



UNDERSTANDING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROCESSES FOR DECISION-MAKING IN RWANDA: OPPORTUNITIES AND GAPS

RESEARCH REPORT



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List of Acronyms

| | |
|------------------|--|
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| FBO | Faith Based Organization |
| FGDs | Focus Group Discussions |
| GoR | Government of Rwanda |
| KIIs | Key Informant Interviews |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| MINALOC | Ministry of Local Government |
| MYCulture | Ministry of Youth and Culture |
| NAR | Never Again Rwanda |
| NCPD | National Council for People with Disabilities |
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| NISR | National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda |
| NYC | National Youth Council |
| NWC | National Women Council |
| PAR | Participatory Action Research |
| RALGA | Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities |
| RGB | Rwanda Governance Board |

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Foreword

Youth participation in governance processes is important to both young people and the government. Youth engagement in governance means that youth are involved and play an active role in planning, budgeting, making decisions and setting policies. In the context of Rwanda, active youth participation has been considered to be one of the key strategies for good governance. The Government of Rwanda (GoR) has indeed taken important legal and policy strides that show political will towards active youth participation. This political will is evidenced by a number of legal and policy texts. Specifically, Article 27 of the 2003 constitution of the Republic of Rwanda as revised in 2015 provides that every citizen, youth inclusive, has the right to participate in the development processes of their country.

Despite the progress made by the GoR to create an enabling environment for youth participation, evidence suggests the youth participation in local governance processes is still sub-optimal. Studies, including one by NAR into factors contributing to low citizen participation in the local government performance contracts' process (Imihigo¹) found district Imihigo allocated to the public budget is generally not responsive to youth needs and priorities. NAR conducted this study in the spirit of providing scientific evidence on the pull and push factors impacting youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development.

The research covered 14 districts of Rwanda and used a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques, to scrutinize youth participation in local governance processes for decision-making in Rwanda. We hope that the research findings will help review and reformulate policy to enhance youth participation in local governance processes.

Over 10 years, NAR has been promoting youth participation through different interventions including a youth engagement project. Under this project, NAR provided youth with critical thinking skills, human rights education, peace education, support for their initiated projects, safe spaces for them to dialogue, facilitation of intergenerational dialogue, and helped to engage them in democratic processes and availed them with tools and platforms to engage.

We strongly believe that the research findings will be a valuable contribution towards promoting an inclusive society that enjoys sustainable peace and social justice.

Executive Director, Never Again Rwanda

Dr Joseph Ryarasa Nkurunziza



¹ Imihigo is home-grown solution drawn from the Rwanda culture where leaders and institutions set performance targets, sign performance targets and work towards achieving those targets.

Executive Summary

Background

Broadly defined as a process by which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources that affect them, citizen participation in general, and youth participation in particular, are important pillars of good governance. Youth participation in local governance in the context of Rwanda is even more paramount considering young people constitute the majority (62.5%) of the population. To elaborate further, Rwanda is a youthful nation, with a median age of just 19 years: 40 per cent of the population is under the age of 15, and almost 70 per cent is under the age of 30. Therefore, it is vital to solicit and meaningfully consider youth inputs in any development discourse.

The GoR has indeed taken important legal and policy strides that show political will towards active youth participation. This political will is evidenced by a number of legal and policy texts. Firstly, citizen participation, including youth, is enshrined in the supreme law of the land; the constitution of The Republic of Rwanda. Secondly, special structures such as the National Youth Council (NYC) have been created and included in local governance structures from the village to the district and national levels. Despite the progress made by the GoR to create an enabling environment for youth participation, evidence suggests that youth participation in the local governance process is still sub-optimal. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the opportunities (pull factors) and challenges (push factors) impacting youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision-making for development, and provide actionable recommendations to improve the current situation.

Study Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to understand the push and pull factors impacting youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision-making for development. More specifically, the study intends to explore the nature and level of youth participation in local government processes that shape decision making for development. Secondly, the study endeavours to determine the challenges and opportunities (push and pull factors) impacting youth participation in local government processes that shape decision-making for development. Lastly, the study proposes actionable recommendations that can enhance youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision-making for development.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods study design, employing a blend of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, to explore and quantify the opportunities and challenges impacting youth participation in local governance processes. Qualitatively, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIs) were conducted, while quantitatively a survey was rolled out using a structured digitalized questionnaire. Data were cleaned and analyzed using ATLAS.ti 22 and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) respectively. Thematic content analysis was utilized to analyze qualitative data and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data. The results from both analyses informed the report's findings.

Study Results

Background Characteristics

The study administered the study tools to 1,065 respondents, of which slightly more than half (52.8%) reside in urban settings. An overwhelming majority of respondents are single (90.6%) and have at least reached secondary school (86.5%). This is a key finding as higher levels of education increase young people's capacity to engage in public policy discussions and participate in governance processes.

Awareness of Citizen Participation Mechanisms Among the Youth

Overall, the majority (86%) of youth are aware of at least one citizen participation mechanism. However, the awareness dropped, in certain instances drastically, when respondents were quizzed about which specific citizen participation channels they were aware of. For example, Umuganda² (community work) emerged as being the most well-known with 70.5% reporting they were aware of it, followed closely by village meetings (65.9%), citizen assembly/Inteko y'abaturage (65.7%) and NYC meetings (59.3%) among others. On another note, and perhaps worrying, key platforms such as Imihigo preparatory meetings and planning and budgeting meetings scored the lowest at 28.2% and 17.5% respectively. The qualitative part of the research provides a plausible explanation with local leaders confiding they only involve youth leaders in Imihigo planning and budgeting meetings. Such a finding suggests ordinary youth miss an important avenue to voice their needs in decision-making processes with most reporting limited engagement with their leaders.

Preferred Citizen Participation Mechanisms Among the Youth

The majority of the youth cited Umuganda (65.1%) as their most preferred citizen participation channel while about half (50.6%) cited Inteko y'abaturage as their preferred citizen participation forum. Youth preferences differed from both the general population and local leaders. The findings of a 2020 NAR study assessing local leaders' capacity needs in participatory governance revealed local leaders and ordinary citizens preferred Inteko y'abaturage as a citizen participation channel. Surprisingly, the findings suggest the youth are not enthusiastic about their own designated NYC meetings (33.5%). This could be attributed to a weak relationship between the youth and their constituents, in addition to the fact that these meetings rarely happen³.

History of Youth Attending Citizen Participation Channels

Regarding whether youth have ever attended citizen participation channels, an overwhelming majority (93.3%) have ever attended Umuganda, while a significant majority of the youth that took part in this study have attended village meetings (74.7%) and Inteko y'abaturage (60.9%). However, only about four in 10 (39.7%) of the young people have ever attended a NYC meeting. This is a cause for concern since this is the platform provided for by law to enable youth to voice their needs in the decision-making process. Even more worrying, only a meagre 6.5% and 22.4% have ever attended the planning and budgeting and Imihigo meetings respectively.

Regularity of the Youth Attending Citizen Participation Channels

When the study pressed further to ascertain the regularity of youth participation in local governance processes, Umuganda still emerged as the best regularly well-attended citizen participation channel for the youth, with around 66.9% stating they often or always attended the platform. Comparatively, only about 34.9% reported often or always attending an Inteko y'abaturage. This observed discrepancy in attendance between Umuganda and Inteko y'abaturage is explained through qualitative revelations.

Regarding Umuganda, the youth contend that the fact it happens on weekends, its physical nature, and its informal interaction offers an opportunity for youth to catch up. Additionally, Umuganda is associated with cultural norms that the elderly/old people cannot undertake manual work when the young are around.

In the same vein, the youth reported that some local leaders use negative reinforcement mechanisms and punishment to induce youth attendance. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the

2 Umuganda literally means, "Guided by a shared purpose, people coming together to achieve an outcome". Umuganda, or community work, is inspired by the Rwandan culture of self-help, but it has been mandated under the law, which has made it compulsory for everyone aged between 18 to 65 to attend community works at the village level every last Saturday between 8am and 11am.

3 Participant in an FGD with opinion leaders in Mbazi sector, Huye District.

youth revealed that mobilization around Umuganda is more comprehensive and attendance is a legal requirement.

The youth cited several reasons why their attendance at Inteko y'abaturatione is suboptimal. Specifically, they disclosed that the themes/topics discussed rarely touch on youth concerns and are therefore not perceived to be relevant to youth. The youth confessed to attending Inteko y'abaturatione on multiple occasions only to find the discussion centred around conflict resolution within the community and not about genuine youth issues. This causes frustration and demotivates the youth from attending Inteko y'abaturatione. Other issues that demotivate them from attending meeting-style citizen participation mechanisms include delays in devising solutions for youth-raised issues in the past, limited information, or limited mobilization on some channels like planning and budgeting meetings, and youth assuming meetings are supposed to be attended by old people. The following discourse highlights some of the reasons behind the poor engagement by youth in Inteko y'abaturatione.

Active Youth Participation in Citizen Participation Channels

When it came to assessing active participation by the youth that attend different citizen participation platforms, the majority have never asked: 1) a question (61.6%), 2) sought feedback on program implementation (71.7%), 3) sought feedback on utilization of finances (82.3%), and 4) questioned potential cases of corruption (87.9%). Qualitative findings point to plausible reasons for this. Firstly, this could be attributed to a lack of confidence by young people to freely express themselves to local leaders. Secondly, the capacity for critical thinking by the youth is limited, which affects the quality of their interventions in the different participation mechanisms⁴.

Opportunities (Pull Factors) Impacting Youth Participation in Local Governance

The youth did point out several opportunities/pull factors to leverage increasing participation by young people in local governance processes. For instance, the majority (80.2%) of surveyed youth recognized political will as the best opportunity to leverage, engage and voice their ideas for consideration in local governance processes. The president of the Republic of Rwanda has been a strong supporter of the youth and youth-related programs and has appointed young people in key government ministries, ensuring they are involved in key decision-making organs. In addition, platforms also exist for politicians and government officials to interact with the youth, providing avenues for young people to participate in local government processes that shape decision-making for development, such as citizen participation channels, including citizens assemblies (Inteko y'abaturatione), Umuganda (community work) *Inama y'umushyikirano*⁵ and meetings by political parties discussing youth priorities and challenges, among others.

Secondly, the GoR has put a legal and policy framework in place that aimed to enhance the participation of youth in local governance. The National Youth Policy addresses the youth's main concerns and assigns legitimacy and orientation to programs and services that are centred on youth and proposes strategies and guidelines for their planning and implementation. It also contains appropriate measures for directing the youth's forces and talents toward the sustainable development of our nation. The policy, and other related ones, also establish councils and commissions like the NYC, whose representatives meet regularly and collect views from the youth, which they then elevate to local councils' meetings in an indirect citizen participation mechanism.

From the experience of the youth, the most important citizen participation mechanisms include Umuganda, NYC Meetings, Inteko y'abaturatione and village meetings. The existence of such plat-

4 Key Informant interviews with a CSO representative and FGD participant with ordinary youth

5 *Inama y'umushyikirano* is an annual national dialogue meeting (provided for under the constitution) chaired by His Excellency the President of Rwanda that brings together local government and executive to discuss prevailing issues.

forms and the wide participation by youths in all areas across the country provides an opportunity that can be explored to increase youth participation and involvement.

The continued exploitation of the existing platforms provides an opportunity that is currently under-exploited. Only 57.09% of the respondents agreed that youth optimally use the existing citizen participation forum to voice their concerns. However, they were not taking advantage of the existing opportunities to voice their concern because of the following reasons, namely: lack of interest in participating in local governance issues; lack of awareness of the existing opportunities; lack of confidence; the existing opportunities are not youth-friendly; and, cultural barriers.

