



Study On Role of Journalism in Socioeconomic Development of Nyagatare (Rwanda)

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Abstract

Journalism means a practice of investigating, collecting, verifying, preparing, or editing for dissemination of information, commentary, opinion or analysis, including but not limited to news or current affairs.

In this paper, we are going to investigate how journalism can play a role in socioeconomic development of Nyagatare town. The media industry is an important sector for any region, mostly because of its significant contribution to socioeconomic development. The regional 'media industry' is known more as a socio-cultural change agent than a 'business enterprise'. The present paper takes a look at the history and growth of broadcasting media in Nyagatare town (in the Eastern Province of Rwanda), and reviews its contributions and operational issues, as an independent industry.

Keywords: Journalism, Socioeconomic Development, Community Transformation, Rwanda

1.0 Introduction

Journalism has been a key participant in government development in social and economic along with many other forms of news that would be unattainable to the general public. Access to this information allows opinions to be formed on various public matters that, in turn, create social change. If this outlet is corrupt in any way, public opinion can be subconsciously changed to inflict harm to certain groups, or create changes in favour of certain groups. In more recent times, media has altered into various forms, becoming accessible through video, online streaming, radio, and print. Print being the longest existing form of mass media, and the type of news source I interned with for a month, will be the focus of this report as I present the roles of media within Rwanda, and my experiences.

2.0 Literature Review

The role of journalism in the socioeconomic development of Nyagatare town, based on various planning through the Government of Rwanda (GoR) formulated the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) by merging the previous 7 Year Government Programme (7YGP) and Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS). NST1 is a medium-term strategic plan at the national level and goes hand in hand with the

development of the District Development Strategy (DDS), which serves as a medium-term strategic development framework at the district level. Previously, DDS were also known as District Development Plans (DDP). Nyagatare DDS is aligned with the priorities and outcomes of NST1 by giving utmost importance to the three pillars of NST1 namely, Economic transformation, Social transformation and Transformational governance. The Nyagatare DDS development has involved various factors such as: Central and Local Government, in particular the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance (MINICOFIN), Eastern Province and Nyagatare District, for the elaboration of a proper District Strategy. The joint collaboration also involves civil society, including local and international non-governmental organizations such as the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGIRwanda), Rwanda Governance Board, among others, the Private Sector, the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) and the local community.

The Nyagatare DDS is envisaged as a bridge connecting the national visions of 2020 and 2050 and achievements at the district level, which are crucial to realize the national visions, for overall socioeconomic development and poverty reduction in the District and country at large, and making Rwanda achieve high-income status by 2050.

The DDS is primarily a strategic document that considers aspects of participatory planning, and efficient coordination by leveraging the strengths of key district stakeholders through partnerships, identifying district priorities, and their implementation and enhancing district administration and management to increase economic opportunities, reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of Nyagatare Districts residents.

The DDS stressed the all-round development of the District by leaving no one behind with an emphasis on increasing agriculture and livestock-based incomes and productivity, job creation by tapping the potential of agro-processing, cross-border trade, minerals, mines and tourism industry, promotion of green urbanization to make Nyagatare city as a pole of economic growth through provision of basic infrastructure services and environment protection at the core of districts development.

In this DDS, the role of Nyagatare city as one of the chosen secondary cities among the six secondary cities in the country was highlighted for not just positioning Nyagatare city as a secondary city but also positioning Nyagatare city as a 'green growth model' to the emerging district centers and other urban centers in the Eastern Province to prevent and avoid the socioeconomic inequalities among the local community through efficient and effective usage of the district resources thereby promote holistic district development which is often characterized by peace, social inclusion, sustainable or green economic development and environment conservation. The DDS also aims to contribute towards the nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Nyagatare district vision is to be a "Leading Center for Granite and Agro-processing Industry". This district vision implicates the positioning of Nyagatare district as a "Commercial Hub of East and the Dairy Centre". And its medium-term goals are to:

(1) Maximize and increase production and productivity of agriculture and livestock by modernizing agriculture and livestock in a way that takes into consideration climate change

- (2) Transform agriculture and livestock production to boost exports and the country's self-sufficiency
- (3) Promote Mining Industry, tourism, trade and expand formal business enterprises
- (4) Improve and accelerate urbanization and rural settlement by promoting basic infrastructure development and investments for green urbanization and economic development, as well as efficient public transport and green mobility
- (5) Protect and preserve the environment by adopting, implementing and promoting environmentally resilient actions, activities and projects with reference to green alternatives, including green innovative technologies
- (6) Improve and strengthen the quality of life of all local communities in all aspects, such as education, sustainable management of water resources and sanitation, access to clean and efficient energy, health, justice, good governance and security.

