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The Role of Community Radio in Promoting Community Participation in Local Governance in Rwanda:A Case study of PAXPRESS Community debates.

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[***]*This paper is published in loving memory of Umuhire Valentin (journalist) who was co-working on this topic.*

ABSTRACT: The study investigated the community radio as a tool that promotes community participation in local governance. Multi-stage random sampling method and purposive method was adopted. Data collection was undertaken using questionnaire and interviews. The datawascollected in three Sectors (Muzo, Kivuruga and Gakenke) of Gakenke District in Northern Province of Rwanda. Overall research results indicated that 93% of respondents (citizens, local authorities, and journalists) agreed that PAXPRESScommunity radio debates enhance the knowledge and awareness of the citizens. For the role played by PAXPRESS community radio in promoting dialogue on community issues and needs, the overall research results indicated that 20% of respondents strongly agreed and 74% of respondents agree that PAXPRESS community radio promotes dialogue on community issues and needs as well as educating on household decisions making. On the contribution of PAXPRESS community radio in improving the relationship between citizens and authorities, in general, 70% of respondents believe that the relationship has improvedand 18% believe that it has changed a little while 10% believe that maybe it exists while 2% do not agree. The good practices and lessons learned for the promotion of community participation in local governance through PAXPRESS community radio include (i) Paxpress debates engage community and authorities in these debates; (ii) Paxpress debates provide dialogue for the community with disabilities; (iii) Paxpress debates allow rural community to interact with authorities and journalists; and (iv) Paxpress debates enhance the knowledge of the citizens on their rights, household decision making and government policies. Challenges outlined by the research include: difficult to convince citizen to talk through radio; difficulty to convince local authorities who seem not informed about the laws of access to information and freedom of expression; Misinterpretation of some authorities face the media's role or mission; (v) Financial limitations. The research recommends: (i) to make a follow up after debate; (ii) allocating enough time to the debates; (iii)managing citizens' emotions; (iv)toinform people on the topic to be discussed before, and give enough time to authorities to explain their concerns instead of challenging them only; (v) emphasize on the debates that strengthen the relationship between the community and authorities. If well done, this would be an utmost achievement for the government.

KEYWORDS:_Community Radio, localgovernance, community participation,PAXPRESS._

I.   Background of the study

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters or "Association Mondiale Des RadiodiffuseursCommunautaires" (AMARC) is an international non-governmental organization serving the community radio movement, with almost 4000 members and associates in 150 countries. AMARC defines community radio as a radio service offering a third model of radio broadcasting in addition to commercial and public broadcasting. Community stations serve geographic communities and communities of interest. They broadcast content that is popular and relevant to a local, specific audience but is often overlooked by commercial (or) mass-media broadcasters. Community radio stations are operated, owned, and influenced by the communities they serve. They are generally non-profit and provide a mechanism for enabling individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own stories, to share experiences and, in a media-rich world, to become creators and contributors of media.Community media exist to satisfy the communication needs of their communities' members and to enable them to exercise their rights of access to information and freedom of

expression. Their aims are directly related to the communities they serve and represent including: the promotion of social development, human rights, cultural diversity, pluralism of information and opinion, peaceful coexistence, and the strengthening of social and cultural identities. They help to avail utilities and amenities for various development aspects of the society like education, health, water and sanitation, protection from natural disasters, address social issues at the community level and connect rural population with the government (AMARC, 2018).

Researchers indicated how community radios play important role in promoting the good governance and social economic development in Africa. They indicate that positive change is also happening at a personal level. Community radio stations are offering training and work experience opportunities, contributions to local education and providing a voice to those, such as older people or speakers of minority languages, who may find it harder to access the media.Radio reaches the most number of people; radio doesn't run out of air time or data; radio is democratic,it reaches rich and poor alike, educated and uneducated, young and old. It can reach every tribe, every region, each gender and race.Radio informs and educates; radio is trusted; radio is life-saving; radio is portable; radio is low cost; radio builds community (Khan, 2017;Wabwire, 2013).

In 2015, Rwanda was ranked as the world's fastest developing country in the world according to UN's Human Development Index (HDI), which incorporates measures for income, life expectancy and education into a single development score. Rwanda was found to be the country that made the most progress after the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994 that suddenly caused the level of development to fall. This emerged as a good sign that the country was in the right direction toward development program namely known as "VISION 2020" established by the government of Rwanda (Newtimes, 2015).

According to MINALOC's DIP report (2011), decentralization has been a key policy of the Government of Rwanda since 2000. The aim of the policy was, and is, to ensure equitable political, economic, and social development throughout the country, and to be a cornerstone of the fight against poverty by increasing people's participation in the planning and management of the development process. (MINALOC, 2011). Through this context, a free and independent media environment offering public participation can have a profound influence on people's opportunities to access information and services, to understand and be able to exercise their rights and participate in decisions that affect their lives; and thus contribute to the promotion of good governance.

Media plays an important role in promoting good governance since it is an outlet through which people use to receive information about what is happening inside and outside country. According to Rwanda Media Barometer (RMB) report issued in 2016 by RGB, 89.0% of citizens used radio, 69.1% used community meetings, 33.4% used television, 31.0% get informationrelatives and neighbours, 17.0% used social media, and 13.8% used newspapers to get news/information (Rwanda Media Barometer, 2016). These statistics indicate how radio communication still dominates the type of media in providing information in Rwanda. Media coverage of politic issues certainly raises questions among the community. Despite laws put in place to avoid unbalanced political coverage, a large majority of public is wary of the media's role in political opinions. In 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, radio contributed in spreading information that was used to kill people. This example shows how media has a big impact on the governance of any country.

