

SITUATION ANALYSIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS ON LEGITIMACY TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN RWANDA

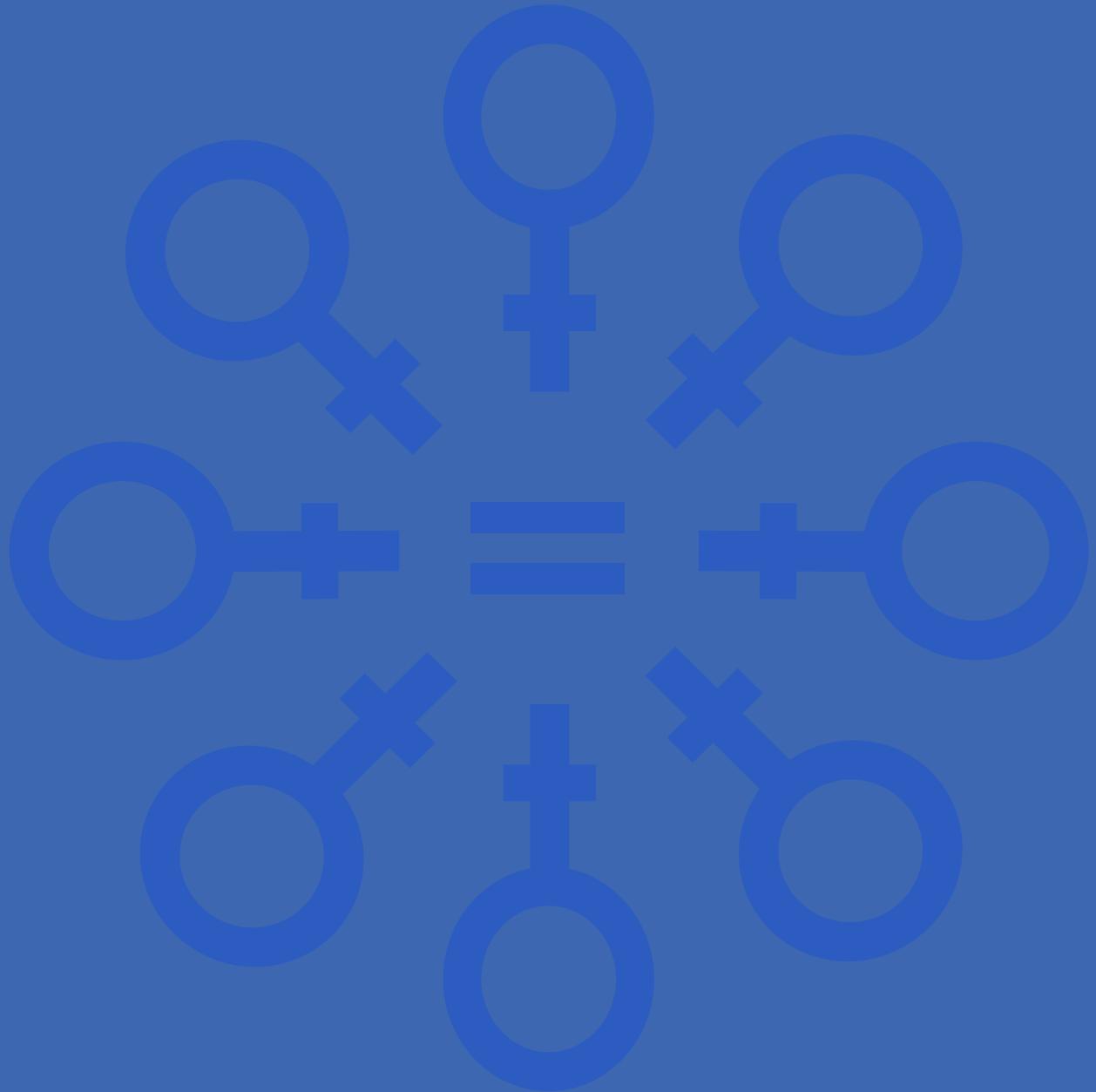
August, 2021
Kigali - Rwanda

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Full Report

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An idea to conduct this report on the "Situation analysis of Civil Society Organizations on Legitimacy Transparency and Accountability in Rwanda" came with the implementation of the 5-years' project (2020-2025) titled "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWEP III)". Pro-Femmes /Twese Hamwe (PF-TH) received funding from CARE International-Rwanda for the GEWEP III project, the funding that included this assessment. Thus, early this year, PF-TH commissioned the Empowering People and Organizations Company Ltd (EPO Company Ltd) to conduct the assessment.

The assessment period coincided with the rise of the 2nd and 3rd waves of the Covid-19 pandemic in Rwanda, which resulted in some operational difficulties. For the conduct of the assessment, the consultant was requested to conduct a mixed qualitative and quantitative survey, and interview key resourceful people whose expertise allow them to provide strategic observations.

Understandably, the completion of this study is a result of efforts from several people and organizations, whom PF-TH would like to acknowledge. First and foremost, PF-TH acknowledges CARE International-Rwanda for the funding that has enabled the GEWEP III project and their efforts in conducting this study.

Secondly, PF-TH acknowledges the dedication of various staff working for different CSOs in Rwanda who defied working difficulties during the Corona-Virus pandemic period and accepted to respond to the questionnaire and, others, attended to the interviews. Their contributions have been very much appreciated.

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To all of you, PF-TH pledges to honor your contributions and support through pursuing the implementation of the recommendations that resulted from this study, for Rwanda to have strong and sustainable CSOs that bring significant and sustainable contributions to the building of Rwandan society.

KANAKUZE Jeanne d'Arc
Chairperson
Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	II
LIST OF TABLES.....	IV
LIST OF FIGURES.....	V
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	VI
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	VII
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background on Civil Society Organizations	1
1.2. Civil Society organizations in Rwanda	1
1.3. Social and economic transformation Performance of CSO in the post-genocide period in Rwanda....	2
1.4. Performance of CSOs in Gender equality and Women Empowerment	4
1.5. Rationale of the assignment.....	4
1.6. Objectives of the assignment	4
1.6.1. General objective.....	4
1.6.2. Specific objectives	5
1.7. Research questions.....	5
1.8. Scope of the assignment	6
1.9. Structure of the report	6
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW: LTA IN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS.....	7
2.1. Introduction.....	7
2.2. The concept of Civil Society Organizations	7
2.3. Core values of Civil Society Organizations	8
2.3.1. Autonomy.....	9
2.3.2. Voluntarism.....	9
2.3.3. Plurality.....	9
2.3.4. Non-partisan	9
2.3.5. Non-violent	10
2.3.6. Compassion.....	10
2.4. Prerequisites for a strengthened and sustainable Civil Society Organizations	10
2.4.1. Legitimacy in CSOs	11
2.4.2. Transparency in CSOs.....	12
2.4.3. Accountability in CSOs.....	13
2.5. Weaknesses and challenges that CSOs face while trying to achieve LTA.....	14
2.6. Benefits of LTA within CSOs	15
2.7. Gender equality & Women Empowerment and LTA	16
2.8. CSOs LTA Conceptual Framework.....	17
CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .	19
3.1. Introduction	19
3.1. Study design and approaches	19
3.2. Selection of informants and sample size.....	19
3.3. Methods of data collection, tools and data collection process	20
3.3.1. Quantitative survey	20
3.3.2. Qualitative interviews	21
3.3.3. Deliberative forum.....	21
3.4. Data collection tools	21
3.5. Data management, cleaning, analysis and reporting.....	21
CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	22
4.1. Introduction	22
4.2. Identification of the Respondents and the CSOs Involved in the Study	22
4.3. Status of legitimacy within CSOs in Rwanda	25
4.3.1. Understanding the concept of legitimacy and its measurements	25
4.3.2. Perceived level of legitimacy and its importance within CSOs.....	27
4.3.3 Challenges related to CSOs legitimacy	30

4.3.4 Proposed strategies for strengthening the legitimacy of CSOs	31
4.4 Transparency within CSOs in Rwanda	33
4.4.1 Definition of transparency and tools used to measure it within CSOs.....	33
4.4.2 Processes to achieving transparency within CSOs	34
4.4.3. Level of transparency, its applicability and tools used for its promotion within CSOs.....	36
4.4.5. Mechanisms used by the CSO to ensure transparency to the state	37
4.4.6. Mechanisms used by CSOs to ensure transparency to stakeholders	37
4.4.7 Major transparency challenges and the proposed strategies to strengthening CSOs.....	38
4.5. Accountability in CSOs in Rwanda	40
4.5.1. Definition of accountability, measurements and the perceived levels within CSOs	40
4.5.2. Accountability to different stakeholders	42
4.5.3. Balancing accountability to the state, donors, members and target groups....	43
4.5.4. Major challenges affecting accountability among civil society organizations in Rwanda.....	43

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 45

5.1. Introduction	45
5.2. Summary of the study	45
5.3. Limitations of the study	48
5.4. Conclusions	49
5.5. Recommendations.....	50
5.5.1. To Civil Society Organizations.....	51
5.5.2. To Rwanda Civil Society Platform and Umbrellas of CSOs	52
5.5.3. To Donors and development partners .	53
5.5.4. To the constituency	53
5.5.5. Government, the regulator	53

APPENDICES: 54

Annex 1: List of Institutions from which the mixed qualitative/quantitative survey was conducted.....	54
Annex 2: List of individuals who participated in the KIIs and their affiliations	54
Annex 3: Interview guide for key informants	54
Annex 4: Themes discussed during Focus Group Discussions	54
Annex 5: List of Experts who attended the Deliberative Forum and the Agenda	54
Annex 6: Questionnaire on CSOs LTA	54

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Respondents' characteristics	23
Table 2: Description of the organizations	24
Table 3: Meaning and measurements of legitimacy for CSOs	25
Table 4: Perceptions on the Level of legitimacy and its importance and indicators of compliance with its principles among the CSOs in Rwanda.	28
Table 5: Meaning of transparency and tools used for its promotion within CSOs in Rwanda	33
Table 6: Perceived level of transparency and applicability of its principles and tools within CSOs in Rwanda	36
Table 7: Transparency challenges and the proposed strategies to strengthening SCOs.....	39
Table 8: Meaning of accountability, its measurements and the perceived levels within CSOs in Rwanda.....	41
Table 9: Balancing priorities of accountability to different stakeholders	43

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Universal CSO Ecosystem adapted to Rwandan context	7
Figure 2: Pre-requisites for a strengthened and sustainable CSO	11
Figure 3: Levels of CSO accountability and stakeholders	14
Figure 4: The benefits of LTA within a CSO	16
Figure 5: CSOs LTA Conceptual framework	17
Figure 6: Processes to achieving transparency within CSOs	35
Figure 7: Mechanisms used by survey CSOs to ensure transparency to the government	37
Figure 8: Mechanisms used by survey CSOs to ensure transparency to the donor	37
Figure 9: Mechanisms used by survey CSOs to ensure transparency to staff and members	38
Figure 10: Accountability of CSOs to different stakeholders	42

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AVEGA	Association des Veuves du Genocide - Agahozo	NNGOs	National Non-Governmental Organizations
CBOs	Community Based Organizations	NST	National Strategy for Transformation
CESTRAR	Central des Syndicats des Travailleurs au Rwanda	NUDOR	National Umbrella for Disability Organizations in Rwanda
CIO	Common Interests Organizations	OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Civic Participation	ODK	Open Data Kit
COTRAF	Congrès du Travail et de la Fraternité	PIO	Public Interest Organizations
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations	RCSP	Rwanda Civil Society Platform
DF	Deliberative Forum	RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
DFID	Department Fund for International Development	RGS	Rwanda Governance Scorecard
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
EPO	Empowering People and Organizations	SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
FDGs	Focus Group Discussions	SPC	Strategies for Planned Change
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office	TfT	Training for Transformation
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-profit Law	TIR	Transparency International Rwanda
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organization	TORs	Terms of References
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum	UN	United Nations
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency	UNDP	United Nations for Development Programs
KIIs	Key Informants Interviews	UNICEF	United Nations Fund for Children
LTA	Legitimacy Transparency & Accountability	UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
Ltd	Limited	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion	VAT	Value Added Tax
NAR	Never Again Rwanda		
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations		
NISR	National Institute of Statistics in Rwanda		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study aimed at critically assessing the status of TA in CSOs in Rwanda in terms of understanding, measuring, applying LTA principles, and exploring weaknesses, gaps and challenges that CSOs face while applying the principles, and use the results to develop a Civil Society strengthening approach that suits the Rwandan context. The study was commissioned by Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe with financial support from CARE International Rwanda. Therefore, for this analysis, the focus was given to CSOs that have a mandate of addressing the issues of gender equality and women empowerment, as well as those intervening in the areas of social justice, disability and human rights. To complement the data and build a national perspective, the study interviewed top officials at the national and international CSOs, central and local government officials and the national coverage faith-based organizations. The study specifically considered Non-Governmental Organizations that are legally recognized.

The study used an exploratory study design with a participatory consultative approach of data collection, involving selected leaders, members and staff of the selected CSOs. The study collected data through quantitative surveys within 38 purposefully selected CSOs and the study aimed to have at least 4 people in each organization to fill the questionnaire. These include 2 individuals working in the executive wing of the organization, and 2 people members of the board.

The study collected 114 filled questionnaires from all 38 organizations. Further, the study conducted 37 qualitative interviews including 7 FGDs in 7 districts and 30 Key Informants Interviews (KIs). In addition to qualitative interviews, an interactive deliberative forum with leaders of the selected CSOs practitioners/experts was organized to collect views from CSOs' experts on LTA.

The findings indicate that the concepts of legitimacy, transparency and accountability are defined as enablers of CSO performance and sustainability. Generally, CSOs in Rwanda are inherently at a good level of LTA, because all the organizations started after receiving the authorization by regulator. Through the authorization process, organizations must have statutes, representatives, mandate and mission, develop an action plan with a budget, which are discussed and checked before the registration certificate is issued. CSOs without registration are considered illegal and cannot sign formal contracts with partners.

Further, it emerged that most of the CSOs in Rwanda emphasize requirements by the State to keep their authorization valid. Equally important, the organizations focus on the donor requirements to ensure that the relations with the donors are maintained. The existing literature indicated this imbalance between the State, the donors and the constituency as a critical challenge to achieving an adequate level of LTA.

Speaking on the challenges of applying the principles of LTA, the findings indicated several of them. The major challenges include limited human resource capacity related to less staffing and unbalanced governance structures, with weak leadership and poor management which limit the organizations capacity to grow, raise and manage funds, manage programs effectively and efficiently and flourish. Equally important, the findings indicate the low levels of involving the members of the constituency or even lack of constituency in the design of the interventions. These affects the level of transparency and accountability within the organization, which are the key dimensions of growth, performance and sustainability. Further, the findings indicated a critical challenge in the limited fundraising capacity. This makes that most of the CSOs easily bear influence from donors as a survival mechanism.

In conclusion, the study generally commends the current level of LTA among the CSOs in Rwanda. However, most of the organizations achieved the level because they were constrained by the regulations and the donors' requirements. Nevertheless, the current status of LTA has allowed the organizations to contribute significantly to the development achievements of Rwanda in the recent past. Would the organizations have pursued the levels of LTA by principles and balanced the levels LTA towards their constituencies and the general public, their contributions to the current national development achievements would have been more.

The study recommends that CSOs in Rwanda should define their constituency and ensure that the members of the constituency are active, and timely pay their dues to support the organization. Secondly, the organizations should strengthen the collaborations between the executive secretariat and the board directorate to ensure power is delegated from the people, power separation is clear, and the replacement within positions is respected to allow new ideas into the organization leadership and management.

Also, CSOs were recommended to increase their internal technical capacities, develop fundable projects and effective fundraising strategies, conduct regular organizational and operational capacity assessment and capacity building to ensure human resource capacity development at different levels of their CSOs goes with the economic, social and political changes at national and international levels.

Umbrellas organizations and platforms were recommended to initiate transparency and accountability mechanisms in a form of self-regulation initiative among CSOs, initiate a harmonized code of conduct and ethics for all, organize and coordinate member organizations peer mentoring and coaching mechanisms to maximize potentials of CSOs in the implementation of LTA principles. Donors and development partners were recommended to increase funding, support comprehensive and holistic capacity building initiatives and invest in peer mentorship and coaching mechanisms for the implementation of LTA and CSOs sustainability.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background on Civil Society Organizations

For more than three decades now, the number of civil society organizations (non-governmental organizations, local community-based organizations, trade unions, community foundations, civil society platforms, umbrellas and network bodies) has been increasing dramatically all around the world and at different levels (global, national and local). As their numbers have soared, their roles, responsibilities and activities have continued to increase and their position within their community, society or sector has continued to evolve.

The work of civil society spans a wide range of issues in societies; from service delivery to supplement the work of government agencies, to advocacy and raising awareness about human rights violations, environmental or trade concerns; to development and aid programs and emergency responses to natural and human-induced disasters. Recently civil society organizations (CSOs) have been acknowledged by the international community as development actors in their own right¹.

Further, the role of civil society organizations (CSO) in service delivery and public policy varies greatly depending on their political contexts. Civil society, in a democratic government, is a channel through which citizens participate in making and implementing public decisions; identifying, prioritizing and resolving public problems, and allocating and managing public resources. People become more involved in agenda setting, and policy implementation through various voluntary associations, which contribute to the sustaining of democracy and fosters economic growth.

