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Homegrown Solutions as an Instrument for Good Governance and Economic Development:

The Case of Rwanda



Abstract

Development theory has attempted to answer the question of what is needed for enhancing economic well-being in so-called development countries. One way of answering that question is to call for good governance that allows people to realize their aspirations and, by doing so, to contribute to internal wealth creation. In that context, the question arises whether good leadership practices cannot but be imported from countries which owe their wealth largely to good governance, or whether homegrown solutions can contribute to that process and even outcompete external solutions. This case study on Rwanda looks at some of such homegrown solutions and their possible impact on good governance and economic development of Rwanda. It focuses on the initiatives of Gacaca, Abunzi, Ubudehe and Umuganda. These institutions were analyzed to find their contributions to good governance and economic development in terms of long-term economic efficiency and wealth creation. Gacaca, Abunzi, Ubudehe and Umuganda provide profoundly participatory initiatives that promote democratic decision making in society by involving community members in solving their problems, thus recreating their communities. These Rwandan created initiatives have proven vital in terms of empowering people and generating a grassroots democratic movement.

Key words: homegrown solutions, ownership, good governance, economic development.