PAXPRESS is a network of about one hundred journalists working with 32 media organizations (radio, TV, websites, etc.) since 2008 and envisioning a Rwanda where professional journalism is a cornerstone for a peaceful society andcitizens' opinion is respected. PAXPRESS' mission is a professional journalism, cohabitation, and citizen participation through spaces for dialogues. In order to achieve this, PAXPRESS coaches and skills journalists, trains authorities, collaborates with other civil society organizations, facilitates national dialogues and radio community debates on relevant issues of concerns. Through the creation of spaces for dialogue, the organization strives to promote citizen participation, social justice, human rights, and the promotions of democracy in Rwanda.

Community Radio are spaces for peaceful and constructive discussions between authorities and citizens on a broad range of different topics, such as agriculture, education, governance, health, and laws governing persons and family. The overall aim of their community debates is to provide "a forum for the unheard to be heard" and to address the rural population in remote areas of the country. Beyond that, PAXPRESS aims to empower and focus on the rights of vulnerable groups, such as youth, historically marginalized people, women, and people with disabilities.

The historical philosophy of community radio is to use this medium as the voice of the voiceless, the mouthpiece of the oppressed people and generally as a tool for development. (AMARC, 1981) Thus, this paper attempts to evaluate various radio community debates that have been conducted by PAXPRESS in rural sectors of Rwanda. The paper mainly based on assessing the data, which were collected in Gakenke district through questionnaires mainly. Therefore, the findings will draw certain critical theory for policy makers in order to achieve a sustainable good governance.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

In Rwanda, media availability and access to information for the citizens increased over 10%, from 55.2% in 2013 to 65.8% in 2016(Rwanda Media Barometer , 2016); However, the percentage is still inadequate. Thus, some citizens are still ignoring the government policies and programs that seek to improve the human life. A country is said to have a good government according to various factors. Participation, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability, all these factors are used to measure how appropriate a government is being ruled. In Rwanda especially in rural areas, the community is not aware of its rights, obligations, and political involvement. This has a negative impact on the government status. Thus, the study aimed at evaluating community radio debates prepared and conducted by PAXPRESS; the debates that ~~insist~~ focus on promoting human rights and strengthening Rwandan civil society. PAXPRESS is, somehow,playing the role of "citizens' voice" or advocate.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to explore how PAXPRESS is promoting good governance through community radio debates. The specific objectives of this study are:to assess the role of PAXPRESS community radio in enhancing Citizens' knowledge and awareness on their rights and change in attitudes; to analyse the role played by PAXPRESS community radio in promoting dialogue on community issues and needs; to find out the contribution of PAXPRESS community radio debates in improving the relationship between citizens and authorities; and to identify good practices, challenges, and lessons learned for the promotion of community participation in local governance through PAXPRESS community radio.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section describes the conceptual review where the concept of community radio and good governance are described; the literature review focusing on three key theories such as Citizen'sparticipation theory, Social Learning Theory, and Communication for Development (C4D) Theory and empirical review.

4.1. Conceptual review
The concept of Community Radio

The 'community' in the case of community radio, generally refers to a geographical area over which the signal of that radio can be heard. Geography, however, is not sufficient to make a radio station a community radio. Community radio is properly realized when a radio station broadcasts for a diverse geographic community, understanding that a variety of different ethnic and social groups live in that geographical area, that there may be imbalances of power within that 'community' and that the airwaves on a community radio station should be opened to those members of communities who are not heard on other media.

Community radios are based on the following principles:

Access: Community radio stations exist to provide access to the media, access to public information, and access to a public forum to groups and individuals who have not previously had such access. This principle is often conceptualized as providing an opportunity to hear the voices of the voiceless, for those who generally cannot be heard in public forums. By access, community radio stations generally mean that they provide time and space for all members of the community to speak, to discuss issues of social, political, and economic importance, and to hear voices of dissent or of marginalized peoples (KBOO, 2013).

Participation: Community radio stations are supposed to be maximally participatory. They are supposed to encourage participation of local citizens in all elements of their operation, including management, planning, education and production (NFCB, 2013).

Training: Maximal participation is made possible by the existence of extensive training, both in terms of content and radio production and engineering, and in the physical maintenance of the community radio equipment. Training is supposed to provide community members with the ability to operate their station, and to allow them to go on the air and express their views, interacting with other members of their community. Most community radio stations have a 'community building' or 'educational' mission, and many stations see their training programs as empowering and educating community members (FCC, 2013).

Not-for profit: Community radio stations are not-for-profit entities. They may receive funding from businesses, or they may have fundraisers and sales in order to increase their funding, but the proceeds from such commercial ventures must go to the station itself, or to any community foundation that runs the station to be used for projects related to the station and education. (AMARC, 2013).

Community owned: The ideal of a community radio station is that it is started, operated, and owned by the community, which it serves. Very few community radio stations are totally community owned, and may receive financial support from IGOs, NGOs, local or national governments. One way that the community owns their community radio stations is through community run non-profits, community-elected boards of directors, and the creation of a membership-subscription service (NFCB, 2013).

Volunteer run: Community radio stations are non-for-profit, and they generally have a large staff of volunteers. Because community radio stations are supposed to be maximally participatory, it is important that they be run by a large number of people representing the community that they serve. Stations differ in the number of volunteers and the roles they play in the organization. Volunteers may maintain the station, build the station, produce and host programs, or manage the station. Having paid staff members does not usually conflict with being run by volunteers (WRFG, 2013).

