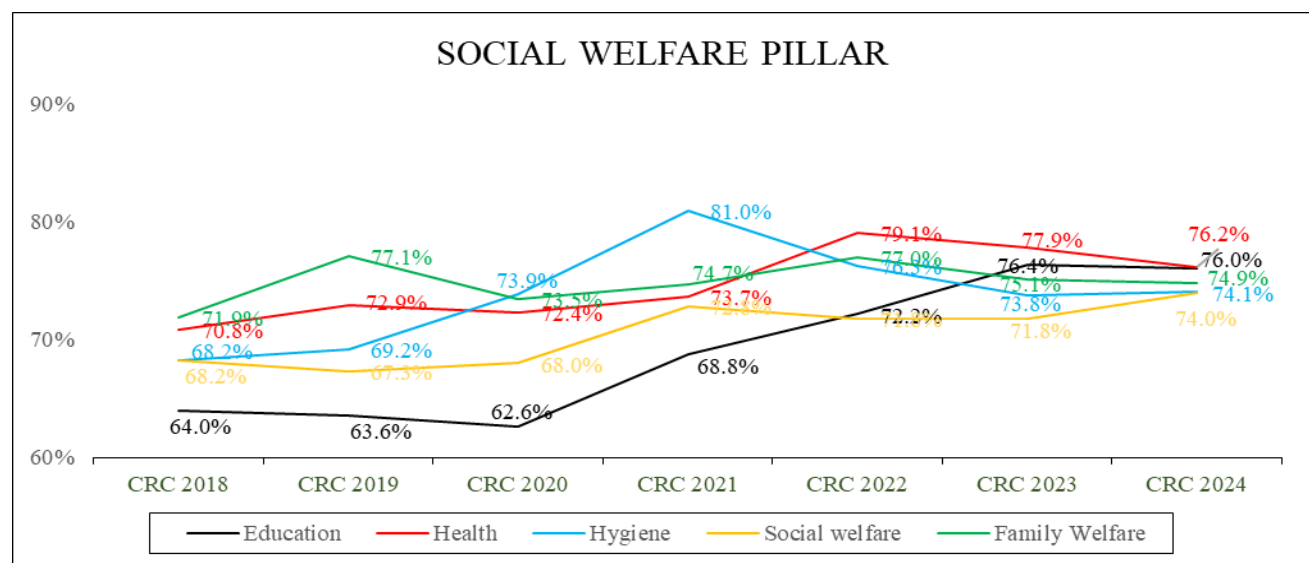
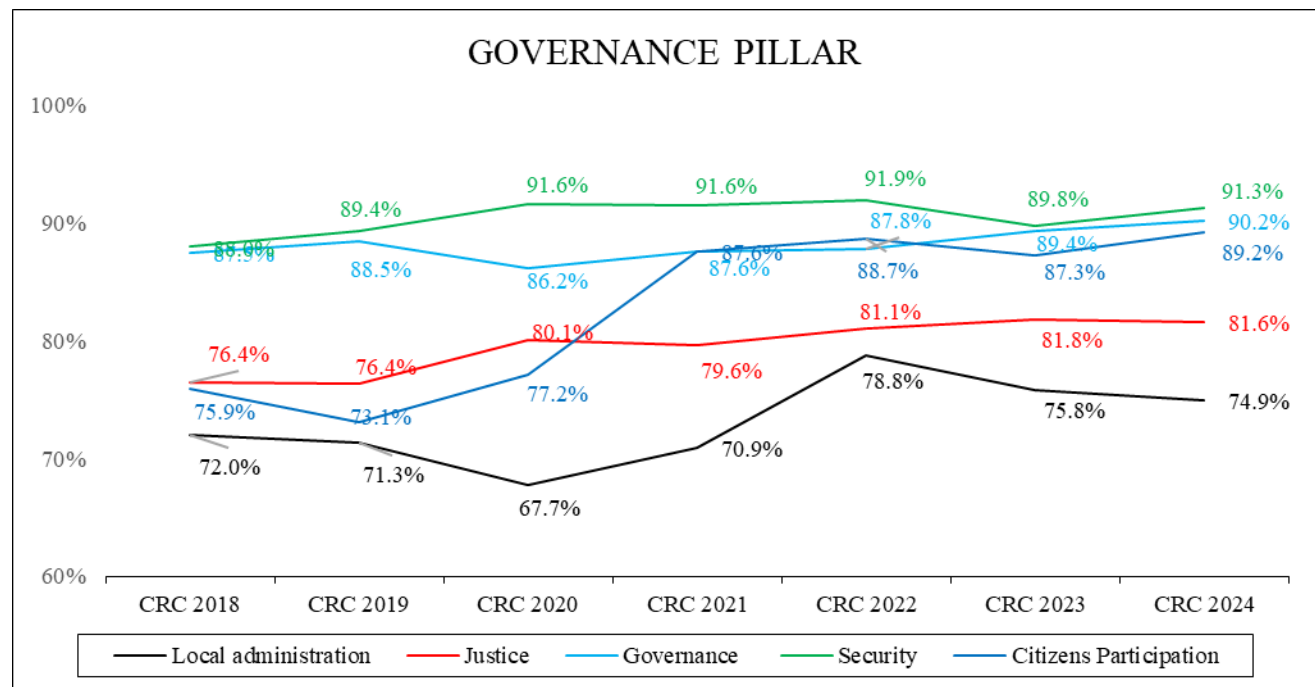
Figure 2: Performance trend in economic pillar*Source: RGB (2024)***Figure 3: Performance trend in Social welfare pillar***Source: RGB (2024)*