This strategy was developed not only to respond to the country's main priorities listed in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) but also to come up with tangible and coherent solutions to the District's main challenges, which are the following:

- (1) Shortage of water for the population, especially in Matimba, Musheru, Rwimiyaga, Karangazi and Rwempasha Sectors
- (2) Prolonged draught in 5 Sectors: Karangazi, Rwimiyaga, Matimba, Musheru and Rwempasha
- (3) Lower modernization, production and productivity of agriculture and livestock
- (4) Environmental degradation and deterioration due to climate change and other natural and human effects
- (5) Lower percentage of people with electricity and water
- (6) Poor condition of road network
- (7) Lack of Partners in infrastructure development
- (8) Lower urbanization rate with the lower trade and tourism development
- (9) Insufficient Health facilities where one District Hospital is serving 465,855 population and education facilities
- (10) Problem of illegal drugs from neighbouring Countries.
- (11) Insufficient offices, staff and infrastructure for various public institutions (cells, sectors and District)
- (12) Insufficient culture and sports facilities.

Furthermore, in order to overcome all district challenges, the following priorities were set and cost according to the NST1 pillars: The sub-total of the Economic Transformation pillar is 234,095,800,000 Rwfs, and its identified priorities are: Create 1.5m (over 214,000 annually) decent green and productive jobs for economic development, Accelerate Sustainable Urbanization from 17.3% (2013/14) to 35% by 2024, Promote Industrialization and attain a Structural Shift in the export base to High-value goods and services with the aim of growing exports by 17% annually, Increase Domestic Savings and position Rwanda as a hub for financial services to promote investments, Sustainable management of natural resources and environment to transition Rwanda towards a carbon neutral economy, Modernize and increase productivity of agriculture and livestock.

The subtotal of the Social Transformation pillar is 94,723,050,000 Rwfs, and its identified priorities are: Enhancing graduation from extreme Poverty and promoting resilience,

Eradicating Malnutrition, Enhancing demographic dividend through ensuring access to quality health for all, Enhancing demographic dividend through ensuring access to quality education and Moving towards a Modern Rwandan Household.

The subtotal of the Transformational Governance pillar is 3,882,000,000 Rwfs, and its identified priorities are to reinforce Rwandan culture and values as a foundation for peace and unity, Ensure the Safety and Security of citizens and property, Strengthen diplomatic and international cooperation to accelerate Rwanda and Africa's development, Strengthen Justice, Law and Order, Strengthen Capacity, Service delivery and Accountability of public institutions and Increase citizens' participation, engagement and partnerships in development.

The total cost of priorities of all pillars of the Nyagatare District Strategy is 332,700,850,000 Rwfs for implementing the district-identified priorities for the next six years, and the above budget will come from public funds and district development partners and stakeholders.

3.0 Methodology

The following methodology is used for DDS preparation and elaboration. The guidelines provided by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) served as the background for this exercise. Based on the guidelines, the elaboration of DDSs has been undertaken concurrently with the elaboration of sector strategic plans, thematic strategies, NST1 and Vision 2050. To ensure proper elaboration of DDS, the following methodology was used:

- Desk Review
- Consultation meetings with district officials and stakeholders
- District Data collection

4. Data Collection

4.1 Desk Review

The desk review aims at gathering district information and sector priorities to ensure alignment and proper linkages between central government-planned activities and those of the District. This part includes the reviewing of the following documents (books, reports, statistical surveys, etc...) for the secondary data collection: the previous district development plans (DDP), assessment report, district local economic strategies, action plans, district performance contracts (IMIHIGO), vision 2020, EDPRS 2, EICV 3 & 4, Imihigo achievement reports, DHS (3,4 & 5), vision 2050, the speech of PM, National Leadership Retreat (NLR), Rwanda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, Sector Strategic Plans (SSPs), GoR and GGGI National roadmap for green city development, Green Growth Climate and Resilience Strategy (GGCRS).

The following cross-cutting sectors were also considered for mainstreaming in DDS as they play a key role in the sustainable and inclusive development of the District and the country

1. Capacity Development
2. Regional integration
3. Gender and Family promotion
4. Environment and climate change

5. Integrated Water Resource
6. Disaster management
7. Disability and social inclusion
8. HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases

4.2 Primary Data Collection

Through consultation meetings reported by Local Journalism, the data was collected. Stakeholders play a key role in the development of each Rwandan District; for that reason, their consultation in planning activities for the next six years is of high importance as not only most of them are partners, but they are also the beneficiaries of the planned district projects.