Local: Most community radio stations have as one of their programming principles, a requirement to play local music, to support local artists and cultural producers, and to focus on local public affairs and news. Although this does not prevent international, regional or national coverage of news, and the playing of music from outside the community, the importance of supporting the local community, and of programming about and for the local community is a goal of community media. (KAOS, 2013)

Benefits of community radio

Researchers indicated a series of benefits of community radios: Community radio is a democratizing tool, encouraging participation and involvement in local affairs, political and social; Community radio provides access to the media to communities and groups that have previously not had such access; Community radio increases the political and social power, knowledge, and experience of those who participate in it; Community radio offers communities opportunity for self-expression; Community radio creates and sustains political community through its role as participatory public forum. Community radio stations are a forum for the discussion of community problems, and thus are spaces where community problems can be described, interpreted, analyzed, mobilized around and solved. Community radio creates a public, and a public sphere, where one had either withered or had never existed before; Community radio can inform listeners and participants and can focus on local issues; Community radio mobilizes listeners and participants; Community radio stations can serve as spaces for dissent and opposition; Community radio stations can empower marginalized groups, giving them skills in political communication, helping them develop support networks, and programming for their needs (linguistic, health, social, and cultural).Compared to other media, in terms of cost of setting up a station and the cost of a receiver, radio is inexpensive.Through training, community radio stations provide participants with valuable skills, in terms of self-expression and political communication, which can empower them. Training people to use and to fix basic radio equipment is a standard practice of community radio stations (Calhoun, 1991; Maiava, 2002; Myers, 1995; Lang, 2002; Kumar, 1994; Ross and Rolt, 2005; Prometheus, 2013, Prometheus, 2013b).

The concept of Good governance

In the 1990s, the World Bank became the first international institution to adopt the concept of good governance into lending arrangements for developing countries and introduce the idea to the general public. In its 1992 report entitled "Governance and Development", the notion of good governance was written as the way in which power is used to regulate the economic and social resources of a country for development.Now, the term good governance has often been used by national and international organisations. Good governance aims to minimise corruption, take into account the opinions of minorities, listen to the voices of the oppressed people in the decision-making process, and respond actively to the needs of the community now and in the future (Fukuyamana, 2013)

Sheng (n.d.)lists the principles of Good governance namely:

Participatory: Participation by both men and women is a key cornerstone of good governance. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives. Participation needs to be informed and organized. This means freedom of association and expression on the one hand and an organized civil society on the other hand.

Consensus-oriented: There are several actors and as many viewpoints in a given society. Good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. This can only result from an understanding of the historical, cultural and social contexts of a given society or community.

Transparent: Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement.

Responsive: Good governance requires that institutions and processes try to serve all stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe.

Effective and efficient: Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of good governance also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

Accountability: Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their institutional stakeholders.

Equitable and inclusive: A society's well-being depends on ensuring that all its members feel that they have a stake in it and do not feel excluded from the mainstream of society. This requires all groups, but particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being.

Rule of law: Good governance requires fair legal frameworks that are enforced impartially. It also requires full protection of human rights, particularly those of minorities. Impartial enforcement of laws requires an independent judiciary and an impartial and incorruptible police force.

4.2. Theoretical Framework
Communication for Development (C4D) Theory

C4D is a tool for social and political transformation. It promotes participation and social change using the methods and instruments of interpersonal communication, community media, and modern information technologies.Communication for Development (C4D) uses communication tools and techniques to facilitate community participation and engagement and foster transformative social change.The underlying fact behind the genesis of this theory is that there can be no development without communication. C4D theory has been defined by One World Network (2004) as people centred communication that promotes and elaborates on peoples own development needs and aims with the use of old and new communication technologies. With this theory, people are at the centre of the local and global development initiatives or programmes. In D4C theory also called "development communication" or "development journalism", the media undertake the role of carrying out positive developmentalprogrammes, accepting restrictions and instructions from the State, the mediasubordinated themselves to political, economic, social and cultural needs (Kalyani, 2003; Muyanga, 2015). Applying this theory in the context of this study, the community radio targets to engage the entire community members in the process of improved governance by highlighting key issues challenging the good governance and affect the development of the community and the country in general. Through community radio, the community members point out the core areas needing improvement in social and economic development and the central government may be aware of such issues and work on them. As example: the community members indicate where there is corruption in service delivery and even point out some leaders who are corrupts. Based on such information, the government makes a deep investigation and handle the cases. The same in health sector as well as in business activities.

Social Learning Theory

Developed by (Bandura, 1977), Social learning theory suggests that social behavior is learned by observing and imitating the behavior of others. Psychologist Albert Bandura developed the social learning theory as an alternative to the earlier work of fellow psychologist B.F. Skinner, known for his influence on behaviorism.Inthe context of media, the social learning theory refers to learning through social media settings, focusing on observation as an important aspect of learning, that model the behavior of learners accordingly.Mass-media messages give audience members anopportunity to identify with attractive characters that demonstrate behavior, engage emotions, and allow mental rehearsal and modelling of new behavior. Television and film models, in particular, seem to exert a powerful impact, and one major implication is that television is shaping humans' motivation and behavior on a daily basis(O'Rorke, 2016).

This theory is applied to the context of this study in a senseas the leaders learn from the community radios. In fact, the community members do not only claim through radios about the issues they are encountering, but also provide solutions to handle these issues. For example, the community members challenged by the issue of corruption indicate the leaders to fire for the security of the entire community and the central government may learn from the solutions proposed by the community members and make deep investigation and apply the solutions proposed and then the community and the entire country may improve their techniques of fighting corruption. Through community radio also the community members teach one another through debates and thus community radios become tools for public education. It is in this line, the community may combat diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Cholera, Ebora and other diseases where the medical doctor comes and make a teaching in form of debate with the community members.

