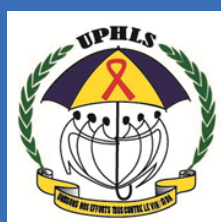
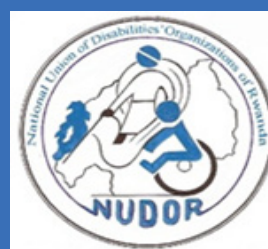
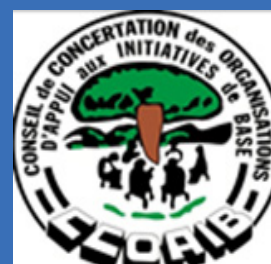




ANNUAL REPORT

January - December 2023



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FOREWORD



It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Annual Report by the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP), capturing the period from January to December 2023.

As the apex coordinating body, RCSP continued over this period to engage with its various stakeholders internally (with member umbrella organizations and individual CSOs in some cases) and externally with the Government of Rwanda, international NGOs, Development Partners, the media and a wide array of actors with whom we work on a regular basis.

The Governing Board throughout this period played its primary roles of providing oversight, creating nurturing relations for RCSP and providing guidance to the executive team led by the Executive Secretary. I want to express my

sincere gratitude to the members of the Board for their altruistic contributions.

I also would like to congratulate our technical and executive team at the RCSP for their embodiment of the core values of volunteerism and excellence in service, going the extra-mile on each and every task tirelessly. Thank you and may the achievements of the past twelve months and those of the years prior provide you and us all the courage to scale higher, knowing that it is indeed possible.

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform as the premier body in the country's civil society sector has been an influencing voice in national policy, ensuring that the needs and aspirations of Rwandans are voiced and advocated for to duty bearers.

Not only have we raised issues to the Government, they have on several occasions approached us; engaging us to ensure that in key decisions, all stakeholders and voices are accounted for and have contributions to the outcomes. We are similarly grateful for the Government's continued investment in the strengthening of Rwanda's civil society sector; ever improving the regulatory environment, allocating capacity building resources and partnering with us and our member organizations to deliver services to the people. While this remains a long journey, we are convinced of the Government's willingness to work with us in making the requisite strides.

Our gratitude also goes to colleagues in International NGOs and Development Partners who have been reliable partners in the past year. With our internal and external stakeholders, I am happy to note that despite the challenges faced, RCSP has moved forward, is stronger and we are more resolved in our commitment to making significant contributions in improving the quality of life for Rwandans, Africans and our collective global human family.

Dr. JOSEPH NKURUNZIZA RYARASA
Chairperson and Spokesperson
Rwanda Civil Society Platform

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The period under review is January - December 2023 and in introducing what we have achieved, I will focus on our work at the Rwanda Civil Society Platform, and the partners with which we delivered on various outcomes in alignment to our Strategic Plan 2019/2023 during the same period under review.

Inside the report, there will be details on the strategic axes of the strategic plan and what was accomplished during the preceding year. Allow me to point out some activities which I believe will form the ground for our continued work during the New Year: capacity strengthening of CSOs, development of e-ihuriro and advocacy efforts. As usual, RCSP has continued the work of capacity strengthening of its members. Among others, the training session on research and advocacy benefited CSOs within our network.

Kabeza Angelique, Executive Secretary of RCSP.

A wide range of advocacy interventions marked this period under review, including a national learning and reflection event on issues that affect in and out of schools adolescents. The CSO Week and exhibition also illustrated the importance of partnership and coordination.

These and many others you will read in this report were our continued investment in strengthened coordination to better deliver on our mandate to advocate for and contribute to achieving the socioeconomic and development aspirations of Rwandans. Seeing the impact made by CSOs contribution fuels our resolve to continue investing in civil society capacity so that as Rwanda gears towards Vision 2050, civil society will continue to play its role in transforming people's minds and safeguarding lives, to build a formidable and sustainable Rwandan community.

The contributions of the communities with which we and our umbrella organizations work was also central to all achievements. In addition, we have been honored by the collaboration and partnership with various international organizations and development partners with whom we worked.

In celebrating the achievements of this semester, we celebrate each and every one, individuals and entities, who selflessly played their part in making these possible.

Angelique Kabeza
Executive Secretary
Rwanda Civil Society Platform

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB:	African Development Bank
AJPRODHO:	The Youth for Human Rights Promotion and Development
AMIR:	Association of Micro Finance Institutions
AMI:	Association Modeste et Innocent
ARCT:	Rwanda Organisation of Trauma Counselors.
BFP:	Budget Framework Paper
C4C:	Charter for Change
CCOAIB:	Council of Collaboration Organizations for Basic Initiative Support
CDJP:	Commission Diocesaine de Justice et Paix
CLADHO:	Collective of Leagues and Associations for the Defense of Human Rights in Rwanda
CoK:	City of Kigali
CRD:	Citizen Rights Development
CS:	Civil Society
CSO:	Civil Society Organization
CUI:	Coalition Umwana ku Isonga
CWDs:	Children with Disabilities
DDS:	District Development Strategy
DEA:	District Executive Administrator
DG:	Director General
DPs:	Development Partners
EAs:	Environmental Audits
EIA:	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPO:	Empowering People Organisation
ERP:	Economic Recovery Plan
FBO:	Faith Based Organisations
FCDO:	Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
FSW:	Female Sex Workers
FVA:	Faith Victory Association
GBS:	Gender Budget Statement
GLIHD:	Great Lakes Initiatives for Human Rights and Development
GMO:	Gender Monitoring Office
GoR:	Government of Rwanda
HDI:	Health Development Initiatives
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IA:	Irish Aid
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
IDA:	Integrated Development Association
IMRO:	Ihorere MunyaRwanda Organization
INGO:	International Non- Governmental Organisation
IT:	Information Technology
ITM:	International Training and Motivation.
LTA:	Legitimacy Transparency and Accountability
M&E:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL:	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MINAGRI:	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINICT:	Ministry of ICT and Innovation
MINICOM:	Ministry of Commerce and Trade

MINIJUST:	Ministry of Justice
MIGEPROF:	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINALOC:	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN:	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MININFRA:	Ministry of Infrastructure
NGOs:	Non-Government Organizations
NINGO:	Network of International Non-Government
Organization	
NST:	National Strategy for Transformation
NUDOR:	National Union of Disabilities' Organisations of Rwanda
NCDA:	National Children Development Agency
NCHR:	National Commission for Human Rights
NPA:	Norwegian People's Aid
NWC:	National Women Council
QIP:	Quick Impact Project
RBC:	Rwanda Biomedical Centre
RCCDN:	Rwanda Climate Change Development Network
RGB:	Rwanda Governance Board
REMA:	Rwanda Environment Management Authority
RENGOF:	Rwanda Environmental Non-Government Organizations Forum
REFAC:	Rwanda Education for All Coalition
RRA:	Rwanda Revenue Authority
RRP+:	Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV
RURA:	Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency
RWN:	Rwanda Women's Network
RWF:	Rwandan Francs
PEs:	Peers Educators
PLHIV:	People Living with HIV
RCSP:	Rwanda Civil Society Platform
RODI:	Rwanda Organisation for Development Initiative
RWAMREC:	Rwanda Men Resource Centre
PWDs:	People with Disabilities
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV:	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
TIR-RW:	Transparency International Rwanda
ToT:	Training of Trainers
UPHLS:	Umbrella of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities I the Fight
against HIV&AIDS and for	Health Promotion
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
WASHNET:	Water Sanitation and Hygiene Network

1. INTRODUCTION

RCSP is a platform of Rwandan civil society organizations created in 2004. Currently RCSP has 12 umbrella organisations as members which, in turn, bring together several constituent member organizations. Rwanda Civil Society Platform serves to bolster contribution to national development through coordinated, proactive, dynamic and sustainable engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and review.

In addition, RCSP contributes to the well-being of the population by providing a forum for dialogue, context analysis, and information exchange among CSOs and the various stakeholders of the civil society sector in a manner that builds mutual respect and strengthens their voice to conduct efficient evidence-based advocacy. Its mission is to serve as a framework for consultation, solidarity and reflection and capacity building of members; to be a voice of the people and to defend public interest at the national, regional and international levels.

The year in review completed the last year of implementation of RCSP's Strategic Plan 2019/2023, which was developed through a broad consultative process to ensure that this timeframe makes significant inputs into the building of a strong foundation for Rwanda's civil society.

This report is structured along the three strategic axes of the new Strategic Plan and shares the progress garnered in each of these areas, all of which are key to delivering the expected outcome of this plan. These pillars are:

1. Capacity Strengthening
2. Advocacy and policy Influence
3. Coordination, Representation and Partnership.

1.1.Vision and Mission

RCSP envisions a society where all people can peacefully enjoy and claim their human development rights.

RCSP's mission is to represent its members in the processes of facilitating citizen's participation in sustainable development efforts through constructive dialogue, debate and advocacy at the national and the international levels.

1.2.Values

Volunteerism, professionalism, integrity & transparency, collaboration / cooperation, respect for human rights.

2. KEY INTERVENTIONS

RCSP focuses its activities in 3 main strategic areas and these are capacity strengthening, Advocacy and Policy influence and then Coordination, representation, and partnership.

2.1. CAPACITY STRENGTHENING

This strategic area aims at strengthening RCSP's organizational and institutional capacity in terms of systems, processes and policies to enhance its governance and operations. Furthermore, it will lead to secure diversified funding opportunities and the retention of highly skilled and competent staff for the achievements of RCSP's vision and Mission. The objective further extends to strengthening and improving the capacity of its members

Objective 1: Strengthening RCSP and Members' capacity to effectively deliver their mandate.

Outcome 1: RCSP's internal organizational and institutional capacity is strengthened to effectively deliver on its mandate

2.1.2. Recruitment of new staff

During 2023, RCSP recruited new staff to facilitate the projects being implemented. Some of the staff were hired as full-time and while others are supporting the organisation on contractual basis.

The following positions were filled during the year namely:

Project coordinator, MEL specialist, 2 communications personnel, IT Intern and communication and outreach expert. Their expertise and experience has greatly contributed to the successful implementation of very important activities.