Challenges (Push Factors) to Maximise Youth Participation in Local Governance

In the same vein, the youth detailed a number of challenges/push factors they encounter when trying to participate in local governance processes that shape decision-making for development. The youth cited inadequate functioning of the local government youth leadership structures. KIIS and FGD participants raised several issues that contribute to limited functioning of the NYC structures. Firstly, the youth leaders confessed to not receiving adequate orientation regarding the roles and responsibilities of each of the members elected to the NYC committees. Even in cases where NYC capacity building sessions were held, only the coordinators benefited. As a result, NYC coordinators, especially at the village, cell, and sector level, take over all their committee's responsibilities, which leads them to become overwhelmed and the remaining committee members to become frustrated.

Furthermore, findings reveal that most of the NYC committees at sub-district levels are not fully constituted and rarely meet to discuss youth issues. This is partly due to a lack of cohesion within the committees and the mobile nature of the youth. Even more worrying, the NYC leaders seldomly convene meetings with their constituents (ordinary youth) to gather their ideas on development as prescribed by the law. In FGDs, ordinary youth confided that aside from not meeting their leaders to discuss their priorities, in some cases they do not even know them.

Secondly, the youth blamed the disconnect between NYC leaders and local leaders at village and cell level as one of the main reasons for their sub-optimal participation in local governance processes. There is a weak working relationship between NYC leaders and local leaders at the village and cell levels. Participants in KIIS and FGDs attribute this to negative attitudes from local leaders towards the youth. Apparently, some local leaders are worried about over-performing youth, thinking or believing they could take their positions. In so doing, they provide limited support for youth leaders' activities and, in some cases, even go as far as frustrating their activities. In the same vein, the youth leaders decried poor time management tendencies from local leaders where they do not arrive on time for meetings. Equally, local leaders blame timekeeping issues on having to deal with many competing priorities, which sometimes leads to youth being placed lower down on their priority list.

Thirdly, the youth attributed an uncondusive environment for youth participation in some existing citizen participation channels; mainly those that adopt a meeting style format. A number of research participants taking part in this study felt that most citizen participation channels adopted an exclusively meeting-style format, which most youth acknowledged finding less attractive. To compound the situation, some FGD participants remarked that most citizen participation channels bring together people from diverse age groups, including in some cases their parents, uncles, elders and grandparents, which creates cultural barriers where the youth fail to freely express their concerns, especially if they contradict those of their parents. Similarly, other research participants in FGDs and KIIS were particularly critical of the limited time availed to youth to voice their concerns in the existing citizen participation channels. Additionally, the youth disclosed that the themes discussed in most instances did not capture their needs.

Fourth, youth decried the limited resources provided to implement youth-friendly approaches, such as integrating entertainment in their forums. Youth leaders that participated in this research reported inadequate material and equipment, such as soccer balls among others, that would enable them to implement youth-friendly approaches. This mainly results from the limited youth activities budget provided at the local government level. As a matter of fact, local leaders in the district confided that the only budget line for youth activities stops at the district level. Equally, youth leaders further complained that they lack resources both in terms of financial and technical capacity to put into action some of the designated youth Imihigo.

Lastly, other reported hindrances to youth participation were the top-down nature of youth Imihigo, and youth representatives not optimally participating in their local government council (Njyanama)⁶. On one hand, perhaps surprisingly, both youth leaders and local leaders revealed that youth Imihigo is prepared by the Ministry of Youth and Culture to be transmitted to the district level through the NYC structures without the participation of the youth, in a top-down style. On the other hand, a recurrent theme in the KII and FGDs was that youth leaders believe their participation in the Njyanama is not optimally utilized. Feedback paints a picture that youth leaders face significant challenges in not getting time and space to voice their views during local council proceedings since they are rarely part of the agenda-setting process. Such a scenario means youth leaders in particular, and youth in general, may not be able to contribute to key local governance processes that shape decision making, such as local councils.

Proposed Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study proposes the following recommendations:

1. Strengthen the youth leaders' structure (NYC) through comprehensive capacity-building programmes entailing training, mentorship and coaching.
2. Put in place a mechanism to regularly replace NYC committees.
3. Undertake capacity building of local leaders in participatory government approaches.
4. Build the critical thinking capacity of youth to enable young people to better express their views and opinions.
5. Increase fiscal support for youth activities at sub-district levels.
6. Reinforce the existing frameworks to ensure youth not only participate in the shaping of their Imihigo but also the local government's Imihigo.
7. Adopt a down-top approach to the planning and budgeting for youth Imihigo.
8. Raise youth awareness of local government decision-making processes, their importance and how they can contribute their ideas.
9. Incorporate youth-friendly approaches (using fun, entertaining and creative ideas) to existing citizen channels, especially at NYC meetings, to increase youth attendance.
10. Revise the legal framework to optimize the participation of special interest groups, such as youth, in local councils.

⁶ Njyanama or local government councils, which consist of elected individuals, are decision-making bodies with oversight at their respective local government level.

Background and Rationale

General citizen and youth participation are important pillars of good governance. In the context of Rwanda, youth constitute the majority of the population and 62.5% of the active population (15 to 64 years) (GoR, 2013). To elaborate further, Rwanda is a youthful nation, with a median age of just 19 years: 40 per cent of the population is under the age of 15, and almost 70 per cent is under the age of 30 (United Nations Population Fund, 2017). Therefore, it is paramount to solicit and meaningfully consider youth inputs in any development discourse.

The GoR has indeed taken important legal and policy strides that show political will towards active youth participation. This political will is evidenced by a number of legal and policy texts. Firstly, the participation of citizens, including youth, is enshrined in the supreme law of the land, the constitution of The Republic of Rwanda. Specifically, Article 27 of the 2003 constitution, as revised in 2015, provides that every citizen, youth inclusive, has the right to participate in the development processes of their country (GoR, 2015).

Furthermore, the transformation governance pillar priority area six in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) calls for increased citizen participation, with a particular focus on youth, in planning for development (GoR, 2017). In more practical terms, the GoR has established different direct citizen participation platforms, including Inteko z'abaturatione and Umuganda, that give youth an equal right to take part. In the same vein, the GoR has also set up indirect citizen participation channels where youth can participate through their representatives, such as the NYC.

Despite the progress made by the GoR to create an enabling environment for youth participation, evidence suggests the youth participation in local governance process is still sub-optimal. A 2018 NAR on factors contributing to low citizen participation in local government Imihigo processes found district Imihigo that is allocated to public budgets is generally not responsive to youth needs and priorities. It also pointed out to youth (representatives) being mainly used by government authorities to mobilize their peers to help execute government policies and programs, but rarely to shape them. Furthermore, the study revealed that youth generally do not actively participate in existing citizen consultative platforms such as Inteko y'abaturatione and Umuganda, where some of the government decisions impacting their lives, including local planning and Imihigo issues, are debated.

Equally, during the implementation of the youth-focused program Inzira Nziza project, and Societal Healing and Participatory Governance Program (SHPG) between 2015-2019 in Gisagara, Huye particularly, NAR noted that youth representatives generally lack the confidence and voice power necessary for them to vibrantly shape the local and national policy and agenda (NAR, 2019). This has largely been attributed to young people's limited knowledge of key policy. For instance, in a study conducted by AJPRODHO- JIJUKIRWA, almost 40 per cent were unaware of the government policies that most impact their lives (AJPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA, 2015).

As hinted earlier, citizen participation in post-genocide Rwanda has received scholarly attention and quite a number of studies assessed citizen participation. The Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) conducts quantitative studies that assess citizen participation annually. This is in addition to the Rwanda Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA), which has also done work on citizen participation. NAR has mainly focused on the qualitative part of the research and has marginally touched on youth participation as an area.

However, considering the body of literature on citizen participation in post-genocide Rwanda, it is rather surprising that no study has been conducted at the national level to comprehensively assess citizen participation in local governance process that shape decision making. This research aims to plug this knowledge gap by conducting a study that will examine the pull and push factors impacting youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development.

Definition of Key Terms

Youth

Globally, there is no universal definition of youth. The definition of youth differs from place to place (United Nations, 2021) depending on customs and traditions, social behavior and location (Curtain, 1993). For statistical purposes and without prejudice to other definitions by Member States, the United Nations defines youth as people between the ages of 15 to 24 years (United Nations, 1981). On the contrary, the African Union through the African Youth Charter defines youth as people between the age of 15 to 35 years (African Union, 2006). In Rwanda, youth are defined as being between 16 to 30 years of age and this study will adopt this definition for contextual purposes (GoR, 2015).

Nevertheless, it's imperative to be cognizant of the fact that youth are a heterogeneous group and consist of several sub-categories, including female youth, male youth, non-schooling youth, schooling youth, educated youth, married youth, unmarried youth, youth in lower social economic status, youth with disability, youth in high social economic status, youth leaders, youth residing in urban areas, and youth residing in rural areas, among others.

Governance

According to Bevir (2013, p. 12), the term 'governance' encompasses all the processes of governing, interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that led to the creation, reinforcement or reproduction of social norms and institutions within a given society. Governance is broader than government (Fasenfest, 2010) and it implies the actions undertaken to improve the general welfare of a society by means of the services delivered. Governance can be further defined as the connections and interactions between national, provincial, and local authorities and the public they serve. Good, stable, and regular connections and interactions between authorities on all levels of government and the public serves as a good and key attribute of good governance (Bevir, 2011, p. 84; Addink, 2019, p. 5).

In the Rwandan context, governance is an effective way by which the administration achieves its goals of social and economic development with respect to basic rights (Office of Ombudsman in Rwanda, 2011, p. 12). Good governance relies on the quality of the public service and the participation of citizens in the elaboration of the national policies (Idem).

Local Governance

Local urban governance is a system whereby organized local bodies with clear mandates are generally more efficient and effective in enhancing local democracy and good governance in delivering services to the local urban people and in reducing poverty (Nissen, 2021). Local urban governance implies that urban local government strives to improve service provision and reduce poverty and to empower citizens to participate in decisions that affect their urban areas.

Community Participation

Direct citizen participation is defined as the process by which members of society as citizens share power with public officials in making substantive decisions related to their community (Roberts, 2008, p. 26) and its future. Genuine citizen participation requires power sharing among citizens and public officials vested with powers to make public decisions, and it is totally different from mere consultations (Arnstein, 1969), citizen manipulation or ratification, co-optation, and tokenism. True community participation can only come about when development planners who translate national policies into action at the local level, and the people involved or targeted by those policies, work together throughout the decision-making process, when genuine dialogue takes place and community members' decisions are not ignored by the final decisions made. True participation also happens when people are empowered to control the implementation of the public decisions taken in their name while holding their leaders to account.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is the process through which members of society engage in individual and collective actions aimed at influencing public processes (Ekman & Amna, 2012). According to Adler & Goggin (2005), civic engagement refers to the ways in which citizens participate in the life of a community to improve conditions for the community or to help shape the community's future. In the context of this assignment, civic engagement is considered as collective engagement of the youth in identifying and addressing issues of public concern, but also in influencing public policies to provide a better future for youth.

Objectives

General Objective

To understand the pull and push factors towards youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development.

Specific Objectives

1. To explore the nature and level of youth participation in local government processes that shape decision making for development.
2. To determine the challenges and opportunities (push and pull factors) towards youth participation in local government processes that shape decision making for development.
3. To propose actionable recommendations that can enhance youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development.