Citizen participation theory

According to Quick and Bryson (2016),citizen participation is a process which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process. The roots of citizen participation can be traced to ancient Greece and Colonial New England. Before the 1960s, governmental processes and procedures were designed to facilitate "external" participation. Citizen participation was institutionalized in the mid-1960s with President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs (Cogan & Sharpe, 1986 p. 283).Public involvement isa mean to ensure that citizens

have a direct voice in public decisions. The terms "citizen" and "public," and "involvement" and "participation" are often used interchangeably. While both are generally used to indicate a process through which citizens have a voice in public policy decisions, both have distinctively different meanings and convey little insight into the process they seek to describe (Quick&Bryson, 2016).

Applying this theory in the context of this study, the citizens participate in governance through community radio. For example, when the government want to introduce a new system of medical care such as 'health insurance' these radios start assessing what the population think about such procedure. These debates allow the population contributing on effective implementation of such new policy and the implementation becomes more facilitated and easily assimilated by the beneficiaries. In political theory, community radio provides an alternative conception of democratic participation and deliberation, crucially providing a tool for increasing public deliberation and communication. In community radio stations citizens and non-citizens can develop their political understanding and work to bring their problems to the attention of the larger public. In this way, community radio provides a communicative democratic answer to the problems of both development and of contemporary democratic theory.

4.3. Empirical Literature Review

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters or "Association Mondiale Des RadiodiffuseursCommunautaires" (AMARC) conducted in 2006 a long-range participatory action research seeking to identify the barriers that limit the potential positive impact of Community Radio (CR) and explore ways to increase the effectiveness of community radio in achieving poverty reduction, development objectives, inclusiveness and democracy building in local communities.This evaluation was entitled "Community Radio Impact Assessment: Removing Barriers, Increasing Effectiveness"(AMARC, 2007).

The evaluation process highlighted that communities have sought in community radio a means to express their own issues, concerns, cultures and languages. Community ownership of the media and participation in programming has led to communication processes that are effectively empowered local actors to achieve poverty reduction, forward development objectives, encourage inclusiveness and participation, peace building, good governance and accountability.

The main advantages of CR are the following:

(i) Community Radio is a new worldwide tier of radio broadcasting. Community radio is a distinct media sector and a vital alternative to state owned public broadcaster and commercial private media. Communities have sought in community radio a means to express their own issues, concerns, cultures and languages.

(ii) The main social Impact of Community Radio is Voice for the poor and marginalized. For most community radio practitioners, the social impact of community radio is evidence on itself. The sole existence of community radio has a positive impact in the communities. CR allows local communities to experience alternative experiences through their access to a proximity media.

(iii) Community Radio is part of a political non-partisan communication process. Community radio is a social actor of the development process. Community radio can initiate or accompany social change and carries responsibility to be effective in facilitating civil society development and democratic processes.

(iv) CR is effective in empowering Women. Community radio is effective in empowering women to actively participate in their communities and to become citizens whose voices are heard.

(v) CR is effective in ensuring proper governance. Community radio can contribute to rendering governments accountable by enabling ordinary people to question their leaders on matters such as the use of public resources.

(vi) CR is effective in conflict resolution. Community radios in countries in conflict are known to have an important social impact in conflict resolution and peace building.

(vii) CR has an effective impact in disaster prevention/relief. CR has proven very effective in prevention or in confronting disaster relief following natural disaster. The examples go from the Tsunami in Asia, the Katrina disaster in New Orleans, in Sub-Saharan regions radios are effective in confronting consequences of desertification.

The evaluation process has pointed to following key challenges:

(i) The lack of proper enabling legislation as the single most important barrier to increased effectiveness of CR social impact (the assessment indicated that the absence of a friendly legislation; the existence of media oppression and military threats are a generalized barrier to the development of community radio);

(ii) There is need for appropriate tools and indicators to evaluate CR social impact that go beyond information dissemination indicators or small project impact in individuals. Some specific experiences point to the need for further research on how to increase the effectiveness of CR. To do so, the most important challenge is to embed participatory monitoring and evaluation across the CR network.

In order to remove barriers and increase its effectiveness the assessment recommends to:

(1) Advocate and do policy research to achieve improvement in the policy, legal and regulatory environment for community media and of the right to communicate as the recognition of CR is the single most important factor hindering CR positive social impact;

(2) Increase knowledge sharing and capacity building in the CR sector to strengthen the sustainability, effectiveness and relevance of community media facilitating the appropriation of community media by excluded and marginalized communities to better identify, discuss, articulate and voice their development concerns;

(3) Develop content exchange and social action campaigns in order to amplify the voices of the excluded and marginalized in sustainable development and to strengthen south-centered perspectives;

(4) Effectively support gender equality, women rights and voices to combat gender based discrimination and to strengthen women's participation in communitymedia at all levels;

(5) Reinforce the CR Network and communications and to strengthen alliances between community media and other networks and social movements, as well as by strengthening and harmonizing AMARC international and regional bodies functioning.