Candidates during written tests for some of the positions mentioned above.

2.1.3. Governance and Leadership Training

From 16th -18th October 2023, Trocaire in partnership with ITM Africa Ltd organized a 3-days' training on governance and leadership for executive leaders and board members of partner organizations. RCSP as partners of Trocaire also participated in this capacity strengthening activity.



Participants during the Governance and Leadership training

2.1.4. Irish Aid Programme meeting by Trocaire

Trocaire organized a 3 days Irish aid Programme meeting from 30th October -1st November 2023 at Sainte Famille Hotel. This meeting targeted its partners with the objectives to have a shared vision and standards desired to be reached in work on programme integration and women's empowerment integration, to have a common understanding on Irish Aid MEL framework and the process of data collection, & to support Irish Aid partners to make a planning ahead toward IA 2024.



Participants during group presentations in the IA programme meeting.

2.1.5. Inclusive programming by Trocaire

RCSP participated in a training under the title Inclusive programming organized by Trocaire in collaboration with NUDOR. During this training, participants understood more about disability and as well as why disability inclusive programming is essential. This event took place on 20th-21st November 2023 at Five to Five hotel.



Participants during group work session

2.1.6. Resource mobilization coaching and training

Two of RCSP staff participated in a resource mobilization coaching and training organized by Trocaire in collaboration with NUDOR. This took place from 22nd -24th November 2023 at Sainte Famille Hotel. The aim was to equip CSOs with the knowledge, skills and strategies necessary to effectively acquire, manage and sustain the resources needed to support their organization's mission and activities.



Participants during the resource mobilization training

2.1.7. Evaluation of RCSP strategic plan 2019-2023 and development of new strategic plan 2024

In the last quarter of 2023, an evaluation of the RCSP strategic plan 2019-2023 and development of new strategic plan 2024-2028 was conducted.

As far as the reviewing of RCSP strategic plan 2019-2023 is concerned, the following were identified as positive outcomes:

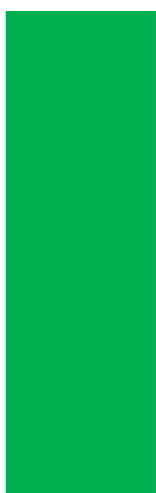
- Development of operational governance tools: Human resources manual, financial procedure manual and procurement policy among others.
- Recruitment of new staff.
- Capacity strengthening of member organizations and their affiliates on different themes: Research and evidence-based advocacy, Financial Management, Communication and Visibility, etc.
- Quarterly and annual coordination meetings have been organized with member organizations
- Organizing high-level meetings with decision-makers on policy issues backed by evidenced research and policy analysis

Despite the above mentioned achievements, challenges were also noted. These include:

- The established reporting template was not fitting to the CSOs context.
- The thematic working groups operated only one year of the strategic plan
- Covid-19 breakout affected the performance of the organizations in terms of resource mobilization and implementation of planned activities.

The development of a new strategic plan 2024-2028, built on achievements and was informed by challenges, lessons learned and recommendations from the implementation of strategic plan 2019-2023. This new strategic plan will focus on the following strategic areas: Capacity Strengthening; Coordination, representation and partnership; Advocacy and Policy Influence. The strategic plan includes a logical framework which consists of an implementation plan, strategic objectives, expected outcomes, outputs and indicators.

It also includes a monitoring and evaluation framework that is set to provide quality, timely and accurate evidence of progress towards the implementation of the strategic plan. The RCSP Secretariat will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the overall performance and achievements of results under the strategic plan and its related annual action plans. The mechanisms for M&E include the semi-annual review, annual assessment, mid-term review, and end line evaluation. The strategic plan suggests a reporting system that includes the weekly report- to monitor progress against targets and indicators, activity-based reports, monthly, quarterly and annual progress report



RCSP STRATEGIC PLAN (2024-2028)

Cover page for the PowerPoint presentation of the RCSP SP

2.1.8. Board meetings

RCSP conducts quarterly Board meetings. These meetings were held on 1st March 2023, 6th April 2023, 14th Sept 2023 and 3rd Nov 2023. These regular meetings are vital for identifying problems, plan for the future and make strategic decisions.

2.1.9. FCDO directorate visit

On 25th Oct 2023, RCSP had a meeting with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development office (FCDO) open societies Directorate & the Governance advisor at FCDO Rwanda Eric Mahoro. The discussion centered on understanding the CSOs work in Rwanda in terms of needs, context and how the funding stream can be adapted to ensure the intended goals are achieved.

Outcome 2 Strengthened capacity of RCSP members

2.1. Development of reporting tools.

RCSP developed reporting tools which include Capacity assessment tool, Data protection and a bi- annual template that was shared with member organisations.

RCSP conducted a comprehensive members' capacity assessment exercise. An orientation meeting held on 06th October 2023 provided a thorough review of the assessment tool and its

key components. The assessment aimed at (1) Supporting members in assessing their capacity in specific competencies, (2) Identifying specific organizational capacity strengths and areas of growth, and (3) Developing a capacity strengthening action plan to address areas of growth. RCSP having already completed a self-assessment was well versed to guide its members through the tool administration process. The key areas of capacity assessment were institutional, programming and financial.

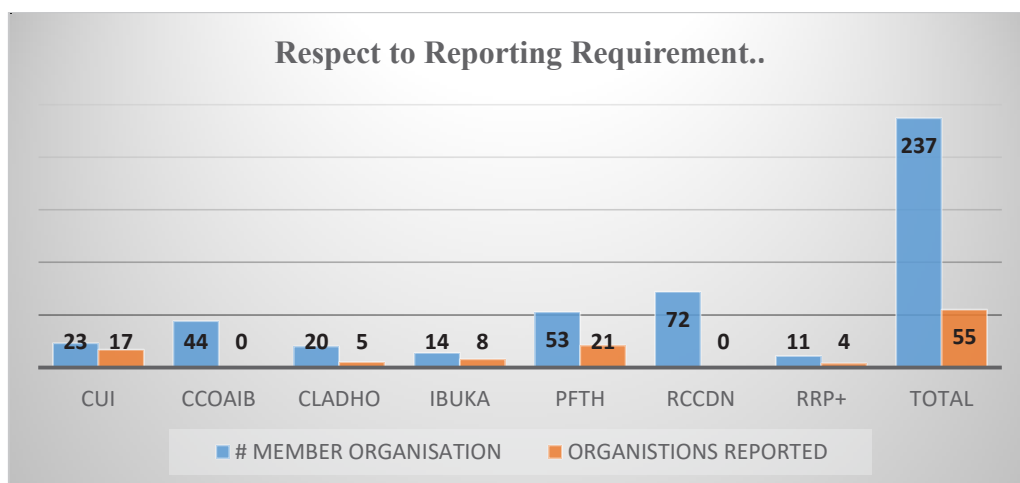
Personal data Protection by RCSP and its members

During a Co-creation of Feedback and Complaint Handling Mechanism workshop organized by Trōcaire on 18th August 2023, an informative session on the **personal data protection law N° 058/2021 of 13/10/2021 and related compliance requirements for local CSOs**. The primary goals of the law are; (1) Empower citizens with agency over their personal data; (2) Enable trusted and secure data flows, domestically and internationally, and (3) Accelerate Rwanda's ambitions towards a technology enabled and data-driven economy.

REPORTING STATUS OF RCSP MEMBERS ON VARIOUS TOOLS					
#	Organization Full name	Organization Acronym	Data Protection submission status	Feedback from NCSA	PCAS Report submission Status
1	Coalition Umwana kw'isonga	CUI	Yes	Application approved awaiting registration certificate	Yes
2	Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Defense des Droits de l'homme au Rwanda	CLADHO	Yes	Pending	No
3	Conseil de Concertation des Organisations d'Appui aux Initiatives de Base	CCOAIB	Yes	Application approved awaiting registration certificate	Yes
4	IBUKA	IBUKA	Pending	NA	Pending
5	National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda	NUDOR	Yes	Pending	No
6	Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe	PROFEMME	Yes	Pending	Yes
7	Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network	RCCDN	No	NA	Yes
8	Rwanda Education for All Coalition	REFAC	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
9	Rwanda Environmental NGO's Forum	RENGOF	No	NA	No
10	Rwanda Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS	RRP+	Yes	Application approved awaiting registration certificate	Yes
11	Rwanda NGO's Forum on AIDS and Health Promotion	RNGOF & HP	Yes	Pending	Yes
12	Rwanda Youth Organization Forum	RYOF	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable

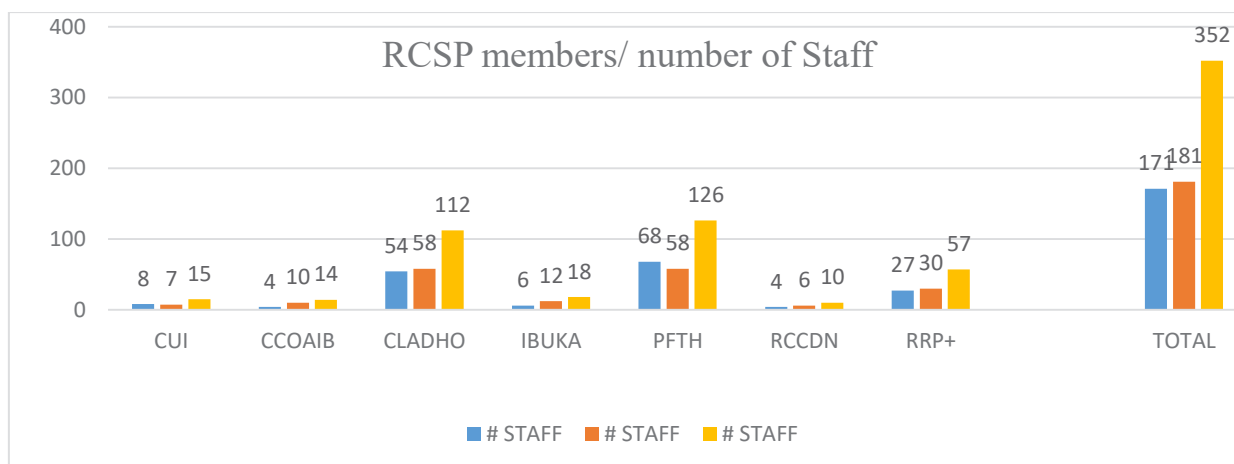
The **Bi- annual reporting template** captured all relevant information about umbrella and its affiliate member organisations which included number of affiliate members, number of staff, active members, and interventions being implemented among others.