Figure 4: Performance trend in Governance pillar

Source: RGB (2024)

Based on the data in the table and graphs above, citizens have consistently appreciated the level of security higher than other sectors in the last seven years where it improved from 88% in CRC 2018 to 91.3% in CRC 2024. They also highlight that their role in maintaining security has been very significant being on the reasons security has always had a high rate of satisfaction. In all the sectors, there has been improvement between the first year and the seventh year even with variations in between. The regular CRC monitoring and assessments have kept public institutions on their toes especially those that have not received positive rating from their people (Moussa & Akims, 2024; UNDP, 2024). Additionally, the Citizen Report Card strengthens feedback mechanisms that are used to assess the quality of services and to hold service providers accountable (UNDP, 2024). CRC allows that voice of the citizens to be heard and to channel their needs to relevant institutions and authorities thereby ensuring tailored services to their needs and increasing their satisfaction. Increased satisfaction with services leads to increased trust in public institutions and the governance systems as well as results in the willingness of the people to pay for services.

CRC has had a catalysing effect on the service delivery improvement particularly in the local government. CRC acts as a link between people centred governance approaches and service delivery. Citizens not only participate in decision making and development but also strongly take part in evaluating the performance of their leaders in form of people centred accountability (UNDP, 2024). By doing this, CRC acts as an intervening variable between people centred governance (independent or predictor variable) and effective dispensation of services (dependent or outcome

variable). In the interviews held with some of the local government leaders, they asserted that the connection between plans and their implementation is regular measurements to examine if the plans are being implemented according to plan. People centredness that drives effective dispensation of services to the people cannot be attained without regular people centred measurements to assess the effectiveness, challenges and to redesign the best course of action based on the findings. Local government leaders interviewed argued that:

- The consistent linkage between plans and implementation using tools like Citizen Report Card is what sets Rwanda apart. It ensures that plans are implemented effectively through continuously identifying implementation gaps and engaging concerned stakeholders to fix these gaps.
- Citizen Report Card acts as a tool for advocacy on policy changes and improvements in service delivery as it provides it is based systematic collection of empirical evidence from service users to inform various partners and citizens to support their demands for improved governance and service delivery.
- CRC allows identification of specific needs and priorities of communities, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of services.
- Through engagements to share findings, CRC brings different stakeholders together which fosters a sense of community and collective responsibility towards improving public services.
- CRC empower citizens by providing them with a platform to express their views on the quality of services they receive. This participatory approach helps in amplifying citizen voices in governance and service delivery.
- CRC serves as a means for citizens to hold public officials and service providers accountable for their performance. Through collecting and presenting feedback, it points to areas where improvements are needed and strategies for appropriate actions are taken.

The experience with Rwanda's people centred governance model shows that, it nurtures a culture of accountability and responsiveness within the public institutions and this leads to greater efficiency (Otieno et al., 2022). The qualitative interviews revealed that (1) when citizens provide feedback on service delivery, public institutions endeavour to identify and eliminate inefficiencies (2) as a result of citizens participation in monitoring and evaluation of service delivery and governance practices, public institutions respond quickly to to issues, improve services and institution quality assurance measures to improve and sustain service delivery (3) involving citizens in prmoting transparency and accountability restricts corruption tendencies which results into better use of public resources for the good of the general public (4) because citizens' voices are heard and their needs are met through these people centred approaches, it has increased their trust of public institutions and governance system and their participation in different development activies has grown progressively. Due to these functional people centred approaches, the government of Rwanda has a very high trust rate of 90.2% from the public (Rwanda Governance Board, 2024).

Citizens empowerment and promotion of participatory decision-making are essential forms of people-centered governance contributes to sustainable and equitable development which is the focus of Rwanda's leadership. The government of Rwanda prioritises and nurtures a sense of responsibility and ownership among citizens, and stresses the alignment of development initiatives with the needs and priorities of the citizens to guarantee sustainable people centred development.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

People centred governance that emphasises a commitment to community-driven development, empowerment, and autonomy is the cornerstone of Rwanda's governance system. It seeks to cultivate local capacity, promote inclusive and equitable development, and support context-specific problem-solving that addresses the unique needs and challenges of each community. The linkage between people-centred governance and service delivery is a vital one. The drive to prioritise citizen participation, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness is aimed at ensuring that services are designed, delivered, and evaluated in a way that meets the needs and expectations of the people. This leads to improved service quality, greater citizen satisfaction, and more sustainable development. Implementing and maintaining this linkage requires addressing the challenges of; (1) translating policies and programs into practice, (2) limitations of acting on citizens' feedback, (3) capacity limitations, (4) bureaucratic inertia, and (5) information gaps to attaining a truly people-centred approach to governance that positively shapes the design and implementation of an effective service delivery chain. As a result of the need to perpetuate the linkage between People Centred Governance and Service delivery, the following recommendations are offered:

- Continuously encourage active participation of citizens and community leaders in governance and decision-making processes that enhances mutual responsibility and accountability.
- Ensure that service design is constantly informed by the needs and priorities of the people to guarantee their effectiveness, relevance and user friendly
- Sustain the spirit of ensuring that leaders are held responsible for their decisions and actions and that citizens provide feedback that shapes future decisions.
- Continue investing in the initiative of gathering citizens' feedback on governance practices and on the quality-of-service delivery to ensure sustained improvement and to attain true people centredness.
- Public officials should regularly endeavour to bridge information gap between them and citizens and build citizens' capacity to maintain an effective people-centred approach to governance.

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