In USA, Tucker (2013) analysed Community Radio in Political Theory and Development Practice. The research investigated how community radio is conceptualized within and outside of the development frame, as a solution to development problems, as part of development projects communication strategy, and as a tool for increasing democratic political participation in development projects.Community radio has been used as a development tool, and many theorists and practitioners of community radio believe that community radio and participatory media in general have the potential to 'solve' some of the problems with traditional development (Haugerud, & Edelman, 2015;Fisher &Ponniah, 2013).Community radio offers promising solutions to the following set of problems:

(i) Community radio provides a means of political participation for beneficiaries of development projects;

(ii) Community radio functions as a development tool that does not encourage depoliticization; (iii) Community radios can intervene into the international globalization of media resources that will become a huge problem for developing countries in the coming years. Community radio provides a solution to the problemof how to operationalize empowerment that does not undermine the political nature of 'empowerment'.Citizen participation and community identification of problems, rather than bureaucratic problemidentification and management are keystones of the community radio model. Community radio is aninstrument for constructing and uncovering community knowledge about the problems of differentgroups in that community. Community radio is communicative action in process. It facilitates the makingand dispersion of local knowledge through community participation and creation of programs. Further, itcan be a tool for organizing and informing groups. Community radio stations are tools for the kind of development that seeks to empower localpeople to define and to solve their own problems, to build their community's capacities from within.Empowerment radiates outward from community radio stations. Members join, become aware of otherprojects in their community, build connections with others, leave the radio station for these other projectsencourage others to try their hand at broadcasting. Also, power builds upon power in the realm ofdemocratic participatory communication.

In Africa, Naaikuur and Dombo (2021) analyzed the promotion of local governance through community radio in northern Ghana. The study provides insights on how Royals FM and Radio Progress have, through innovative and strategic programming, become community mobilisers for tackling issues of communication and accountability in their local assemblies. The study employed a qualitative research approach. Interviews and focus group discussion were used to collect data from two purposively selected Community Radio Stations (CR), and from some community members and other stakeholders in local governance.

The results of the research are the following: Media and governance accountability.A well-known conception of media's governance role is the one which summed up the role of the media as civic fora, watchdog, and agenda-setter.

Media scholars such as Servaes (2009) and Ali (2005) are unanimous that the watchdog function of the media is rooted in the media accountability role in governance. The media act as watchdogs over society by keeping a critical eye and giving an alternative ear over decision makers and the performance of public and private institutions. The aim is to highlight policy failures, maladministration, abuse of power, corruption and scandals in society. When the media perform their public watchdog role effectively, they serve as critical checks on government misuse of power or incompetence, and enables citizens to demand good governance.

The findings established that the non-partisanship principle of CR was the most proponent influencer of respondents'' perceptions of CR stations local governance role within the politically polarised media environment in Ghana. The data confirm that the non-partisan ethos of a CR is a key generator of public trust in its local governance agenda. The data also revealed how CR in Ghana take seriously the non-partisan principles.

The study found several governance-related programmes on both Royals FM and Radio Progress. Some of the most innovative programming formats tailored towards promoting both communication between local government officials and communities as well. Mobilizing the communities for exacting accountability are the followingprogrammes:

(a) 'Yen Assembly Fuo Mire', which means Meet your Assembly Members is a standing programme on Royals FM. Broadcast every mid-week, it is dedicated to assembly persons within the Wenchi Municipal area to account to their electorates on their stewardship. The programme demands from them to report on their responsibilities to their communities and their work at the assembly as their people's representatives.

(b) 'Bombe a yiri' (What is in your Community?) on Radio progress: this was a flagship accountability program instituted by Radio Progress to present an open microphone to village communities to voice their needs and to hold duty-bearers to account. Following the airing of the community voices, the assembly members were invited to respond. Alongside, phone lines were open for public participation. To empower female participation on the programmes, separate phone lines were dedicated to them. Assembly members who have acquitted themselves through their good performances were praised but those whose inefficiencies had been made evident were blamed. Focus group participants in communities of Charia in the Wa Municipality, Loho in the NadowliKaleo Districts and Dorimon in the Wa West District praised Radio Progress for bringing the microphone to ordinary, poor and marginalised people to express themselves.

(c) 'Foo Ane a fo DCE'(Citizens Meeting their District Chief Executives-DCE) on Radio Progress: It was a weekly programme broadcast at the end of every month. DCEs were invited to respond to portions of recordings which focused on the poor states of essential services such as education, health, roads and sanitation that had been raised in the BombeaYiri. The radio listeners were invited to phone in to demand that the problems be fixed. Interviews with programme producers revealed mixed experiences in getting the DCEs on the programme. While some were described as eager and sought opportunities to appear to account on their stewardship, others were reluctant.

In Rwanda, Biraro (2015) analysed the role of community radios in socio-economic development in Rwanda using a case of Izuba community radio in Ngoma District. The research indicated that:

(i) Community radios expose corruption in both the government and corporate sector.Since people care about their reputation, media attention can provide strong incentives for changing behaviour, therefore reputational penalties and rewards can be powerful in ensuring accountability toward constituents;

(ii) Community radios often play a key role in today's conflict. They may improve the responsiveness of authorities by making the government more transparent and answerable to the public. This, in turn, reduces chances of social, ethnic and religious conflict. The community radios have the ability of preventing the conflicts before they arise. In fact, they keep a critical eye on government, opposition and society by supplying credible information and reaching a large audience, the media help in managing conflicts and promote democratic principles;

(iii) In line with (Inuwa, 2007) the electronic and print media provide extensive coverage of disasters. Radio and television could broadcast early warnings, evacuation information and increase public awareness about risks and responses as far as disasters are concerned;

(iv) Community radios are very important for public health promotion especially against epidemics and other fast spreading diseases, such as AIDS.Important developmental NGO's also have resorted to the media so as to carry out their campaign against health issues;

(v) community radios promote Behaviour Change, Advocacy, Gatekeeping, Entertainment Education, Watchdog.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive design approach since it has high degree of representativeness and the ease with which the researcher could obtain the participant opinion (Ndirangu, 2014). Concerning research methods, the study adopted mixed methods to collect data which are qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Creswell (2003), quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories). The researchers employ strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data.In addition, qualitative methods are "one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative or change oriented) or both. It also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenology, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data (Creswell, 2003). Following both approaches, the study begins with a content analysis of radio community debates prepared and executed by PAXPRESS members. From here, it proceeds with a survey in

order to gather data that can be relied upon to generalize results to a sample population and then focuses, in the second phase, on detailed qualitative, structured interviews and focus groups discussions were used to collect participant's perceptions. This facilitates a deeper understanding on the reasoning that can inform or explain numbers derived from quantitative method.