RCSP developed and shared a reporting template to all member organisations for the period January to June 2023. This main purpose of this activity is to capture vital information about these organisations and then develop a data base for the platform. The data analysis and interpretation is for 7 out of 12 umbrella organisations of RCSP equivalent to only 58% is that were able to report. Information from this template is summarized below.



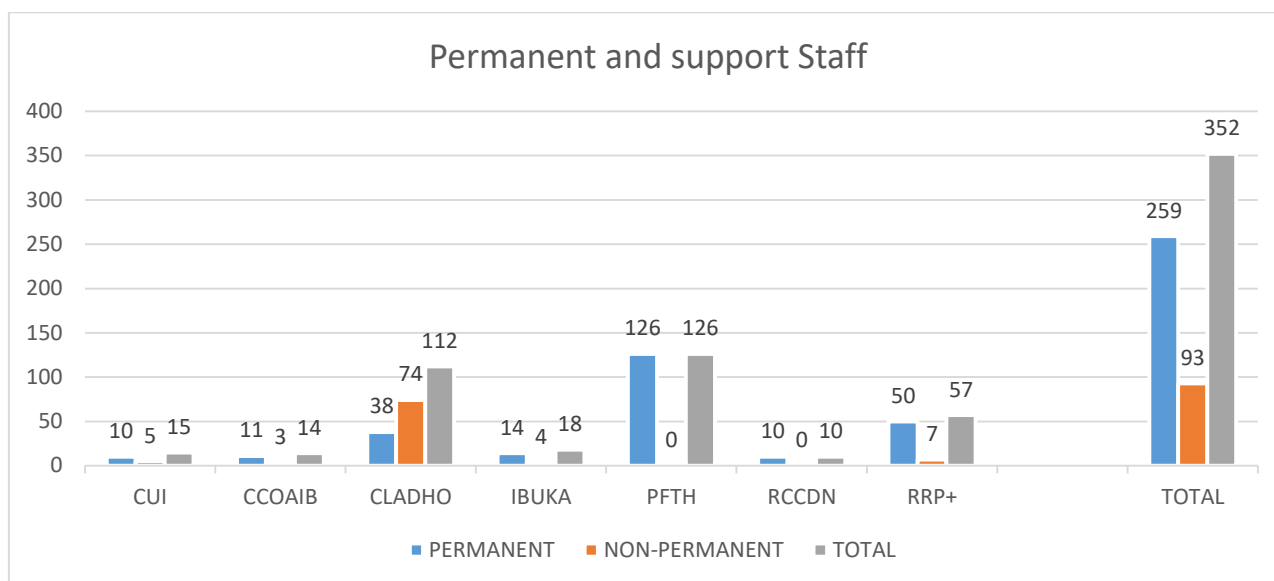
CUI is composed of 23 affiliate members of which 17 reported, CCOAB has 44 affiliate members, none of these members were able to participate in the reporting exercise in that period of time. Out of 20 members that belong to CLADHO as an umbrella organisation, only 5 of them reported. IBUKA consists of 14 members and only 8 of them reported, 21 out of 53 member organisations belonging to PFTH reported. RCCDN member organisation did not report during the period of January to June 2023. , RRP+ which consists of 11 member organisations received reports from only 4 of their members. Only 23% of affiliate organisations reported to the umbrella organisations. It is very obvious that the reporting of umbrella organisations and affiliate members is still a very big challenge.

RCSP Members number of staff.



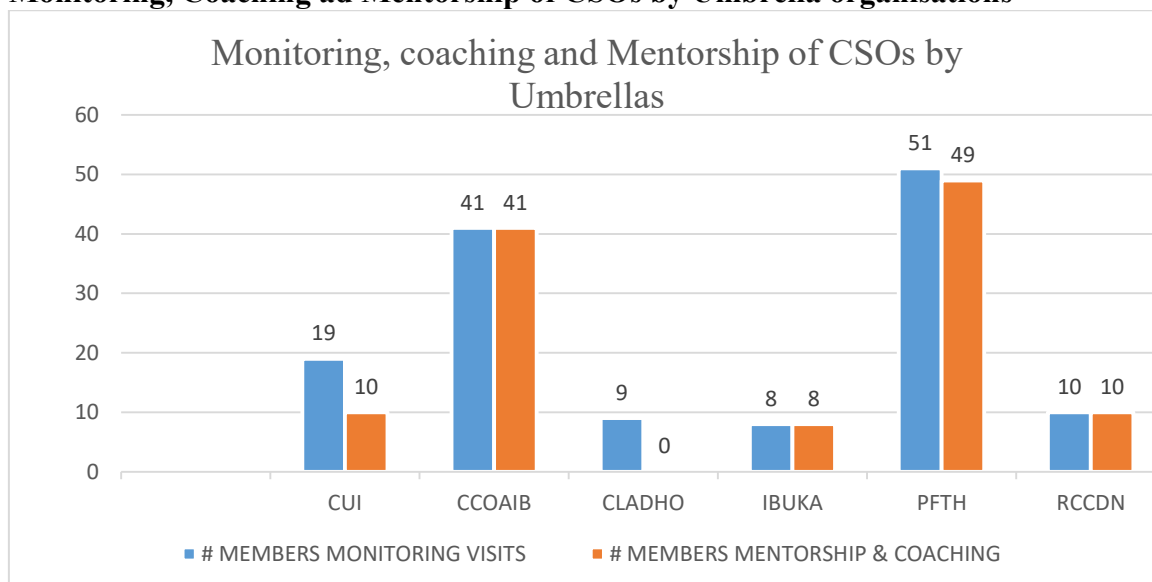
Out of 352 staff, 49% are female while 51% are male. However there is a very big gap in the number of staff that are persons with disability because out of 352 staff, only 2 are persons with disability.

Permanent and Non-Permanent Staff of Umbrella Members



According to raw data provided by the member organisation, permanent staff consist of organizational staff, management staff, technical staff and drivers while support staff consist of interns, volunteers and any other staff hired by the organisation. CUI has 10 permanent staff and 5 support staff adding up to a total of 15 staff. CCOAIB has 14 staff where by 11 of them are permanent and 3 are support staff. Out of 112 staff from CLADHO, 38 are permanent while 74 are support staff. IBUKA is composed of 18 staff where 14 are permanent while 4 are support staff. PFTH employs 126 people while RCCDN employs 10 staff all of whom are permanent staff only. RRP+ consists of 57 staff of which 50 are permanent staff and 7 are support staff. In conclusion therefore, out of 352 staff from 7 organisations, 74% are permanent staff while 26% are support staff.

Monitoring, Coaching and Mentorship of CSOs by Umbrella organisations



CUI conducted monitoring visits for 19 member organizations while 10 received mentorship and coaching. This is equivalent to 82.6% and 43.5% respectively. CCOAIB conducted the same number of monitoring visits as mentorship and coaching. 93% of the affiliate organisations received mentorship and coaching as well as monitoring visits. CLADHO conducted monitoring

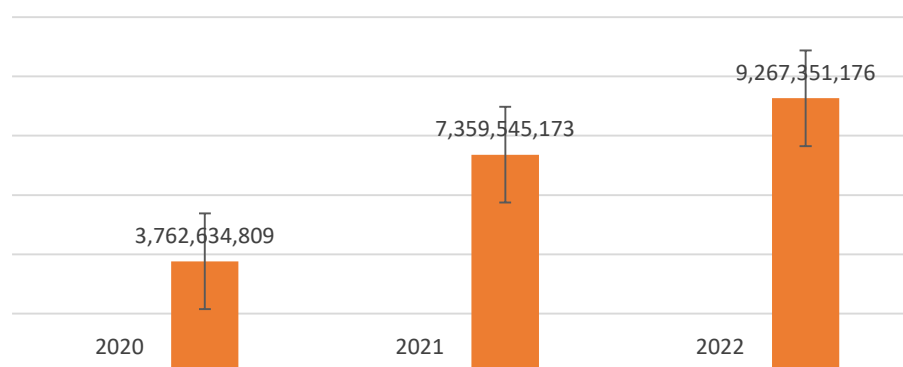
visits to 45% of member organisations while none of the member organisations received mentorship and coaching. 57% of member organisations of IBUKA received monitoring visits and mentorship and coaching. 96% of members of Profemme /Twese Hamwe received monitoring visits while 92% of the members received mentorship and coaching. Only 13% of affiliate members were visited and the same number received coaching and mentorship. The average percentage of member organisations that were visited 50% were for mentorship and coaching. This numbers are still low and need to be increased to achieve the maximum benefits of these activities.

Intervention areas for member organisations

ORGANISATIONS	Central Level	District Level	Districts of Operation	Districts
CUI			Bugesera, Gatsibo and Nyaruguru, Gasabo	4
CCOAIB			All Districts	30
CLADHO			Kicukiro, Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Rwamagana, Kamonyi, Huye, Karongi, Rubavu, Musanze, Kayonza, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Gakenke, Rulindo, Burera, Huye, Gisagara, Rutsiro, Ngororero, Karongi, Nyamasheke, Rusizi	22
IBUKA			All Districts	30
PFTH			Huye, Gisagara, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Rusizi, Kicukiro, Rulindo Gakenke, Nyabihu, Rubavu, Huye, Nyamagabe, Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma & Kirehe	16
RCCDN			Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, Rulindo, Kicukiro, Gasabo, Nyarugenge	7
RRP+			Gicumbi, Rulindo, Burera, Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Nyanza, Huye, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Karongi, Rubavu, Nyabihu, Ngororero, Gasabo, Nyarugenge, Kicukiro	25

RCSP umbrella organisations due to different areas of focus have interventions being implemented in different districts ranging from 4 to 30 districts depending on the number of interventions being implemented at a particular time and availability of finances. This implies that civil society is able to create impact in all the districts with very close interaction with the central level.