The consultation meetings as part of the Primary data collection of DDS elaboration, played a major role in the identification of the district priorities that are not only aligned to the NST1 but are also aligned to the basic needs of the district citizens and key district stakeholders. In the consultation meetings, citizens, national and international NGOs and district staff, including the district Executive Committee were consulted for their contribution to this DDS elaboration.

Other important stakeholders consulted also include members of JADF (Joint Action Development Forum) and the local population from Umudugudu to Sectors.

4.3 District Data Collection

Data is key for DDS elaboration as it helps in knowing the District's development status regarding different thematic areas or clusters (economic, social and governance). Using the collected secondary data from both reviewed books and reports and also obtained through the organized consultation meetings, the following data were gathered:

- District profile;
- District potentialities;
- District achievements;
- District baselines and targets.

The above methodologies were done with reference to the following DDS elaboration principles provided by the MINECOFIN:

- Complete unfinished business from Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) and Vision 2020
- Adopt and scale up homegrown solutions based on Rwandan culture, values and the country's unique developmental context
- Develop the Private sector as the engine/driver of economic growth • Ensure Sustainability for long-lasting results
- Ensure Inclusiveness for all to benefit and no one to be left behind
- Lay the foundation for a quality standard of living for future generations

5.0 Analysis

5.1 District Economic Transformation

The Nyagatare District's priorities for the next six years are linked to scale-up finished business to achieve long-term growth, complete unfinished projects planned in the previous DDP (2013-2018) and identify new priorities for the overall development of the District.

The DDS development was guided by the NST1 economic transformation pillars and priorities. In Nyagatare DDS, there are specific interventions identified during the district consultation meeting organized by the District with its stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries. In the following paragraphs, the main interventions are enumerated and explained.

5.2 In Agriculture Development

The following projects are the major district priorities for the next six years, they include: the strengthening of agriculture mechanization, modern irrigation, land consolidation, usage and enhancement of organic and inorganic fertilizers by farmers, usage and enhancement of improved seeds, enhancement of crops production especially exports crops like vegetables, crops, fruits, coffee, flowers, create and strengthening farmers cooperatives through capacity building, trainings, workshops, the enhancement and strengthening of both agri-business and agri-processing, the crops diseases prevention through knowledgeable and equipped agronomists, and post-harvest production improvement. These are the main projects that will be implemented in the agriculture sector, and they will also contribute to the various national policies aimed at promoting the Made in Rwanda program.

5.3 Livestock Development

In this domain, the following are the main interventions: the increase of livestock development such as numbers of modern cows, increase in the quantity of milk and meat, improvement of animals' species from the local ones to the exotic specific productive species through insemination, high leather quality production, the construction of a modern slaughter, the transformation of milk collection centers (MCCs) into the business centres, promote animals' vaccination, increase the number of district veterinary hospitals and pharmacies.

5.4 Mining Development

In the whole country, this sector shows the largest percentage increase (22% per year). In the District, mineral deposits (wolfram, coltan, and cassiterite) and quarries (granites, sands and clay) are available for mining development. For the next years, this sector will contribute more to the district development and to the whole country in general by the usage of modern mining technologies that prevent the loss of mining production and then contribute to the add value of the minerals, increase the number of the skilled labour, environmental protection by the mining sites protection.

5.5 Water Access

The Eastern province had the largest increase in the use of potable water sources by 14% points to 81% between 2010-11 and 2013-14 compared to all other provinces (EICV4). In Nyagatare district, the use of potable water sources is at 72.5%. According to the SDGs target of achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030. Rwanda is making a huge effort on this sector, where by 2018; the country's access to the drinking water will be 100% (By 17/18). In water sector development, the following

major 42 | Page projects will be implemented in the next years: increase of water supply by constructing or upgrading water treatment plants and expanding water supply network.

5.6 Infrastructure Development

In Nyagatare District, its sustainable economic development depends deeply on both the basic and general infrastructure development such as water, energy, roads (tarmac and feeder) and internet accessibility. The Rwanda Urbanization Development Project initiated by the Ministry of Infrastructure in the six secondary cities with the support of the World Bank, it will help to increase the basic infrastructure such as tarmac roads and drainages in Nyagatare District. The project was designed to strengthen urban management for the delivery of basic services and to promote local economic development.