Research Methodology

This section details the different methods, approaches and tools used to undertake this research. It's divided in several sub-sections, including research design and approach, data collection methods and tools, study population and sampling, data analysis, quality control measures, ethical considerations and expected use of the findings.

Research Questions

1. How do youth participate in local government processes that shape decision making for development?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities (push and pull factors) impacting youth participation in local government processes that shape decision making for development?
3. What are the factors associated with youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development?
4. What actionable recommendations can be adopted to enhance youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development?

Research Design and Approach

Sometimes referred to as methodological pluralism (Anderson, 2016), this study utilized a mixed methods research design. The mixed methods design is attributed with several advantages, such as mitigating the limitations of the individual qualitative and quantitative approaches while consolidating both their strengths (Wiggins, 2011). Secondly, mixed methods improve the soundness and credibility of the findings where inferences and assertions can be made and triangulated (Anderson, 2016). Thirdly, the mixed methods design enables comprehensive examination and interpretation of causal and contextual relationships that may be associated with youth participation in local governance processes (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012). For this research, the cross-sectional mixed methods study design will be adopted.

As is the culture at NAR, this study was guided by the Participatory Action Research process, which is participatory, democratic, reflective, and jointly action-oriented with research participants to seek solutions to practical concerns (Bradbury, 2015).

Mixed Methods Design

This research adopted a mixed methods research design involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative part collected subjective views and perceptions of ordinary youth, local leaders, youth leaders and representatives of CSOs, FBOs and CBOs on how youth participate in local governance processes and the pull and push factors that facilitate or hinder their participation. This part was done through FGDs and KIs.

Overall, the quantitative part of this research captured the descriptive statistics of our participants and respondents while the qualitative part of the research explored the lived experiences of youth in local governance processes.

Participatory Action Research

This research relied on the PAR strategy, as defined by Powers & 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” (Powers & Allaman, 2012, p. 1). One of the unique attributes of the PAR strategy is that it considers participants to be experts and co-researchers, “because of their lived experiences related to the research topic”. This guarantees that pertinent youth concerns regarding youth participation in local governance processes that guide decision making will be researched (Watters, Comeau & Restall, 2010, p. 5).

Study Population and Sampling Plan

Study Population for the Qualitative Part of the Research

The study population consisted of Rwandan youth, defined as those aged between 16 to 30 years (GoR, 2015). Purposive sampling, one of the signature non-probability sampling methods was performed to sample participants in FGDs and KIs. FGDs and KIs participants who work closely with youth and have lived experience of how youth participate in local governance processes were then selected. The sample used for the qualitative part included among others: female youth, male youth, non-schooling youth, schooling youth, educated youth, married youth, unmarried youth, youth in lower social economic status, youth with disability, youth in high social economic status, and youth residing in urban areas, youth residing in rural areas, youth leaders, local leaders, academia, representatives of CSOs, FBOs and CBOs, and, media and policymakers in youth-related national level institutions. The specific number of participants in the qualitative part of the study was guided by the principle of data saturation. However, for planning purposes, three FGDs and five KIs were conducted in 5 selected districts among the 14 study area districts, making a total of 15 FGDs and 25 KIs. Since sampling methods are prone to errors, a comprehensive triangulation (use of various data collection methods and collecting data from various sources) and iterative approaches (progressive reviews throughout the assessment process) led the research to minimize these errors.

Table 1. Categories and Number of Participants in the Qualitative Part of the Research

| Number | Categories of Participant |
|---|---|
| FGDs at District Level | Klls at the District Level |
| 1 Urban or Rural Youth | Mayor |
| 1 Youth Leaders (cell and village levels) | NYC District Coordinator |
| 1 FGD with Opinion Leaders | President of District Council (Jyanama) |
| | Director of Good Governance |
| | District Youth Officer |
| | Sector Executive Secretary |
| | NYC Coordinator at sector level |
| | JADF Coordinator |
| | Representative of CSOs and CBOs |
| Total = 3 per district = 15 | Total = 5 per district = 25 |

Study Population, Sample Size and Sampling Strategy for the Quantitative Part of the Research

The study population included youth, as defined in the National Youth Policy. In regards to the sample size calculation, since the population is known as per the Fourth Rwanda Housing and Population Census Main Indicators Report (NISR, 2012) (Table below), the formula of Slovin was performed. Probability sampling was adopted for this research. In particular, the multistage sampling method was preferred.

The sample size of study adopted Slovin's Formula⁷, $n = N / 1 + N (e)^2$ where (n) is the sample size, (N) is the given population size and (e) is a margin of error.

In our case, the N is 1,755,788.4, the margin of error is 1.5% (0.015).

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\frac{2,235,440}{1 + 2,235,440(0.015)^2}$$

$$\frac{2,235,440}{1 + 2,235,440(0.000225)} = 1,006 \text{ Respondents}$$

Adjustment of sample to consider non-response.

The corrected sample to minimize non-response rate is done with (10% size effect). Then, the sample was 1,006+ (1,006*10%) =1,107 Respondents' minimum.

Therefore, the survey targeted 1,107 respondents distributed across the 14 districts, but it achieved 1,065 respondents.

Yet, the selection of sectors and cells was done using the multi-stage simple random sampling

7 <https://www.statisticshowto.datasciencecentral.com/how-to-use-slovins-formula/>

method (whereby two sectors were selected from each of the districts; except districts that were deliberately selected following their performance in Imihigo 2019/2020, as explained in the preceding paragraph). The random selection of sectors and cells followed the steps below.

Step 1: Arrange sectors.

Step 2: Generate random numbers using =RAND () function in Excel.

Step 3: Assigned random number to each sector.

Step 4: Randomly select 2 sectors from each district (a total of 30 sectors will be randomly selected from 14 districts).

This process of selecting sectors was done separately using the Index function in Excel to extract the specific sector and cells from the list based on random numbers generated and assigned to each element from the list.

The Method of Index function was chosen from the other traditional method of using RANDBETWEEN function to avoid several occurrences of the same value since this method is not duplicate-free. We shall use the Index function to extract sampled units without duplicates as below:

Step 5: We put the below formula in the formula bar and extracted a random value from a specific column: = INDEX (\$D\$2: \$D\$9, RANK (D2,\$D\$2:\$D\$9), 1)

Step 6: We shall copy the above formula to as many cells as many random values we want to pick. In our case, we copied the formula 2 once to select.

NAR hired and trained field focal people who recruited respondents for this study. For the quantitative part of the research, ordinary youth⁸ were sampled in the respective sectors and will exclusively constitute the study respondents for the survey. A list of youth residing in the sector guided the sampling frame. Using simple random sampling, the youth were sampled in each sector while also taking into consideration their age groups, as specified above. The sampled respondents were invited to the youth center based at their sector, where experienced and trained enumerators conducted the face-to-face interviews guided by questionnaires.



8 Ordinary youth are youth that do not hold any leadership roles as either elected local leaders or technical staff at local government.

Study Area

The sampling for the study area was done purposively, based on the districts' performance in Imihigo in the financial years 2019/2020 (NISR 2020).

Table 2. Sampled District, Sectors and Sampling Criteria

| Province | Best Performing District(s) | Sampled Sectors | Worst Performing District(s) | Sectors |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Southern | Gisagara | Ndora Mugombwa | Nyamagabe | Gasaka Kaduha |
| | Huye | Kinazi Mbazi | | |
| Northern | Gicumbi | Muko Mukarange | Musanze | Kinigi Muhoza |
| | | | Gakenke | Nemba Rusasa |
| Western | Rutsiro | 1. Kivumu 2. Rusebeya | Rusizi | Nkombo Rwimbogo |
| | | | Ngororero | Kabaya Ngororero |
| Eastern | Bugesera | 1. Mayange 2. Nyamata | Nyagatare | Nyagatare Tabagwe |
| | Gasabo | Ndera Kinyinya | | |
| City of Kigali (CoK) | Kicukiro | Gikondo Masaka | Nyarugenge | Mageragere Nyarugenge |

Accordingly, Gisagara and Huye were chosen from the best performing districts in the southern province while Nyamagabe was sampled for being among the worst performers in Imihigo 2019/2020. Equally, the District of Gicumbi took the spot of the best performer in the Northern Province, while Musanze and Gakenke were selected among the bad performers. A number of moderate performers were also sampled, including Bugesera, Rutsiro and Nyagatare. In addition, Gasabo and Kicukiro were selected among the good performers in their respective provinces as detailed in Table 2. Rusizi, Ngororero, and Nyarugenge were selected among the bad or worst performers.

Data Collection Tools

Data collection for the qualitative part was done through FGDs and KIs.

Focus Group Discussions

FGDs were conducted with the youth, local leaders, including both executive committee staff and members of local councils (cell, sector levels and district), opinion leaders and CSO members at district level. A total of 45 FGDS were conducted and each comprised between six and eight individuals (gender parity and age parameters were considered). Focus group discussions

were facilitated using the FGD guides. The guides were developed based on the specific objectives of this research. All questions were intended towards answering a certain specific objective. Refer to Appendix 1 for more details.

Key Informant Interviews

In addition to FGDs, we conducted KIIs with selected members of district executive committee and councils, representative of the National Women's Council (NWC), NYC and National Council for People with Disabilities (NCPD) at district level. KIIs also included directors of good governance, mayors, directors of planning and selected sector executive secretaries. Table 1 depicts the number and categories of FGDs and KIIs. A comprehensive key informant interview guide was developed (see Annex 2). The interview guides were informed by specific objectives.

Audiovisual Techniques

To optimize quality and rigor in data collection to enable firsthand accounts to be used as evidence during dissemination and advocacy sessions, the research was reinforced with audio-visual support. Specifically, researchers videotaped all consenting FGDs and KIIs and eventually produced a documentary film.

Survey and Questionnaire

This study uses cross-sectional mixed method; combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative phase took the form of a face-to-face interview, based on a structured questionnaire, with data collected using a tablet. A validated closed-ended questionnaire was adopted and domesticated to the Rwandan context. The design of the questionnaire utilized a blend of discrete and continuous variables, including nominal, ordinal, and numeric. The questionnaire is comprehensive and captures different parameters of the respondents, such as age, gender, and social economic status, among others, and how they participate in local government processes. The questionnaire is made up of four sections: background information; social demographic characteristics of respondents; youth participation in local government processes that shape the decision-making; and, challenges and opportunities to youth participation in local government processes.

Data Management and Analysis

Data Management and Analysis for the Qualitative Data

In order to preserve the highest quality of data, the KIIs and FGDs were audio-visually recorded, transcribed, cleaned and loaded onto ATLAS.ti version 9 (specialized, qualitative data analysis software), from where data will be analyzed. Consistent with Braun & Clarke (2006), the six steps of thematic content analysis were used for qualitative data analysis. Thematic content analysis involves the following steps: becoming familiar with the data set; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining themes; and, report writing (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 92).

Data management and analysis for the quantitative data

The quantitative data was collected through face-to-face interviews using tablets (with KOBO Toolbox software) with the data transmitted to a server each day for storage. On a regular basis, data on the server was reviewed to ensure data coherence. After data collection, the data set was imported to SPSS version 22, from where it was cleaned and analyzed. In the analysis process, the data was tabulated in frequency tables and, where necessary, data visualization in the form of graphs and charts was created. Cross tabulations were done to check for possible associations among different variables. As a good research practice, the findings were discussed, to the extent possible, in relation to past literature to identify possible knowledge gaps worth exploring by future research.

As far as the study's external validity is concerned, its conclusions will be generalized only to the districts covered. There is no intention to extrapolate the findings to a national level.