Financial Contribution



RCSP secretariat together with 7 umbrella organisations collectively increased from a financial contribution of RWF 3,762,634,809 in 2020 to RWF 7,359,545,173 in 2021 to RWF 9,267,351,176 in 2022. This implies that civil society has expanded both in interventions and coverage whereby they are implementing more projects, increasing their target populations or both. This is a representation of the financial contribution of civil society to the country's development.

Target institutions by Member organisations

	CUI	CCOAIB	CLADHO	IBUKA	PROFEMME	RCCDN	RRP+
NCDA							
MINICT							
NCHR							
CSOs							
MEDIA							
DISTRICTS							
MINAGRI							
REMA							
MINALOC							
MINECOFIN							
TEEN MOTHERS							
ALL CITIZENS							
VULNERABLE YOUTH							
MINIJUST							
MIGEPROF							
GMO							
NWC							
MINICOM							
CoK							
DUHAMIC ADRI							
AMIR							
URWEGO BANK							
HEALTH FACILITIES							

MINISTRY OF HEALTH							
RBC							
PRIVATE SECTOR							

It is evident that different umbrella organisations work closely with different public institutions, private sector, civil society organisations etc. This is because they have different areas of focus or specialization and therefore civil society plays a vital role in improvement of the lives of its beneficiaries in different areas of political, social and economic transformation.

2.1.10. Training on Research and Evidence Based Advocacy

RCSP organized training sessions on research and evidence-based advocacy. This training was organized through a partnership between RCSP and UNDP. This three day training for the CSO members was held in the period from 06th to 8th June 2023 at Five to Five hotel where the number of attendees was 40 per day.



Participants during the training

The course provided participants with information and abilities to engage in advocacy by conducting policy research, gathering and evaluating data, and achieving their advocacy purpose and vision. The post training assessment indicated that around 84% of participants met or exceeded their expectations. Participants were awarded certificates of participation

2.1.11. Promoting CSOs' Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability (LTA)

Since 2021, an assessment/analysis on LTA among CSOs was conducted and disseminated to help CSOs in accountability and transparency in their daily operations. An implementation framework was also developed as well as the Code of Ethics. On this activity, RCSP worked in collaboration with Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe with the support of Care International. Lessons learnt included:

- LTA mentees/organizations had an opportunity to reflect on their journey where by some organizations which seemed like had stagnated were able to regain energy.
- This open type of mentorship helped the members to have an opportunity to meet often beyond the formal meetings.
- The sessions helped the members to also reflect on the key organizational policies and documents e.g. safeguarding and volunteer policies are now in place and a resource mobilization policy will also be developed moving forward.

The challenges faced include:

- Time constraints vis-à-vis other responsibilities for both the mentor and the mentees.
- The programme has budget implications (refreshments, transport and sometimes need for specific venues), but this was not provided by the programme.
- Mentors who were not available for more than 4 months

Recommendations included:

- Mentees/ Organizations recommended that the LTA mentorship should continue so that the members are able to cover other interesting activities and learning opportunities that have not been covered in this year.
- There is need to provide financial resources to the organizations that are participating in the future LTA mentoring program.
- There should be standard tools/guidance for various interventions for key areas where mentees need to be supported e.g. standard templates on resource mobilization, strategic plans.
- At the end of LTA Mentorship Program, RCSP & PFTTH should organize a learning and sharing event where we will invite other CSOs to share with them success stories and achievements.



Participants in a joint mentorship session

2.1.12. Strategic Planning Workshop

On 04-05th July 2023, RCSP and members had a two days' workshop which was aimed to engage civil society members in the strategic planning process of our organization. We aim to identify key goals, develop actionable strategies, and establish a roadmap for the future. The workshop took place in Rubavu district at I&N Chanto Kigufi HILL Agape Resort Ltd.



The Chairperson RCSP Mr. Ryarasa Nkurunziza sharing some insights during the workshop

2.1.13. Training on Resource Mobilization and Fundraising

On 20th -22nd Sept 2023, RCSP conducted a 3-days training on resource mobilization and fundraising at Centre Saint Vincent Pallotti Hotel Gikondo and facilitated by EPO Company Ltd. The aim was to equip CSOs with the knowledge, skills, and strategies necessary to effectively acquire, manage, and sustain the resources needed to support their organization's mission and activities. It was attended by 30 participants (15 female and 15 male) from CSOs and some of them are umbrellas and individual organisations which are members of RCSP and its affiliates. Based on the pre and post training results, it was concluded the training achieved its prime objective of enhancing the knowledge and skills of the participants as the average score increased from 63% to 73.5% with a difference of +10.5%.



Participants during the resource mobilization and fundraising training

2.1.14. Quarterly Meeting For CSO Mentors and Mentees

A quarterly meeting was held on 5th October 2023 for CSO Mentors and mentees (beneficiaries). The powerful collaboration between local and international NGOs in Rwanda empowers CSOs which in turn enhances internal governance, builds trust and amplifies voices as a means to forge a transformative path towards a bright future.



Participants during the meeting for CSO mentors and Mentees

2.1.15. Civic Space Awareness for Child Rights

RCSP in partnership with Coalition Umwana ku Isonga (CUI) held powerful discussions on civic space awareness for child rights. This took place on 28th Sept 2023. The main aim was to build synergy among child protection actors. Advocacy of child rights took center stage of the following key issues: addressing child labor, tackling sexual child abuse and empowering children for active participation.



The ES RCSP Mrs. Kabeza Angelique sharing some insights during this event

2.1.15. Result Based Reporting For Umbrella And Affiliates

From 11th-13th October 2023 RCSP conducted a training session on result based reporting for umbrella organizations and their affiliate organization. By the end of this training the participants understood what result based reporting is and why it is important. After the training, participants were offered certificates on result based reporting.



Figure 1 Group photo of participants after the training with their certificates

2.1.16. Develop training module and conduct Training of Trainers (ToT)

The training module was developed in 'Kinyarwanda' and used in the training sessions for ToT for youth. The general objective of the training was to enhance the capacities of youth-led CSOs and national youth council volunteers in effective advocacy, accountability and citizen participation. A total of 16 trainers of trainers was conducted with the facilitation of a consultant from 4th to 6th October 2023 at Centre Saint Vincent Pallotti Hotel. CSO focal persons and NYC representatives were invited to this training with 15 out of 16 showing up. The CSOs that are implementing this project are AMI, FVA (Faith Victory Association), AJIPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA, RWAMREC, CRD (Citizen Rights and Development), IDA-RWANDA, CDJP Gikongoro (Commission Diocésaine Justice et Paix) and DUHOZANYE from the districts of Nyanza, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyaruguru, Nyagatare, Ngororero, Nyamagabe, and Gisagara respectively. 94% expressed their satisfaction with the content, while 6% reported moderate satisfaction. 87% were satisfied with facilitators delivery skills and 73% said the trainers engaged equally all the participants (women and men) in the training discussions.



Group photo of participants after the training of trainers with back bags and training module to facilitate their work

2.1.17. Training for Youths, Women, & PWDs in 8 Districts

From 16th -20th Oct 2023, 16 youths from 8 implementing CSOs and NYC representatives that attended the training of trainers trained 50 master trainers including youth, women and PWDs on inclusive engagement and citizen participation in the 8 respective districts where this project is being implemented. A total of 400 youth in 8 districts of project implementation are beneficiaries. 391 people out of 400 people who were trained including 190 females, 201 males and 26 PwDs reported improved knowledge in civic engagement, citizen participation and how to effectively advocate and participate around key issues of local governance in their communities.



Group photo after the training of youth, women and PWDs in Gisagara District

2.1.18. Training workshop for CSOs on evidence-based advocacy and policy development with practical sessions

The training was organized by the Rwanda Civil Society Platform. From 8th to 10th November 2023, 16 staff from CSOs including 6 females and 10 males attended the training workshops for CSOs on evidence-based and policy development. The pre-test was given to the participants to find out the knowledge they had before the training and a post test was given after the training to show knowledge improved. The results showed that 90% showed improved knowledge after the training compared to 40% from the pretest.



Participants during the training on evidence based advocacy and policy paper development

2.1.19. Training on leadership, management and institutional development

The CSO institutional development training was planned for the representatives of all 28 CSO grantees within the framework of capacity building for CSOs supported by Rwanda Governance Board (RGB). The training was under the "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance in Rwanda" initiative, in partnership with UNDP and Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP). It was held at Five to Five hotel from 15th to 17th November, 2023. The 24 CSOs representatives composed of 16 males, 8 females were given a pre-test and post-test questionnaire to assess their prior and post understanding of Leadership, Management and Institutional Development. Results showed that participants scored from 5 to 30 points during the pre-test, while the post-test scores ranged from 10 to 40 (the maximum). Therefore, there was an increase in knowledge average increased from 19.75% to 26.13%.



Participants during a training on leadership, management and institutional development

2.1.20. 50 master trainers/ district conduct peer to peer sessions among youth citizens in their communities

This activity took place from 15th – 30th Nov 2023 in each of the 8 districts of project implementation. It was implemented by each of the 50 youths, women and PwDs trained prior in the Training of Trainers (TOT) in the 8 districts through peer to peer sessions to youth citizens in their communities. The main purpose of this activity was to provide knowledge about their effective and inclusive civic

engagement and citizen participation. Below is a quote from Denis UWIRINGIYIMANA from Gihango Sector, Rutsiro District who said: *“I learnt that we need to take ownership of government programs as we are the beneficiaries. The change we need should start with us and I am convinced of that. I am going so sensitize my fellow youth, change my mindset and ask my fellow youth to put our effort together and develop my country”*.