5.7 Urbanization

Nyagatare District, as one of the six secondary cities, is benefiting to the national urbanization policy. The updated district master plan under development will lead to the development of Nyagatare city. The following projects will also contribute to the urbanization sector like the eco-industrial park, district stadium and markets, car parks, the local airport in the construction process, an increase of real estate, the development of IDP Model villages and affordable housing projects, waste management, renewable energy development, open and green spaces development such as recreational parks, plot servicing, increasing of water supply and electrification systems taking into account the off-grid and grid systems.

5.8 Trade

Nyagatare District is among the Rwandan Districts that have a proximity to the South-East part of Uganda. This gives the District an opportunity to develop a cross-border trade. Recently, the cross-border market and post were respectively constructed at Kagitumba and Rwempasha–Kizinga localities.

5.9 Tourism Development

The tourism sector at the country level is increasing at high speed. From the national policies regarding the tourism sector, the District will be facing a quick development of the sector, such as the construction of a modern and high-ranked hotel (City Blue EPIC hotel) and the Akagera park development through the increasing of the biodiversity by importing and integrating the exotic animal species into the park.

5.10 Environment Protection

Due to the climate change issues and the environmental degradation in the world, there is a need for environmental protection in Nyagatare.

4.0. Stakeholders analysis:

The District plays a fundamental role in the projects planned centrally and the ones planned by the District.

The district stakeholders play a key role in development and project implementation and the role of the private sector and their engagement and contribution to socioeconomic development is very crucial as the private sector is considered as an engine for economic growth for the whole country⁴.

It gives all stakeholders or partners, such as national or international, a huge opportunity to participate or contribute to the national development progress.

In Nyagatare District, this is not an exception; there are many key stakeholders or partners that are involved in different district projects for district development. The partners are mainly categorized into government institutions, civil society, religious faith-based organizations and the private sector. Under the first category of government institutions, there are ministries and ministerial agencies. Under the second category, civil society organizations include Non-government organizations (NGOs) and associations. Under the third category fall all religious faith organizations bodies. Lastly, the fourth category of partners, the private sector includes banks, insurance companies, hotels, transport companies, and private individuals in different businesses and cooperatives. All these stakeholders are very active and are contributing to the development of the District. The below table, indicates the list of stakeholders under their specific interventions in the District.

6.0 Discussion

To realise the main district issues referring to economic, social and governance sectors, let us review the main challenges under each of the following socioeconomic variables:

6.1 The Main Challenges for the Economic Transformation, as seen through local journalism perspective are:

- a. Shortage of water for the population, especially in Matimba, Museri, Rwimiyaga, Karangazi and Rwempasha Sectors;
 - b. Prolonged draught in five Sectors: Karangazi, Rwimiyaga, Matimba, Museri and Rwempasha
 - c. Lower modernization, production and productivity of agriculture and livestock
 - d. Environmental degradation and deterioration due to climate change and other natural and human effects
 - e. Lack of Partners in infrastructure development
6. Lower urbanization rate with the lower trade and tourism development

6.2 The Main Challenges for the Social Transformation, as seen through local journalism perspective are:

- a. Lower percentage of people with electricity and water
- b. Poor condition of the road network
- c. Insufficient Health facilities where one District Hospital is serving 465,855 population and education facilities

6.3 The Main Challenges for the Governance Transformation, as seen through local journalism perspective are:

- a. Problem of illegal drugs from neighbouring Countries.
- b. Insufficient offices, staff and infrastructure for various public institutions (cells, sectors and District)
- c. Insufficient culture and sports facilities.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the Law n°08/2006 of 24/02/2006 determining the organization and functioning of the District, the main mission of the District is as follows:

- To implement Government policies adopted;
- To deliver and assist Sectors in delivering good quality services
- To elaborate, coordinate and implement development programs
- To promote solidarity and cooperation with other Districts
- Mobilize resources, and promote investment in the District
- Ensure proper management of public assets, and promote ICT

In addition to the above general mission, the Local Journalism Chancels like Community Radio of Nyagatare, Flash FM Nyagatare, Muhaziyacu and Imvaho nshya, shown that Nyagatare District is dedicated (over the DDS period from 2018 to 2024) to supporting agriculture transformation, granite production and eco-tourism development by green and sustainable urbanization through improved infrastructure development that positively impacts job creation and the life of district residents.

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