In non-democratic and transitional states, the civil society sector plays a significant role in lobbying and pressuring governments for democratizing politics and complementing policy changes.

In Africa and countries in transition, civil society organizations have been involved in various political activities ranging from public voter education and monitoring elections; protesting what they consider unjust or unwise policies; protecting citizens from actions of repressive regimes, and opposing or even overthrowing regimes. The civil society organizations contribute to better governance.

1.2. Civil Society organizations in Rwanda

The concept of civil society coincides with the arrival of Christian churches in 1900, especially the Catholic Church with its specialized missions. However, the dense associational movement was witnessed in the early 1980s, with the banner of development, especially in rural areas. It was mainly concerned with agricultural cooperatives and associations for mutual aid. Donors injected large amounts of resources into the country and hailed Rwanda's dense network of vibrant grassroots associations². Three important phases trace the historic emergence of Rwandan civil society.

The first civil organizations emerged in the 1980s. Most of them are developmental NGOs and peasants' associations. The sharp increase in development assistance during that time nurtured their expansion and set their agenda³. In 1987, INADES (an African support NGO), sponsored by the World Bank, inventoried 143 registered NGOs.

1. CIVICUS. (2014). *Accountability for Civil Society by Civil Society: A Guide to Self-Regulation Initiatives*. 1-80. <http://civicus.org/images/stories/CIVICUS%20Self-regulation%20Guide%20Eng%202014.pdf>

2. Uvin, P. 1998. *AIDING VIOLENCE: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*. Connecticut: Kumarian Press.

3. Uvin, P. 1998. *Idem*

In 1991, this figure increased to 170⁴. These organizations have considered themselves as apolitical⁵, whose roles are to support small developmental projects in rural areas. The second group encompasses mainly human rights organizations, which emerged in the early 1990s during the short-lived period of political liberalization before the political tension that led to the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994.

These include human rights organisations such as the Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LIPRODHOR), women's organizations such as Réseau des Femmes oeuvrant pour le Developpement des Femmes Rurales, Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe and Haguruka, AMIZERO, SERUKA, and labour unions such as the Conseil National des Organizations Syndicales Libres au Rwanda (COSYLI). These organizations have always fought for human rights, civil liberties, gender equality and social justice⁶.

After 1994, a good number of civil society organizations have been created in response to humanitarian challenges such as supporting genocide survivors, widows, orphans, trauma and counselling, unity and reconciliation, fighting genocide ideology, trust-building and social reconstruction among others. In the 1998 and 2000 years, many of the organizations adjusted to their initial mandate to social and economic development as the country was embarking on the new vision with a focus on political stability and strategic programs for poverty reduction.

The study see in that period the birth of organizations like AVEGA AGAHozo, DUHOZANYE, AVEKI, BENIMPUWE, ARTC-RUHUKA, IPFG, ADTS, SDA-IRIBA, IBUKA, Never Again -Rwanda, RDO, among others.

Given the growing number of civil society organizations, the government of Rwanda enacted the laws N°04/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organization and the functioning of national non-governmental organizations, the law N°05/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organization and functioning of international non-governmental organizations and the law N°06/2012 of 17/02/2012 determining organization and functioning of faith-based organizations.

During the 2018-2019 period, RGB registered 180 international CSOs, including 15 new organizations, and 261 local CSOs, including 131 organizations with legal personalities and 130 organizations with temporary operating certificates⁷. These organizations have different missions and intervene in different sectors such as agriculture, rural development, education, health, governance, justice and human rights, gender equality and women empowerment, youth empowerment, disability, environment, among others.

1.3. Social and economic transformation Performance of CSO in the post-genocide period in Rwanda

In general, CSO in Rwanda perform activities of representing the interests of the communities they say they represent. Active involvement of CSOs in the public policy-making process was witnessed in 1998, a year that reflects the transition from the emergency to the development phase.

Activities include mobilization and education of their members to increase consciousness about certain public issues.

4. Bugingo, E. & Mutambuka, P. 1998. *National Capacity Building Assessment: Civil Society*. Rwanda. Technical report.

5. Uvin, P. 1998. *Idem*

6. Nkubito, E. 2002. *Etat des Lieux de la Societe Civile de la Région des Grands Lacs: Cas du Rwanda*. Paper presented at a seminar on Le Role et l'Identité de la Société Civile dans la Région des Grands Lacs Africains. Ngozi- Burundi.

7. USAID, 2020. *Civil Society Organizations Sustainability Index for Sub-Saharan African Countries, 11th Edition –*

For instance, several campaigns have been launched by non-governmental organizations to mobilize and educate people about peace and reconciliation, HIV/AIDS, women abuses, and public participation in decision-making. However, as many studies have indicated (such as the 2001 USAID report, Trocaire 2002)^{8,9}, most associations have been mainly involved in the simple execution of development and social programs. Only human rights groups and women's organizations appear to demonstrate the most visible contributions to the government policies.

Rwanda has made great efforts to promote economic inclusiveness with a special focus on traditionally excluded groups including women. The New National Gender Policy 2021 is set to ensure that gender gaps across sectors are addressed through accelerating effective gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive interventions, and gender accountability mechanisms to positioning Rwanda as a global model in promoting gender equality¹⁰.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) in its vision 2020 and 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024 NST-1 has embarked on a development agenda aimed at transforming Rwanda into a middle-income country, an economic trade and communications hub.

For this to be achieved, different national policies and strategies highlight gender equality, women's empowerment and family promotion as one of the cross-cutting areas. Within these new frameworks, Gender Monitoring Officer (GMO) indicates that a solid stage for gender equality and women's empowerment was set for women and men of Rwanda to realize their rights, potentials, aspirations and be full partners and beneficiaries in the Country's development.

GMO adds that from transition to transformation, it is visible that Gender Equality and the empowerment of women in Rwanda is not a myth but an achievable goal in the journey of transformation¹¹. PFTH is one of the among civil society organizations that strongly share the same beliefs with Rwanda Government institutions as well as with many international partners such as CARE International in Rwanda, NORAD among others, on issues related to gender equality in Rwanda.

In that regard, the Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Project 2020-2025 (GEWEP III) funded by CARE International in Rwanda is a concrete action to materialize gender equality and women empowerment in Rwanda and ensure the capacity of CSOs is improved to drive to that goal.

However, these partners are concerned about how civil society organizations could invest significant efforts in this area, improve their level of Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability (LTA) so that women and girls could be more economically, socially and politically empowered.

For PF/TH and CARE International in Rwanda, the potential for CSOs working on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) to open up a space for dialogues on issues affecting women's rights and informing public opinion can only be fulfilled if they respond to questions about their legitimacy, transparency and accountability (LTA).

Over the last two decades post-genocide perpetrated against Tutsi in 1994, CSOs have played a significant role in Rwanda's recovery and reconstruction whereby they participated in various forms of development including gender equality awareness, women's rights and women's empowerment, advocacy on gender issues among others.

8. Trocaire/Rwanda. 2002. *Mid-Term Review of the Civil Society Programme*. Kigali

9. USAID. 2001. *Civil Society in Rwanda: Assessment and Options*. Burlington, Vermont: ARD, Inc.

10. *National Gender Policy 2021*, pp.30

11. *State of Gender Equality in Rwanda 2019*, pp.9

1.4. Performance of CSOs in Gender equality and Women Empowerment

Major progress has been made, but the role of partners and civil society organizations and their level of LTA still need to be strengthened, particularly those supporting gender equality and women empowerment through their mandates and programs. To continue to fulfil their missions, however, many CSOs must themselves grapple with clarifying their **transparency, legitimacy** as social and economic actors and their **accountabilities** to key stakeholders to ensure that they contribute to the public good¹².

Properly dealing with LTA will help every CSO to define more clearly the mission and core values. Moreover, better implementation and compliance with LTA dimensions/principles within CSOs will help to mobilize and retain highly competent staff, build strong allies/supports, attract big donors, and keep a good reputation and relationships with government institutions. While CSOs have often been remarkably effective at holding governments and corporations accountable to policies, laws and promises; their continued effectiveness will turn on their capacity to live up to their standards¹³.

By anticipation, these statements justify the problem and great reasons why CSOs operating in Rwanda whether local or international should pay particular attention to LTA at different levels and with different stakeholders.

It is against this context that PF/TH in partnership with CARE International Rwanda commissioned the present study to conduct a situation analysis on LTA in CSOs. The situation analysis ended up with an informed civil society strengthening approach/model that suits the context of Rwanda.

1.5. Rationale of the assignment

The situation analysis on LTA was meant to review the CSOs' understanding and application of LTA principles, and their understanding of the strategies to ensure achievement of the principles. This assessment intends to inform CSOs of the need to reflect on their level of LTA and improve the service provided to society at large. Also, informed by the findings of the assessment and the context, the study suggested the potential of strengthening CSOs in Rwanda.

By achieving LTA, CSOs will be empowered to address the social challenges they are established for, and the government will benefit strong institutions that are aware of their rationale of existence and the strategies to achieve a high level of performance sustainably. The awareness of the principles of LTA would inform the CSOs in Rwanda to benchmarking their performance to the international standards that operate in similar areas.

1.6. Objectives of the assignment

1.6.1. General objective

The objective of this study was is to conduct a critical assessment on the status of LTA in CSOs in Rwanda in terms of understanding, measuring, applying, weaknesses and challenges and develop a Civil Society strengthening approach that suits the local context.

12. David L. Brown, Jagadananda, "Civil Society Legitimacy and Accountability: Issues and Challenges", Scoping Paper, Hauser Center and CIVICUS, 2007, 43 p.

13. See Naidoo, K. (2004). *The End of Blind Faith? Civil Society and the Challenge of Accountability, Legitimacy and Transparency*. Accountability Forum, 2, Summer 14-25

1.6.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this assessment were defined as follows:

1. To describe how CSOs in Rwanda defines the concepts and principles of legitimacy, transparency and accountability
2. To explore the current status and efforts to achieve legitimacy, transparency and accountability among the selected CSOs in Rwanda;
3. To describe the process to achieving LTA, and identify the required documentation;
4. To review how the CSOs balance the requirements of the State, the donors and the members of the constituency.
5. To describe the weaknesses and challenges that the CSOs face while applying the principles of LTA.
6. To measure the impact of LTA principles on CS performance and sustainability.
7. To develop CSOs Strengthening approach/ strategy to implement LTA principles and address sustainability related challenges and gaps.

1.7. Research questions

This study is guided by one research question: *What is the current status of LTA in CSOs in Rwanda in terms of understanding, measuring, applying LTA principles, and exploring weaknesses, gaps and challenges that CSOs face while applying the principles? Equally important, what is the potential Civil Society strengthening model that suits the Rwandan context?*

The main research questions were operationalized into 7 specific questions as follow:

1. What does legitimacy, transparency and accountability mean for CSOs, which processes and documents would indicate the application of LTA principles?
2. What are the performance indicators for the applicability of LTA within CSOs in Rwanda?
3. How CSOs can achieve legitimacy in the sense of being relevant, accountable, transparent, and being recognized by their constituency?
4. How do the CSOs balance their accountability and transparency between the state, donor organizations and their constituency?
5. What are the challenges and gaps faced by civil society organizations in Rwanda while applying LTA?
6. What is the impact of LTA principles on CS performance and sustainability?
7. What are the possible strategies to strengthening CSOs to implement LTA principles and addressing challenges and gaps?

The study engaged selected participants from both the organization executive team and the board members from selected CSOs in Rwanda. Further information on the selected process of informants is provided in the methodology chapter. Answers informed the discussion of the results, conclusions and recommendations towards a strengthened CSOs in Rwanda.

1.8. Scope of the assignment

The study has a national scope and aimed to reach formal CSOs. It selected informants from CS platform level and umbrella organizations, INGOs, as well as the organizations which are members of the umbrellas. It also reached organizations that do not belong to any umbrella such as faith-based organizations. Beyond this, the study reached key and active stakeholders working closely with CS in different areas and researchers in this area. The main focus of the study was on the organizations that operate in the areas of gender equality and women empowerment as well as those operating in the areas of rural development, human rights, disability, and social justice.

1.9. Structure of the report

Apart from this introduction and background, the report is structured in five chapters: one being an introduction, the second focuses on the literature review on CSOs and LTA principles, the third describes the methodology, the fourth is about the findings, data presentation, analysis and discussion, and the fifth is a summary of analysis, limitations, conclusion and recommendations. The report ends with appendices.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW: LTA IN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

2.1. Introduction

This chapter defines the main concepts that guided the study for clarity and common understanding. The report documents the concept of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and describes their conceptualization and sustainability. Also, it describes more widely the concepts of legitimacy, transparency, and accountability (LTA), sustainability in the context of CSOs. Further, it discusses the benefits and impact of LTA within a CSO and describes how the pursuit of LTA helps CSOs to achieve gender equality and women empowerment.

2.2. The concept of Civil Society Organizations

The UNDP defines CSOs as “*one of three spheres of interference in the making of democratic societies namely, the state, the market and the family.*” The organizations of civil society, which represents many diverse and sometimes contradictory social interests, are shaped to fit their social base, constituency, thematic organizations (e.g. environment, gender, human rights) and types of activity¹⁴.

This definition includes church-related groups, trade unions, cooperatives, service provider organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations groups (CBOs), women and youth organizations as well as academic institutions. Figure 1 shows a description of the universal CSOs ecosystem with a specific focus on the Rwandan system.

According to the universal principles, CSOs can be described as all organized activities not associated with major institutional systems: government and administration, education and health delivery, business and industry, security and organized religion. They include religious/faith-based organizations, cooperatives, trade unions, academic institutions, community and youth groups, etc¹⁵. From the “good governance perspective,” CSOs are usually defined as a positive descriptive term and entities where citizens associate neither for power nor profit. They are the third sector of society, complementing government and business¹⁶.

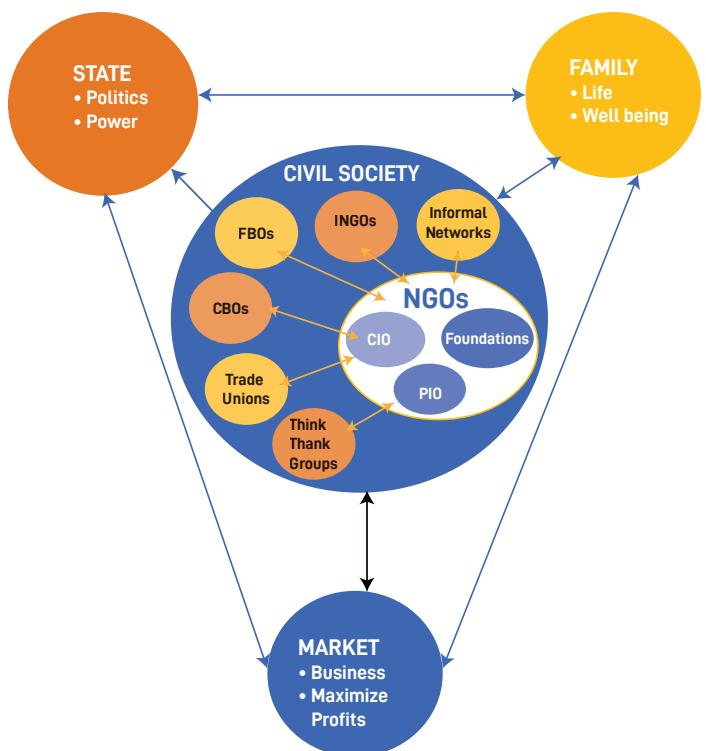


Figure 1: Universal CSO Ecosystem adapted to Rwandan context

Source: "Consultants' conception, August, 2021"

14. Rwanda Civil Society Platform, 2010:1

15. Judge, Anthony, Interacting fruitfully with uncivil society: the Dilemma for Non Civil Society Organizations, (Transnational Associations, Washington DC, 1996)

16. Towards Self Reliance: A Handbook for Resource Mobilisation for Civil Society Organizations in the South (Earthscan Publications Ltd London, 2001)

Through the Figure 1, it emerges the mainly academic definition of CSOs. The academic definition of CSOs goes beyond the secular definition to include informal, semi-formal or formal organizational formations that protect, promote and facilitate principles and practices of democracy, participation, pluralism, rights, equity, justice and peace and among the people locally, nationally or internationally (Mudacumura G.M., Mebratu D., Shamshul M., 2006). This definition raises interest for this study as it introduces the role of civil society in persuading the state to be responsible and responsive to the needs and rights of citizens especially the poor and the marginalized.

On the other hand, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) through its project "the Civil Society Index (CSI)" has been long used a working definition of civil society as being "the arena, outside of the family, the state, and *the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations and institutions to advance shared interests*"¹⁷.

However, these arenas mutually supplement the common good and survival of society. A key principle to add to all these CSO definitions is that citizen action should be goal-oriented and voluntary, rather than through compulsion. According to the most universal principles, CSOs can be described as all organized activities not associated with major institutional systems: government and administration, education and health delivery, business and industry, security and organized religion.

Transparency International Rwanda in its "Rwanda CSOs development barometer" (2015), argues that the conceptualization of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is not universal as CSOs form and their roles in societies depend on historical, cultural and socio-political context.

Factors, such as membership, mission, and a form of organization, and the levels of operation also helped to generate a theoretical framework for a definition of what a CSO is in a given society¹⁸.

For this particular assessment, and given the context, the study agree with UNDP that CSOs are voluntary organizations with governance and direction coming from citizens or constituency members, without significant government-controlled participation or representation.