One of the 50 master trainers conducting a peer to peer session in Nyaruguru District

2.1.21. Inclusive Programming by RCSP for Umbrella Members

RCSP in partnership with the National Union for Disability Organisations of Rwanda (NUDOR) organized a training under the title *Inclusive programming* for its umbrella organisations and their affiliate members. This event took place from 30th Nov to 1st Dec 2023 at Splendid Hotel in Muhanga District and was attended by 30 participants including 22 males and 8 females from umbrella organisations. During this training, participants reported increased capacity and knowledge acquisition on disability rights and ability to mainstream disability into plans and contribute to achieve the inclusion of PwDs in all spheres of life.



Participants during Inclusive programming training by RCSP

2.1.22. Practical workshop sessions for CSOs to produce at least 6 position papers and 6 policy briefs to be discussed during policy dialogues and consultative processes

RCSP recruited a consultant, Dr. Shema John Bosco to accompany CSOs in the process of developing the position papers. The assignment is progressing from identification of policy issues. All 8 implementing CSOs were visited in practical workshop session for CSOs to produce at least 6 position papers and 6 policy briefs from 15th -30th Nov 2023. The participants included heads of organizations and program managers together with the consultant and identified policy issues that need to be advocated for.



Dr. Shema during the practical session to identify policy issues for advocacy

2.1.23. Policy Paper Development Workshop

The biggest challenge faced during the practical workshop sessions for CSOs to produce at least 6 position papers and 6 policy briefs to be discussed during policy dialogues and consultative processes activity was that the process for CSOs identifying topics for position papers and policy briefs took longer than anticipated. Therefore a workshop about Policy paper development was conducted. This workshop was conducted on 19th December 2023 at Centre Saint Vincent Pallotti, all organisations identified policy issues toward the development of the policy papers. The 8 implementing CSOs representatives and National Youth Council volunteers delved into the art of policy analysis paper. Thus the implementing CSOs of the project **“Enhancing the participation of non-state actors of responsive governance in Rwanda”** finalized the identification of policy issues to be later used as topics of advocacy. The different CSOs identified policy issues as follows:

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION	POLICY ISSUE IDENTIFIED
AJPRODHO JIJUKIRWA	Persistence of Teenage pregnancy.
DUHOZANYE	Limited Contribution of District Youth Centers to Youth Development.
AMI	Not yet submitted.
RWAMREC	N/A.
CDJP-GIKONGORO	Sustainability of Created Youths Cooperatives in Nyamagabe District in the past Five years (IMIHIGO YA NYC).
CRD	Functionality Challenges of BDF services in Promoting Youth entrepreneurship in Nyagatare District.
FVA	Challenges of Youth entrepreneurship in Rutsiro district.
IDA	Challenges in health posts service delivery".



PM RCSP Mr. Zacharie Ndayishimiye giving some insights to the participants during the workshop

2.2. Coordination, Representation and Partnerships

Objective Two: Ensure effective Coordination, representation and partnerships among RCSP member CSOs

Output 1 Strengthened Coordination and representation framework

This strategic area seeks to strengthen the framework of CSOs coordination and representation. It is geared towards enhancing collaboration and synergy among CSO members. In addition, through this strategic area, RCSP will seek to obtain a CSO self-regulatory framework for local NGOs. Furthermore, it will lead to strengthening strategic partnerships with Government, as well as other partners for Impactful CSOs in Rwanda. Below are Activities and events that RCSP conducted and /or participated in this regard.

2.2.1. Development of the online Platform for CSOs

The development of a digital platform for use by all CSOs in Rwanda started in November 2022. RCSP's multipurpose portal will be the first stop for information exchange among CSOs, DPs and other audiences. In terms of objectives, it will:

- 1) Strengthen the capacity and skills of CSOs through its learning resource center,
- 2) Facilitate knowledge sharing, networking and partnership between CSOs themselves and other partners,
- 3) Provide information regarding the work of CSOs and resource mobilization opportunities, including open calls for proposals, donor intelligence and alike.

This initiative was motivated by the fact that it is critical that Rwandan CSOs gradually shift from manual to digital tools to allow for effective management, access to information and sustainability. The platform will be a one-stop information exchange platform for CSO would significantly contribute to this goal. To this end, RCSP hired a consulting firm which started working on the assignment last year.

The development work continued during the preceding period and went hand-in-hand with a process of collecting and endorsing resources and documentation that will be uploaded on the portal for use by CSOs. The following activities were conducted and led to completion of the e-ihuriro portal:

- a) **Features of the portal created and ready for navigation:** The contract with HAVATH Ltd, the Company that is working on this assignment has 100% completed the development of the portal and the revamping of the RCSP Website which is 95% completed.

Welcome to E-ihuriro!

The CSO Digital Hub aims to strengthen the capacities of civil society actors and enhance networking, cooperation and partnership building among key stakeholders of the civil society in Rwanda. In addition, it is dedicated to promoting accessible information about civil society, while allowing users to explore [jobs](#), [announcements](#) and [funding opportunities](#) in Rwanda.

Registering on the CSO Digital Hub provides your organization with a great opportunity to connect with other actors in civil society through the [Forum of Discussions](#), and to access the wealth of information in the [Resource Center](#).

To register on the platform, please proceed to the registration page [here](#). If you are a registered user, you can login [here](#).

Enjoy your journey!
Cordially,
The CSO Digital Hub team

E-ihuriro News & updates


96 Registered CSOs


1 Blog post


+410 Resources published

The screenshot above shows the home page with the welcome note, total number of CSOs registered on the portal so far etc

b) Resources for learning hub tagged and ready for upload:

The process of resource gathering consisted of identifying documentation under respective thematic areas, tagging i.e. assigning information to each document so as to allow search of the resources using the search engine. The consultant has been able to gather more than 400 documents/resources for assessment and endorsement by the content review committee.

c) Technical and review meetings conducted

During the reporting period, a review meeting was organized and took place on 13th March 2023 at Grand Legacy Hotel. The meeting aimed at assessing the progress of developing the digital platform, collecting feedback and was attended by 14 people from CSOs.

The status of the digital platform was presented and participants provided their feedback and views to enrich the product. Among other things, the meeting proposed a date for the content review committee to assess resources that will be uploaded on the platform, to take place in the third week of April 2023. The name of the digital platform was adopted: *e-ihuriro* which means ‘electronic place where people meet’ in the local language Kinyarwanda. Participants were able to share their inputs and comments that were used to improve the development of features on the portal.

d) Content review workshop by the review committee

A workshop of the content review committee to examine and endorse the resources was conducted on 20th and 21st April 2023. A team of technical staff gathered at Dereva Hotel to assess the resources meant to be uploaded on the e-ihuriro portal. Around 400 documents were assessed and 370 were endorsed and are now uploaded on the Knowledge Hub page. Furthermore, the knowledge hub will be regularly visited and examined to get rid of outdated documents and replacements will be done if relevant.

e) Roll-out training sessions

Upon finalization of the development work, CSOs were invited to training on how to navigate the portal including registration of their respective organizations on e-ihuriro which permits access to more information on the portal namely the Discussion Forum and knowledge hub.



Participants at one of the roll-out sessions

In total, 170 participants participated in the five sessions and 96 CSOs were able to register their organisations on the portal.

e-ihuriro development process - Challenges and lessons learned

Implementation of activities experienced a number of constraints as follows:

Delays: the design and development work has had surprises. The timelines initially set were found to be too small. Again, feedback from target users of the digital platform and from various teams to the developers had to be scheduled and sometimes postponed.

More technical development workload than expected: the development team received comments that added more on the work than expected.

Limited responsiveness of CSOs partners: Participants were invited to attend the roll-out sessions and some of them were unable to attend. Again, some CSOs were represented by more than one person as planned.

Delays and more technical development workload than expected: the development team expresses the need for more time and an extension to the contracts was negotiated and obtained.

2.2.2. CSO week and Exhibition

From 8th – 12th May, RGB, RCSP and NINGO in partnership with UNDP organized a collective CSOs' week and an exhibition of the achievements of grantees supported in phase II (2018-2022) and achievements of other CSOs to showcase their tangible results achieved in partnership with international NGOs that operate in Rwanda, with the participation of representatives from the GoR, development partners and the private sector.

The objective of the CSO week was to showcase the contribution of CSOs in the national development agenda in Rwanda. Further the objective of the exhibition was to showcase the achievements of grantees (phase II) of the Programme on Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance in Rwanda and facilitate networking, partnership and resource mobilization for Civil Society Organizations supported by RGB and UNDP since 2018. In addition, the exhibition similarly benefited other CSOs that are members of NINGO and RCSP.

More specifically, the CSO exhibition allowed Civil Society Organizations:

- To reach out to potential donors that have interest to join and support CSO Strengthening Programme, with a particular focus on non-traditional donors such as the private sector;

- To facilitate networking and partnership building among CSOs, donors, development partners and the private sector;
- To increase awareness and visibility of the results achieved by the CSO Strengthening Programme;
- To communicate the results achieved by CSO grantees to the wider audience through media coverage, testimonies and photo gallery.

Activities of the CSOs' Week:

- **Collecting and consolidating the fact sheet leaflet:** the brochure summarized the CSOs contribution and was distributed during the exhibition
- **Making and disseminating/showcasing the documentary videos:** a video on achievements of beneficiaries of the Programme on Strengthening Civil Society Organizations for Responsive and Accountable Governance in Rwanda was made and another one on the CSOs' contribution in the development of the country will be made by NINGO and RCSP.
- **TV/Radio shows:** one radio show and one TV show were aired during the week.

The first TV show talked about “CSOs contribution to the national development” on RBA on 07th May 2023 from 6PM

The TV show was a captivating presentation hosted by RBA and featured representative from RCSP, UNDP, and RGB. The show explored various intervention and contribution of CSOs in the attainment of the NST1 goals and also their response to different issues facing citizens in Rwanda. It discussed the contribution of RCSP, UNDP, and RGB in building the capacity of CSOs to perform and attain their goals. While concluding, the RCSP representative introduced the CSO week by highlighting different activities planned during that week.