As mentioned above (see PAR), after research report drafting, a national stakeholders' meeting will be organized to review and validate the research findings. After integrating stakeholders' comments, the report will be produced and shared with NISR, along with raw data. Once the feedback from NISR is secured, we shall move to the final report design for the purpose of publication.

Quality Control Measures

For the purpose of assuring quality, the following measures were considered:

- NAR senior management heads, and programme officers reviewed the research documents (research proposal, methodology, data collection tools, draft report). This served to ensure that quality is not only audited, but also that the work is progressively owned by staff of the organization as part of their internal learning processes.
- RGB and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) also reviewed the research protocol and, eventually, grant research permits.
- Triangulation (use of various data collection methods and collecting data from various sources) and iterative approaches (progressive reviews throughout the assessment process).
- Field supervision and cleaning were done during quantitative data collection to ensure adherence to the approved research protocol.
- Experienced field enumerators were hired and rigorously trained on the administration of the questionnaire.
- Pre-testing of the data collection tools was done to check for clarity of the questions as well as to assess where the questions were generating the relevant answers. Additionally, this provided an opportunity for the enumerators to familiarize themselves with the questionnaire prior to the actual data collection.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards to conduct quality research were strictly observed throughout the process. Prior to starting any interview, interviewees were informed about the background of the study, its goal, and objectives, the intended use of findings, and measures taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of data sources. They were equally given an opportunity to seek clarification on unclear areas from the interviewer before consenting (written or verbally) to take part in this assessment.

Audio-visually taping of interviews or FGD were exclusively done for the sake of avoiding loss of original data and to ease subsequent data coding and the analysis process. Participants were assured that nobody, except the research team, had access to their data and that their names would not be revealed to anyone without their prior consent. Throughout, the "do no harm" principles of undertaking research involving human subjects were strictly complied with.

The study followed extensive precautions to prevent any breaches of confidentiality, including: (i) Storage of data under scrambled unique ID numbers for each questionnaire; (ii) Secured storage of questionnaires and consent forms; (iii) Encryption of all respondent data on non-networked computers to prevent access to the data in case of theft of computer losses; and, (iv) After all the transcripts were typed, the tapes were to be destroyed and, in the report, only titles were to be used to present what different individuals said.

Presentation of Results, Interpretation and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of this study. It commences with the general characteristics of the youth participating in this study and then explore how youth participate in different local governance processes. The chapter will also assess existing opportunities and challenges that young people encounter while trying to participate.

Background Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 3. Respondents' Social - Demographic Characteristics

| Variable/Indicator | Response Options | Frequency and Percentage (%) (N= 1065) |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Nature of Residence | Urban | 562 (52.8) |
| | Rural | 503 (47.2) |
| Province of Residence | City of Kigali | 289 (27.1) |
| | Northern | 222 (20.8) |
| | Western | 203 (19.1) |
| | Southern | 189 (17.7) |
| | Eastern | 162 (15.2) |
| Gender | Male | 569 (53.4) |
| | Female | 496 (46.6) |
| Age Groups | 16 through 20 | 273 (25.6) |
| | 21 through 25 | 539 (50.6) |
| | 26 through 30 | 253 (23.8) |
| Marital Status | Single | 965 (90.6) |
| | Married | 65 (6.1) |
| | Divorced | 5 (0.5) |
| | Widowed | 1 (0.09) |
| | Other | 29 (2.7) |
| Education Level | Advanced Level | 627 (58.9) |
| | Ordinary Level | 171 (16.1) |
| | Tertiary | 122 (11.5) |
| | Primary school | 113 (10.6) |
| | Never Attended School | 5 (0.5) |
| | Other | 27 (2.5) |
| Ubudehe Category (head of household) | Category 3 | 468 (43.9) |
| | Category 2 | 466 (43.7) |
| | Category 1 | 110 (10.3) |
| | Category 4 | 2 (0.2) |
| | I do not know | 19 (1.8) |
| Youth Head of Household | Yes | 970 (91.1) |
| | No | 95 (8.9) |

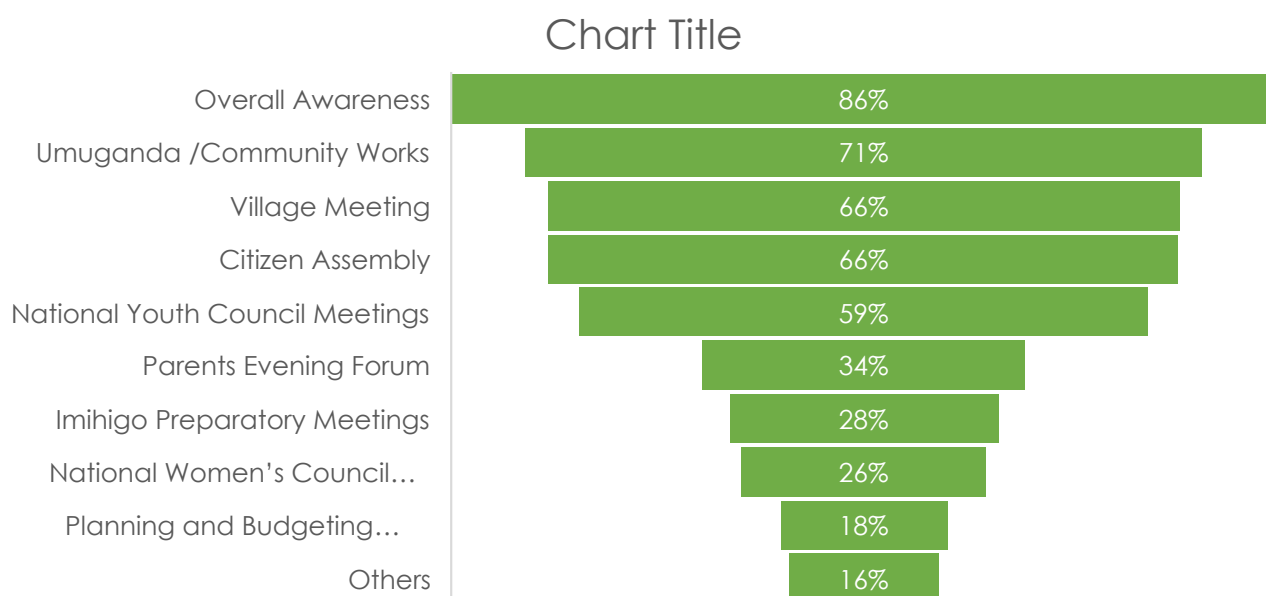
As indicated in Table 3, slightly more than half (52.8%) of the respondents reside in urban settings. Equally, more than a quarter (27.1%) reside in the City of Kigali, which is high compared to provinces. Almost half of the respondents (50.6%) are between the ages of 21 and 25 years. An overwhelming majority of respondents are single (90.6%), while cumulatively at least 86.5% of respondents have reached secondary school. This is understandable, considering school attendance beyond primary school is associated with delays in marriage (Marphatia et al, 2020) and has been recommended as one of the strategies to fight child marriages (World Bank, 2017). Improved levels of education are an important factor regarding youth and citizen participation in governance processes because they increase capacity to engage in public policy discussions (Carreira, Machado & Vasconcelos, 2016).

Nature of Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes

Awareness of Youth Participation Mechanisms

The majority of respondents (86%) were aware of at least one citizen participation mechanism. However, the awareness dropped significantly when respondents were quizzed about which specific citizen participation channels they were aware of. In this regard, Umuganda emerged as the most popular with 70.5% reporting being aware of it, followed closely by village meetings (65.9%), Inteko y'abaturage (65.7%) and NYC meetings (59.3%), among others. It is worth noting and perhaps worrying that key platforms such as Imihigo preparatory meetings and planning and budgeting meetings scored the lowest at 28.2% and 17.5% respectively. The qualitative part of the research provides a plausible explanation where local leaders confided that during Imihigo planning meetings and planning and budgeting meetings they only involve youth leaders. Such a finding suggests youth miss an important avenue to voice their needs in decision-making processes.

Figure 1. Awareness of Citizen Participation Channels



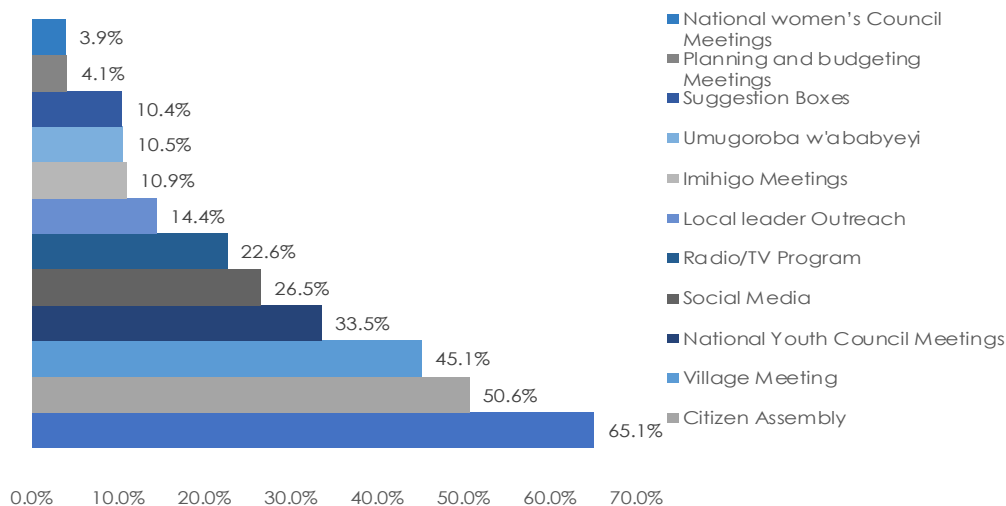
Data source: survey

Preferred Citizen Participation Channels

Similarly, the majority of respondents reported community work/Umuganda (65.1%) as their most preferred citizen participation channel while about half (50.6%) named citizen assembly/Inteko y'abaturage. These findings differ from those reported by the 2020 Never Again Rwanda study Assessing Local Leaders' Capacity Needs in Participatory Governance, where local leaders and

ordinary citizens cited Inteko y'abaturatione as their most preferred citizen participation channel. Surprisingly, the findings suggest the youth are not enthusiastic about their own designated NYC meetings (33.5%). This could be attributed to a weak relationship between the youth and their constituents, in addition to the fact that these meetings rarely happen⁹.

Figure 2. Preferred Citizen Participation Channels

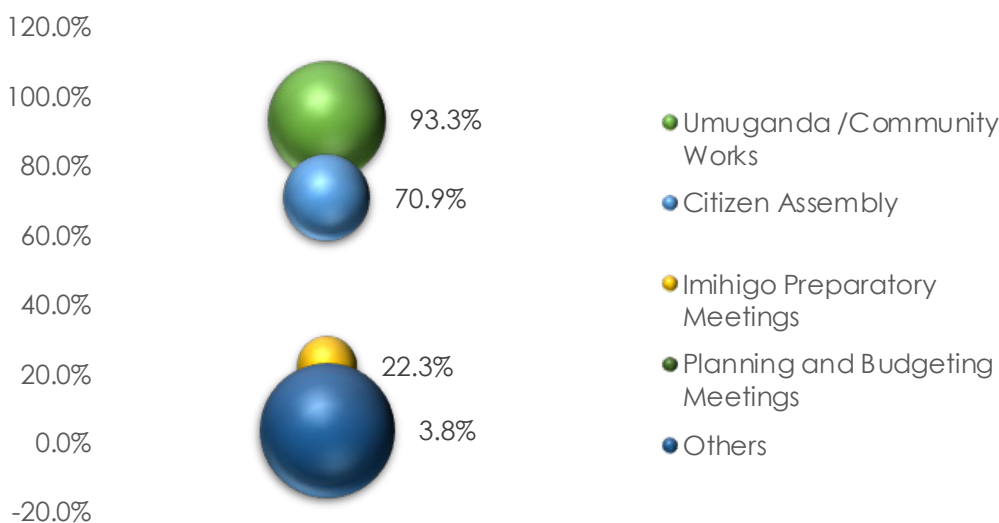


Data source: survey

Level of Youth Participation in Existing Citizen Participation Mechanisms

An overwhelming majority (93.3%) of respondents have attended Umuganda, while significant majorities of the youth that took part in this study have at least attended village meetings (74.7%) and Inteko y'abaturatione (60.9%). However, only about four in 10 (39.7%) have ever attended NYC meetings. This is a cause for concern since this is the platform provided for by law to enable youth to voice their needs in the decision-making process (GoR, 2003). Even more worrying, only a meagre 6.5% and 22.4% have ever attended the planning and budgeting and Imihigo meetings respectively.