2.3. Core values of Civil Society Organizations

The values of the CSOs, as a concept, can be synonymous with "principles" and it means the guidelines or the borders of values within which CSOs operate, and to which they must adhere. Such values are critical measures of civil society's legitimacy, the values form the foundation on which work is performed and which determines CSOs' behaviour. Some of the values are context-specific; they are shaped by the cultural, social, political and technological context under which the organization operate. Such values can change over time as the context changes as well.

However, the universally established values of CSOs remain constant in whatsoever context and situation. These are called the core values of CSOs: autonomy, voluntarism, plurality, non-partisan, non-violent, and compassion. These values remain constant regardless of the ever-changing world and they define how and why CSOs do their work and to who.¹⁹

17. CIVICUS, 2010:17

18. Transparency International Rwanda. (2015). *Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer*. December. <http://www.tirwanda.org>

19. Nizeyimana, B. (2013). *Civil Society Organizations in the Public Policy Process in Rwanda A Case Study of Rwanda Civil Society Platform Thesis*. University of Rwanda.

2.3.1. Autonomy

CSOs are free to focus on any topic without limitation. They are usually governed by their own by-laws, which define their goals, internal decision-making bodies, and management rules. CSOs may take part in public discussions but should keep their stand bound by mandatory codes of ethics written into their founding documents and the universal principles of CSOs. Political and sociological definitions of CSOs agree on the centrality of autonomy as a CSO characteristic, and this is usually referred to as the freedom and independence of civil organizations to set their own agenda without the direct intervention or dictation from external forces, especially the state and donors.

In reality, CSOs exist, not in a vacuum but in historical, political, and socio-economic contexts and their autonomy is circumscribed by these contextual factors. Autonomy may, therefore, be relative: a matter of degree and subject to negative or positive change. Furthermore, CSOs interact with other organized social forces including state, donor communities and other civic organizations, which circumscribe and limit their ability to act independently.

2.3.2. Voluntarism

CSOs vary from small membership organizations, informal, semi-formal, registered or not mainly engaged in self-help activities, to large and medium scale organizations engaged in all sorts of service, development and advocacy activities. Accordingly, they exhibit differences in their style of organization, internal democracy, and level of membership participation. The self-image of CSOs as democratic, participatory and accountable needs close inspection. However, voluntary membership and participation are some of the important characteristics and principles of CSOs.

2.3.3. Plurality

The notion of plurality indicates not only the large number and types of associations and organizations occupying the sphere but also the diversity of interest objectives, organizational forms and capacities. Academics have noted that civil society is not a uniform and homogeneous group of institutes. On the contrary, the institutions of CSOs are myriad of particular interests, which have an institutional form or an institutional expression. They express conflicts, rivalries, and struggles – or consented action. They may act as integrating or disintegrating elements.

2.3.4. Non-partisan

The Civil Society Organizations are primarily expected to speak for the voiceless for policy change and instauration.

Therefore, CSOs need not align to any political ideology in order to meet the non-partisan core value. This position would hold the CSOs to only siding with the truth and rights for the people, the mandate of the CSO and the core values the organization intends to exhibit. However, this behaviour may be seen as a sign of a lack of vibrancy of CSOs or of their limited capacity or willingness to engage in the public sphere²⁰.

The non-partisan value has bought legitimacy to CSOs in different countries of sub-Saharan Africa in 2019. In South Sudan, both the government and the opposition appreciated the involvement of CSOs that were selected to participate in peace negotiations, particularly their nonpartisan contributions. Thanks to a heavy media presence, the South Sudanese public increasingly saw CSOs as agents of positive change²¹. Similarly, in Nigeria, CSOs helped develop a national security management plan based on a local-level approach to justice and security dialogues.

20. Transparency International Rwanda. (2015). *Rwanda Civil Society Development Barometer. December*. <http://www.tirwanda.org>

21. USAID. (2020). *2019 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index For Asia. 2th Edition*, 38. <http://ciesc.org.mx/documentos/csosi/CSOSI19.pdf>

Though their involvement in crisis mediation and peace building is largely still nascent, CSOs' interventions in 2019 show that they are steadily developing expertise and credibility in these areas and can offer new, well-received approaches to the region's most difficult challenges.²²

2.3.5. Non-violent

Although CSOs influence policy change and advocate for the cause of the people, their approaches should abide by the high levels of non-violence. This principle has instilled the capacity for CSOs to negotiate mediation among belligerents as it was earlier observed in South Sudan and Nigeria. Similarly, in Rwanda, CSOs have been instrumental in imparting a non-violent mindset within the communities as well as tolerant nature of seeking a consensus on a wide range of issues²³.

However, the non-violence approach to policy change did not always have a non-violent end. In Zimbabwe, several CSOs leaders have been jailed for attempting or instigating the people into a form of non-violent efforts²⁴.

2.3.6. Compassion

The essence of CSOs is compassion. This concept entails the commitment to speak for the voiceless in search of their empowerment or provide direct support to vulnerable people, groups and communities. The birth and rise of CSOs are built on a commitment to build a world that is fit for the people – many of them with the least power in society – through putting into action the values of compassion, empathy and humanitarian commitment²⁵.

This value for CSOs was specifically hailed by Ms Lysa John, the CIVICUS Secretary-General in the foreword of the "State of Civil Society Report 2019: The Year in Review". She makes a call to CSOs "to put the value of compassion at the heart of the societies, at a time when it is ever more under attack²⁶." It is through the value of compassion and shared humanity that CSOs demand rights and dignity for all and work towards them.

The raise of the COVID-19 pandemic has put the value of compassion to the test for some CSOs. Active SCOs were motivated by the value of compassion to put the people at the forefront, mobilizing humanness and putting humanitarian values into practice to hold states to account for the decisions they made. Compassion has been a signature value for active CSOs more than ever.

2.4. Prerequisites for a strengthened and sustainable Civil Society Organizations

The concept of "sustainability" for an organization refers to its ability to improve its institutional capacity to continue its activities among target populations over an extended period of time, minimize financial vulnerability, develop diversified sources of institutional and financial support, and maximize impact by providing quality services and products²⁷. However, the definition is generic, defined more by the context of its application than by any settled meaning. Sustainability is largely a process, although it can equally be a goal in its own right and entails more than just the availability of funds.

22. USAID. (2020). *Ibid*.

23. USAID. (2020). *2019 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index For Asia. 2th Edition*, 38. <http://ciesc.org.mx/documentos/csosi/CSOSI19.pdf>

24. CIVICUS. (2020). *STATE OF REPORT CIVIL SOCIETY 2020. The year in review*. <https://www.azores.gov.pt/NR/rdonlyres/D21CF49B-EF59-4E76-88BD-5D0EEC3A2D4F/1098978/PlanoARPLAlcool.pdf>

25. CIVICUS. (2020). *STATE OF REPORT CIVIL SOCIETY 2020. The year in review*. <https://www.azores.gov.pt/NR/rdonlyres/D21CF49B-EF59-4E76-88BD-5D0EEC3A2D4F/1098978/PlanoARPLAlcool.pdf>

26. CIVICUS. (2019). *State of Civil Society Report 2019: The Year in Review*. <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/state-of-civil-society-report-2018>

27. USAID. (2020). *2019 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index For Mexico (Issue 2th Edition)*. <http://ciesc.org.mx/documentos/csosi/CSOSI19.pdf>

It is also a broader and holistic concept, which goes beyond survival toward thriving, resilience, autonomy, independence, and continuous functioning.

There are three main prerequisites for a strengthened and sustainable CSO: Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability. Figure 2 presents these key drivers of organizational readiness for sustainability.

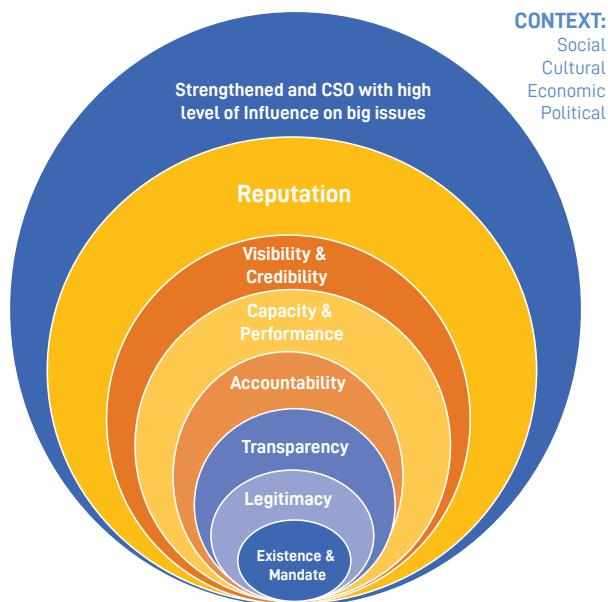


Figure 2: Pre-requisites for a strengthened and sustainable CSO

Source: "Adapted from Nizeyimana, 2013²⁸"

The drivers of strength and sustainability a CSO are driven throughout the exiting of the organization from its elementary stage when the mandate was formulated to its maturity. They are the determinants of the organizational capacity and performance, drive the visibility, credibility, reputation and trust, and, overall, determine the organizational level of influence.

28. Nizeyimana, 2013. The role of civil society organizations in Public policy process: Case study of Rwanda Civil Society Platform, Kigali. Pp.30

2.4.1. Legitimacy in CSOs

The concept of legitimacy refers to perceptions by key stakeholders that the existence, activities and impacts of CSOs are justifiable and appropriate in terms of central social values and institutions. For example, Edwards (2000) has defined legitimacy as the right to be and do something in society—a sense that an organization is lawful, admissible, and justified in its chosen course of action²⁹. Legitimacy is grounded in the perceptions of stakeholders in the larger environment in which the organization is embedded. The concept has been most developed in thinking about political systems, but it has also been a matter of recent concern for development institutions and civil society actors³⁰. Brown and Jagadananda (2007) summarized four kinds of legitimacy which are important for CSOs³¹. These forms of legitimacy are largely the product of external forces and dynamics that are not under the direct control of CSOs. They describe them as follows:

Legal Legitimacy: It is a legitimacy that can grow from compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, such as complying with the state registration requirements or following national laws and codes that define appropriate CSO activity. This form of legitimacy draws on the authorizing power of the state and its legislation. The compliance with Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) requirements particularly the NGO law N°04/2012 of 17/02/2012 governing the organization and the functioning of national non-governmental organizations provide legal legitimacy to CSOs.

29. Edwards, 2000, op. cit. 20. See also Suchman, M. (1995). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3): 574; and Meyer, John W. and William R. Scott. (1983). *Organization Environments: Ritual and Rationality*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 201

30. Atack, Iain. (1999). Four Criteria of Development NGO Legitimacy. *World Development* 27:855-864; Brinkerhoff, Derick. (2005). Organisational Legitimacy, Capacity and Capacity Development. Discussion Paper No. 58A, European Centre for Development Policy Management, Maastricht, Netherlands

31. L. David Brown, and Jagadananda, (2007), Civil Society Legitimacy and Accountability: Issues and Challenges, Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations Harvard University and CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Normative Legitimacy : CSO legitimacy can also be grounded in widely-held social values, norms and standards. CSOs with normative legitimacy are assessed as meeting norms for performance ("it does good work"), as implementing desired structures and processes ("it represents its constituents and members"), for fitting the task ("CSOs are good for grassroots organizing"), or for the characteristics of its leaders and staff ("its leaders are committed and effective"). For these authors, normative legitimacy is particularly important for CSOs since they are often value-based organizations that emphasize contributions to the public good at the heart of their mandate and missions.

Pragmatic Legitimacy: The legitimacy of CSOs may also emerge from the instrumental value they provide to various stakeholders, either directly in terms of specific outputs or more generally in terms of creating conditions that meet stakeholder interests. Service or advocacy organizations may provide immediate benefits to stakeholders and so be perceived as legitimate; they may also contribute to creating more general contexts (better public health; more responsive government agencies) that are favourable to stakeholders and so gain their support.

Cognitive Legitimacy: CSOs are also perceived as legitimate when their projects, activities and goals are widely seen as appropriate, proper, and "making sense" to the larger society. Cognitive legitimacy may emerge from acceptance of organizational activities as fitting into a comprehensible and acceptable story about their roles in society. The same authors say that this form of legitimacy may also emerge from widespread perceptions that the organization is a social institution that is "taken for granted" by society as being part of "the way things are." This is true, for example, for churches and some educational institutions in many societies.

2.4.2. Transparency in CSOs

CIVICUS (2010) defines transparency as a principle, which refers to the openness of processes, procedures and values of CSOs, the proactive public disclosure and dissemination of information that should be in the public domain.

Transparent procedures include open meetings, financial disclosure statements, clear board elections and governance procedures, access to information on budgetary review, audits etc.³² Transparency is environment and culture sensitive, and the question about how open can and should be the organization. A transparent organization is understandable and clear to its own people, to its supporters, beneficiaries and key stakeholders (donors and governments). Transparent organizations are much more accountable in their nature since promises that have been made, goals that are being achieved, policy statements that guide the organization and resources that have been allocated are made public³³. CIVICUS confirms that as a result, such an organization has much less room for any secrecy and corruption. However, transparency might not be automatically good all the times. Indeed, more transparency may mean less secrecy but it also means less privacy – and some things might better remain private, and this at the discrepancy of the leaders and or the context.

In this particular context, transparency will refer to the level of openness and the disclosure and dissemination of information concerning CSOs' values, activities, funding, processes and procedures. For instance, organizations that have aimed to become more transparent have organized regular annual general meetings, quarterly board meetings, and management meetings.

32. CIVICUS, World Alliance for Citizen Participation, (2010),
Turning Principles into Practice: A Guide to Legitimacy,
Transparency and Accountability, *Johannesburg, South Africa*.

33. CIVICUS, World Alliance for Citizen Participation, (2010),
Turning Principles into Practice: A Guide to Legitimacy,
Transparency and Accountability, *Johannesburg, South Africa*.

Others have conducted annual staff reflections to discuss plans, budgets, and reports. However, small and newly established organizations usually experience challenges to abide to the principles of transparency at the same level as well established organizations. Their challenges are related to the resources or capacity to produce annual reports³⁴.

2.4.3. Accountability in CSOs

According to CIVICUS (2010), accountability (answerability, responsibility, liability) means the requirement to accept responsibility to act based on CSO's own promises and subsequent justified expectations by various stakeholders³⁵. Accountability is about being open and sharing information. For a CSO to be accountable, it needs to be transparent about what it is doing, what it is planning to do and how it is performing in relation to the mandate, goals it has set itself.

This information should be made available to all stakeholders, both international and external. For stakeholders, the study refer to an "individual or group that has an interest in any decision or activity of an organization." Furthermore, the information that it makes available needs to be timely and accessible to those it is intended for.

Accountability also involves engaging individuals and groups in the activities and decisions that affect them. This is relevant for both internal stakeholders, such as staff, and for external stakeholders, such as the communities that a CSO works with. Sometimes it is difficult to identify various stakeholders and they may even have conflicting interests or requirements. There is a danger that when CSOs are not primarily accountable to one set of stakeholders, they may in fact be accountable to none.

Accountability is a means to achieve legitimacy, which, in its turn gives a CSO the right to exist and act in the society. In this context, accountability shall mean the CSO's willingness and its ability to answer and take responsibility for its actions, activities and messages. It also indicates the justification for each of the CSO's activities and communications to all stakeholders.

2.4.3.1. Levels of CSO accountability and stakeholders

Figure 3 shows the four levels of CSO accountability that have been identified and each one is based on the different stakeholders to whom a CSO must be accountable:

- i. **Upward to donors** who provide funding and resources and to Government and regulatory agencies responsible for the regulatory framework and legal certification;
- ii. **Downward to beneficiaries and clients** who use their services and to members who expect representation;
- iii. **Outward to peers, partners and allies** who cooperate in programs, projects and advocacy;
- iv. **Inward accountability to members, Board of directors, staff and volunteers** who invest their talents and time in CSO activities.

34. United States Agency for International Development, & Law, C. for N.-P. (2019). *2018 Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index*. 5, 1-107.

35. CIVICUS. 2010, Idem

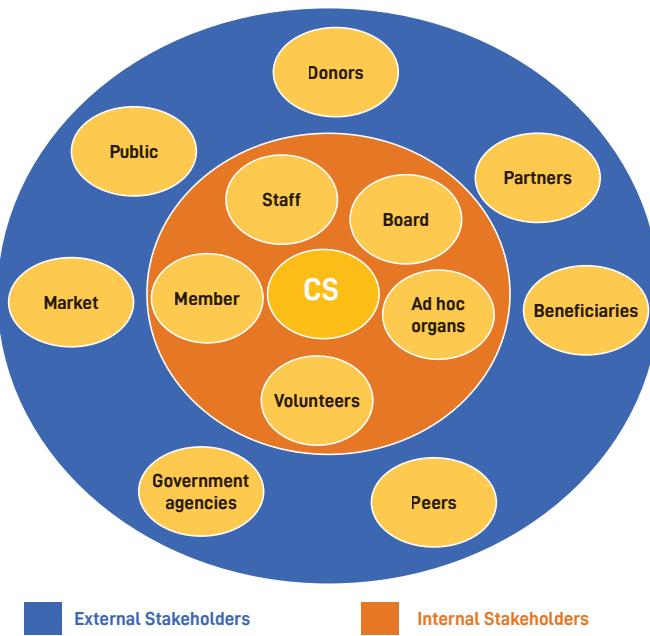


Figure 3: Levels of CSO accountability and stakeholders

Source: "Consultants conception, August, 2021"

Being aware of and responsive to the needs, interests and views of stakeholders and balancing them when making decisions is essential to CSO accountability.