From the left; RBA presenter, Judith KAZAIRE/ RGB, Dr. Emmanuel NZEYIMANA/ RCSP, and Aime MUZIRANENGE/UNDP

The second TV show was talking about the “Collaboration and partnership between local and International NGOs in Rwanda and took place at Rwanda TV on 12th May 2023 from 6:30pm.

a) CSO Community Connect Day

The CSO Community Connect Day and the Exhibition were the main activities of the Week. The CSOs Community Connect Day was organized and took place in Mageragere sector, Nyarugenge district and CSOs showcased their work and provided services to citizens.



The District Executive Administrator of Nyarugenge (right) and the Chairperson of RCSP (left) addressing the public during CSO Community Connect Day

The CSOs Community Connect event took place on 9th May 2023 from 12pm at Mageragere Sector, Nyarugenge District. The event brought together different CSOs, government officials, citizens, and International NGOs working in Rwanda. During this event, different CSOs provided services to citizens such as HIV testing, GBV advisory, sanitary products, agriculture services, legal aid etc. Among the CSOs which provided services there are; Haguruka NGO, RODI, ARCT-Ruhuka, Coalition Umwana ku Isonga, RCCDN, CCOAIB, RDO, Réseau de Développement de Femmes Pauvres, CLADHO, and Unique Rehabilitation Center.

Around 500 people were given services and it was recommended by the citizens and local leaders that this service provision can be a regular activity done in different sectors for citizens to recognize the activities of CSOs.



During CSO Community Connect- CSOs explaining their services to DG at Minaloc (right) and citizens



CSOs officials and children from Mageragere Sector, Mataba Cell photographed during CSO community connect

Keynote speeches delivered by the representative of CSOs, the DEA of Nyarugenge and the Director General from the Ministry of Local Government emphasized on the importance of collaboration between the government and CSOs, and appreciated CSOs for their contribution in improving the livelihood of citizens. The event ended with an interactive session known as “Inteko y’Abaturage” where citizens asked questions to their leaders and received answers.

b)Exhibition day

An exhibition of achievements took place on 12th May 2023 at Kigali Conference and Exhibition Village (KCEV) from 10am and it brought together different government officials, development partners, International NGOs and local NGOs. During this event, CSOs showcased their achievements and different videos highlighting the impact of partnership between INGOs and local NGOs were presented.



Participants during the Exhibition day at Kigali Conference and Exhibition Village (KCEV)



Group photo of CSOs and partners in the closing of CSO week- exhibition group at KCEV

The CSO Exhibition Day served as a showcase for the organizations' sustainability initiatives and projects. It provided an opportunity for local and international stakeholders to explore and engage with the work of the CSOs. The exhibition included interactive displays, presentations, and demonstrations to educate visitors about the organization's service and products (to those who provide tangible materials).



Exhibition booths for CSOs

The CSO Week was a resounding success, bringing together stakeholders, community members, and CSOs to raise awareness, foster collaboration and showcase the organization's achievements. The week's activities created a platform for knowledge sharing, engagement, and inspiration, motivating individuals and organizations to contribute towards the development of the country.

2.2.3. CSO Joint #Kwibuka29 Event

On 23rd June 2023, RCSP and members, in partnership with UNDP, RGB, and NINGO carried out the CSO #Kwibuka29 event in Ntarama Sector, Bugesera District. On this day, CSOs representatives and leaders from different international NGOs visited Ntarama Memorial Site where they got a chance to be explained to about the history of Ntarama Sector before, during and after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

After laying wreaths on the graves, participants of the event also visited and supported survivors of the Genocide against the Tutsi working in the cooperative namely “AHEZA HEALING & CAREER CENTER” which operates in Ntarama Sector.



Figure 5- Vice- Chairperson delivering speech during CSO Kwibuka #29 event, Ntarama Sector, Bugesera District.



Group photo- RGB, NINGO, and LCSOs representatives at Ntarama Memorial Site

2.2.4. Visiting of New Prospect Members

On 27th and 30th October 2023, RCSP visited WASHNET Rwanda and UPHLS respectively after their request to join RCSP as new members. This process took place at their respective offices and an evaluation criteria was used to check whether these organization possessed the minimum requirements to become members of Rwanda Civil Society Platform. These new members were approved in RCSP’s general assembly held in November 2023.



Left: RCSP secretariat staff during the evaluation process of WASHNET Rwanda. Right: After the evaluation process of UPHLS at their respective offices

2.2.5. Monitoring visits to Member Organizations

Between 4th-11th Oct 2023, RCSP did monitoring visits to member organizations. During these visits RCSP introduced PCAS- a self-assessment tool for organizations to help identify their weak and strong points and Bi-annual reporting tool and data protection to comply with the new data protection law.



RCSP secretariat staff during a visit at CCOAIB

The members were requested that the content of these tools inform the development of RCSP new strategic plan 2024-2028 and also inform on how to help members improve as organisations.

2.2.6. Capacity Assessment and Support Orientation

RCSP held a meeting with members on 6th October 2023 at Grand Legacy Hotel on capacity assessment & support orientation. The main purpose of this meeting was to share with them insights on the upcoming capacity assessment processes and schedule. The members were also informed about the new law on data protection and how to register.



Group photo of participants after the meeting

2.2.8. RCSP general assembly

The Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) and its member organizations gathered for the annual general assembly, marking a pivotal moment for the organization. The assembly, held on November 29th 2023, served as a platform for evaluating the progress made in achieving the platform's objectives and setting new projections for the upcoming years. At the forefront of the agenda was the validation and approval of RCSP's new 5-year strategic plan, which will guide the platform from 2024 to 2028. The general assembly also provided an opportunity for self-assessment, showcasing the progress made in implementing RCSP's action plan over the past 14 months, from September 2022 to November 2023. Members received an insightful presentation of the progress report, highlighting achievements across the platform's core mandates

- In terms of capacity strengthening, RCSP reported that 607 individuals, including 298 females, 309 males and 28 persons with disabilities, received various trainings from member organizations and their affiliates during the 14 months. Additionally, RCSP conducted monitoring visits to member organizations and engaged with two umbrella organizations interested in joining the platform.
- RCSP's influence and advocacy efforts were evident through policy dialogues, consultative meetings, and workshops, addressing critical issues such as taxation laws, paternity leave, gender-based violence, SDG5, user engagement and education policy.
- The platform also emphasized its commitment to partnership building, participating in various events and activities to strengthen relationships with local and international partners. Additionally, RCSP engaged in fundraising activities to support its initiatives.
- Members also had the opportunity to review RCSP's financial report as of November 2023, ensuring transparency and proper management of partners' grants and members' contributions.



Dr. Rutebuka, a consultant hired by RCSP presenting the strategic plan during the General Assembly

2.2.9. Launch of the strategic plan

A gala dinner to launch the RCSP 2024-2028 Strategic Plan was organized and held at Kigali Convention Centre on 12th December 2023. Participants were RCSP's existing partners (Trocaire, Care, UNDP, and RGB) and target potential partners as well as civil society organizations members of RCSP and their affiliates. The launch of RCSP's 5-year strategic plan was a momentous occasion, signaling a collective commitment to driving positive change and sustainable impact in Rwanda. The event was a celebration of the hard work and dedication of RCSP and its member organizations, as well as recognition of the critical role that civil society and NGOs play in driving development in Rwanda.



Distinguished guests during the launch of the RCSP's new Strategic Plan

2.2.10. Identification of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

QIPs were identified as part of an activity to implement eight quick impact projects (QIPs), in partnership with UNDP in 8 districts that aim to enhance citizen participation, targeting 800 vulnerable/marginalized community members, at least 100 in each district, 50% female, 5% PwDs). This activity took place conducted from 15th – 30th November 2023 in all implementing districts and RCSP supported partners to identify potential Quick Impact projects (QIPs) during feedback sessions. The following QIPs were identified per district and are being assessed for implementation:

- ✚Gatsibo: Supporting youth cooperatives to grow vegetables.
- ✚Gisagara: Rehabilitation of football playground and a wooden bridge in Kibirizi sector.
- ✚Nyanza: Rehabilitating the football playground.
- ✚Ngororero: Rehabilitation Rutemba Bridge connecting Hindiro and Matyazo sectors or Rehabilitation of Murago Bridge in Hindiro Sector, or Contribution to social security issues, or Completion of a public toilet on Ngororero-Muhanga Highway.
- ✚Rutsiro: Car wash place, or play grounds and related equipment.
- ✚Nyamagabe: Rehabilitation of water supply pumps or fruits farming.
- ✚Nyagatare: Rehabilitation of football playground and wooden bridge that connects both Mimuri and Rukomo sectors at a place called muri Magana Atandatu and Rehabilitation of a playground.
- ✚Nyaruguru: Small livestock farming.



Participants during a feedback session in to identify QIPs in Ngororero District

The identification of QIPs is still ongoing and selection and implementation will be done during the forthcoming quarters.

2.2.11. Monitoring field visits and peer learning sessions for all activities with the participation of key stakeholders and beneficiaries

From 15th -30th Nov 2023, RCSP conducted field monitoring visits for peer to peer sessions in the 8 implementing CSOs. The purpose was to supervise and support the implementation of peer to peer awareness sessions on youth engagement and civic participation by trained youth facilitators, as well as identify challenges that prevent youth from effective participation. The topic was “**The role of youth in Governance**” whereby they shared in their own words the meaning of governance, how the country plans the development of its citizens, the contribution of communities in putting government priorities into practice, among others.

They also shared ways they believe they can contribute to the development of their country and highlighted some of the examples below:

1. Participating in government activities such as engaging in community works (umuganda, umugoroba w'imiryango, inteko z'abaturage, among others).
2. Being candidates in elections such as the National Youth Council representatives, village representatives, as well as participating in electing their leaders
3. Getting involved in village planning, and contributing to their implementation such as being volunteers in many activities

Among the challenges identified that hinder effective youth participation include lack of regular meetings for youth to make them aware of youth opportunities and to encourage them to speak out, and some of the youth are actively involved in shifting due to the search of employment.