Figure 3. Citizen Participation Mechanisms by Level of Participation



Data source: survey

9 Participant in an FGD with opinion leaders in Mbazi sector, Huye District.

Level of Attending Different Citizen Participation Channels

Table 4. Level of Attending Citizen Participation Channels

| Participation Channels | Level of Attendance Frequency and Percentage (%) N=1065 | | | | |
|--|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| Umuganda / Community Works | 60 (5.6) | 57 (5.4) | 236 (22.2) | 400 (37.6) | 312 (29.3) |
| Village Meeting | 241 (22.6) | 122 (11.5) | 300 (28.2) | 276 (25.9) | 126 (11.8) |
| Citizen Assembly / Inteko y'abaturage | 291 (27.3) | 98 (9.8) | 302 (28.4) | 271 (25.2) | 103 (9.7) |
| NYC meetings | 623 (58.5) | 83 (7.8) | 126 (11.6) | 173 (16.2) | 60 (5.6) |
| Imihigo Meetings | 800 (75.1) | 83 (7.8) | 86 (8.1) | 61 (5.7) | 35 (3.3) |
| Parents Evening Forum | 844 (79.3) | 52 (4.9) | 73 (6.9) | 57 (5.4) | 39 (3.7) |
| Planning and Budgeting Meetings | 972 (91.3) | 20 (1.9) | 36 (3.4) | 21 (1.97) | 16 (1.5) |
| National Women's Council Meetings | 1004 (94.3) | 15 (1.4) | 22 (2.1) | 11 (1.03) | 13 (1.2) |
| Isibo Meetings | 568 (53.3) | 67 (6.3) | 169 (15.9) | 177 (16.6) | 84 (7.9) |
| Local Leader Outreach | 542 (50.9) | 85 (7.9) | 188 (17.7) | 181 (17) | 69 (6.5) |
| TV or Radio Programs | 381 (35.8) | 95 (8.9) | 270 (25.4) | 260 (24.4) | 59 (5.5) |
| Social Media | 487 (45.7) | 80 (7.5) | 167 (15.7) | 239 (22.4) | 92 (8.6) |
| Suggestion Boxes | 855 (80.3) | 62 (5.8) | 97 (9.1) | 37 (3.5) | 14 (1.3) |
| Toll-free Lines Of Communication | 852 (80) | 80 (7.5) | 85 (7.98) | 36 (3.4) | 12 (1.1) |
| Meeting Between Youth, Local Leaders and CSOs | 713 (66.9) | 78 (7.3) | 131(12.3) | 109 (10.2) | 34 (3.2) |

Overall, Umuganda emerged as the best regularly well-attended citizen participation channel for youth, with cumulatively around 66.9% reporting they often or always attended the platform. Comparatively, only about 34.9% cumulatively reported often or always attending Inteko y'abaturage. This observed discrepancy in attendance between Umuganda and Inteko y'abaturage is explained through qualitative revelations.

Regarding Umuganda, the youth contend that the fact it happens on weekends, its physical nature, and its informal interaction offer an opportunity for youth to catch up. Additionally, Umuganda is associated with cultural norms that the elderly/old people cannot undertake manual work when the young are around. In the same vein, the youth reported that some local leaders use negative reinforcement mechanisms and punishment to induce youth attendance.

Lastly and perhaps most importantly, the youth revealed that mobilization around Umuganda is impeccable. Below is a snapshot of quotations to highlight youth views in their words.

“Firstly, Umuganda happens on a weekend when the youth are not in school and the morning hours when all other activities are halted. Most times, we usually see them attending.” (FGDs with opinion leaders, Nyagatare District)

“I was once fined an amount of 5000 francs for not attending Umuganda for the general public. For special Umuganda organized for the youth to help vulnerable people by constructing houses or latrines for them among other activities, they compile a list of the youth that did not attend and each contributes 1000 or 2000 depending on what was agreed in the meeting.” (FGDs with ordinary youth, Nyagatare District)

“The reason we attend Umuganda more than other platforms is that we are young and energetic, and we feel ashamed when we see an elder going to Umuganda and doing manual work that requires strength and energy.” (FGDs with youth leaders, Kinigi Sector, Musanze District)

“The reason we attend Umuganda more than other citizen participation channels is mainly that the local leaders put a lot of emphasis on it in comparison to other platforms.” (FGDs with youth leaders, Kinigi Sector, Musanze District)

“In Umuganda the atmosphere is more jovial, you meet your mates, and you can catch up, and joke around. On the contrary, during meetings, you’re all quiet and cannot freely interact.” (FGDs with ordinary youth, Mbazi Sector, Huye District)

“In Umuganda, negative reinforcement mechanisms (igitsure) like punishments are used. For example, if I organize a certain Umuganda, I inform the village leaders and the one in charge of security. In instances when many youths do not attend, there are punishments involved. So many of us fear punishment and therefore many attend because of fear of punishment.” (FGDs with youth leaders, Kinazi Sector, Huye District)

The youth cited several reasons why their attendance is still suboptimal at Inteko y’abaturatione. Specifically, they disclosed that the themes/topics discussed rarely touch youth concerns and therefore are perceived as not being of concern to young people. The youth reported attending Inteko y’abaturatione on multiple occasions only to find the discussion centred around conflict resolution within the community and not about genuine youth issues. In the end, this causes frustration and demotivates the youth from attending Inteko y’abaturatione.

A youth leader in the Tabagwe Sector, Nyagatare, reported: “The reason why we do not attend is that you go to a cell assembly and they are discussing solutions for intra-family conflicts and, in reality, you even do not have plans of starting a family. You find the whole meeting dominated by intra-family conflicts and no single issue of the youth is raised. Can you attend the citizen assembly once, twice without being demotivated? You get demotivated, lose interest, and stop attending”¹⁰.

The youth further revealed several other reasons that push them away from attending meeting-style citizen participation mechanisms like Inteko y’abaturatione. These include delays in devising solutions for youth-raised issues in the past, limited information, or limited mobilization on some channels like planning and budgeting meetings, and poor attitude from the youth who assume meetings are supposed to be attended by old people. The following discourse highlights some of the sentiments behind the youth’s sub-optimal engagement in Inteko y’abaturatione:

10 Focus group discussion with National Youth Council leaders in Tabagwe Sector, Nyagatare District.

“Thank you, the reason why I think the youth do not attend is that there are many concerns they (have) raised in the past and no answer has been provided. For example, today I can voice a concern and wait for a solution. If the solution does not come that will automatically discourage me from attending.” (FGD participant, youth leader, Mbazi Sector, Huye District)

“It’s either limited mobilization or lack of information. The youth have a misconception that platforms like citizen assemblies (Inteko y’abaturatione) and parents’ evening forums are for married people. Even the youth that attend are married while the single youth go about their daily businesses and never bother to attend.” (KII with NYC Coordinator, Kinigi Sector Musanze District)

“The reason the youth do not optimally attend Inteko y’ abaturatione is that (they)believe that what is discussed concerns old people and not them. Secondly, youth do not feel comfortable attending the same platforms as old people in the age groups of their fathers and mothers.” (FGD participant, youth Leader, Bugarama Sector, Rusizi District)

Youth participation in key platforms such as Imihigo meetings and planning and budgeting meetings is worryingly low with 75.1% and 91.3% of those surveyed respectively reporting having never attended. This is higher than findings stated in a RALGA study of the general population, where 21.7% of respondents reported participating in planning and budgeting meetings (RALGA, 2017a).

Other studies such as Trócaire (2020) and NAR (2018) have also reported limited participation in citizen participation platforms that are not dictated by the law, including Imihigo, and planning and budgeting meetings. Needless to say, these platforms inform the development agenda at the district and sub-district levels. The fact that youth rarely participate in them is a cause for concern since it literally means they miss a key avenue to provide their input into priorities for the development agenda.

Level of Active Youth Participation During Meetings

Table 5. Active Youth Participation

| Variable | Frequency and Percentage (%) | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|-------------|
| | Yes | No | Refused | No meeting | Do not know |
| Level of active participation. | | | | | |
| Asked a question or gave an idea regarding youth concerns in a meeting or event with authorities. | 361 (33.9) | 656 (61.6) | 21 (1.9) | 20 (1.9) | 7 (0.6) |
| Asked for feedback about program implementation during a meeting or event with authorities. | 260(24.4) | 764 (71.7) | 20 (1.9) | 13 (1.2) | 8 (0.8) |
| Asked for feedback from authorities on how money allocated to youth programs has been spent. | 140(13.2) | 876 (82.3) | 25 (2.4) | 16 (1.5) | 8 (0.8) |
| Publicly questioned cases of corruption and/or mismanagement of funds allocated to youth needs. | 92 (8.6) | 937(87.9) | 25 (2.4) | 6 (0.6) | 5 (0.5) |

Attending a designated citizen participation platform like the Umuganda meeting and standing up and actively voicing your concerns during that meeting are two different things. For instance, as indicated in Table 6, of the youth that attend different citizen participation platforms, the majority have never asked: 1) a question (61.6%); 2) for feedback on program implementation (71.7%); 3) for feedback on utilization of finances (82.3%); and, 4) about potential cases of corruption (87.9%). Qualitative findings point to plausible reasons for this. Firstly, this could be attributed to a lack of confidence among the youth to freely express themselves to local leaders. Secondly, the youth have limited capacity in terms of critical thinking, which seems to affect the quality of their interventions in the different participation mechanisms¹¹.

Level of Youth Leader’s Engagement with their Constituents

Table 6. Youth Leaders’ Engagement with their Constituents

| Level of youth leaders’ engagement with their constituents | Frequency and Percentage (%) N=1065) | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------|----------|------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree | Do not know |
| I regularly talk to my National Youth council representative in my area | 292 (27.4) | 518 (48.6) | 23 (2.2) | 141 (13.2) | 47 (4.4) | 44 (4.4) |
| The NYC representative at the village usually asks for our concerns before meeting | 136 (12.8) | 318 (29.9) | 23 (2.2) | 396 (37.2) | 103 (9.7) | 89 (8.4) |
| The NYC representative at the cell usually asks for our concerns before meeting | 149 (13.9) | 316 (29.7) | 21 (1.9) | 384 (36.1) | 95 (8.9) | 100 (9.4) |
| The NYC representative in the sector usually asks for our concerns before meeting | 177 (16.6) | 343 (32.2) | 22 (2.1) | 322 (30.2) | 91 (8.5) | 110 (10.3) |
| The NYC representative at the district usually asks for our concerns before meeting | 241 (22.6) | 455 (42.7) | 29 (2.7) | 158 (14.8) | 42 (3.9) | 140 (13.2) |

11 KII with a CSO representative and FGD participant with ordinary youth

Overall, the findings suggest limited interaction and engagement between youth leaders and their constituents. For instance, the findings cumulatively indicate that 76% of the surveyed youth either disagree or strongly disagree that they have interacted with their leaders (NYC), while slightly over four in 10 of the young people reported that their youth leaders do not regularly seek their concerns before attending council meeting at sub-district levels. This finding is corroborated by a RALGA study that reported a disconnection between councils and their constituencies (RALGA, 2017b). Studies by NAR, the Rwanda Governance Board and the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) attribute the observed inadequacy of local government councils to their limited capacity and meagre training opportunities (RGB & MINALOC, 2019; NAR, 2020).