2.4.3.2. Dimensions of accountability in CSOs

CSOs accountability is analyzed through three dimensions:

- i. **Accountable on legal grounds:** Some stakeholders can use law and the courts to hold the CSO accountable, such as using it to compel compliance with contractual obligations to provide donors with audited accounts.
- ii. **Accountable on normative grounds:** Some stakeholders can call for accountability on grounds of values and social norms, such as publicizing CSO behavior that is inconsistent with its public value and norm commitments.
- iii. **Accountable on prudential or practical grounds:** Some stakeholders can equate high costs for accountability failures, as in donors refusing to re-fund or extend programs.

Donors often have strong claims on legal and prudential grounds, while clients may have strong moral claims but little prudential power or legal standing. One approach has been to assess stakeholders on all three questions and then combine those assessments for an overall priority rating. Identifying stakeholders and establishing priorities among them is essential to constructing accountability systems that support the organization's mandate, mission, core goals and strategy achievement.

Many CSOs recognize the temptation to pay more attention to stakeholders with strong prudential and legal claims and pay less attention to value-based claims, even when those values are at the core of CSO missions. Recognizing and discussing those tensions is central to constructing accountability systems that realistically support CSO reputation and sustainability. This assessment will indicate how CSOs in Rwanda have built their levels of LTA in the aim of achieving strong organizations and sustainability.

2.5. Weaknesses and challenges that CSOs face while trying to achieve LTA

Several studies have indicated that CSOs are well aware that achieving LTA would benefit the organization to the great extent. As discussed earlier, it would mean the organizational sustainability and strength to withstand shocks and challenges. Nevertheless, the CSOs face a number of challenges that constrain their legitimacy, their efforts to transparency and accountability. Nizeyimana (2013)³⁶ discussed seven major challenges that CSOs face particularly in pursuit of the principles of LTA:

36. Nizeyimana, B. (2013). *Civil society organizations in the public policy process in Rwanda A case study of Rwanda Civil Society Platform Thesis*. University of Rwanda, 2013

1. CSOs mandate, mission and constituency not clearly defined and not properly shared with all members, constituents and the public; Low level of understanding by CSOs about their role in the public policy process;
2. Poor capacities of leadership, management and administration;
3. Weak human and financial resources;
4. Lack of policy research and evidence on public policy issues;
5. Lack of public policy monitoring plans and advocacy strategies;

To these, Hayman (2012)³⁷ highlighted the lower level of funding, the obscure relationship with donors, the State and the society as equally strong challenges for CSOs to achieve the principles of LTA.

2.6. Benefits of LTA within CSOs

The International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness adopted eight principles aiming at promoting CSOs development and sustainability. Principle number five states that *CSOs are effective as development actors when they demonstrate a sustained organizational commitment to transparency, multiple accountabilities, and integrity in their internal operations.*

Transparency, mutual and multiple accountabilities and internal democratic practices reinforce CSO values of social justice and equality.

It is believed that transparency and accountability create public trust while enhancing CSO credibility and legitimacy. Democratizing information, increasing and improving its flow among all stakeholders, including political actors, strengthens both civil society and democratic culture³⁸.

Transparency is an essential pre-condition for CSO accountability. Mary McBride, Partner in Strategies for Planned Change (SPC) and Clinical Professor at NYU's Gagner Graduate School of Public Service explained how practicing LTA has a powerful effect on helping the CSO achieve better results: "Without legitimacy, CSOs have no basis for action.

Key stakeholders must perceive the mission, vision, activities and outcomes to result in an impact that offers benefit to those served. To the degree that CSOs monitor, measure and effectively message the impact they have, they will be considered to be legitimate. Legitimacy does not guarantee power or success. But, without legitimacy, success can be questioned and power eroded. This is true across all sectors. In short, it is the responsibility of CSOs actors to:

- i. Act within legal and regulatory frameworks;
- ii. Act within norms, standards and social values consistent with their mission and populations, or groups served;
- iii. Act to effectively provide value and set goals to measure that value;
- iv. Act to communicate and confirm legitimacy across stakeholder networks using traditional and new media to increase the value of a commitment to LTA.

Transparency leading to increased accountability is now an urgent demand rather than an earnest request. Civil society demands to know how decisions that will impact the whole of life are being made.

37. Hayman, R. (2012). POLICY BRIEFING PAPER 29 The Busan Partnership : implications for civil society. February, 1-16

38. Christina Bermann-Harms and Nora Lester Murad, (2010) Putting the Istanbul Principles into Practice: A Companion Toolkit to the Siem Reap Consensus on the International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness. Retrieved on <http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/-/global-report,052-.html> 15th February 2021.

Figure 4: The benefits of LTA within a CSO



Source: "Civicus, Accountability for civil Society by civil Society. 2014, p.9"

The three concepts of legitimacy, transparency and accountability (LTA) are very much intertwined as indicated in Figure 4. A CSO's legitimacy requires accountability in its processes and decisions and transparency in its actions and promises.

At the sectoral level, these efforts towards greater legitimacy, transparency and accountability have led to the creation and development of self-regulation initiatives³⁹.

2.7. Gender equality & Women Empowerment and LTA

This assessment was embedded in the framework of gender equality and women empowerment, which "refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys".

For UNWOMEN, equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, rather, women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men⁴⁰. From the above, it is highlighted that gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women.

Theoretically, CSOs are effective as development actors when they promote and practice development cooperation embodying gender equity, reflecting women's concerns and experiences while supporting women's efforts to realize their individual and collective rights, participating as fully empowered actors in the development process⁴¹. It is stressed that achieving gender equality, through addressing unequal power relations and fulfilling women's and girls' rights in all their dimensions is essential for realizing sustainable development outcomes.

Promoting gender equality is not a task for women's organizations or government institutions in charge of gender and family promotion. The State, market and civil society are all concerned and called to act. To achieve this, Goal 5 among the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 focusses on Achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls, while the fifth target of this goal seeks to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, social, economic and public life⁴². Gender equality remains an area of concern for different development actors, CSOs and PF/TH included. However, the status of CSOs LTA and how these principles can contribute to the improvement of gender equality, needs to be discussed further.

39. CIVICUS. (2014). *Accountability for Civil Society by Civil Society: A Guide to Self-Regulation Initiatives*. 1-80. <http://civicus.org/images/stories/CIVICUS%20Self-regulation%20Guide%20Eng%202014.pdf>

40. UNWOMEN, Important concepts underlying gender mainstreaming

41. Christina Bermann-Harms and Nora Lester Murad, 2010, Putting the Istanbul Principles into practices, p. 21

42. UN, Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals 2030

2.8. CSOs LTA Conceptual Framework

Several sections of chapter two in this report discussed towards the building of strengthened CSOs. It was argued that a Civil Society Organization is legitimate if it has a justifiable existence in conformity with central social norms and makes justifiable impact that makes sense, has respectable people, competence and knowledge of the topic.

An organization is accountable if it has clear processes and tools of reporting, engagement, management and governance in place and in daily practice and/ or it honors and follows sectoral codes.

An organization is transparent if it is open, clear and honest about its work, decision making, programs, information, achievements and failures. These principles are found to be enablers and key prerequisites for any CSO working for the public good and that seeks to grow, increase its performance, trust, reputation and its influence for a great change in the society. However, the status of CSOs LTA and how they can contribute to the improvement of gender equality, and the CSOs sustainability need to be well defined and conceptualized to guide the interventions. The operational conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 5.



Figure 5: CSOs LTA Conceptual framework

Source: "The Consultant conception, August, 2021 "

Figure 5 reads that the landscape of CSO is “*the arena, outside of the family, the state, and the society, which is created by individuals and collective actions, organizations and institutions to advance shared interests.*” These shared interests may be common and/or public. LTA principles as earlier described are among the key prerequisites for any CSO working for the public good and that seeks to grow, increase its performance, reputation and its influence for a great change in the society.

Gender equality and women empowerment should play a driving role for CSOs, to ensure that the development and human rights principles they fight for do not leave anyone behind. This study will describe the particular chase of CSOs landscape in Rwanda and their efforts to heighten the levels for high performance and sustainability.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This section describes the research approach, methods and tools used in data collection, processing, treating and analysis, and report writing.

3.1. Study design and approaches

The study used an exploratory study design to understand the current situation of CSOs in Rwanda with regard to legitimacy, transparency and accountability. The design was appropriate since no prior study was conducted in Rwanda to indicate the real level of the application of LTA principles within CSOs in Rwanda. The study, therefore, had to go to all the potential sources of information in order to respond to the research questions.

Also, the study used *participatory and consultative* approaches involving selected leaders of the selected CSOs.

Specifically, it involved the participation and consultations of PF/TH Secretariat and Board members, PF/TH member organizations, umbrella organizations, individual CSOs operating at the national and local level, International NGOs and donors, government institutions (ministries, districts and agencies) and other relevant stakeholders pertaining to the functioning and sustainability of CSOs in Rwanda.

These individuals contributed to the design of the study, data collection and an opportunity was created for them to reflect on the preliminary results. This was an opportunity to discuss widely the current status of applying LTA principles within CSOs in Rwanda. Both a quantitative survey and interviews with key informant interviews was conducted.

3.2. Selection of informants and sample size

The informants of the study were the Civil Society Organizations operating in Rwanda both local and international organizations, government institutions that have among others the support of gender equality and women empowerment as well as UN agencies that support initiatives in gender equality and women empowerment.

Informants for the interviews were selected purposively. The study selected CSOs leaders, members and staff of CSOs. The selection went beyond PF/TH member organizations and targeted broadly other CSOs and umbrella organizations to have a broader overview of CSOs on LTA. Moreover, institutions involved in data collection and analysis were also purposively selected based on their position, mandate, and support and working relationships with CSOs on the above-indicated thematic areas. Respondents to the questionnaire were selected from five (5) big umbrellas organizations and individual CSOs particularly working in promoting women's rights, gender equality and women empowerment.

For the quantitative survey, the study selected 38 CSOs based on their mandate as described earlier and on their availability for the survey. The inclusion criteria were mainly the focus of the organization: (i) Agriculture and Rural Development; (ii) Youth empowerment, (iii) Justice and human rights, (iv) Gender equality and women's empowerment, (v) Disability. The number of 38 CSOs was decided based on the available budget, and the timeframe. The selection of the 38 organizations ensured that the sample represents a diversity of organizations operating in areas of social justice and human rights.

For interviews, the study purposefully selected leading institutions that directly or indirectly support or work closely with CSOs that focus on rural development, social justice and human rights, gender women and women empowerment. Interviewees were selected in the following institutions that fulfilled the requirements as earlier described:

- i. **Government institutions:** Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), Districts' officials, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), and Gender Monitoring Office (GMO).
- ii. **International NGOs and Donors:** CARE international Rwanda, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA); Department Fund for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Trocaire: these were the international organizations that support CS in different fields and local NGOs operating in the areas of gender equality and women empowerment.
- iii. **UN Agencies:** UNDP and UN Women: These agencies provide a wide range of financial support to CSOs, sometimes in partnership with RGB. UN-Women was selected because it provides special support to women's organizations and CSOs operating in gender equality and women empowerment at large.
- iv. **Umbrella organisations:** Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), PFTH, Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base (CCOAB, CLADHO, NUDOR, LAF)

- v. **Trade Unions:** CESTRAR, COTRAF, COSYLI
- vi. **Media:** Pax Press, ARFEM
- vii. **Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs):** AEE; CARITAS
- viii. **Think tank organizations:** IRDP, IPAR, Tree stones organization

In total, the study conducted 15 interviews with key informants selected in the various institutions as mentioned earlier. The number of 15 interviews was determined by the theoretical saturation principle. At least one person was interviewed from each of the categories of institutions described above. Then, it was observed that the data were very similar. For cross-checking the data, it was decided to run a second phase of interviews and the saturation was decided based on the repeatability of data.

3.3. Methods of data collection, tools and data collection process

Data was collected through a mixed-methods approach through quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews and a deliberative forum.

3.3.1. Quantitative survey

For the quantitative survey, EPO COMPANY LTD recruited and trained enumerators to administer the phone call based surveys. Respondents were called and the enumerators asked questions and the same time filling in the questionnaire using the COMM CARE application.

This approach faced some challenges and was complemented by questionnaires sent to informants on email, and filled questionnaires were sent back through email. Where phone calls and emails did not work, face-to-face questionnaires (Interview) were administered. The choice of phone calls approach was preferred as a solution to minimize travel and maximize social distancing as a way of complying with COVID-19 prevention measures.

3.3.2. Qualitative interviews

Similarly, for qualitative interviews, phone calls and face-to-face interviews were used. For the informants who could not mind interacting with the research team through phone calls, the calls were used over the predefine questionnaires. For those who preferred face to face, the study physical meeting were arranged

As earlier indicated, due to the nature of the assignment the data collection and analysis was mainly resorted to the qualitative approach, whereby qualitative methods such as KIIs with individuals and Focus Group Discussions, and deliberative forum were used to collect different views, opinions and perceptions on LTA within CSOs in Rwanda.

3.3.3. Deliberative forum

The deliberative forum was organized to seek practitioners and experts' views to deepen the understanding of LTA within CSOs in Rwanda. These were basically to understand the perspectives of CSOs in future based on the past and current analysis of the CSOs context. Although desk review, KIIs and FGDs have had generated useful information, DF generated useful additional information through controversial debates of experts, critical thinking and analysis in a very open and constructive way. Data collected from DF fed both situation analysis as well as for CSOs strengthening approach/strategy.

3.4. Data collection tools

A quantitative survey was administered using a pre-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on the research objectives indicated in the introductory chapter. The details of the questionnaire are attached as annexe 6. The data collected from the questionnaire was recorded using the CommCare Application and exported into Excel and transferred to STATA for analysis.

A data analysis plan was pre-developed to guide the data cleaning, analysis and interpretation. Descriptive statistical analyses were used to generate frequencies, tests of association, correlation analysis, factor analyses, and multivariate regressions. Means, standard deviations, and percentages were used to understand the socio-economic and demographic characteristics and other interesting variables.

For the quantitative interviews, interview guides were pre-developed for both KIIs and FGDs. The guides were developed based on the objectives of the study. A sample of each of the guides is provided in annexes 7 and 8.

3.5. Data management, cleaning, analysis and reporting

To analyze quantitative data generated through the survey, cross-tabulation with frequencies and percentages were used to present and analyze the data collected. The Cross-tabulation technique helped to reveal basic information on variables and highlight the relationship between them towards research objectives.

Qualitative data generated through KIIs, FGDs and the deliberative forum was analyzed through content-based. The key patterns, from data, were identified and organized into coherent categories corresponding to key themes of the assignment, particularly those pertaining to LTA.

Each theme was numbered following the order of the objectives of the study, and the corresponding ideas/insights were grouped and systematically analyzed. The emerging themes from interviews and FGDs were rigorously scrutinized to understand their meaning and to know where they fit.

CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents analyses and discusses the data collected through the mixed qualitative and quantitative survey as well as through interviews. As earlier described in the methodology chapter, quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently to ensure triangulation of data collection from key informants. The data were triangulated the data through interviewing various people on the same questions and from the same organization. Results to all questions have been analyzed and interpreted.

This chapter is made of four main sections. The first section describes the respondents; both the individuals that responded to the surveys and the organizations that were involved in the surveys. The second section describes the status of legitimacy and how it is measured among the surveyed CSOs in Rwanda. The third describes the status of transparency while the fourth and last section describes the status of accountability. The description goes from exploring how CSOs define and understand LTA, how they measure the concepts and describe the efforts to achieve these principles and challenges uncounted in the process.

4.2. Identification of the Respondents and the CSOs Involved in the Study

Table 1 shows the identification of individuals that responded to the surveys. More women than men were interviewed (62/52), and this happened randomly. The high women against men ratio was consistent when comparing the executive team (executive secretariat and ordinary staff members) and the members of CSOs (Board leaders and members).

Most of the respondents were between the ages of 31 to 60 compared to those below 30 and above 60. This was expected, however, since most of the interviewed individuals were employed, and the ages of the majority of the interviewees are the active employment age in the Rwandan context. The majority of the respondents had a bachelor's degree and a master's with the frequencies of 60 and 42 respectively. The data shows 2 PhD holders among the interviewees but these were among the board members. A vast majority of the respondents had experience of over 10 years (47). Also, a big number of the respondents had experience of over 5 years in the CSOs environment either as executive staff or as members of the board.

Table 1: Respondents' characteristics

Variables	Categories	Executive team		Members			Total
		Executive Secretary	Ordinary staff	Board of directors	Ordinary member		
Gender	Female	19	22	8	13	62	
	Male	14	27	7	4	52	
Age	21-30	0	6	0	1	7	
	31-40	11	20	4	4	39	
	41-50	8	13	5	5	31	
	51-60	12	10	3	4	29	
	61-70	2	2	2	0	6	
	71≤	0	1	1	0	2	
Highest Education Level	Below Bachelor's degree	0	4	4	3	11	
	Bachelor's degree	13	30	6	11	60	
	Master's Degree	18	15	5	3	41	
	PhD	0	0	0	2	2	
Experience within the Organization (in years)	0- 3	4	16	1	1	22	
	3-6	6	16	1	2	25	
	6-9	5	8	4	3	20	
	10≤	18	9	9	11	47	

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

A quick observation of the profiles of the respondents for the quantitative interviews gave the research confidence that the responses are grounded in the right knowledge, experience and represent gender diversity. On the other hand, Table 2 shows the description of the institutions that were involved in the quantitative survey. Among the 38 institutions, 34 of the institutions are headquartered in Kigali against 4, headquartered outside Kigali. However, this was expected because it is relatively obvious that CSOs have been established in Kigali and operate throughout the country.