Participants during peer to peer session in Ngororero District

2.2.12. Validation workshop of RCSP strategic plan

24th Dec 2023, RCSP conducted a validation workshop with members and partners to assess the draft evaluation report of strategic plan 2019-2023 and the vision of the new strategic plan 2024-2028. RCSP is grateful for the invaluable insights and active participation of stakeholders which will be considered.



RCSP partners during the validation workshop.

2.2.13. RCSP Newsletter

RCSP introduced a newsletter, the first of its kind in 2023. This inaugural edition issued in December 2023, captured the main activities that took place in the organisation as well as those key activities from our member organisations. It is a gateway to updates and activities of Rwanda's Civil Society Sector.



RCSP Newsletter cover page.

Output 2 RCSP's strategic partnership is strengthened

As a coordination body for Rwandan civil society, it is imperative that RCSP builds strong partnership with various organizations in not only Rwanda but also regionally and internationally.

During the preceding period, RCSP engaged in various collaborative initiatives with a number of Government of Rwanda institutions, international organizations and in regional efforts to foster integration and contribute to collective progress.

Below are some interventions of partnership and collaboration carried out during January-December 2023:

2.2.14. Joint monitoring of RGB, UNDP and RCSP to CSOs grantees

In the context of the 'Civil Society Strengthening Program' that supports CSOs across the country, joint monitoring visits were carried out together with RGB, UNDP and RCSP in March 2023. The visits constituted an occasion for visitors to experience innovative works and their impact including income generating activities supported by the program including businesses owned by women and girls.



Beneficiaries supported through Réseau des Femmes in Burera district during a visit on 27th March 2023.

The beneficiaries in the photo above are members of the *Urinyampinga* Cosmetic Production Cooperative. The members are vulnerable youth and women who were supported to enhance their livelihoods at community level.

2. 2.15.Engagement with donors and partners for further partnership building

RCSP has engaged with or is in contact with other various partners, donors for further partnership including (but not limited to) TReNDS, NPA, UNDP.

SDSN TReNDs: RCSP participated in an online discussion organized by SDSN TReNDs on the successes and challenges of building multi-stakeholder data partnerships across Africa to support evidence-based policymaking.



Contribution to partners' work

RCSP participated in CSOs' and Government institutions' activities through various means especially technical support and provision of opinions during meetings and workshops.

2.2.15. Women Deliver Conference 2023

From 17th-20th July 2023, RCSP and members participated in the Women Deliver 2023 conference where Rwandan CSOs showcased some achievements through the exhibition. The event took place at Kigali Convention Center. The objectives of the conference among others were: Catalyze Collective Action to Advance Gender Equality, Empower the Feminist Movement, and Hold leaders accountable. RCSP with support from Trôcaire managed to secure 4 booths under the following themes: Education and Technology, Health and Human Rights, Women Peace and security, and Agri/Business and Environmental protection. RCSP also managed to secure 50 scholarships for women's rights leaders to attend the conference. Further to this RCSP participated in a specific session "[Raise up women's and girl's voices in the movement to localize development](#)"



2.2.16. Project Orientation Meeting

In Partnership with UNDP Rwanda, RCSP conducted a project orientation meeting for the project “**Enhancing the participation and engagement of non-state actors for more accountable and responsive governance in Rwanda**”. This meeting introduced the new project to partners that will help in implementation of this project clearly showing them their responsibilities and those of RCSP as far as implementation of this project is concerned.



ES RCSP Mrs. Kabeza Angelique giving opening remarks during the Project Orientation Meeting

2.2.17. Trocaire visit discussing on the charter 4 change

The Trocaire Rwanda Localization and Partnership team visited RCSP for discussions on the upcoming Charter 4 change annual meeting and capacity strengthening support. This visit took place on 13th September 2023 at the RCSP head office.



Group photo after the discussion meeting at RCSP offices

2.2.18. Rwanda Philanthropy Forum

On 20th October 2023 RCSP in partnership with East Africa Philanthropy Network Organized the pioneer national philanthropy forums under the theme “Towards a resilient Philanthropy

Ecosystem” across our region that united philanthropists, civil society and key sector players to address national challenges collaboratively. This event took place at the Ubumwe Grande Hotel.



2.2.19. Implementing partners for new us embassy project

RCSP invited representatives of the Implementing partners of their yet to come project funded by the US Embassy. This event took place on 27th Oct 2023 at the RCSP offices. The purpose of this visit was to let the partners know this new development so that they plan accordingly in favor of this new project.

2.2.20. Field visit with RGB, UNDP and Belgian Embassy

RCSP participated in the Monitoring Visits of CSOs working in Kamonyi, Huye and Gisagara Districts on 20th-21st December 2023. The purpose was to strengthen CSOs through impactful partnerships that catalyze socio economic change for the most vulnerable. The field visit was wrapped up with a workshop to discuss project outcomes, expertise and lessons learned. The socio-economic empowerment project is helping families through agriculture and microfinance services. One of the beneficiaries now has 2500sqms with vegetables which has helped her to contribute to her community's development.



Gloriose one of the beneficiaries of the socio-economic empowerment project

2.2.21. Regional Meeting on Charter4Change in Nairobi

RCSP participated in the C4C regional meeting Africa in Nairobi from 7th-9th Nov 2023. It brought together signatories & endorsers and allies sharing experiences of collaboration at country & regional level. It was realized that there is a call for redefining localization based on context, community led response and inclusivity of all grassroots organizations and other minority groups.



Delegates at the Charter4Change meeting in Nairobi

2.2.22. Participation in 16 days of activism against GBV

Every year from 25th of November- 10th of December, RCSP participates in the 16 days of activism against gender based violence (GBV). In 2023, RCSP has partnered with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion with the support of Care International Rwanda. This campaign was launched in Bugesera District. During this period, RCSP spread different messages through its social media handles on daily basis. Below is one of the messages:



One of the messages shared by RCSP during 16 days' activism against GBV

2.3. Advocacy and policy influence.

Advocacy and policy influence constitute one of the core mandates for CSOs, and so it is of RCSP. Thus, this pillar will strengthen action research to inform advocacy positions and guide active engagement with relevant public policy actors. Furthermore, this strategic area is meant to advance RCSP's policy influence on various strategic issues of national interest affecting the community and urges the network to actively participate and meaningfully contribute to policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring while continuously engaging with Government on policy matters, with the ultimate goal to contribute to sustainable development. Below are some of such activities that RCSP organized or participated in.

Objective Three: Engage in policy advocacy and influencing to contribute to the national development agenda

Output 1 Effective evidence based advocacy is promoted

2.2.7. Validation workshop for the Holistic needs assessment on Youth Civic Participation

A stakeholders' meeting was held on 24th October 2023 at Grand Legacy Hotel to review and validate the draft report for the “**Holistic Needs Assessment on Youth Civic Participation in 8 Districts (Gisagara, Nyanza, Rutsiro, Nyamagabe, Ngororero, Nyaruguru, Gatsibo, and Nyagatare)**”.

Other participants provide inputs for improvements in the report. The provided inputs related to:

1. Detailed reasons on why the youth representatives (in the National Youth Council) at the decentralized level are not active and do not effectively represent their constituencies.
2. Stressed the fact that preparation for the active and effective youth civic participation should start at an early age (during childhood) and that parents/guardians and teachers need to play a big role in this.

3. Considering the economic and livelihood challenges the youth are facing, participants underscored the need for government and stakeholders to use project-based civic engagement initiatives as a way of supporting the youth deal with livelihood and economic hardships they are facing as well as motivating them to actively and effectively engage and participate in civic matters.
4. The importance and linkage between Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) and youth civic participation nowadays.
5. The need to revisit culture and approaches towards children/youth in families and communities, where in most cases it is taken as a taboo for a young person to challenge an adult, even where the former has a point.

The meeting stressed the need and importance of organizing intergenerational dialogues between the youth (young generation) and adults (old generation) to handle/mitigate the issue of intergenerational conflicts, which is one of the main factors limiting the full participation of the youth in civic matters.

Participants to the meeting validated the assessment report pending the integration of the few comments/inputs provided.



Group photo of stakeholders after the validation workshop

2.3.1. Policy Dialogue on Paternity Leave.

On 24th July, RCSP in partnership with RWAMREC had a learning and policy dialogue to discuss on parental leave in Rwanda. The aim of the dialogue was to understand the significance of paternity leave in achieving gender equality and a healthy work-life balance. As a result, the dialogue recommended the number of days allocated for paternity leave increase from 4 to 12 days.



Group photo of participants after the paternity leave policy dialogue

2.3.2. Consultative Meeting on Taxation Laws in Rwanda.

On 23rd August 2023, RCSP in partnership with Trocaire had a consultative meeting on taxation laws in Rwanda. During the event RCSP had an honor to have the Director General of tax policy from MINECOFIN, and Director of Legal affairs from RRA for a knowledge sharing on tax duties and responsibilities.

After panel discussion and plenary contributions, commitments from participants were noted thus:

- Tax education of all taxpayers will be done so that apart from paying taxes well they can actively participate in dialogues on taxation. This will be through the consistent identification of challenges on either side or organizing forums for relevant discussion.
- Conduct research about how to avoid tax escalations by finding alternative products to tax other than food products.
- Increase the number of similar dialogues in any way possible because by the time the meeting ended some of the participants had more contributions to be made.



Group photo of participants during the consultative meeting on taxation laws

2.3.3. Policy dialogue on AU Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security

This event was held on 4th October 2023 at Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Kigali, Rwanda, and its main objective was to create awareness on the AU Protocol on Social Protection and Social Security which will lead to ratification. It was attended by 35 people representing state and non-state actors working in the sector of social protection and social justice. The guest of honor was a Senior State Attorney in Charge of International Justice and Judicial Cooperation at the Ministry of Justice. Other key government institutions represented in this meeting include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Local Government, Rwanda Social Security Board and National Child Development Agency.