Opportunities Towards Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes

Youth participation in local government processes is key to good governance and inclusive and sustainable development. The engagement of young people in the decision-making process can, in particular, promote social wellbeing at an individual level as well as increasing the ownership of national development plans and a joint commitment to identify solutions for common challenges for a sustained society (International Republican Institute, 2021).

In Rwanda, young people are represented in different organs of decision making from the lowest level, being Umudugudu, to higher levels, such as district council. Several structures and platforms have been established to leverage youth opportunities and find solutions to challenges faced by young people. These youth structures include NYC, YouthConnect and Intergenerational Youth Dialogue. These frameworks have the potential to unlock opportunities to advocate for youth issues, exchange ideas, and promote information and knowledge sharing. Table 7 illustrates the perceived opportunities by respondents.

Table 7. Opportunities Impacting Youth Participation in Local Governance

| Variable | Frequency and Percentages (%) |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Political will exemplified by HE the President | 854 (80.2) |
| Existence of citizen participation mechanisms like Inteko y'abaturatione, Umuganda and NYC meetings | 624 (58.6) |
| Availability of security | 502 (47.1) |
| Availability of media avenues that reach a huge scope of the population | 365 (34.3) |
| Existence of consultative meetings during Imihigo planning processes | 267 (25.1) |
| Existence of CSOs offering extra space to participate | 242 (22.7) |
| Others | 8.2) |

The majority (80.2%) of surveyed youth recognized political will as the best opportunity to leverage, engage and voice their ideas for consideration in local governance processes. The President of the Republic of Rwanda has been a strong supporter of youth and youth-related programs. The President has appointed young people to government ministries, ensuring they are

involved in key decision-making organs. In addition, there are platforms for politicians and government officials to interact with youth, which provide avenues for youth to participate in local government processes that shape decision making for development such as Citizen Participation Inama y'umushikirano space for citizens, and meetings by political parties that discuss youth priorities and challenges, among others.

The GoR has put in place enabling legal frameworks that enhance the participation of the youth in local governance. Among them is the National Youth Policy that, by addressing the main concerns of youth, assigns legitimacy and orientation to programs and services that are centered on young people and proposes strategies and guidelines for their planning and implementation. It also contains appropriate measures for directing the youth's forces and talents toward sustainable development of our nation. The policy and other related ones also establish councils and commissions like the NYC that have representatives that meet and collect views from youth for maximum participation (Republic of Rwanda, 2015).

From the experience of youth, the most important citizen participation mechanisms include Umuganda, NYC Meetings, Inteko y'abaturatione and village meetings. The existence of such platforms and the broad participation by youth in all areas across the country provides an opportunity that can be explored to ensure increased youth participation and involvement.

The existing platforms provide an opportunity that is currently under exploited. Only 57.09% of the respondents agreed that youth optimally use the existing citizen participation forums to voice their concerns. However, they were not taking advantage of the existing opportunities to voice their concerns because:

- Youth lack interest in participating in local governance issues.
- Youth are not aware of the existing opportunities.
- Youth lack of confidence.
- The existing opportunities are not youth friendly.
- There are cultural barriers to participation.

Comparative Analysis

Not all captured variables in this study are considered for this analysis, only those who were active participants will be compared to some social-demographic characteristics. Active participants include youth that took the initiative to actively voice their concerns or make inquiries to local leaders during a citizen participation platform such as Umuganda and Inteko y'Abaturage, among others.

Overall, active participation was weak (below 50%) regardless of the social-demographic characteristics of the respondents. As indicated in the UN DESA's World Youth Report 2016, there are youth segments that are likely to lack the required knowledge to participate. These segments include marginalized youth such as minorities, unemployed youth, and youth growing up in poverty and conflicts.

| Variable | Category | Active Participation by Frequency and Percentage(%) | |
|---------------------|----------|---|------------|
| | | Yes | No |
| Nature of Residence | Rural | 199 (19.6) | 333 (32.7) |
| | Urban | 162 (15.9) | 323 (31.8) |
| Gender | Female | 169 (16.6) | 374 (36.8) |
| | Male | 192 (18.9) | 282(27.7) |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Age | 16-20 | 55 (51.4) | 204 (20.0) |
| | 21-25 | 190 (18.7) | 325 (32) |
| | 26-30 | 116 (11.4) | 127 (12.5) |
| Education | Advanced Secondary | 227(23) | 377 (38) |
| | TVET | 4 (0.41) | 9 (0.9.5) |
| | Basic TVET | 5 (0.51) | 17(1.8) |
| | Completed University | 19 (2) | 18 (1.9) |
| | Upper Primary | 25(2.52) | 73 (7.32) |
| | Lower Primary | 2 (0.02) | 11(1.1) |
| | None | 1(0.01) | 4 (0.04) |
| | O'Level | 51 (5.1) | 108 (10.9) |
| | Student at University | 24 (2.42) | 19(2) |
| Ubudehe Category | Category 1 | 69(7) | 34 (3.4) |
| | Category 2 | 270 (27) | 177(18) |
| | Category 3 | 302 (30.18) | 144 (14.4) |
| | Category 4 | 2 (0.02) | 0(0) |

Challenges Facing Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes

As highlighted in Table 8, youth have limited knowledge of existing citizen participation mechanisms where they can voice their concerns with close to half of the respondents (49.1%) citing a lack of information. For example, as illustrated in Table 8, only 17.5 per cent are aware of planning and budgeting meetings while only 6.5 per cent of youth have ever attended these meetings. Additionally, 48.2 per cent reported being too busy to attend.

Table 8. Challenges To Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes

| Challenges (push factors) | Frequency and Percentage (%) |
|---|------------------------------|
| Limited knowledge of existing platforms to voice development concerns | 523 (49.1) |
| Lack of time / Busy and mobile nature | 513 (48.2) |
| Inadequate support for youth participation mechanisms | 275 (25.8) |
| Unfavourable attitude from the youth | 246 (23.1) |
| Fearing local leaders | 241 (22.6) |
| No perceived benefits | 232 (21.8) |
| Not attending existing citizen participation channels | 207 (19.4) |
| The negative attitude of local leaders toward the youth | 207 (19.4) |
| Lack of youth-friendly approaches to attract the youth | 201 (18.9) |
| Limited interest in governance issues | 144 (13.5) |
| Other | 189 (17.8) |

Challenges Impacting Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes Voiced in the Qualitative Part of the Research

Inadequate Functioning of the Local Government Youth Leadership Structures

The Government of Rwanda has shown tremendous commitment to promoting youth participation in local governance, putting in place a legal and policy framework aimed at guiding and promoting youth participation in decision-making processes. To cite a few examples, Article 139 of the Supreme Law of the Land (Rwanda's 2003 constitution with amendments through 2015) establishes the NYC, whose core mission is to promote interests of youth — including in local governance. In addition, law number 001/2016 of 05/02/2016 sets out the smooth functioning of the NYC. However, sound functionality of the NYC on the ground remains a challenge. KIIS and FDG participants raised several limitations to the functioning of the NYC. Firstly, the youth leaders reported they had not received adequate orientation regarding the roles and responsibilities of each of the members elected to the NYC committees. Even in cases where NYC capacity building sessions were held, only the coordinators benefited. As a result, a situation has arisen where NYC coordinators, especially at the village, cell, and sector-levels take over all of the committee's responsibilities. This workload not only overwhelms the coordinators but also frustrates the remaining members of the committees who often remain dormant.

Furthermore, findings reveal that most of the NYC committees at sub-district levels are not fully constituted and rarely meet to discuss youth issues. This is partly due to a lack of cohesion within the committees and the mobile nature of the youth. Even more worrying, the NYC leaders seldomly convene meetings with their constituents (ordinary youth) to gather their ideas on development as prescribed by the law. Ordinary youth confided in FGDs that aside from not meeting their leaders to discuss their priorities, in some cases they do not even know them. Below are a few salient quotes that illustrate the young people's point of view.

“The youth general assembly under National Youth Council rarely happens apart from normal mobilization for a specific activity. But the big meeting that bring all the youth together does not really happen.” (Participant in an FGD with youth leaders, Bugarama Sector, Rusizi District)

“We do not meet as required, we seldomly meet. In most times, even the message is to receive from our leaders, we do not receive them on time. This affects us in that we lag behind.” (FGD with ordinary youth in Nyagatare Sector, Nyagatare District)

“If you analyze how they tried to design the NYC structures, personally I feel they built them and reached a point and sort of neglected them. You may wonder how? Today there are youth on the NYC committees in the village and they do not even know their roles and responsibilities.” (Participant in an FGD with youth leaders in Masaka Sector, Kicukiro District)

“The weaknesses lie in the way we prepare the youth leaders for the work ahead. After electing youth leaders, we focus more on sending them to work than preparing them for the roles and responsibilities in those roles. This is the root cause of the problems.” (KII with a sector executive secretary in Nyagatare District)

Disconnect Between NYC Leaders and Local Leaders at Village and Cell

There is a weak working relationship between NYC leaders and local leaders at the village and cell levels. Participants in KIIs and FGDs attribute this to negative attitudes from local leaders towards the youth. Apparently, some local leaders are worried about over-performing youth thinking or believing they could take their positions. In so doing, they provide limited support for youth leaders' activities and in some cases even go as far as frustrating their activities. In the same vein,

the youth leaders decried poor time management tendencies from local leaders where they do not arrive on time for meetings. Equally, local leaders credit the time keeping issue to being busy, claiming they have many competing priorities, which is why sometimes youth priorities find themselves near the bottom of the list. This finding is corroborated by a 2020 NAR study that assessed local leaders' capacity needs in participatory governance and found poor time management was a key challenge among local leaders. The following discourse highlights some of the youth leaders' lived experience of engaging local leaders at the cell and village levels.

“But let's not put blame on the sector because when we approach them, they help us. However, when we reach at the cell level, we still have challenges working with the sector executive secretaries at the cell.” (Participant in an FGD with youth leaders in Nyagatare)

“The second thing I wanted to talk about (is) respecting time that local leaders set for different activities. The time needs to be respected. This is because when (we) attend activities and we find local leaders who invited us are not yet there, it discourages us. This makes us not attend such activities.” (Participant in an FGD with youth leaders in Huye District)

Unconducive Environment for Youth Participation in Some Existing Citizen Participation Channels

A number of research participants taking part in this study felt that most citizen participation channels exclusively adopted a meeting-style format that most youth acknowledged finding less attractive. To compound the situation, some FGD participants remarked that most citizen participation channels bring together people from diverse age groups including, in some cases, their parents, uncles, elders and grandparents, which creates cultural barriers where the youth fail to freely express their concerns especially if they contradict that of their parents.