Further, Table 2 shows the description of the organizations that were involved in the study in terms of the location of the Headquarters. Indicating the organizational headquarters was important to observe whether there is any significant difference between the organizations that are headquartered in Kigali city against those headquartered outside Kigali.

Among the 38 organizations, four are as young as less than 10 years. These are the organizations that were established after 2010, this is when the country was relatively stable after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. The data shows that 18 organizations were established from 2000 to 2010, while 6 were established in 6 years corresponding to after genocide against the Tutsi. Another relatively big number of CSOs were established before the Genocide, assumable shortly before the Genocide against the Tutsi to address the socio-political challenges that were associated with human rights and political tension that was associated with it.

Table 2: Description of the organizations

Variable	Categories	HEADQUARTERS		
		Kigali city	Out of Kigali	Total
Legal registration		34	4	38
Experience of the organisation in years	Less than 5	3	0	3
	5-10	1	0	1
	11-20	11	3	14
	21-27	5	0	5
	Above 27	14	1	15
Membership in the umbrella	Yes	29	4	33
	No	5	0	5
Experience (in years) as a member of an umbrella organisation	Less than 2 years	1	0	1
	3 to 5 years	2	0	2
	Above 5 years	26	4	30
Number of districts of intervention	1	0	2	2
	2-3	1	1	2
	4-5	1	0	1
	Above 5	33	0	33
Area of gender equality and women empowerment involved in the organisation interventions	Capacity building on gender equality	28	4	32
	Promotion of Women's socio-economy	27	3	30
	Promotion of Women's voice and power	26	3	29
	Health for women and girls	20	3	27
	Engaging Men and boys in Gender Equality	19	3	27
	Lobbying and policy advocacy on gender	22	3	32

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

Table 2 further shows that not all the CSOs are members of umbrella organizations though the majority of surveyed organizations are. Also, Table 2 shows that nearly each of the surveyed organizations has a component of gender equality and women empowerment in their interventions. This was expected, however, since the study deliberately selected organizations that are members of Prof-Femme Twese Hamwe, in addition to other organizations that work in the areas of social justice.

4.3. Status of legitimacy within CSOs in Rwanda

4.3.1. Understanding the concept of legitimacy and its measurements

The study inquired about the meaning of legitimacy among CSOs. Informants responded to the question of "how do you define the concept of Legitimacy?" Respondents were requested to choose the meaning of legitimacy among the five options and were requested to tick all the definitions that applied. The answers to that question are presented in Table 3.

The data shows that legitimacy for CSOs is generally understood as fulfilling the legal requirements (96.4%). In the Rwandan context, the legal requirements are the documents issued by the Rwandan Governance Board and the authorization papers issued by the districts as they emerged from the qualitative data.

Table 3: Meaning and measurements of legitimacy for CSOs

Categories		Frequency (n=114)	Percentage
Meaning of legitimacy for CSOs	Compliance to legal requirements	110	96.49
	Having Justifiable activities and impact	92	80.70
	Acceptancy by key stakeholders	85	74.56
	Conformity with central social norms, values and institutions	75	65.79
	Responsiveness	73	64.04
Measurements of legitimacy	Level of compliance to legal requirements	108	94.74
	Level of acceptance by key stakeholders	86	75.44
	Meaningful activities potential for impact	85	74.56
	Level of Conformity with the social values and institutions	79	69.30
	Level of responsiveness to the stakeholders' needs	72	63.16

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

The legal requirements aspect is followed by having justifiable activities and impact (80.7%) and acceptance by the stakeholders 7(5%).

The study further asked the informants how they would measure their levels of legitimacy. Table 3 shows that legitimacy for CSOs can be measured through the level of compliance with the legal requirements (nearly 95%), level of acceptance by the stakeholders and engaging with meaningful activities potential for impact (75% each respectively).

However, the level of responsiveness to the stakeholders' needs and conformity with the social values and institutions were selected by relatively few respondents. This is surprising since the two factors are indicated in the literature as key to defining the concept of legitimacy and in measuring it.

The study asked the same questions of the definition of legitimacy and how it is measured during the KIIS. One of the respondents who has been in CSOs leadership for nearly 10 years of experience said:

Legitimacy means compliance to legal requirements but also the way a CSO feels and enjoys its rights to undertake activities that are under its mandate, missions and core-goals". However, the legitimacy of many CSOs in Rwanda is still at a low level because after fulfilling the legal requirements, very few bother about aligning the mandate, relevancy with the needs of the constituency, and local communities.

The aspect of legal requirements kept emerging during several interviews the study conducted. However, some of the respondents indicated that having a certificate from RGB does not guarantee acquiring legitimacy in front of the state, target groups, and beneficiaries. About the definition of legitimacy towards fulfilling the needs of the constituency, one of the respondents indicated that

Being granted the RGB certificate of compliance does not give every CSO the ability to enjoy its full rights like operating in any district, or implementing any project aligned to its mandate. He added that in the Rwandan context, legitimacy is sometimes determined by the level of relationships that exist between the CSOs leaders and the authorities at a given level. It is something that sometimes refers to how the CSO interprets and implements government policies.

The above quoted interviews show how important legal documents are felt to be with regard to legitimacy. In fact, it emerged even during the deliberative forum that "legal documents" by competent authorities, be it the Rwanda Governance Board or the District, are the basis for an organization to claim its legitimacy. One of the CSOs experts the study interviewed challenged this common definition and called it a "*one way definition*". The interviewed, who is a senior Lecturer in Political Sciences and a long-term researcher in CSOs said:

Legitimacy is key to a CSO success. It refers to external trust: towards donor, and the state, the suppliers, and the beneficiaries; as well as internal: towards, the employees, the members of the constituency, and the board members. Legitimacy is measured by the level of trust the stakeholders have towards the organization.

This definition introduces an inclusive consideration of legitimacy, whereby both internal and external trust need to complete each other. Further, respondents were asked for the documents that should indicate the level of legitimacy in the organization.

For the Compliance to legal requirements, they inanimately said that the availability of the legal registration certificate would show the compliance to legal compliance requirements and this would mean that the organization is legitimate. For those who said that acceptancy by stakeholders is another key legitimacy, they highlighted a list of documents:

1. List of the members of the constituency financial contribution to the organizational functioning
2. List of attendance in the organization meetings indicating the level of participation and ownership of members and beneficiaries
3. Minutes of statutory meetings
4. Number of media coverages realized when meeting their constituencies
5. Number of invitation letters received to attend other stakeholders meetings
6. Number of strategic meetings attended
7. Projects and actions plans that respond to beneficiaries needs
8. Funds mobilized on the behalf of beneficiaries and how they impacted and changed their lives

For those who responded that having justifiable activities and impacts would mean legitimacy, they indicated documents that would mean that: (i) Number of projects implemented; (ii) the organization strategic plan; and (ii) Number of impact assessment reports available

For those who responded that conformity with central social norms, values and institutions is key to achieving legitimacy, there was indicated this can be observed through the organization's theory of change itself. Similarly, those who indicated that responsiveness is key to legitimacy, indicated that responsiveness in this regard would be translated into documents indicating the Engagement in the stakeholders' concerns. To ensure legitimacy, which processes and documents should be made accessible and to whom, for which purpose and with what kind of risks and mitigation measures?

Further, the study inquired how CSOs would measure the levels of legitimacy in everyday activities. This question was asked in two ways, to two different groups. First, the study asked the question to all the informants during the survey. Respondents were given options of the measurements of legitimacy to choose all the options that apply to their understanding of how legitimacy would be measured within a CSO in the Rwandan context.

Further, the qualitative data emerged several factors that would commonly measure the level of legitimacy among CSOs in Rwanda. Those are:

- i. Number of members that give membership dues,
- ii. Number of direct beneficiaries,
- iii. Report of meetings with the direct beneficiaries.
- iv. Meeting invitations on collaboration with local authorities,
- v. Reports on the collaborations with national-level authorities,
- vi. Number of projects implemented a year, and budgets

- vii. Size of the organizational annual budget
- viii. Reports on the impact of the project implemented
- ix. Reports of monitoring and evaluation of the activities.

The above documents would indicate the life of the organization, especially its link to the policy/decision-makers, which would signify its ability to conduct successful policy/decision advocacy for the people and its stakeholders in particular.

4.3.2. Perceived level of legitimacy and its importance within CSOs

During the survey, respondents were requested to indicate their perceptions of the level of legitimacy within CSOs in Rwanda. They were requested to choose whether legitimacy is (i) Very high, (ii) High, (iii) Moderate or (iv) Low. Multiple choices were not allowed. Also, the study asked the respondents to indicate the importance of legitimacy for CSOs in Rwanda. For this question, multiple answers were allowed. Table 4 shows the responses for both questions (the frequencies and the percentages).

Table 4 shows that 46.5% of respondents talks of the level of legitimacy among CSOs as very high. Also, nearly 44% consider it to be high. The perceptions of legitimacy as high or very high are very good at 90%.

Those who indicated that the level of legitimacy is high and very high, show reasons such as appreciation of their interventions by beneficiaries and stakeholders, compliance of CSOs to RGB requirements, the standardized approach of monitoring and evaluation for CSOs activities, CSO efficiency and the value to money during projects implementation. For respondents who evaluated the level of legitimacy as good and moderate, they said that the implementation of activities is not conducted effectively.

Table 4: Perceptions on the Level of legitimacy and its importance and indicators of compliance with its principles among the CSOs in Rwanda.

Levels	Categories	Frequency	% (n= 114)
Perceived level or legitimacy	Very high	53	46.5
	High	50	43.9
	Good	10	8.8
	Low	1	0.9
Importance of legitimacy for CSOs	Improved reputation and acceptancy	100	87.7
	Improved service delivery	88	77.2
	Strengthened voice for advocacy and influence	89	78.1
	Attraction to donors	77	67.5
Indicators of compliance with the principles of legitimacy within CSOs	Full compliance to legal requirements	102	89.47
	Conducting statutory meetings	88	77.19
	Impactful actions on target groups	81	71.05
	Regular linkages/ contacts with constituencies	78	68.42

Source: "Consultants conception, August, 2021".

Reference to the data in Table 4, it is not surprising that respondents indicated a relatively high level of legitimacy based on two things. First, the study inquired a self-reported assessment of the level of legitimacy, and, second, the respondents were requested to reflect on their own organizations.

To triangulate the data, the study requested respondents during the qualitative interviews to describe why many people think that CSOs in Rwanda are at a high level of legitimacy. One of the discussants during the deliberative meeting mentioned the following:

I think all the CSOs have the authorization from RGB and therefore, almost all of them are legitimate. If you are not legally registered, you are not officially authorized to operate and your CSO is not eligible for funding from donors. In Rwanda, organizations start with legal authorization from competent institutions.

According to the quote above, legitimacy measured through securing legal status is almost high among all the CSOs operating in Rwanda. However, this is not surprising since it is mandatory and strictly monitored to ensure that individuals starting CSOs have all the documentation in order before operating on the territory of Rwanda. Further, during the interviews, the study requested the informants to comment on the level of legitimacy among CSOs from the perspectives of donors and members of the constituency. One of the respondents who are from the Government agency said the following:

CSOs do not represent the population, only government does it through parliamentarians and other elected representatives at different levels. They are simply legitimate because they are granted a working authorization by Districts and/or by RGB to implement their action plans. They need to mobilize funds and maintain their relationship with donors who financially support their activities. However, I agree that some of them do good work at the community level, while other work to serve their interests.

Another CSO board member argued that legitimacy is measured in the perspectives of the members of constituency and the community, in general, is relatively low for some of the institutions. Asked to estimate at the national level, the informant said:

Normally legitimacy refers to constituency representation and advocacy. Unfortunately, our CSOs and trade unions are not properly representing members nor beneficiaries or workers' interests. If the study look at the big issues affecting them like Covid-19 prevention measures, land issues like high and double taxation, high level of unemployment among the youth, abuses in contract terminations in the private and public sector, how can the study say the study are representing our constituency? To me, legitimacy may score 3/10.

This statement collaborates with one from the government side who said that

Legitimacy is not something you can count or evaluate in terms of money. It is all about empathy and compassion. It is something grounded in the hearts and minds of founder members, focusing on finding a lasting solution to a given problem in the society.

The qualitative data above indicates that the level of legitimacy among CSOs in Rwanda can be seen through 3 different perspectives: *regulatory requirements (legal status), donors' perspectives (funding) and the CSO constituency, members and target groups (satisfaction)*. In the perspective of legal status, the legitimacy is very high as no organization would claim legal existence without prior registration from competent authorities from districts and RGB. However, the legitimacy in the perspective of the donors and the constituency may vary from one context to the other.

Further, on the importance of legitimacy, Table 4 indicates that nearly 88% acknowledge that legitimacy can improve CSOs reputation and acceptance, 78% indicated that legitimacy leads to a strengthened voice of CSOs for advocacy and influence, 77% indicated that legitimacy can improve service delivery of a CSO and 67%, agreed that good level of legitimacy can help CSOs to attract and keep donors' relations. Other importance was also highlighted by 8% of respondents. These are mainly sustainability, stick to organization mandate, legacy and credibility.

During the deliberative meeting with leaders of nationwide CSOs, it emerged that legitimacy is a key enabler of the operations and whatever that an organization can achieve. One of the discussants said:

An illegitimate organization cannot be funded, and cannot advocate for the people it was established for. An organization that does not pursue legitimacy in the first place would be preparing for its extinction.

During the deliberative meeting as well as in many other interview sessions the study conducted, the importance of legitimacy within CSOs is considered as critical for the organization to work towards achieving its mandate.

Further, the study inquired the perceived indicators of compliance with legitimacy principles within the surveyed CSOs. Table 4 shows the four options that respondents were given to choose what they thought would be the indicators of compliance with the legitimacy principles within CSOs in Rwanda. According to the data (Table 4), 89% of the respondents believe that their organizations would achieve legitimacy principles by full compliance to legal requirements, 77% indicated that conducting statutory meetings would be an indicator to complying with the principles of legitimacy, 71% said engaging with impactful actions for the constituency would lead to legitimacy and, last, 68% said establishing regular linkages/ contacts with constituencies would indicate compliance with legitimacy principles.

The indicators of complying with the principles of legitimacy that emerged from the qualitative data are not very far from those raised through the surveys. One of the leaders of an established CSO had here to say on the indicators of complying with the principles of legitimacy. It was during one of the key informant interviews:

We are aware that we have to organize internal meetings and other meetings with beneficiaries and partners for compliance purposes. Many of these meetings are skipped due to the lack of financial means as we have to pay for their transport and perdiem. For beneficiaries', we simply meet them when we have a project to implement.

4.3.3 Challenges related to CSOs legitimacy

The study inquired about the potential challenges related to CSOs legitimacy in Rwanda. This question was open and respondents had the right to write whatever they think could compromise the application of the principles of legitimacy.

It emerged five main challenges:

i. **Scarce funding:** A big share of the budgets for most of the CSOs comes from external funders, and the funding is not stable. For some organizations, the external funders may influence what to be done, how to do it and to whom. This influence may affect the organization's legitimacy in front of its constituency and the State. Unstable funding is another critical aspect that affects the organization's legitimacy. This is because an organization may suspend its activities, abandon a given community before the implementation reaches a satisfactory level and this may affect its legitimacy to the constituency, to the served communities and other partners.

Further, some organizations required capacity to develop fundable projects, lack fundraising strategy to diversify their funding sources. This may cost the organization to spend a lot of time without sufficient funds to run its activities either internal as well through the interventions related to its mandate.

Failure to consistently run interventions related to its mandate would affect the level of its legitimacy among the members of its constituency, the state, and among other stakeholders.

ii. **Failure to follow internal laws, rules and regulations:** Some of CSOs fail to abide by their policies, laws, rules and regulations such as those related to management and reporting to their constituency, like holding consistent meetings with the state and other stakeholders, and honoring the laws, rules and regulations related to its internal governance and daily management.

In some cases, the executive teams refuse and delay to implement decisions made by Board members, and recommendations provided by donors. Some of them prevent control committees, internal audits and other thematic committees to operate and accomplish their tasks.

iii. **Internal conflicts related to the poor organization's governance and financial management:** As indicated in point 2 above, the organization's failure to abide by rules and regulations, ineffective implementation of decisions from competent bodies and recommendations from donors can fuel internal conflicts. Conflicts within an organization (among staff, between boards and executive teams, between the organization and third parties,...) may cost its legitimacy when they are not systematically assessed, well managed and timely solved .

iv. Undefined or inactive constituency:

It emerged from the data that some organizations do not have an active and well defined constituency. The later might have existed when the organization started but shortly after the birth of the organization, the constituency are reduced their contribution to the organization and lost their interest to the organizations activities. In such context, it is not easy to remain legitimate towards the constituency, and to the entire community, which, in theory, is paramount to CSO development and sustainability.

v. Limited capacity of lobbying and advocacy

on issues affecting constituency and the society: Weaknesses and limited technical capacities of an organization in lobbying and policy advocacy and failures to conduct strategic and fruitful interactions with the government, donors and other influential organizations or bodies, lead the organization to lose its legitimacy and trust vis-à-vis its constituency and the entire community.