Research population and sample size

The research population was drawn in three sectors of Gakenke District in Northern Province of Rwanda. Those are Muzo, Kivuruga and Gakenke sector. Therefore, the selected population was used to obtain the sample size.Some critical parameters were taken into consideration during sample size selection. These include the desired degree of precision, the target population size, the timeframe and the available budget.According to David Royse (2008), the use of 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error is a common standard in the social sciences. These two parameters were considered with a response distribution of 50%, and the population size for each of the following survey populations (participants); the computation of sample size was adopted from Raosoft sample size calculator which are shown in table 3-5 (Raosoft, 2004).

Table 1: Citizen Sample size

Sectors	Participant size	Margin of errors	Confidence level	Distribution level	Sample size
MUZO	450	5%	95%	50	208
KIVURUGA	500	5%	95%	50	218
GAKENKE	600	5%	95%	50	235

Table 2: Journalists sample size

Participant size	Margin of errors	Confidence level	Distribution level	Sample size
12	5%	95%	50	12

Table 3: Local Authorities sample size

Participant size	Margin of errors	Confidence level	Distribution level	Sample size
14	5%	95%	50	14

Sampling Technique

The research adopted multi-stage sampling technique to collect qualitative and quantitative data where the researcher selected a group of people (cluster) who participated in the debates, from citizens to key personnel (authorities and journalists) in three sectors of Gakenke District. Through this technique, equal opportunity of being picked was ensured which increase the validity of the data collected.

Data Collection Instruments

In this research, data were collected by the means of questionnaires, interviews, and the study of relevant documents. The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data and information related to good governance that could be provided by the respondents. A questionnaire is an instrument of gathering self-report information from respondents through self-administered questions in paper and pencil format (Ndirangu, 2014) Therefore, this study used a self-administered questionnaire (structured questionnaire), which enhance objectivity and ease statistical analysis. Interview and focus group discussion (FGD) were used to collect qualitative data, considering their flexibility nature, interview and discussion guides can be modified over time to focus more attention on areas of particular importance, or to exclude questions the researcher has found to be unproductive in relation to the objectives of the research (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). Interviews and group discussions are justified because they are suited for occasions where the questionnaire is not satisfactory (Lofland and Lofland, 1984). Interviews and FGD were used to get more in-depth information. This method was used to collide qualitative and quantitative data, which enhance the legitimacy of the data and furthermore increase reliability. Document analysis and participant observation were other techniques used to collect data.

Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the systematic organization and synthesis of research data. This study utilized descriptive design and as such, descriptive statistics was adopted. Descriptive statistics enabled the researcher to reduce, summarize and describe quantitative data from empirical evidence. Quantitative data were analyzed by use of Ms Excel and the results are presented in form of tables.

EthicalConsideration

The plan was to conduct the research with adults (18+) only and to have the names of the participants remain anonymous, and so the research did not raise any ethical issues. While collecting data on the field, all the participants in the research were informed about the aim of the research. The researcher sought the participants' permission to conduct research and all the participants signed the consent form to indicate their willingness to participate in the study.

VI.　　RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Respondents by Age and Area of Residence

Like earlier mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study is specifically concentrated in three sectors of Gakenke district where citizens where questioned with the aid of questionnaires. The table 6 shows the respondents' age group with their residential location.

Table 4: Age of Respondents and their Locations

MUZO			KIVURUGA		
Age Range	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)	Age Range	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
18-25	94	45.19	18-25	38	17.43
26-35	57	27.40	26-35	96	44.04
36-45	38	18.27	36-45	67	30.73
45+	19	9.13	45+	17	7.80
Total	208	100	Total	218	100
GAKENKE			GRAND TOTAL		
18-25	76	32.34			
26-35	59	25.11	18-25	208	31%
36-45	71	30.21	26-35	212	32%
45+	29	12.34	36-45	176	27%
Total	235	100	45+	65	10%

Source: Primary data (2022).

Respondents by gender

The table 7 illustrates the gender of the respondents within their respective location. Overall, 59% of all respondents to this study are male compared to 41% female. These high numbers of male respondents indicate that male are more engaging and attend radio community compared to female.

Table 5: Gender of Respondents

	MUZO	KIVURUGA	GAKENKE	Total
Male	113	151	125	389 (59%)
Female	95	67	110	272 (41%)

Source: Primary data (2022).

Respondents by Marital status

The table 8 shows the number of respondents who are married and those who are not married. This was done with the aim of gathering an overview of the respondents who are interested with the debates where 46% of respondents are married and 54% are not married. Through this data, it is clear that the debates address all individual, this include youth and adults, which is very important in promoting good governance.

Table 6: Marital status of Respondents

Married	MUZO	KIVURUGA	GAKENKE	Percentage
Yes	132	67	103	46%
No	76	151	132	54%

Source: Primary data (2022).