Conclusion and way forward

The dialogue underscored that social protection and social security are for everyone and it is not a favor. All articles of the protocol are very important to the citizens of Rwanda and its ratification by the Government will be a good supplement to existing legal and policy frameworks. It was highlighted that inclusive development cannot be achieved when all community members are not equally protected by the laws and policies in place at national, regional and international level. Participants noted that one meeting like this is not enough for such a kind of request. The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance together with Rwanda Civil Society Platform and its member CSOs agreed to organize a technical meeting to discuss more on ways and strategies to adopt in order to have this protocol ratified by the Government of Rwanda.



Group picture of participants after the policy dialogue on AU protocol on social protection

2.3.4. Assessment of taxation laws

A policy brief on taxation laws was produced highlighting gaps, challenges and recommendations.

Issues identified include and presented to the parliament when the Ministry of Economic Planning together with Rwanda Revenue Authority were presenting the draft bills on taxation:

Tax on sale of immovable property is proposed to be 2% of the property value for registered taxpayers and 2.5% for non-registered taxpayers. The first issue is to know why taxing people who are not tax registered just because they have sold a property without considering whether there is any gain made out of the sales of the property

Taxes on rental income for property owners who own one house and rent it out for income but also pays rent for their own residence for various reasons including work reasons is a burden to the owner of the house.

The immovable property tax is assessed and paid by the owner (based on ownership) and not based on the income generated from the property.

The current state of citizen participation in influencing the taxation policy process presents a mixed picture. While efforts have been made to involve citizens in policy discussions, there are still significant challenges that hinder meaningful participation. In many cases, citizens are not adequately informed about tax policies, making it difficult for them to provide informed input. The availability and accessibility of information regarding the tax policy process, including draft legislation and policy documents, are often limited. This lack of transparency limits citizens' ability to understand and engage in the decision-making process.

2.3.5. Policy Dialogue on Women's Participation in Decision Making Positions

RCSP participated in a policy dialogue on women's participation in decision making positions organized by Pro Femme/TweseHamwe on 27th Sept 2023. All participating institutions were called on to play their part in fostering women's participation in decision making positions as a prime way to addressing gender gaps in leadership and employment opportunities.



RCSP ES Mrs. Kabeza Angelique sharing insights during the event

2.3.6. Policy dialogue on gender budget statements in Rwanda

A policy dialogue on gender budget statements (GBS) took place on 13th December 2023 at Grand Legacy Hotel, and among the participants were representatives of government institutions from the central level and Civil Society Organizations (national and international) that have interventions on gender and women's empowerment. Various aspects of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) were covered during this interactive dialogue and they include;

Legal framework: GRB is embedded within the laws/regulations and guided by clear policies: Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, Organic Law on Public Finance Management No: 002/2022.OL of 12/12/2022, The Organic Law on Public Finance Management No: 002/2022.OL of 12/12/2022

Role of CSOs: The role of CSOs in the preparation and implementation of the National budget with a focus on financing for gender equality was highlighted. This is mainly achieved through participation in budget consultations forums, analysis of Budget Framework Paper and participation in budget parliamentary hearings, budget monitoring and audit, Radio/TV talk shows, conduct researches for evidence generation and advocacy, policy/consultative dialogues, dissemination of budget information, capacity strengthening for CSOs and public servants.

Achievements through advocacy as per the findings of an assessment on GBS contributions to NST1:

- Through a High-level dialogue with the Parliamentary Budget Commission, budget agencies are required to include gender in Imihigo planning and evaluation processes.
- Significant alignment of GBS to other national planning and accountability tools like Action Plans and Performance Contracts has been observed through the monitoring exercises
- Revision of Law N° 12/2013/OL of 12/09/2013 on State finances and property and adopting Organic Law No. 002/2022.OL of 12/12/2022 on Public Finances Management which repealed Organic Law.

Gaps:

- Limited oversight that continues to affect the quality of GBS,

- Limited skills in gender analysis leading to ambiguous targets and less focus on GBV as well as family issues,
- GBS is not discussed in the different planning forums - comes at the last minute,
- No regular monitoring of GBS plans – absence of progress reports,
- Inadequate reporting on the gendered impact,
- Limited participation of women in decision-making in competitive positions – Director level at both central and decentralized levels,
- Non-involvement of CSOs operating in Districts in the Gender Budgeting process.
- Limited use of the available/current data to analyze the gender situation.

Way forward:

- RCSP in collaboration with the Gender Monitoring Office will request for increased accountability for government budget agencies and request for administrative measures to officials whose GBS are not effectively addressing gender issues. The target institution will be the Parliament's Budget and Patrimony Commission,
- RCSP and Gender Monitoring Office will request the establishment of a GBS draft review team at each budget agency to analyze, GBS plans before they are shared with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning for funds release,
- Gender Monitoring Office will collaborate with RCSP and its members to increase the level of participation of CSOs based at the district level during GBS monitoring activities,
- Gender Monitoring Office will engage more partners to strengthen the capacity of planning staff in government budget agencies at both the local and central levels to increase budget efficiency and effectiveness for improved equitable expenditures of public funds to men and women, boys and girls.



Participants in the policy dialogue on gender budget statements

Output 2 CSOs actively participate and meaningfully contribute to policy formulation, implementation and monitoring.

2.3.7. EACSOFS summit in Arusha

RCSP and members participated in the East Africa Community civil society summit on "**Harnessing Citizens potential in Regional Process**" which brought together dignitaries & CSOs representatives from across the region. The summit was for 3 days starting from 3rd to 5th May 2023 in Arusha, Tanzania. Participants reflected on avenues for citizens' engagement on matters of regional integration in EAC, existing legal framework of CSOs to engage and the future of CSOs in EAC and African Union.



Participants during the East African Civil Society Summit the in Arusha Tanzania.

2.3.8. 9th Peer review retreat organized by MINIJUST

RCSP attended the 9th Justice, Reconciliation, Law & Order Sector Peer Review retreat & UPR Retreat. The retreat was held in Nyagatare District from 29th to 30th May 2023. The theme of the retreat was "Enhancing the Citizen's role in the Justice Service delivery to hit JRLOS targets".



Photos show panelist of the 9th Peer review retreat in which the Chairperson of RCSP (right) participated

2.3.9. National learning and reflection on key issues that affects in and out of School adolescents

On 22nd June 2023, RCSP in collaboration with Care International Rwanda conducted national learning & policy dialogue on "Key issues adolescents face to access sexual and reproductive (SRH) services in Rwanda". Participants learned from approaches and shared lessons learned from our education programming from monitoring and evaluation reports. It also engaged policy makers on emerging issues and challenges that require actions of relevant actors.



Attendees of the national learning and reflection dialogue and the ES of RCSP delivering her remarks

2.3.10. Rwanda Civil Society Open Day with AfDB

RCSP participated in the CSO open day organized by the Africa Development Bank (AfDB) on the 1st June 2023 at Hotel Des Mille Collines. Information was shared and feedback obtained from CSOs on existing Bank funded projects, as key stakeholders in the achievement of development objectives of the country.



Participants of the Rwanda CSO open day with AfDB

2.3.11. Assessment of Gender Budget Statements (GBS) and their contributions to National Strategy for Transformation (NST1).

From March to June 2023, Rwanda Civil Society Platform, in collaboration with the Gender Monitoring Office, embarked on a GBS impact assessment exercise in twelve districts of Southern Province: Nyanza, Nyaruguru, Nyamagabe, Gisagara, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Huye. Northern Province: Burera and Gakenke. Eastern Province: Nyagatare and Rwamagana and the City of Kigali. The focus was on four sectors namely Agriculture, Education, Infrastructure and Health. The ministries assessed are Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources as well as Ministry of Education. The primary purpose of this assessment was to appraise the gender transformational impact of GBSs from 2019-2020 GBS, 2020/2021 GBS and 2021/2022 and their contribution to NST1 aspirations in Rwanda. The GBS exercise further reviewed the relevance and quality of GBS plans and reports in respective districts and ministries. The assessment also reviewed the alignment of GBS interventions to other major planning frameworks such as DDSs, Action plans, Sector Strategies and Imihigo among others.

2.3.12. Data for Now Workshop

On from 16th- 18th August 2023, RCSP in collaboration with NISR, office of the national statistics-UK, and SDSNA-TRENDS, conducted a 3 days' workshop in 3 districts; Karongi, Musanze, Nyamagabe with the theme "Localizing user engagement and data utilization post-

census”. The aim of the workshop was to engage local government officials, CSOs, and faith based organisations on the strategies they use to leverage the data collected to tailor user engagement within their communities for local development. Moving forward;

- RCSP will continue working closely with CSOs to utilize their grassroots knowledge and expertise to ensure that the census results are not only effectively disseminated, but also understood and utilized effectively at local level.
- RCSP recognized the pivotal role that CSOs play in facilitating grassroots participation and advocating for meaningful change within communities. These organisations serve as essential conduits for information, mobilization, and advocacy, making them invaluable partners in our dissemination strategy of data-driven decision-making and evidence-based policymaking throughout Rwanda.
- Furthermore, the outreach efforts will extend to engaging with local leaders who hold positions of influence and responsibility within the districts and sectors. These leaders, who are deeply rooted in their communities, possess a unique capacity to facilitate dialogue, decision-making, and action based on the census data.
- By collaborating with them, the Civil Society Platform hopes to ensure that the census findings are not only accessible but also translated into tangible policies, initiatives, and development projects that address the specific needs and challenges faced by each community.



Participants during the workshop in Nyamagabe District

3. Conclusion

Over the past 12 months, RCSP concluded implementation of its Strategic Plan 2019/2023 launched in the last fiscal year as well as its subsidiary plans including the capacity building plan. This report provided highlights on the main interventions made in the strategic axes of the Strategic Plan as well as the various initiatives of the umbrella organizations that constitute the platform.

Despite various challenges, there was commendable progress in each of the areas especially thanks to partnership and collaboration with various institutions of Government, Development Partners, CSOs and International NGOs.

It is pleasing to note that the platform as whole remains strong and resolved to deliver on its mandate. Challenges remain like they have in the past but most importantly, there is commitment from various partners to collaborate in addressing them.

Over the next six months, the platform envisages to further widen its resource mobilization net, consolidate internal operations and systems to reinforce its effectiveness and efficiency and continue building onto gained momentum.

END