Similarly, other research participants in FGDs and KIs were particularly critical of the limited time availed to youth to voice their concerns in the existing citizen participation channels. Additionally, the youth reported that the themes discussed did not capture the needs of the youth in most instances.

Limited Resources to Implement Youth-Friendly Approaches

Youth leaders that participated in this research reported inadequate material and equipment such as soccer balls that would enable them to implement youth-friendly approaches. This mainly results from the limited budget apportioned to youth activities at the local government level. As a matter of fact, local leaders in the district confided that the only budget line for youth activities stops at the district level. Youth leaders further complained that they lack both financial and technical resources to put into action some of the designated youth Imihigo.

“We used to approach the local leaders and request them to buy footballs for us. They would understand and in turn tell us to be patient and wait. After, we would wait and first month and the second month with no positive outcome. Then we would organize ourselves, contribute and buy a football which is of low quality, but it makes us meet for three weeks before bursting. Thereafter, it's difficult to get another football since we have to save for some time before we can get another ball.” (Participant in an FGD with ordinary youth in Rusizi)

“Like me in my sector Musanze, it's difficult to get facilities to implement youth-friendly approaches. For example, personally, I have never heard NYC or local leaders organize a football or cultural dance competition for the youth. I am almost 25 years and yet I have never had an activity where youth come together and yet those events are important in making youth attend in huge numbers which local leaders can leverage and discuss government programs.” (Participant in an FGD with opinion leaders in Muhoza Sector, Musanze District)

“The challenge I have encountered these days, the first one is limited equipment for sports. There is still limited effort to increase them. This can be rectified. If such equipment are available, it’s one way to bring the youth together. For instance, I sometimes organize football matches, bringing between two cells, Shanga and Kabuye for example. In such a case you get a lot of youth, actually more than if I had convened a meeting for those cells and the sector at large. You can understand why I think we should give sports equipment more attention.” (KII with a senior youth leader at Huye District)

Top-down Nature of Youth Imihigo

Perhaps surprisingly, both youth leaders and local leaders revealed that youth Imihigo are prepared by the Ministry of Youth and Culture and thereafter transmitted to the district level through the NYC structures without the participation of the youth in a top-down style. When it comes to general Imihigo at the district level, youth leaders and local leaders alike agreed that only the former are invited and not ordinary youth. This is a cause for concern considering youth leaders rarely convene their constituents to consult them regarding their ideas for inclusion in Imihigo. One would wonder about the source of ideas that the youth present during Imihigo meetings. Past NAR studies have consistently pointed to the predominant issue of top-down Imihigo (NAR, 2016, 2018, 2020).

“Imihigo of youth are planned by the Ministry of Youth and Culture. The context of each district is reflected during the planning process of Imihigo. So, Imihigo are specifically related to the area, for example if it is a Umuhigo related to technology you find that it considers everyone.” (KII with a director of good governance at Nyagatare)

Youth Representatives do not Optimally Participate in Njyanama

A recurrent theme to come out of the KIIs and FDGs was that youth leaders believe their participation in the Njyanama is not optimally utilized. For example, a participant in an FGD with youth leaders in the Nyagatare District opined that, “Honestly speaking, even for the NYC coordinator to raise his concern and (have it) adopted is a big challenge. This is because even when an issue raises to the NYC coordinator at the cell level, it’s very difficult for him/her to access the Njyanama. This is even though the NYC coordinator sits within the Njyanama. In most cases focus is on security, and rarely do they touch youth issues since they have limited time and a lot of issues to discuss”.

Another interviewee echoed similar sentiments when he accepted that it was indeed difficult to bring youth ideas to the Njyanama, especially at the cell or sector level. As the president of the cell council in Huye, he confirmed that, “It is very difficult for youth to bring their ideas in Njyanama, but for me it’s a bit easy since I am the president of Njyanama at my cell”. While talking about the same issue, another interviewee said that, “The agenda of Njyanama is prepared beforehand — often no youth issues are captured. Even when you want to add youth issues when the meeting is in session, they end up in the ‘Any Other Business (AOB) section’ you find towards the end of the meeting. People just comment on them in words only since everyone is tired and wants to go home.” (KII with a youth leader in Musanze District.)

Taken together, these narrations paint a picture that youth leaders face a significant challenge of not getting time and space to voice youth views during local council proceedings since they are rarely part of the agenda-setting process. Such a scenario means youth leaders in particular, and youth in general, may not be able to contribute in a key local governance process that shapes decision making, such as local councils.

Recommendations and Conclusion

| # | Observed Challenge | Proposed Recommendation | Targeted Institution |
|----|---|---|--|
| 1. | A challenge of weak youth leadership structures was observed where the seven members of youth committees at sub-district entities, especially at the sector, cell and village levels have limited knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. | Strengthen youth leaders' structure (NYC) through comprehensive capacity-building programmes entailing training, mentorship and coaching. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) • Rwanda Management Institute • Civil Society Organizations |
| 2. | Numerous instances were reported of youth committees at sub-district entities in NYC that are not fully constituted. Therefore, this leads heavy workload on the youth coordinator. | Put in place a mechanism to regularly replace NYC committees. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) |
| 3. | The negative attitude of local leaders toward youth, including youth leaders, was reported at the cell and village levels. This manifested through limited support for youth activities on one hand and belittling youth leaders on another hand. | Undertake capacity building of local leaders in participatory government approaches. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC • Rwanda Management Institute • Civil Society Organizations |
| 4. | Youth reported fearing fully expressing themselves during the different citizen participation channels like the meeting after Umuganda and Inteko y'abaturation among others. They attributed this to cultural barriers and doubts about the quality of their ideas. | Build the capacity of the youth in critical thinking to enable young people to better express their views and opinions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC • Rwanda Management Institute • Civil Society Organizations |
| 5. | Limited financing for youth activities at the local government level. Apart from the district, there is no youth budget at the sector, cell and village levels. This makes it difficult to implement youth-friendly approaches that have the capacity to increase youth participation in government programs. | Increase fiscal support for youth activities at sub-district levels. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC |

| | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| 6. | Findings suggest limited youth participation in local government processes, especially those that are held in meeting-style formats like Inteko y' abaturage. In so doing, most youths miss out on Imihigo meetings. | Reinforce the existing frameworks to ensure youth not only participate in the shaping of their Imihigo but also the local government Imihigo. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC • Districts |
| 7. | Youth reported that youth Imihigo is exclusively top-down, which sometimes affects implementation. | Adopt a down-top approach in the planning and budgeting for youth Imihigo. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Youth and Culture |
| 8. | Limited awareness and understanding of the importance of local governance processes that shape decision-making for development. For example, the youth were not aware of when planning and budgeting process take place. The same is true for the Imihigo meetings. | Raise awareness among the youth of the local government decision-making processes, their importance and how they can contribute with their ideas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC • Civil Society Organizations |
| 9. | A challenge of an uncondusive environment that does not attract the youth was reported. Most citizen participation channels are held in a meeting-style format and rarely touch on youth issues. This makes them less attractive to the youth. | Incorporate youth-friendly approaches (fun, entertaining and creative ways) within existing citizen channels, especially NYC meetings, to increase youth attendance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC |
| 10. | The youth leaders decried the lack of space to voice youth concerns, especially at the cell and sector level, since in most instances they are not part of the committee that prepares the agenda. | Revise the legal framework to make sure special interest groups such as youth optimally participate in local councils. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MINALOC |

Conclusion

This was a mixed methods study that covered 14 districts in all the provinces and the City of Kigali. The study examined the opportunities (pull factors) and challenges (push factors) impacting youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development.

Overall, this research achieved its intended objectives and yielded a number of insights into youth participation in local governance processes. In general, youth are aware of existing citizen participation channels like Umuganda, Inteko y'abaturatione, and Inama Umudugudu to mention but a few. In the same vein, the majority of youth reported attending one of the existing citizen participation mechanisms at least once. However, the findings suggest youth are less aware of some important citizen participation channels such as the planning and budgeting meetings and Imihigo planning meetings. Perhaps surprisingly, the findings also indicate the youth also are less aware of the NYC.

Furthermore, youth participation in existing citizen participation channels remains a work in progress. Findings suggest that, apart from Umuganda, youth participation in platforms including Imihigo meetings, planning and budgeting meetings and NYC meetings are below 50 per cent. When it comes to active youth participation, the statistics get even lower. Nevertheless, the study points out several opportunities that can be leveraged to increase youth participation in local governance processes. These include political will, the existence of citizen participation channels and availability of security, among others.

The sole use of existing platforms for youth to voice their concerns and ideas is limited and insufficient, as indicated in the findings. The core hindrances include limited resources to implement youth-friendly approaches, inadequate functioning of NYC structure at the village and cell levels, the top-down nature of youth Imihigo and an uncondusive environment for youth participation in some existing citizen participation channels.

To become an effective engine for wider youth participation in local governance processes, the existing platforms should be redesigned in a fashion that debates and captures youth concerns, needs and priorities. Additionally, concerted efforts are needed from all stakeholders including local government, CSOs and the youth representatives, to meaningfully magnify youth participation in local governance processes.



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Appendices

Appendix 1: Data Collection Tools

Main Focus Group Discussion and Key Informant Interview Guides

A main semi-structured interview/FGD guide has been developed for the purpose of primary qualitative data collection from a range of participants for this assessment. This guide is built against key themes that reflect the assessment objectives and research questions as defined by the research proposal. However, it renders itself to adaptation to the various categories of participants as identified under the sampling section.

SO1: To explore youth participation in local government decision making processes, including an analysis of gender and the urban/rural divide:

Part One: Type, Number and Nature of Local Governance Processes for Decision Making

5. What do you understand by the term local governance process for decision making?
6. Could you elaborate the number and nature of local governance decision making avenues in your locality?
7. Narrate your experience engaging in the local governance decision making processes.
8. Specifically, explain the process the youth go through while trying to voice their concerns in local governance process like;
 - a. Imihigo
 - b. Planning and Budgeting process
 - c. Umuganda
 - d. Inteko y'abaturage
5. How do you ensure that your /youth views are captured in an inclusive manner?
6. Elaborate on how you prioritize issues raised by the youth and how you incorporate them in the main issues raised by other citizens.
7. Which mechanisms do you use to engage the youth in local governance?
8. What approaches do you use to engage youth in local governance process?
9. Tell us the tools that you use to engage youth in local governance.
10. Explain the effectiveness of the existing tools, approaches and mechanisms in youth engagement in local governance.
11. Tell us some good practices that promote youth participation in your locality and that are unique to this area.

SO2: To determine the push and pull factors towards youth participation in decision making for development.

1. Tell us factors that promote/facilitate youth participation in local governance processes.
2. Based on your experience, what gaps (factors that hinder youth participation) do you encounter in trying to increase youth participation in local governance.
3. Describe the attitudes of youth towards local governance.
4. Describe the perceptions of youth towards local governance.

SO3: To propose actionable recommendations that can enhance youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development.

What can be done for the current youth engagement process to run more smoothly?