Respondents by Education

Most citizens surveyed have stopped their education at secondary level. In total, 48% of those surveyed attended secondary education; 18% attended primary education; 19% attended university and 15% others who did not mention their education. It is surprising that individuals with no education, whom in this study are classified among the others, their percentage is very low compare to others. This provide an insight on the real situation of the debate where illiterate people are not very interested of these debates and hence create a gap, which still need a fill. The table 9 illustrates detailed data of the respondents' education.

Table 7: Respondents by Education

Education levels	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Primary	122	18%
Secondary	315	48%
University	128	19%
Other (couldn't indicate)	96	15%

Source: Primary data (2022).

6.2. Role of PAXPRESScommunity radio in enhancing citizens' knowledge and awareness on their rights and change in attitudes

The table 10 shows the study findings about the role of PAXPRESS community radio in enhancing the knowledge of the citizens about their rights and change in attitudes. Table 10shows the citizens' perceptions about PAXPRESS community radio where four major indicators were used to show the impact of the community debates on the citizens' knowledge and awareness of rights and change in attitude. Through the findings, 96.4% of citizen agreed that the PAXPRESS community debates educate them on their rights while 3.6% do not agree; 86.4% of citizen agreed that the PAXPRESS community debates meet their needs while 13.6% do not agree; 93.3% of citizen agreed that the PAXPRESS community debates changed their attitude while 6.7% do not agree; 97% of citizen agreed that the PAXPRESS community debates inform them well on government issues while 3% do not agree. All these indicators resulted in 93% of agreement that radio community debates enhance the knowledge and awareness of the citizens and 7% of disagreement.

Table 8: Citizens' perceptions

		MUZO (n=208)		KIVURUGA (n=218)		GAKENKE (n=235)		Total (n=661)	
		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Educate public on their rights	N	201	7	216	2	220	15	637	24
	%	96.6%	3.4%	99.1%	0.9%	93.6%	6.4%	96.4%	3.6%
Meets citizens' needs	N	192	16	190	28	189	46	571	90
	%	92.3%	7.7%	87.2%	12.8%	80.4%	19.6%	86.4%	13.6%
Citizens' attitude has changed	N	199	9	201	17	217	18	617	44
	%	95.7%	4.3%	92.2%	7.8%	92.3%	7.7%	93.3%	6.7%
Informs well government issues	N	205	3	214	4	222	13	641	20
	%	98.6%	1.4%	98.2%	1.8%	94.5%	5.5%	97.0%	3.0%
AVERAGE	N							616.5	44.5
	%							93%	7%

Source: Primary data (2022).

The table 11 shows the perceptions of authorities and journalists about the role of PAXPRESS community radio in enhancing the knowledge of the citizens about their rights and change in attitudes.100% of authorities and journalists agreed that these debates educate public on their rights and inform citizens well about government issues. 85.7% of authorities and 75.0% of journalists agreed that the citizens' attitude has changed while 14.3% and 16.7% respectively think that there is a possibility. Overall, 95% of authorities and 92% of journalists agreed while 5% and 6% respectively were inconclusive about the theory that PAXPRESS community debates enhance the knowledge and awareness of citizens on their rights and change in attitudes, thus lead to good governance.

Table 9: Perception of Authorities and Journalists

Indicator		Perception of authority (n=14)			Perception of Journalists (n=12)		
		Yes	Maybe	No	Yes	Maybe	No
Educate public on their rights	N	14	0	0	12	0	0
	%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Citizens' attitude has changed	N	12	2		9	2	0
	%	85.7%	14.3%	0.0%	75.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Informs well government issues	N	14	0	0	12	0	0
	%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
AVERAGE	N	13.3	0.7	0.0	11.0	0.7	0.0
	%	95%	5%	0%	92%	6%	0%

Source: Primary data (2022).

6.3. The role played by PAXPRESS community radio in promoting dialogue on community issues and needs

The table 12 shows the perceptions of citizens onrole played by PAXPRESS community radio in promoting dialogue on community issues and needs as well as educating on household decisions making. Overall results indicate that 20% of respondents strongly agreed and 74% of respondents agree that PAXPRESS community radio promotes dialogue on community issues and needs as well as educating on household decisions making while 6% disagreed.

Table 10: Citizens' perception on role of PAXPRESS in promoting dialogue on community issues and needs as well as educating on household decisions making

	Promote dialogue on community issues and needs (All respondents) (N=661)			Educates on household decisions making (Married respondents) (N=302)		
	Muzo					
	(N=208)			(N=132)		
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
N	38	138	32	19	111	2
%	18.3%	66.3%	15.4%	14.4%	84.1%	1.5%
	Kivuruga					
	N=218			N=67		
N	67	148	3	25	30	12
%	30.7%	67.9%	1.4%	37.3%	44.8%	17.9%
	Gakenke					
	N=235			N=103		
N	29	200	6	13	86	4
%	12.3%	85.1%	2.6%	12.6%	83.5%	3.9%
	Total					
N	134	486	41	57	227	18
%	20.3%	73.5%	6.2%	18.9%	75.2%	6.0%
	Average					
	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree	
N	96		357		30	
%	20%		74%		6%	

Source: Primary data (2022).

6.4. The contribution of PAXPRESS community radio in improving the relationship between citizens and authorities

The table 13 shows the impact PAXPRESS has made on the relationship between citizens and authorities, which is critical in good governance. From the table it can be seen that, in general 70% of citizens believe that the relationship has change and 17.5% believes that it has changed a little unlike those 9.8% who are not sure of this change and 2.6% think there has not been any change at all. In addition, 75% of journalists believe that the relationship changed and 16.7% believes that it has changed a little unlike those 8.3% who are not sure of this change. However, Authorities do not have the same perspective about this matter. This is because 35.7% of authorities believe that the relationship has change and 57.1% believes it has changed a little. In general, 70% of respondents believe that the relationship has changed and 18% believe that it has changed a little while 10% believe that the maybe exists while 2% do not agree. This is a good sign that good governance is being promoted since a large number of participants believe that the relationship has changed. However, there is still a controversial about the matter because the authorities are notconvinced of this change, this matter need to be addressed for achieving mutual understanding and effectiveness.