4.3.4 Proposed strategies for strengthening the legitimacy of CSOs

i. (Capacity assessment and capacity building through mentoring and coaching:

In additional to traditional trainings, this has been identified by many respondents as one of the transformative solutions to improve the knowledge and skills of CSOs leaders and staff. That said, some highlighted capacity building topics such as leadership, funds mobilization, conflict management and transformation, strategic planning, among others.

The capacity building would be organized after a comprehensive organizational capacity assessment and it can be offered by the umbrella organizations or donors. The coaching can be targeting to increase their capacity to building their legitimacy towards the donors and the state (legal legitimacy) through timely and quality reporting, normative legitimacy, towards the constituency through honest engagement with them and pragmatic and cognitive legitimacy through quality reporting to the public and engagement of the members of the press. If done the image and reputation of the CSO will be improved.

ii. Fundable projects, fundraising and resource mobilization strategies:

It was proposed that all CSOs should improve the way they design projects but reviewing their mission and areas of interventions and also coping with the local, national and internal trends . They should initiate income-generating activities to support their strategies and activities and to increase their self-reliance.

In parallel, some also suggested putting in place a strong fundraising and resource mobilization strategy and the recruitment of experts in charge of fundraising. This suggestion was emphasized because an organization can lose its legitimacy once it lost its funding or its operations shaken by the short of funds. Securing stable funding would allow the organization to keeps its relationships with constituency and target groups, build a sustainable level of legitimacy towards all its stakeholders.

- In the same regard, some have proposed to receive financial support from the government; one proposed to earmark in the national budget a share for CSOs based on trust, integrity, reputation and areas of expertise.
- iii. Enhancing representation, partnership and coordination: Components of this theme have also been raised. A good number of respondents proposed to build a strong relationship between CSOs and their umbrellas as well as the government. They proposed to strengthen the joint action mechanisms with stakeholders and requested umbrellas to ensure strong coordination at national and local levels and CSOs to belong and be accountable to their respective umbrella.
- One more note to the government was the decentralization of all required processes of legitimacy to the district level.
- iv. Improving internal governance and organizational management: CSOs were requested to strengthen their internal bodies by appointing or recruiting right people to the right positions and where necessary building their capacities on their specific roles to the organizational growth and sustainability. They were also recommended to make sure that all leading manuals and procedures are in place, updated and referred to during the decision making process.

4.4 Transparency within CSOs in Rwanda

4.4.1 Definition of transparency and tools used to measure it within CSOs

Table 5 shows the definitions of the concept of transparency and tools used to promote transparency within CSOs in Rwanda. The study inquired how members and staff of the CSOs understand the concept of transparency. Respondents were given a list of four choices to select all that apply to their definition of the concept.

Table 5: Meaning of transparency and tools used for its promotion within CSOs in Rwanda

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n= 114)	%
Understanding of "transparency"	Openness	95	83.3
	Honest sharing operations related information	89	78.1
	Provision of accurate information related to activities	83	72.8
	Provision of accurate information related to governance	74	64.9
	Sharing finances related information	74	64.9
Tools used to promote transparency	Human resource management policy	107	93.9
	Administrative and financial procedure manual	104	91.2
	Annuals audits reports	98	86.0
	Conflict of Interest Laws	96	84.2
	Contracts with suppliers	91	79.8
	Certified Financial Statements	90	78.9
	Minutes of organs' Meetings	89	78.1
	Contracts and MoUs with donors	89	78.1
	Anti-corruption policy	87	76.3
	Procurement Policy	85	74.6
	Code of Ethics	81	71.1

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

Table 5 shows that 83% of respondents understand transparency as, just, openness for an organization. During the deliberative meeting, it emerged that the concept "transparency" has a strong meaning when the Kinyarwanda phrase "*gukorera mu mucyo*" is used. This implies being open to whoever is interested in understanding more about the organization.

Similarly, 78% of the informants (Table 5) indicated that transparency can better be defined as the practice of sharing honest information related to the organization's operations, activities (83%), governance and finances (74% each).

The study further sought to understand the tools used to promote transparency within CSOs in Rwanda. Table 5 shows that among 11 recommended tools, the human resource management policy was selected by 94%, administrative and financial procedure manual by 91%. The least selected tool was the code of ethics with 75% of selections.

During the qualitative interviews, the study requested the informants to define the concept of transparency as the study did for legitimacy. It emerged from the data that transparency is all about being open and sharing information related to the organization's activities.

Asked whether all the information can be shared with everyone, an experienced leader of one of the CSOs mentioned the following during the interview:

Transparency does not mean a lack of professional privacy. Transparency means sharing information depending on who needs what. I wouldn't be sharing financial reports to a receptionist or a driver! To me transparency means everyone within the organization knows what he/she entitled to know.

This data means that some information is kept confidential for some members of the organization. According to the existing literature, this practice does not contradict the principles of transparency. This is consistent with the general definition of the concept of "transparency" which indicated that professional confidentiality remains even in pursuit of transparency. It is a matter of assessing who, among the stakeholders, needs which information and then make that information for consumption. However, the leaders of CSOs would be cautious to who needs to be informed of what to ensure that the principles of transparency is not affected. During the deliberative meeting, three levels of transparency emerged:

- **Internal transparency**, which implies sharing information about decisions, finance within the organization;
- **External transparency**, which implies the organization's openness towards the stakeholders;
- **Financial transparency**, which implies sharing financial information with the public.

Similarly, an experienced leader of a CSO that the study interviewed indicated that transparency may be translated to openness and sharing of information, and the sharing can be intimate as within the family, and friends as among the co-workers.

Normally a CSO is like a family, where communication, trust and transparency prevail. The household head must always care about the well-being of the family members. Unfortunately, nowadays it is not the case, due to the lack of volunteerism and compassion, most of the founders of NGOs and members left them in the hand of staff who don't own the core values that guided the creation of these CSOs.

The quote insinuates that a lack of transparency among co-workers in a CSO may create conflicts, affect the performance and sustainability of the organization.

4.4.2 Processes to achieving transparency within CSOs

Figure 1 shows the processes that the informants believe can lead to the transparency of an organization. The data shows that 94% and 92% of the informants selected "*openness in decision-making processes*" and "*transparent internal elections processes*" respectively as critical to ensuring transparency within an organization. "*Financial processes*" and "*recruitment processes*" that follows the rules and regulations were equally selected by 91% of respondents each, while 89% and 88% respectively indicated "*transparent human resources management and tendering processes*" as key to ensuring transparency within an organization.

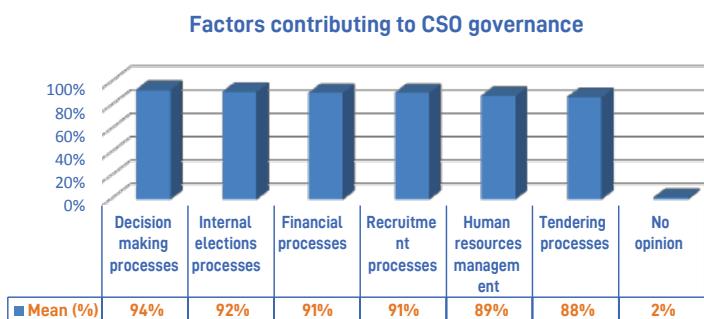


Figure 6: Processes to achieving transparency within CSOs

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

Further, during the qualitative interviews, the study asked the respondents to reflect on the processes that lead to transparency within a CSO. An experienced board member reflected on the process to transparency as follows:

Transparency is not something that comes in one day; organizations need to strengthen governance structures, develop and implement policies, rules and regulations through a participatory approach. The laws, rules and regulations should be discussed and approved through the channels that the organization has instituted. Once the rules and regulations are in place, the organization must endeavor to have the rules and regulations followed as there have been set. In addition, there should be mechanisms for monitoring, controlling the implementation processes.

The study sought to further understand whether there is a specific process to ensure internal, external and financial transparency within CSOs. One of the respondents in KII from the one umbrella organizations when discussing the internal transparency mechanisms mentioned the following:

We organize regular meetings with staff, quarterly meetings with board meetings and general assembly meetings with all members on regular basis. Unfortunately, some of these meetings may delay, or take short time due to financial constraints. Most of the time, the agenda of these meetings are very tight and members are not allowed to criticize, give comments and inputs and/or raise their concerns on key issues.

External transparency is another aspect of transparency that is critical to ensure "openness" as transparency was defined. Some of the leaders thought that CSOs could even publish what they do in a public newspaper for the public to see. When asked whether they publish what they do, one of the experienced leaders of CSO responded that this practice is not yet established but "*may it be done, it would mean total external transparency*". Local CSOs have been advised by one among the donors who participated in this assessment, to initiate a new culture of publicizing their financial statements and finical audits within newspapers where interested stakeholders can get that information openly and transparently.

Concerning financial transparency, respondents said this is relatively high, and the information is shared with whoever is interested. Organizations are supposed to present their reports to the donors through periodic reports, to districts and RGB, and the members through general assemblies organized on regular basis.

According to most of the respondents, providing clear and honest reports for both donors, and stakeholders is critical to ensuring financial transparency.

It was recommended that these reports would be well prepared and shared with target groups as well, for them to get informed on CSOs finance. However, the assessment revealed that it is something that has never happened and beneficiaries are not aware that they are rightful to ask for such information.

4.4.3. Level of transparency, its applicability and tools used for its promotion within CSOs

Table 6 shows the responses to the questions on the perceptions on what would be the level of transparency, the level of applying transparency principles and the tools used. The data indicates that most of the respondents believe that the CSOs operations in Rwanda are relatively transparent. Over 65% of the respondents ranked CSOs' operations to be either high or very high. However, some people might be worried about the remaining 34% who ranked transparency as moderate. This would be a concern to ensure that CSOs in Rwanda operated in a maximum level of transparency.

To complement the question on the perceived level of transparency, the study asked respondents to rank the level of applicability of transparency principles. Table 6 shows again that nearly 65% of the respondents think that the principles are applied at a high or very high level. As it was read for the level of transparency, more than 35% of the respondents observed that the principles of transparency are not applied.

Table 6: Perceived level of transparency and applicability of its principles and tools within CSOs in Rwanda

Tools used	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Very high (%)	Total (n)
Perceptions on the Level of transparency and applicability					
Levels of transparency	0	34.3	36.8	28.9	114
Levels of applicability of transparency principles	10.6	26.3	48.2	14.9	114
Tools towards transparency					
i) Human resource management policy	1	3.8	43.3	51.9	104
ii) Administrative and financial procedure manual	0.9	8.4	44.9	45.8	107
iii) Annuals audits reports	1	7.3	43.8	47.9	96
iv) Conflict of Interest Laws	1.2	11.1	34.6	53.1	81
v) Contracts with suppliers	1.1	5.7	40.2	52.9	87
vi) Certified Financial Statements	1.2	5.9	36.5	56.5	85
vii) Minutes of organs' Meetings	1.1	5.6	41.6	52.8	100
viii) Contracts and MoUs with donors	1.1	2.2	44.4	52.2	90
ix) Anti-corruption policy	1.1	2.2	32.6	64	89
x) Procurement Policy	1.1	2.2	40.7	56	91
xi) Code of Ethics	1	1	43.9	54.1	98

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

Table 6, further, presents the data on the tools used to institute transparency principles within CSOs in Rwanda. Generally, the data shows that the availability of official documents justifying what is done and what is not are critical to establishing the principles of transparency within CSOs.

The documents are (i) Human resource management policy, (ii) Administrative and financial procedure manual, (iii) Annuals audits reports, (iv) Conflict of Interest Laws, (v) Contracts with suppliers, (vi) Certified Financial Statements, (vii) Minutes of organs' Meetings, (viii) Contracts and MoUs with donors, (ix) Anti-corruption policy, (x) Procurement Policy, and (xi) Code of Ethics.

4.4.5. Mechanisms used by the CSO to ensure transparency to the state

The set of basic mechanisms that are mainly recommended to CSOs to ensure transparency to the Government were used to assess this aspect. According to answers that were collected, 92% of respondents declared using annual action plan and budget sharing, 90% using an annual report sharing jointly with participation to JADF meetings and 79% are sharing annual financial reports.

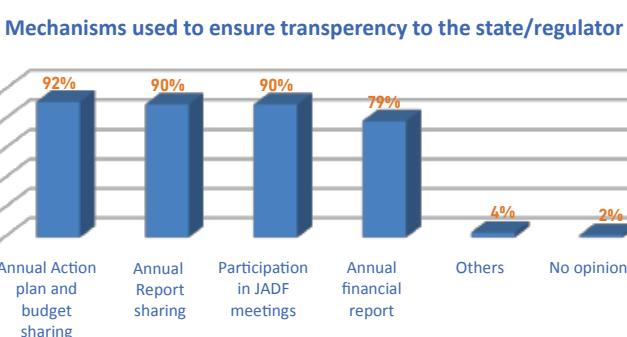


Figure 7: Mechanisms used by survey CSOs to ensure transparency to the government

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

Figure 7 shows that CSOs rely on reporting for transparency mechanisms to donors. Along with ensuring transparency to the government, surveyed CSOs seem to adhere well to the most recommended indicators to ensure transparency to the donor. In this regard, 94% of respondents declared to share with donors the annual financial audits, 91% are sharing the project action plan and 89% are sharing the project reports.

Mechanisms used to ensure transparency to the donor



Figure 8: Mechanisms used by survey CSOs to ensure transparency to the donor

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

4.4.6. Mechanisms used by CSOs to ensure transparency to stakeholders

Based on our findings, most of our interviewees represented CSOs that are complying with transparency principles to staff and members. Indeed, 96% of respondents recognize that their CSO is conducting general assembly meetings, i.e this is another indicator that our CSOs are led by the highest respected body, the general assembly. Moreover, 95% of respondents pointed out that their CSOs is holding board meetings, 95% staff meetings and 77% are organizing participatory planning meetings. The least recognized activity was "organized retreats with staff" with the frequency of 39%.

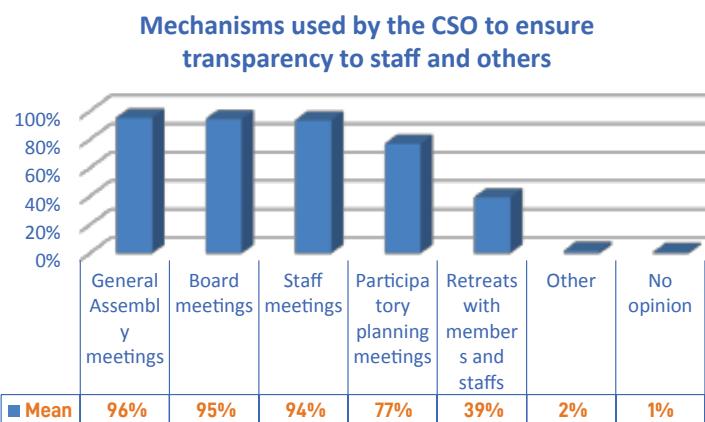


Figure 9: Mechanisms used by survey CSOs to ensure transparency to staff and members

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

However, views from respondents and those from KIIs and FGDs on the level of transparency are different. CSOs beneficiaries' who participated in this assessment complain that they are not informed on the budget or funding received by CSO on their behalf. They are not effectively consulted when they develop project proposals. Some of them say that they are not even in the position of asking questions about CSOs finances. The minimum of information they receive from CSO is only about specific activities shared with a specific group of beneficiaries.

The data is an indication that CSOs value transparency towards the donors and the state, which is quite normal since it is rather an obligation of the law. However, the mechanisms to building transparency towards the constituency and the within the organization were quite nonexistent or unreported.

Two things can be emerged from this data. Firstly, the CSOs were not aware that transparency within the organization was valued and important for the organizations sustainability and, therefore, it was not worthy reporting. Secondly, it may be that little was directly done towards ensuring transparency towards the staff and the constituency.

These hypotheses were explored through the qualitative data. One of the respondents who had served as an Executive Secretary for nearly a decade then said, "Transparency is shown through quality reporting. Therefore, the addressee of the report is the one to appreciate our level of transparency".

As a follow up question to that, the study asked if they publish the results of a job interview or a procurement report, the response was "yes. We do publish both the recruitment reports and the procurement reports but of course the interested parties are the only ones to read the reports". Asked if some of the organizations may not twist the results for the benefits of whatever they like, the response was "yes. It happens; but this is not reported. It remains roomers"

Several of the respondents' comments on this question did not refute the hypotheses initially posed. This was an indication that the "within transparency" and the transparency towards the community was actually subject to improvement to ensure the CSOs sustainability.

4.4.7 Major transparency challenges and the proposed strategies to strengthening CSOs

Table 7 shows the major challenges associated to achieving adequate level of transparency among CSOs in Rwanda. In addition to indicating challenges associated to transparency, respondents were requested to provide their suggestions on how to strengthen the CSOs through an improved level of transparency.

Among the indicated challenges, Table 7 highlights the emerging four that are (i) Insufficient involvement of staff in decision making for the organization, (ii) Insufficient information sharing mechanism within the organization, (iii) Little involvement of constituency in decision-making, (iv) Weak Internal organizational management.