Questionnaire for the survey

Section One: Background Information

| Serial # | Question | Response Options |
|----------|---|------------------|
| 101 | Date of data collection | |
| 102 | District | |
| 103 | Sector | |
| 104 | Cell | |
| 105 | Village | |
| 106 | Nature of where data is being collected | Urban Rural |
| 107 | Name of Data Enumerator | |
| 108 | Name of Field Supervisor | |
| 109 | Start Time | |
| 1010 | End Time | |

Section Two: Social Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

| Serial No | Questions (Ibibazo) | Responses (Ibisubizo) | |
|-----------|--|---|-----|
| 201 | What is your gender? (Observe the respondent) | Male (Gabo) Female (Gore) | ô_ô |
| 202 | What is your age? | | ô_ô |
| 203 | What is your marital status? | Single Legally Married Divorced Widow Others (specify): _____ | ô_ô |
| 204 | What is your highest level of education? | None Lower Primary Upper Primary O' Level Advanced secondary level Basic TVET Advanced TVET Student at University/Higher Learning Institution Completed University/Higher Learning Institution Others (specify): _____ | ô_ô |

| | | | |
|------|--|--|------|
| 205 | Main Occupation | Non occupation Farming Regular paid job Part time paid job Internship Others/specify | ô__ô |
| 206 | What is your Household/ family Ubudehe Categorization? | Category 1 Category 2 Category 3 Category 4 I don't know | ô__ô |
| 207 | Are you the head of Household? | Yes No | ô__ô |
| 208 | Do you have physical or mental disability? | Yes No Refused | ô__ô |
| 209 | What is the size of Household? | One person Two persons Three persons Four persons Five persons More than five persons | ô__ô |
| 2010 | Do you have Children? If yes go to Q 2011 | Yes (Yego) No (Oya) | ô__ô |
| 2011 | How many children do you have ? | | ô__ô |

Section Three: Youth Participation in Local Government Processes that Shape Decision Making

(There are many local government processes where citizens can participate such as Umuganda, Inteko y'abaturatione, planning and budgeting processes, consulting with council representatives)

| Serial No | Questions (Bibazo) | Responses (Ibisubizo) | | | | |
|-----------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 301 | What do you understand by youth participation local governance process that shape development | <p>Youth voicing their concerns to leaders.</p> <p>Youth participating in implementation of government programs.</p> <p>Attending meeting for National Youth Council.</p> <p>Attending citizen participation platform like Umuganda.</p> <p>Attending meet the president sessions like Youth Connect.</p> <p>Other, specify.</p> | | | | |
| 302 | In your view, what is the importance of youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making? | <p>Youth and citizen in general are the basis for all development action.</p> <p>Youth know exactly their needs.</p> <p>It eases implementation.</p> <p>Promotes ownership and sustainability.</p> <p>It empowers the youth.</p> <p>Youth participation is a right.</p> <p>The youth will shape the future of the country.</p> | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|--------|-----------|-------|--------|
| 303 | Are you aware of any local governance processes/ platforms where the youth can voice their concerns to decision makers? | Yes No | | | | ô_ô |
| 304 | If yes, which ones are you aware of? | Citizen Assembly Village Meetings National Youth Council Meetings National Women Council meetings Imihigo meetings Umuganda Planning and Budgeting meetings Umugoroba w'ababyeyi Others, specify ----- ----- | | | | ô_ô |
| 305 | Which of the following local governance citizen participation platforms have you ever attended? (Tick all that apply) | Citizen Assembly Village Meetings National Youth Council Meetings National Women Council meetings Imihigo meetings Umuganda Planning and Budgeting meetings Umugoroba w'ababyeyi Others, specify ----- ----- | | | | ô_ô |
| 306 | If yes, how often do you attend the following local governance platforms | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| | Citizen Assembly | | | | | |
| | Village Meetings | | | | | |
| | National Youth Council Meetings | | | | | |
| | National Women Council meetings | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------|-----------|---------|------|-----------|
| | Imihigo meetings | | | | | |
| | Umuganda | | | | | |
| | Planning and Budgeting meetings | | | | | |
| | Umugoroba w'ababyeyi | | | | | |
| | Others, specify | | | | | |
| 307 | How easy or difficult was it for you to voice your concerns during these processes? | Very difficult | Difficult | Neutral | Easy | Very easy |
| | Citizen Assembly | | | | | |
| | Village Meetings | | | | | |
| | National Youth Council Meetings | | | | | |
| | National Women Council meetings | | | | | |
| | Imihigo meetings | | | | | |
| | Umuganda | | | | | |
| | Planning and Budgeting meetings | | | | | |
| | Umugoroba w'ababyeyi | | | | | |
| | Others, specify | | | | | |
| 308 | When you attend those local government processes, do you voice your opinions, views and concerns? | | ô__ô | | | |
| | Citizen Assembly | Yes No | | | | ô__ô |
| | Village Meetings | Yes No | | | | ô__ô |
| | National Youth Council Meetings | Yes No | | | | ô__ô |
| | National Women Council meetings | Yes No | | | | ô__ô |
| | Imihigo meetings | Yes No | | | | |
| | Umuganda | Yes No | | | | ô__ô |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| | Planning and Budgeting meetings | Yes No | | | | ô_ô |
| | Umugoroba w'ababyeyi | Yes No | | | | ô_ô |
| | Others, specify | | | | | |
| 309 | What is your level participation in those local governance processes? | | | | | ô_ô |
| | Citizen Assembly | Very High | High | Neutral | Low | Very Low |
| | Village Meetings | | | | | |
| | National Youth Council meetings | | | | | |
| | National Women Council meetings | | | | | |
| | Imihigo planning meetings | | | | | |
| | Umuganda | | | | | |
| | Planning and Budgeting meetings | | | | | |
| | Umugoroba w'ababyeyi | | | | | |
| | Others, specify | | | | | |
| Now let's talk about experiences engaging with local leaders, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements: | | | | | | |
| 3010 | I find it easy to voice my concerns to local leaders. | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| | | | | | | |
| 3011 | I usually follow local government processes. | | | | | |
| 3012 | I regularly talk to my National Youth Council representative in my area. | | | | | |
| 3013 | The NYC representative at the village usually asks for our concerns before meeting. | | | | | |
| 3014 | The NYC representative at the cell usually asks for our concerns before meeting. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 3015 | The NYC representative at the sector usually asks for our concerns before meeting. | | | | | |
| 3016 | The NYC representative at the district usually asks for our concerns before meeting. | | | | | |
| 3017 | I know the National Youth Council representatives in my village. | | | | | |
| 3018 | I know the National Youth Council representatives in my cell. | | | | | |
| 3019 | I know the National Youth Council representatives in my sector. | | | | | |
| 3020 | I know the National Youth Council representatives in my district. | | | | | |

Section Four: Challenges and Opportunities to Youth Participation in Local Governance Processes

| Serial No | Questions | Responses |
|------------------|--|---|
| 401 | Are you aware of any opportunities that the youth can leverage to participate in local governance processes? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No |
| 402 | What are some of the existing opportunities youth can use to participate in local governance processes that shape decision making? (Select all that apply) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existence of citizen participation mechanisms like Inteko y'abaturatione, Umuganda and National Youth Council) 2. Availability of security 3. Political will (Citizen Participation policies, Inama y'umushyikirano space for citizens etc.) 4. Exemplary President: President Paul Kagame 5. Existence of Consultative meeting during Imihigo Planning Process (3 concerns per village to cells) 6. Existence of CSOs offering extra space to participate 7. Availability of media avenues that reach a big scope of the population 8. Others, specify ----- |

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 403 | Do the youth optimally use the existing citizen participation fora to voice their concerns? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 3. I do not know |
| 404 | If no, why are they not taking advantage of the existing opportunities to voice their concern? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth are not aware of the existing opportunities. 2. Youth lack interest to participate local governance issues. 3. The existing opportunities are not youth friendly. 4. Others, specify ----- |
| 405 | Have you ever participated in any citizen participation platforms in the local governance process? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No |
| 406 | If yes, which local governance citizen participation mechanisms did you participate in? (Tick all that apply.) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citizen Assembly 2. Village Meetings 3. National Youth Council Meetings 4. National Women Council meetings 5. Imihigo planning meetings 6. Umuganda 7. Planning and Budgeting meetings 8. Umugoroba w'ababyeyi 9. Others Specify ----- |
| 407 | From your experience, which of the following citizen participation mechanisms is most important for the youth? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Citizen Assembly 2. Village Meetings 3. National Youth Council meetings 4. National Women Council meetings 5. Imihigo planning meetings 6. Umuganda 7. Planning and Budgeting meetings 8. Umugoroba w'ababyeyi 9. Others, specify ----- |
| 408 | What are the key challenges you encounter when trying to participate in local governance processes that shape decision making? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of time 2. Limited awareness of when the existing mechanisms take place 3. Unfavourable attitude from the youth 4. Non-attendance of existing platforms 5. Not interested 6. Lack of youth friendly participation platforms 7. Inadequate support for youth participation mechanism 8. Fearing local leaders 9. Negative attitudes from local leaders towards the youth |

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Muraho/Mwaramutse/Mwiriwe. Nitwa.....nkaba ndi gukora ubushakashatsi, nje nturutse m'umuryango nyarwanda utari uwa Leta witwa Never Again Rwanda.

Ibibazo tuganiraho muri ubu bushakashatsi nibijyanye n'uruhare rw'urubyiruko mu bikorwa by'inze-go z'ibanze. Amakuru yose muduha muri ubu bushakashatsi akomeza kuba ibanga. Ibizava muri ubu bushakashatsi bizakoreshwa gusa mu rwego rwo kunoza gahunda zuyu muryango mu gu-teza imbere uruhare rw'urubyiriko mu nzego z'ibanze. Turabamenyesha kandi ko kugira uruhare muri ubu bushakashatsi ari ku bushake bwanyu ijana ku ijana. Mufite uburenganzira bwo guso-banuzi niba hari ikintu mutumvise neza.

Hari igihe ku giti cyawe utagira inyungu muri ubu bushakashatsi ariko ibisubizo utanga ku bibazo tukubaza bizagirira akamaro agace mutuyemo muri rusange.

Niba nta kibazo mufite kuri ubu bushakashatsi turabasaba uburenganzira bwo kuba twatangira ikiganiro.

Appendix 3: Indicator Framework

| Dimension | Main Indicators | Data Source | Data Collection tool | Question |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Social demographic characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Age Marital status | Youth, youth leaders, local leaders, representative of CSOs, FBOs, and CBOs | Questionnaire | 201- 203 |
| Social economic status | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of education Main occupation Ubudehe category | Youth, youth leaders, local leaders, representative of CSOs, FBOs, and CBOs | Questionnaire | 204 -206 |
| Youth participation in local government processes that shape decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth understanding level of their participation in the local governance process that shape development Type, number and nature of local governance processes for decision Category of push and pull factors towards youth participation in decision making for development Nature of actionable recommendations that can enhance youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making for development | Youth, youth leaders, local leaders, representative of CSOs, FBOs, and CBOs | Questionnaire and guides of KIs/FGDs | SO1, SO2, SO3, 303 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Significance of youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significance level of youth participation in local governance processes that shape decision making | Youth, youth leaders, local leaders, representative of CSOs, FBOs, and CBOs | Questionnaire, guides of KIIs | 302 |
| Local governance processes / platforms where the youth can voice their concerns to decision makers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type and number of local governance processes/ platforms where the youth can voice their concerns to decision makers • Frequency of attendance in local governance processes/platforms where the youth can voice their concerns to decision makers • Perceived level of ease or difficulty local leaders face in citizen engagement process | Youth, youth leaders | Questionnaire | 303, 304, 305, 306, 308 |
| Experience in engaging with local leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of experience in engaging with local leaders | Youth, youth leaders | Questionnaire | 3010 - 3020 |
| Challenges and opportunities to youth participation in local governance processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of existing opportunities the youth can use to participate in local governance processes that shape decision making • Most important citizen participation mechanism for the youth • Category of key challenges that you encounter when trying to participate in local governance processes | Youth, youth leaders | Questionnaire | 402 - 408 |



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