Table 11: respondents' perceptions on contribution of PAXPRESS community radio in improving the relationship between citizens and authorities

Muzo (n=208)					**Kivuruga (n=218)**				
	Yes	A little	No	Maybe	Yes	A little	No	Maybe	Yes
N	147	38	4	19	N	164	34	3	17
%	70.7%	18.3%	1.9%	9.1%	%	75.2%	15.6%	1.4%	7.8%

Gakenke (n=235)					Total for citizens' perceptions (N=661)				
	Yes	A little	No	Maybe		Yes	A little	No	Maybe
N	152	44	10	29	N	463	116	17	65
%	64.7%	18.7%	4.3%	12.3%	%	70.0%	17.5%	2.6%	9.8%
Authorities' perception (n=14)					Journalists' perception (n=12)				
	Yes	A little	No	Maybe		Yes	A little	No	Maybe
N	5	8	0	0	N	9	2	0	1
%	35.7%	57.1%	0.0%	0.0%	%	75.0%	16.7%	0.0%	8.3%
Overall averagecitizens, journalists and authorities									
	Yes	A little	No	Maybe					
%	70%	18%	2%	10%					

Source: Primary data (2022).

6.5. Good practices, challenges, and lessons learned for the promotion of community participation in local governance through PAXPRESS community radio.

Good practices and lessons learnt

The practice of promoting good governance is very broad since it can be achieved through various strategies. However, this study aimed at evaluating one strategy that has been developed by an organization called PAXPRESS. Through this context, Paxpress promote good governance through radio community debates because it is media oriented and thatorientation gives the ability to have all necessary means to execute this operation. Throughout the execution of this activity, some of the good practices and lessons have been observed in promoting good governance through the debates namely:

(i) Paxpress debates engage community and authorities in these debates, which at the end is a good approach to improve the relationship between them;

(ii) Paxpress debates provide dialogue for the community with disabilities, which is a good act that leads to inclination of the value and confidence of disabled community;

(iii) Paxpress debates allow rural community to interact with authorities and journalists, which is a good act that leads to good governance hence it affect higher authorities in their decision-making and furthermore affect the implementation of policies;

(iv) Paxpress debates enhance the knowledge of the citizens on their rights, household decision making and government policies.

Challenges encountered by journalists during debate realization

It has been agreed that the debates have a lot of influence in promoting good governance, however, this doesn't mean that the preparation and realization of this debate is a straight forward action where all parties involved participate without complications. Some of the challenges that have been encountered by journalists during these practices are the following:

(i) It is hard convincing/ inciting citizen to talk during its preparation;

(ii) It all goes around communication. It has happened more than once, where local authorities in some places do not facilitate our work. This is due to different reasons, such as lack of confidence, or simply fear of being held accountable on failure;

(iii) To convince local authorities who seem not informed about the laws of access to information and freedom of expression;

(iv) Misinterpretation of some authorities face of the media's role or mission;

(v) Financial means, Paxpress cannot reach the whole country. Individual local leaders still resist against media. Some citizens remain shy, less involved in governance;

(vi) Some of local authorities don't understand well how journalists can organize public debates because for them it is something that seems to be new.

Strategies to enhance community participation in governance through community radio

Despite community radio having important role on promoting community participation in local government, according to the findings of this study, the improvement can still be made since these debates are broadcasted on radio where most are private radio stations and that is a gap because participation of public radio

stations isstill missing. This gap needs an injection because it can create an enormous positive impact if this is achieved. A lot can be done to enhance the effectiveness of radio community debates therefore, according to findings. This study enumerates some of the measures to enhance good governance through radio community debates as follows:

(i) Make a follow up after debate because after realization there is no feedback evaluation conducted;

(ii) Time allocated to the debates is not enough and people always remain with that need of speaking/ expressing their concerns. This issue needs to be addressed;

(iii) Journalists who execute these debates should try to manage citizens' emotions because in some extent citizen confuse their rights of speech with what they are not allowed to do;

(iv) Inform people on the topic to be discussed before, and give enough time to authorities to explain their concerns not to challenge them only.

VII.   CONCLUSIONS

Despite radio community debates have positive impact on the community that lead to good governance, it does not mean achieving good governance through community debate is an easy task. However, it has been observed that for governance to be good and democratic, authorities and citizens have the responsibility of collaborating to achieve greatness. The media sector do not only have a responsibility of communicating and informing the society about the public matters, it also has to create platforms and dialogues which can easily be accessed by community for the purpose of expression and participation on public issues. The country government has a great opportunity to utilize the station to educate the public on governance issues and station management need to involve the community in content development.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:
  (i) PaxPress member need to emphasize on the debates that will strengthen the relationship between the community and authorities. This will be an utmost achievement for the government.
  (ii) Itis paramount for PaxPress to conduct a routine follow up because it will point out the performance of their debates and later show the areas where reinforcement is required.

Suggestions for further study

Some of the recommendations for further studies on this topic are the following:
  (i) Effectiveness of broadcasting community debates on radio and Television station.
  (ii) Sustainability of PaxPress community debates.
  (iii) Context analysis of PaxPress community debates.

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