Table 7: Transparency challenges and the proposed strategies to strengthening SCOs

Challenges	Proposed strategy
Insufficient involvement of staff in decision making for the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Adopt collegial mode of operations ii. Consult staff within the organization before making significant decision that affect the organization iii. Constitute senior management teams and make it operational in a transparent manner iv. Organize meetings where board members can discuss with staff on regular basis
Insufficient information sharing mechanism within the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Install information sharing plan or an internal communication strategy for the organization ii. Use newspapers whenever possible to share information to the public iii. Adopt posters, boards and pigeons to share information iv. Effective use social websites, online platforms and social media
Little involvement of constituency in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Define the organizational constituency and rely on it for planning and building the institutional leadership ii. Establish feedback or complaint mechanisms through which members and target groups can raise their satisfaction or concerns iii. Report to the constituency as much as to the donors and the state iv. Involve the constituency in planning and decision making process
Weak Internal organizational management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review and implement the internal management policies and laws respecting roles and responsibilities ii. Ensure the right people are in the right positions iii. Practice the internal control mechanisms utilizing the appropriate tools iv. Mentoring and coaching in organizational management for LTA

The study selected three most emerging solutions that the respondents suggested for each of the challenges to transparency were selected.

For the first challenges to transparency which was the insufficiency of staff involvement in decision making for the organization, it was suggested that organizations need to adopt collegial mode of operations. That is involving everybody in a collegial discussions and solution seeking. It emerged that staff need to be consulted before making significant decision that affect the organization. Also, it was suggested that involving the constituency and the board in the planning and reporting process would strengthen the level of transparency for the organizations.

The second challenge was related to the insufficient information sharing mechanism within the organizations. To this, respondents mostly suggested the instauration of information sharing plan for the organization, use the newspapers whenever it is possible to share information to the public and install posters boards and pigeons to share information.

Thirdly, Table 7 shows that transparency within organizations is constrained by the little involvement of constituency in decision making. To this challenges, the data immensely suggested that organizations need to define and collaborate more closely with their constituency and rely on it for building the institutional leadership. Also, it was suggested to report to the constituency as much as the organizations do to the donors and the state, and involve the constituency in decision making process.

Lastly, it emerged that organizations fail to strengthen its level of transparency due to the Weak Internal organizational management. To this challenge, it was suggested that organizations review and implement the internal management policies respecting roles and responsibilities, practice the internal control mechanisms utilizing the existing tools and install mentoring and coaching mechanisms in organizational management for LTA.

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

4.5. Accountability in CSOs in Rwanda

4.5.1. Definition of accountability, measurements and the perceived levels within CSOs

Table 7 shows the attempted definitions of the concept of "accountability". Respondents were given four options to indicate whatever applies to their definition of accountability. According to the data, accountability means more of the report on one's responsibility, the definition chosen by 91% of the informants. Equally important, respondents indicated that accountability could mean, "*Being open and transparent on what you do (86%), and being answerable when asked about your responsibilities (85%)*".

A relatively small percentage (65%) selected "*liability/debt to stakeholders*" as one of the definitions of accountability. One can translate the small percentage as an indication of the little importance that CSOs give to their stakeholders in the design and ME&L processes of interventions as earlier discussed.

Further, Table 7 shows the data on how CSOs measure the level of accountability, the tools used for accountability purposes and the perceived level of accountability among the CSOs in Rwanda.

Firstly, respondents were asked to describe how accountability is measured within their organizations and the following are the answers: level of openness and information sharing 89%, the accuracy of data and information revealed 85%, level of accessibility to information 82%, level of interaction with the public 73%. As earlier observed for the definition of accountability, measuring accountability towards the beneficiaries is selected by a relatively small number of the informants.

Secondly, informants were requested to indicate the tools they use to ensure their organizations keep the accountability levels. To the regulator/state, Table 7 indicates that the CSOs use the annual narrative and financial reports (94%), annual plans and budget (93%), compliance to JADF requirements (92%) and financial statements declaration (78%). To donors, 96% of the respondents selected project reports, 91% project action plan and budget sharing, 87% annual financial audit reports and 84% annual audit reports.

To constituency and target groups, 80% of the respondents declared that their organizations are accountable to the constituency and target groups by sharing of action plans and budgets, 80% by sharing of baseline reports jointly with sharing of activity and financial reports, 69% by sharing of audit reports.

To the staff and other members of the organization, 95% said that their CSOs are accountable by conducting regular General Assembly meetings, 93% by conducting regular Staff meetings, 90% by regular board meetings, 75% by regular meetings of other organs and the least selected one is 38% corresponding to retreats with members and staffs.

Table 8: Meaning of accountability, its measurements and the perceived levels within CSOs in Rwanda

Variables	Categories	Frequency	% (n= 114)	
The concept "Accountability"	Reporting on one's responsibilities	104	91.2	Annual financial audit report 99 87%
	Being open and transparent on what you do	98	86.0	Annual audit reports 96 84%
	Being answerable when asked about your responsibilities	97	85.1	To constituency and target groups
	Liability/debt to stakeholders	75	65.8	Sharing of action plans and budgets 103 90%
Measurement of "accountability"	Level of openness and information sharing	102	89.5	Sharing of baseline reports 91 80%
	Level of accessibility to information	93	81.6	Sharing of activity and financial reports 91 80%
	Accuracy of data and information revealed	97	85.1	Sharing of audit reports 79 69%
	Level of interaction with public domain	83	72.8	Within the organization
Tools of accountability	To the regulator			Regular General Assembly meetings 108 95%
	Annual narrative and financial reports	107	94%	Regular Staff meetings 106 93%
	Annual plans and budget	106	93%	Regular Board meetings 103 90%
	Compliance to JADF requirements	105	92%	Regular meetings of other organs 86 75%
	Financial statements declaration	89	78%	Retreats with members and staffs 43 38%
	To Donors			Levels of Accountability
	Project reports	109	96%	Very high 50 43.9
	Project action plan and budget sharing	104	91%	High 49 43.0
				Moderate 15 13.2

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

Thirdly, respondents were asked their perceptions of the level of accountability among CSOs in Rwanda. Table 7 shows that nearly, 87% perceived the level of accountability as high and very high (43% and 44%). It is also shown that 13% perceived the level of accountability as moderate.

Through the interviews and the deliberative meeting, respondents reflected on the definition of the concept "Accountability". One of the informants, a woman who has been a board member for nearly one decade, said:

Accountability is having the ability to explain to whoever is interested in what you do, how you do it and why you do it. It is about making the right decisions based on the existing instruments. An accountable organization should generate accurate reports, both financial and human resource management.

Accountability goes beyond institutional reporting and touches the individual ability to hold firmly their responsibilities. This idea emerged from different discussions while trying to define what the concept of "accountability mean".

The measurements of "Accountability" were also discussed during the qualitative interviews. It emerged that the tools for measuring accountability are rather soft than print documents. It is manifested through the organizational capacity to hold its employees responsible of what they do and the institutional readiness to respond to what it does. Reports may come to complement what is already experienced in the interactions of the organization with its stakeholders.

4.5.2. Accountability to different stakeholders

As per CSOs regulating rules, they are required to be accountable to different stakeholders. That said, the assessment of this aspect helped us to come up with the following results: 97% of respondents declared that their respective organizations are accountable to donors, 90% to members, 79% to districts, 78% to board members, 75% to beneficiaries and RGB and 69% to the team of staff. These figures are illustrated in Figure 10 below.

In addition, it was asked how often respective CSOs are accountable to specified stakeholders. A high rate of "always" was observed for these accountable donors with a percentage of 65.8%. In regards to RGB, 34.1% said always, 64.7% often and 1.2% sometimes. With districts, 35.6% said always, 61.1% often and 3.3% sometimes. In regards to members, 55.1% said always and 44.9% said often. More on this is illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Accountability of CSOs to different stakeholders



Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

The data presented in Figure 10 did not differ very much with the data generated through interviews. It emerged that organizations ensure that the accountability is relatively high towards the donors' requirements. This is because the organizations need to keep good relationship with the donors to stabilize their source of funds. The other stakeholders such as the state and the stakeholders are also important because they just the reason of being for the organizations.

4.5.3. Balancing accountability to the state, donors, members and target groups

While being accountable to different stakeholders, CSOs may have priorities to balance their accountability. As such, one may feel much more concerned with the requirements of one stakeholder vis-à-vis the other one. Donors' requirements were classified "first" by 49% of respondents, target group's requirements by 23%, regulator (state)'s requirements by 22% and member's requirements by 3.5% of respondents.

Table 9: Balancing priorities of accountability to different stakeholders

Priorities	No.	%
Considering donors' requirements first	56	49.1
Considering targets' requirements first	26	22.8
Considering regulators' requirements first	25	21.9
Considering members' requirements first	4	3.5
Others	2	1.8
No opinion	1	0.9
Total	114	100

Source: Survey data analysis, August, 2021

During the FGDs conducted with CSOs' beneficiaries in districts, a participant unanimously said that

We do not get any information about CSOs finances and how it utilized on our benefits. We simply see CSOs field staff coming and supporting us on particular projects. We do not know CSOs leaders. We usually work with projects staff, like agronomists and facilitators, so that we can affirm if what we get is exactly what was planned for us.

One among donors who responded to our interviews said that

Local Civil Society organizations have made good progress in terms of being legitimate, transparent and accountable. However, they are more transparent and accountable to donors and governments, because if they fail to do so, they lose funding and working certificate. Most of them are constrained by these binding laws, funding requirements and compliance mechanisms in place. They have to improve transparency and accountability mechanisms internally (board, staff and members), with peers and mainly with the constituency, target beneficiaries and community members, they are meant to serve.

4.5.4. Major challenges affecting accountability among civil society organizations in Rwanda

The study requested the respondents to indicate what they consider as the major challenges of accountability among CSOs in Rwanda. Generally, the informants indicated two major challenges that affect the level of accountability: governance practices and financial management.

Firstly, it emerged from the qualitative data that the governance and management practices in some of the CSOs do not abide by the rules and regulations as they should be. Some leaders make decisions based on what they think is appropriate regardless of whether it is fair, just and documented in the rules and regulations or not.

More on this, KIIs revealed that the lack of clear separation of power, where the Board of Directors are not active and live the full power to the Legal representative to dictate and interfere in the daily management is a big challenge to accountability. On the other hand, when the Executive team particularly the Executive Secretaries or CSOs coordinators have overpowered other organs by exercising autocratic leadership, the accountability will be undermined.

Secondly, it emerged from the data that the finances for some CSOs are not managed and accounted for as the documents indicate. More surprisingly, one among the KIIs from the donor community said that "*when we conduct the due diligence assessment before funding, most of CSOs have the required management policies and tools that are well designed.*

But, when we conduct financial monitoring or external audits, most of the time we face mismanagement cases, where financial reports lack valid supporting documents" It was also said that some organizations fail to establish trust among staff and information related to the finance or important decisions are not always shared equitably.

However, one among the CSOs Executive Leaders, who participated in the deliberative forum indicated that accountability doesn't mean lack of privacy or secrecy. He clarified that information sharing has some boundaries where every people may have different or specific information depending on their category.

Thirdly, it also emerged from KIIs with donors and government respondents that CSOs are not properly accountable to the constituency, target groups and local communities they are meant to serve. Leaders of organizations endeavour to strengthening accountability towards their donors as a way of keeping good image and keep their funding opportunities. However, when it comes to accountability towards the members of their constituency, efforts towards building accountability are limited to service delivery. Little information is shared on the finances and source of funds.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations about the findings of the study. This chapter also gives highlights of the researcher's suggestions of areas for future studies that would contribute to fully understand the status of LTA within CSOs in Rwanda, and efforts to apply the driving principles of LTA.

5.2. Summary of the study

The study aimed at critically assessing the current status of LTA in CSOs in Rwanda in terms of understanding, measuring, applying LTA principles, and exploring weaknesses, gaps and challenges that CSOs face while applying the principles, and use the results to develop a Civil Society strengthening model that suits the Rwandan context. The study was commissioned by Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe with financial support from CARE International Rwanda.

Therefore, for the survey, the focus was given to CSOs that have a mandate of addressing the issues of gender equality and women empowerment, as well as those intervening in agriculture, rural development, social justice, disability and human rights.

To complement the data and build a national perspective, top officials at the national and international CSOs, central and local government officials and the national coverage faith-based organizations were interviewed as well. To collect the perceptions of CSOs' beneficiaries' on the work of their work, beneficiaries in different corners of the country were contacted.

Seven research objectives guided the study:

- i. *To describe how csos in rwanda defines the concepts and principles of legitimacy, transparency and accountability;*
- ii. *To explore the current status and efforts to achieve legitimacy, transparency and accountability among the selected csos in rwanda;*
- iii. *To describe the process to achieving lta, and identify the required documentation;*
- iv. *To review how the csos balance the requirements of the state, the donors and the members of the constituency;*
- v. *To describe the weaknesses and challenges that the csos face while applying the principles of lta;*
- vi. *To identify the impact of lta principles on cs performance and sustainability; and*
- vii. *To develop potential strategies to strengthening csos to implement lta principles and addressing challenges and gaps related to their sustainability.*

The study used an exploratory study design with a participatory consultative approach of data collection, involving selected leaders of the selected CSOs. The leaders include executive staff as well as board members. Also, the study collected data through mixed qualitative and quantitative surveys within 38 purposefully selected CSOs and aimed to have at least 4 people in each organization to fill the questionnaire including 2 individuals working in the executive wing of the organization, and 2 people members of the board.

As earlier described, 114 filled questions were collected from all 38 organizations, and 42 interviews were conducted including 7 FGDs and 35 KIIs and collected data through a deliberative forum organized by Pro-Femmes Twese-Hamwe.

The analysis of data shows that the findings came from a diversified sample of both female and male individuals working for the CSOs or members of the Board /Directors of different ages; the majority were between the ages of 30 to 60. Most of them were educated up to the bachelor's and Master's degrees (more than 100/114), and the majority were over 10 years of experience within CSOs. A quick observation of the profiles of the respondents for the mixed quantitative and qualitative surveys gave confidence that the responses were sufficiently grounded in the right educational background, experience and represent gender diversity.

The findings indicate that the concepts of legitimacy, transparency and accountability are defined as enablers of CSO sustainability. Legitimacy was particularly defined as compliance with the legal requirements for an organization to exist, having a clear mandate and activities that respond to the needs of the beneficiaries and being accepted by the key stakeholders. Similarly, transparency was better defined using the Kinyarwanda word "*gukorera mu mucyo*".

The word implies several factors that are

- i. Honest sharing of information related to the organization's operations,
- ii. Provision of accurate information on the organization's activities,
- iii. The organization's governance, and
- iv. Availability of the information related to decisions and finances.

Finally, the concept of accountability was defined as the ability to consistently explain the rationale of the decisions made, for both the individuals, working for the CSO or the organization itself.

The indicators of accountability were defined as a leadership that is open to sharing information and ready to explain what it does, why it does it, and how it pursues its mandate. It emerged from the qualitative findings that CSOs in Rwanda emphasize on legal and donor requirements of LTA with a lower focus of the LTA measured through the needs of the beneficiaries, employees of the organization, and peer organization. The existing literature indicated this imbalance between the State, the donors and the constituency as a critical challenge to achieving an adequate of CSOs LTA and the sustainability thereof.

Generally, the findings indicated that CSOs in Rwanda are inherently at a good level of LTA. Good progress has been made. This is because organizations are required to register and get authorization from a competent government entity. This can be at the district level where CSO operates, a district which can issue a temporary authorization, or at the national level at the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB).

Through the authorization process, organizations identify the problem to solve, define their mandate and mission, present their notarized statutes and action plans which are analyzed and approved before the authorization is issued. Also, organizations commit to providing the required reports to different entities and platforms.

Nearly all the organizations working at the district level are also members of the District "Joint Action Development Forum" (JADF), a platform for the development partners at the district to discuss their joint actions for development. In brief, the process of requesting and accessing the legal requirements, and the consistent reporting to various institutions help CSOs to achieve a certain level of LTA especially at the side of the State and the donors.

Further, the findings indicated that the achievements in implementing LTA principles are a real process that starts with the development of the idea that drove the formulation of the mandate of the organization.

This early stage of the organization determines whether the organization is solving a legitimate problem. Openness or transparency is needed at this elementary stage because it gives opportunity to potential stakeholders to contribute to the definition of the mandate, and gives confidence to the founders. The application and acquisition of the legal documents come as an accomplishment of one side achievement of LTA. Once the legal aspect of LTA is secured, CSOs need to continuously build their levels of LTA internally in the building of the institutions and recruitment of staff, and externally in building good and principled relationships with the government, donors, potential stakeholders and the members of their constituency.

The findings indicated that some CSOs have achieved a certain level of LTA through a continuous auto-evaluation, and much effort to adapt the mission, strategic planning, structure, management, governance and leadership of the organization to the social, cultural, environmental, economic and political dynamics. Further, the findings indicated that there are some other CSOs that failed to build trust towards their constituency or does not even have a well-defined, and active constituency, and this has jeopardized its level of achieving a satisfactory level of LTA to some extent.

The documents that organizations need to have as some of the indicators of LTA include

- i. Legal documents authorizing the organizations to implement its activities ;
- ii. Internal policies which facilitate the organizations such as ethical documents, gender policy, conflict management document, procurement, hr policies, etc.
- iii. Strategic plan or project/program planning documents,
- iv. List of founders, indicating those contributing to the organization's cause, and beneficiaries,
- v. Financial reports, audit reports among others.

These documents and many others must be filed at the organization's office and be available for consultation when needed. These documents need to be consistently reviewed to adapt to the dynamics of change as earlier discussed. The leadership, mainly the board of directors of the organization must always cross-check and ensure that these documents are still valid and are properly serving the organization for the common goal. The enforcement mechanisms must be monitored and strengthened.

Furthermore, the findings indicated how the CSOs in Rwanda balance the requirements of the State, the Donors and the members of the constituency in the process of implementing the principles of LTA. It emerged from the findings that most of the CSOs in Rwanda emphasize requirements by the State to keep their authorization valid. Equally important, the organizations focus on the donor requirements to ensure that the relationships with the funders are well maintained so that the funding is not suspended.

However, when it comes to the needs of the beneficiaries and building relations with the peer organizations or the umbrellas, organizations mostly select what benefits them based on the appreciation of their leaders. The existing literature indicated this imbalance between the State, the donors, the peers and the constituency a critical challenge to achieving an adequate level of LTA. Speaking on the challenges of applying the principles of LTA, the findings indicated several of them though at different levels depending on whether an organization is an umbrella, or single, as well as its experience.

Firstly, the major challenge is related to how the organization started. Some organizations do not have a well-defined constituency or their constituency has been inactive and, therefore, did not respond to its responsibilities towards the cause of the organization. This has compromised any efforts for the organization to report back to its constituency since it was inactive or nonexistent.

The second challenge was the limited human resource capacity related to less staffing, the challenge which is very close to limited financial capacity. Some organizations have opted to employ the essential staff in the areas of service provision and project implementation. Staff who would focus on fundraising, proposal writing and on reporting and building trust of the organization towards the public were not the first choice for many organizations due to insufficient funding.

Also, some organizations did not recruit policy expert staff partly because of high inadequate capacity to pay them or a high staff turnover rate. This has compromised the organization fundraising capacity, the level, the timely, and the accuracy of reporting and the level of building good trust with the constituency, the peer organization and the general public to some extent.

The resultant unbalanced governance has compromised the organizations capacity to grow and flourish. Also, the limited fundraising capacity has made that most of the CSOs easily accept influence from the few donors they have to maintain their funding source that led to some deviations on CSOs mandate and defined strategic orientations.

Equally important, the findings indicated the low levels of CSOs to integrate the principles of LTA at all levels in its day to day activities as enablers of building organizational sustainability. While the donors and the state were given some importance, the engagement with the beneficiaries in the design of the interventions has been not clear while they remain key partners during the implementation process.

This affects negatively the level of beneficiaries' engagement, participation, empowerment and their ownership as well as the level of CSOs legitimacy, transparency and accountability among the beneficiaries. Resultantly, the constituency has gone inactive as a response to their poor engagement in the organizations' activities, and this has affected the level of LTA for most of the organizations to a great extent.

Further, the findings identified the challenges associated with the implementation of the policies, rules and regulations related to staffing. Some organizations have recruited staff based on nepotism or prior relationships. Also, some organizations have failed to replace their leadership, mainly the Legal Representatives as per the regulations. The study had evidence that some board members have been in positions for a longer time than the regulations' guidelines. Inadequate implementation of regulations has compromised the organization capacity to accommodate new ideas and skills which would contribute to the building of the organization sustainability through the implementation of LTA principles.

Furthermore, the study identified the challenges associated with the briefcase organizations. These are the organizations that do not have a clear physical address or has changed their physical address now and then. These organizations have not submitted timely and accurately the required reports to either JADF, at the district level, or RGB at the national level, or to any umbrella organization. Some of them do not attend JADF meetings at the district level and are not members of an umbrella organization.

This practice has potentially affected the overall level of CSOs' LTA in Rwanda because the existing mechanisms of accountability days, peer learning and support through meetings at the umbrella level and at the district level through JADF have not benefited them.

5.3. Limitations of the study

The study faced limitations of three types. First, the research team had to change the strategies for data collection more than once to conform to measures related to the Covid-19 pandemic without compromising the quality of data. The study was started when the new cases of infections were on the lower side. However, the second wave of the pandemic rose instantly, and it affected the process and the duration of the study.

This had an implication on the initial budget of the study and created time constraints. Also, the third wave of the pandemic rose during the final stages of data collection which aimed to engage the key stakeholders. The second limitation of the study was the number of the missed informants and unreturned questionnaires.

While the study was aimed to collect data from at least 40 organizations and to have at least 4 people filling the questionnaire in each organization, the research team only accessed 38 organizations and had only 114 returned questionnaires, after several days of waiting and pushing. To schedule interviews, the research team relied very much on the support from Pro-Femmes Twese-Hamwe as many potential informants were constrained by working from home "new model of working" and therefore had missed free time to respond to the research questions.

Fortunately, the limitations that this study faced as they were described did not significantly affect the quality of data due to the strategies the team adopted to mitigate their effects. For instance, to address the limited opportunities to conduct face to face interviews, the research had to resort to online interviewing and FGDs were organized online as well. Equally important, to minimize the effects of unreach organizations and individuals whom the study were expecting to fill the questionnaire, the reachable organizations were diversified to ensure that as many CSOs types as possible are represented. Similar efforts were made for the individuals who filled the questionnaires.

Another potential limitation to having a national perspective of LTA within CSOs in Rwanda could have been the focus of the study on the organizations that are supported by Pro-femmes Twese-Hamwe and those whose interventions are in the areas of social justice and human rights. However, this was quickly addressed through interviewing top officials at the national and international CSOs, representatives of academics and researchers in the areas of CSOs, central and local government officials and the national coverage of faith-based organizations.

Therefore, there is significant confidence that the drawn conclusions from the results are sufficiently grounded in the data and provide a general perspective of the implementation of LTA among CSOs in Rwanda.

5.4. Conclusions

The study concludes that the CSOs in Rwanda generally define the concepts of legitimacy, transparency and accountability based on legal requirements and focuses on the demands and requirements of the State and the Donors. Some organizations do not have an active constituency that regularly submits financial contribution to the cause of the organization, or had never had one.

Therefore, the efforts to achieve a satisfactory level of LTA focus more on what the State and the donors require than on what the constituency, beneficiaries demand or target groups demand. Except for the umbrella organizations or national platforms such as trade unions, labor associations and very few single NGOs serving for common interests, a worrisome number of CSOs do not have a well-defined constituency. The beneficiaries and target groups constantly change according to the nature and the funding of the project. This has compromised the level of LTA and the pursuit of sustainability for most of the CSOs in Rwanda because they failed to stand firm to their mandate.

Generally, the study commends the current level of LTA among the CSOs in Rwanda. However, most of the organizations achieved the level because they were constrained by the regulations and the donors' requirements.

The current status of LTA has allowed the organizations to contribute significantly to the development achievements of Rwanda in the recent past. Would the organizations have pursued the levels of LTA by principles and balanced the levels LTA towards their constituencies and the general public, their contributions to the current national development achievements would have been more.

The study has evidence that some of the organizations have enjoyed legitimacy, at the State and Donor level with little acknowledgement by the people. This is the case with most briefcase organizations. Such organizations will also try to ensure transparency to the State and the Donors and will be accountable to them as well. In this situation, the LTA principles are not respected and the CSOs trust, reputation, performance, voice, influence and sustainability are undermined.

Further, the study concludes that CSOs in the Rwandan context face several challenges in the efforts to ascertaining the implementation of LTA principles. The emerging challenges are associated with the lack of diversified sources of funding, and this is related to the status of the strategic governance, visionary and proactive leadership, contextual analysis and strategic planning, fundraising capacity and staffing. These factors affect the level of efforts to implementing the principles of LTA within the CSOs in the Rwandan context.

Lastly, the study acknowledges and commends the great achievements realized by CSOs in Rwanda during the rebirth and building of the society after it was teared by the Genocide against the Tutsi in 1994. The context explains some of the legal measures the regulator has established, and this has played a tremendous role in the building of legal and normative legitimacy for CSOs in Rwanda. Also, the current level of transparency and accountability owe a lot to the legal framework established by the regulators, both at the local and central level.

Now that the country has stabilized and the national development plans heading to sustainable development principles, it is high time for the CSOs in Rwanda to consider adopting strategies to implementing the principles of legitimacy, transparency and accountability. As earlier discussed several times, the implementation of LTA principles is paramount in the pursuit of CSOs mandate.

It consolidates their base at community level, implementing transformative and impactful actions, conducting effective policy advocacy for more inclusive and sustainable development.

Furthermore, the study concludes that there is need for CSOs in Rwanda to conduct comprehensive organizational capacity assessment (OCA) to inform their potential capacity strengthening strategic approach. The approach would inform efforts and new mechanisms to strengthening CSOs.

Also, it would inform the implementation of LTA principles, addressing challenges and gaps related to their sustainability. The OCA would consider key sustainable governance strategies that are "*governance, leadership and management practices, human resources, financial resources, mission competence, service delivery, internal and external relations, risk management, policy advocacy and road map to sustainability*". More discussion on the CSOs strengthening approach is explored in a separate document.

5.5. Recommendations

Basing on findings, applying the principles of legitimacy, transparency and accountability have positive impacts on the suitability of Civil Society Organizations. The findings indicated evidence that the leadership of CSOs is aware of the benefits of applying the principles of LTA and have made efforts to abide by them.

However, it emerged that some organizations have not managed to balance well the level of LTA applicability among the key stakeholders namely the stakeholders, the donors, and the members of the constituency.

The following recommendations are devised to guide CSOs and partners in the efforts of improving the levels of LTA and aim for strengthened sustainability.

5.5.1. To Civil Society Organizations

1. The Board of Directors, Executive secretariat, and members of the general assembly should observe internal policies, laws and work in symbiosis to build the CSOs capacity and implement the principles of LTA. The study indicated that disaggregated efforts among the three key partners in the CSOs governance undermine sustainability. There exist a good number of policies, laws internal regulations adopted by the organizations; but many of them are not properly followed.

This has undermined the organizations' efforts to build strong governance and management systems with a clear power separation, clear and applicable replacement plan in a democratic way within the positions. The disrespect of the internal laws and policies, poor complementary, loss of compassion and voluntarism have undermined the potentials to accommodate new constructive ideas, within the organizations. The synergy can be a result of the goodwill from both the Board of directors and the executive secretariat to building sustainable organizations based on implementing existing laws and the LTA principles.

2. Defining and building strong relationships with their constituency: Some CSOs have their constituency inactive or not clearly defined. Since most of CSOs are donor-driven, their constituency varies depending on donors' priorities. Thus, defining and building strong relationships with the constituency would amend the related weaknesses and adjust the organization focus and responsiveness.

This implies engaging the members of the constituency in the design and implementation of the CSO interventions as well as in the decision-making process. This recommendation would be implemented by the Board of directors in collaboration with the executive team, devising strategic orientations.

3. Adopt a people-centred approach: CSOs should be grounded within their constituency. Projects and activities must be centered around that constituency needs and priorities. The leadership of CSOs should be delegated by the constituency for it to be fully legitimate. Therefore, the leadership should be held accountable and transparent to that constituency. Grounding any CSO within people, the members of the constituency is a strategic way of building strong alliance and lead to CSO sustainability.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of umbrella organizations to get their member organizations to define their constituency and consistently report on how they have been collaborating. It is also the responsibility of the Board of directors for the single organizations, which are not members of any organization to ensure that their constituency is well defined, active and engaged within the organization activities.

4. Regular organizational and operational capacity assessment and capacity building: Each CSO should conduct an Organizational Capacity Assessment on regular basis, and have a clear roadmap to amend the capacity weaknesses whenever identified. This recommendation should be of the executive secretariat and guided by the Board members.

5. Diversifying the source of funding: The assessment revealed that many CSOs rely on donor funding with restrictive requirements. CSOs mobilize funds by responding to the requests for proposals released by different donors. Despite much time and efforts invested in the process, very few CSOs win such competitive funds. The situation would lead to thinking that the same CSOs are only eligible.

The assessment recommends that CSOs should revisit and strengthen their internal technical capacities in project design, and proposal writing and check their level of compliance to requirements.

CSOs should create ventures with other CSOs and research institutions to develop joint proposals to maximize chances. More importantly, the assessment recommends that CSOs would agree with the saying that "when you need money, you invest money".

CSOs leaders are recommended to invest more time and resources in fundraising and resource mobilization strategies, where the Board of Directors will play a key role rather than leaving this strategic activity to the executive team. Board members should use their influence and positions as Chair Persons and Legal representatives to meet potential donors, charities, foundations and other funders to mobilize them on the cause of their CSOs.

5.5.2. To Rwanda Civil Society Platform and Umbrellas of CSOs

Once an organization decides to be a member of an umbrella of CSOs, it commits to mutual support to achieving sustainability. Therefore, the study recommends the umbrellas of CSOs to do the following in that regard:

1. Enhance representation, coordination and advocacy mechanisms to member organizations. The assessment identified poor representation, coordination and mechanisms of the RCSP and Umbrellas to their member organizations. The issue becomes more challenging and disappointing when it comes to funding mobilization, where umbrellas and their members meet on the same donors competing on the same funding.

CSOs complain that the support from their umbrellas in solving their internal issues is very limited. The challenges are the lack of funds, high staff turnover, and limited human resource capacity. On the other hand, umbrellas complain that members are not active in paying the membership dues, attending umbrellas' activities among others.

The assessment recommends that the RCSP and umbrellas should conduct member satisfaction surveys and collect CSOs views on how every party accomplish its responsibilities. It also recommends that the RCSP and umbrellas should jointly conduct advocacy initiatives to the government to increase funding to CSO and to donors to apply localization principles effectively.

2. Develop a harmonized transparency and accountability mechanism that clearly defines the principles, core values, standards and accepted practices meant to promote the implementation of LTA principles in all CSOs. The assessment recommends that the mechanism should be initiated to the Platform and umbrellas but will later be disseminated to other CSOs not belonging to umbrellas for reference.
3. Develop a checklist of the requirements for the implementation of LTA principles and have the checklist approved by the members.
4. Initiate a comprehensive code of conduct and ethics for CSOs. Many CSOs have internally developed and signed the code of conduct and ethics. In this particular context, the assessment recommends that a harmonized code of conduct and ethics for CSOs operating in Rwanda should be developed and signed by the RCSP and Umbrellas organizations or other formal networks, as a set of standards that can guide the behaviours and practices of leaders, and staff to strengthen the implementation of LTA principles.
5. Conduct regular CSOs auto evaluation and provide regular sessions of mentoring, coaching and technical assistance to members about governance, leadership and management and the implementation of LTA principles.
6. Support the member organizations in the conduct of the organizational capacity assessment and in capacity building as suggested through the OCA.

5.5.3. To Donors and development partners

1. Support the conduct of a comprehensive capacity assessment among the organizations and the development of strategic capacity development within CSOs. The assessment recommends that capacity assessment should go beyond the partnership selection process or the due diligence assessment, to become more comprehensive and holistic. The funding should include the capacity building components on agreed areas to improve and strengthen the implementation of LTA principles.
2. Offer mentoring, coaching and tailored technical assistance to the local organizations to implement the principles of LTA.
3. Support the establishment of peer coaching among the organizations to ensure collegial development of organizations and thus the sustainability of civil society efforts in Rwanda.
4. Encourage CSOs to conduct consistent reflections on the implementation of LTA principles in the organizational everyday activities in governance, management practices, human resource and financial management, external relations and the pursuit of sustainability.

5.5.4. To the constituency

1. The members of the constituency of CSOs in Rwanda need to reflect on the sustainability of the organizations they established and devise strategic measures to hold the executive secretariat accountable for the implementation of the principles of LTA.
2. The constituency should consider the voluntary service they wished to offer for the common cause in the pursuit of general interest and renovate their passion and presence in the organizational activities to be able to ensure LTA principles are

implemented and the organization is led towards sustainability.

3. The constituency should pay the pledged fees to the organization to support the common efforts they have voluntarily joined. This can increase the potentials for the organization's funding and the pursuit of the core mandate of the organization.

5.5.5. Government, the regulator

1. Strengthen an open and fair partnership that values and recognizes the work and contribution of the CSOs in the political, social, and economic development of the country.

The assessment recommends that the government should continue improving the legal and regulatory framework that facilitates CSOs to operate in a freely, trusted, coordinated and conducive environment.

In the return, such a fair partnership and conducive environment will lead CSOs to become more compliant to LTA principles and later leading to transformative, impactful and sustainable actions.

2. The government should allocate a portion of funding in its annual budget to support the implementation of CSOs programs and capacity building initiatives. The assessment recommends that without compromising CSOs freedom, dependency and non-partisan values, the Government, through RGB, other government agencies and their partners should establish mechanisms allowing the small and medium organizations to access and make use of their funding.
3. The assessment recommends the creation of the public-private sector and civil society partnerships where government and private sector could sign agreements with CSOs such as the umbrellas in the implementation of projects and programs of commons interests.

APPENDICES:

Annex 1: List of Institutions from which the mixed qualitative/
quantitative survey was conducted



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Annex 2: List of individuals who participated in the KIIs and their
affiliations



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Annex 3: Interview guide for key informants



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Annex 4: Themes discussed during Focus Group Discussions



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Annex 5: List of Experts who attended the Deliberative Forum and the
Agenda



Annex 5__.docx

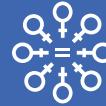
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Annex 6: Questionnaire on CSOs LTA



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