ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN RWANDA: IS THIS EXPERIENCE TRANSFERABLE TO EAC COUNTRIES?

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ABSTRACT

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) played a key role in the implementation of good governance in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. Rwanda managed to restore stability and rebuild the country through structural reforms driven by RPF initiatives. UNDP contributed by building the capacity of government institutions, supporting judicial reform through Gacaca Courts, and advancing social and economic capacity through the Girinka and Mutuelle de Santé programs. The Vision 2020 initiative launched by the RPF focuses on economic transformation through infrastructure development and private sector empowerment, while Mutuelle de Santé expands access to health services, and Girinka aims to improve the economic and nutritional well-being of the community. In addition, the Umuganda program is one of the ways Rwanda can keep nature clean, and also the ban on using plastic bags can be a step in protecting the environment. These programs, along with Good Governance concept support, have strengthened transparency, accountability, and social reconciliation in Rwanda. The good governance model implemented in Rwanda, including economic reform, health access, and poverty alleviation, shows potential for implementation in EAC countries, although adaptation challenges must be considered.

Keyword : Good governance, Human security, Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF)

INTRODUCTION

The human rights violation case in the form of genocide that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 involved two main groups/tribes in Rwanda, namely the Tutsi and Hutu tribes. This case occurred because the President of Rwanda at that time, Juvenal Habyarimana, planned to unite ethnic groups in Rwanda and share power equally with these ethnic groups. The peak was when Habyarimana appointed Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyama from the Tutsi tribe. This appointment was rejected by the militant Hutu group, which wanted to maintain a single-tribe government system. Because of this excessive disappointment, the president himself was assassinated. Habriyamana was shot together with the president of Burundi while on the plane. This incident finally

triggered a massive ethnic massacre in Rwanda. After a matter of hours, President Habriyamana was killed. The targets of this massacre were the Tutsi and moderate Hutu tribes. The Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), together with the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi, began killing anyone from the Tutsi tribe, resulting in thousands of people being killed.

On April 8, 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, led by future Rwandan president Paul Kagame, launched a major defense to end the genocide and rescue soldiers trapped in Kigali. On May 17, 1994, the United Nations agreed to dispatch 6,800 police to protect civilians, but this action had no impact as the Tutsi tribe continued to be killed. After fighting desperately, finally on July 4, 1994, Kagame and his group succeeded in occupying Kigali, which showed the victory of the opposition, who succeeded in defeating the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) together with the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi.

The genocide of the Tutsi tribe certainly caused extraordinary trauma for the Rwandan people. Many families lost their family members because they were killed, many children became orphans, and many women were also victims of sexual violence during the genocide. Many were raped and killed so that they lost their rights, such as freedom and dignity. The genocide also caused chaos in the Rwandan government because many government officials from the moderate Hutu ethnic group were targeted for assassination, making the government at that time unstable. The UN was also considered to have failed to intervene to protect civilians because the massacres continued and killed thousands of people. The destruction of public facilities and places for making transactions stopped economic activities. Many people who worked as officials, doctors, and teachers were killed, so that experienced human resources were lost. The environmental conditions in Rwanda were also severely damaged by the genocide. Many rivers were polluted, so people were forced to drink water that was not safe for consumption. This caused significant health problems.

METHOD

The author uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The descriptive qualitative research method is an approach used to explore and understand social phenomena in depth. The main focus of this study is on understanding the context and meaning of the research subject's experience without manipulating the variables being studied. Through this approach, researchers can explore the views, feelings, and experiences of individuals related to the phenomenon being studied. In descriptive qualitative research, there are two main elements that complement each other. Descriptive elements present an accurate and detailed picture of the situation or phenomenon being studied, including the background, context, and nuances that accompany the phenomenon. Meanwhile, qualitative elements collect data in the form of words, images, or behavior, not numbers or statistics. This allows researchers to capture

the complexity of human experience and the social context that accompanies it. According to Moleong (2010), this study produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior. Thus, researchers have the freedom to investigate and convey research results in a more reflective and subjective manner.

RESULT

The Role of the RPF in Rebuilding Rwanda After the Genocide

As the victorious group that successfully eradicated the Genocide in 1994, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Paul Kagame, tried to form several policies to restore the chaotic situation of Rwanda after the Genocide. The Rwandan Ambassador to Indonesia, Abdul Karim Harerimana, explained that the RPF played an important role in the reconciliation of the post-genocide situation in Rwanda. He said that after stopping the genocide, the first thing the RPF did was to call on all levels of Rwandan society to unite, make peace, and commit that it would not happen again (Liputan 6, 2024). In Rwandan society, if all are family and everything can be resolved amicably, then the Gacaca Court was formed, which uses the principle of family as its basis. In addition, there are several other programs and policies issued by President Kagame as Chairman of the RPF, some of which are Girinka, mutuelle de santé, and the Vision 2020, which is the result of a meeting of all levels of Rwandan society containing the goals that all levels of society want to achieve regardless of ethnicity, religion, and culture.

a. **Gacaca Court**

Gacaca is Rwanda's traditional community court system that aims to restore social order in the community after the 1994 Genocide. The name Gacaca itself comes from the Kinyarwanda word for "grass," referring to a place where communities gather to resolve disputes. Gacaca courts provide a means for survivors of the genocide to learn the truth about the deaths of their loved ones and for perpetrators to confess their crimes and seek forgiveness from their families and communities. Gacaca courts are based on a blend of traditional Rwandan practices and the modern criminal system that also includes provisions for genocide and crimes against humanity. The system was created to respond to the large number of suspects of genocide or crimes against humanity (over 122,000 people) with short trials. With this system, perpetrators of crimes do not enjoy impunity or are free from legal responsibility for their actions (Mega Jaya, 2018).

During the trial process, they would gather on a grass plot to discuss the problem with the Tutsi and Hutu family heads as judges to resolve the conflict between the two families (Tutsi and Hutu). Gacaca focuses on confession and forgiveness because the Rwandan government prioritizes non- violent peace. Under the Gacaca Court, those who

admit to allegations of human rights crimes will receive reduced sentences (Mega Jaya, 2018). It can be said that the main purpose of Traditional Gacaca is not on punishment but on justice, namely the re-enforcement of social rules. This court functions to punish people who are perpetrators of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity except for Category 1 crimes, which include suspects of sexual violence. For those who are considered important perpetrators of serious crimes that occurred during 1994, they are handed over to the International Criminal Tribunal (ICTR) located in Arusha, Tanzania. In principle, the Gacaca courts handle all cases related to genocide, except for cases that fall into category 1. These courts are spread throughout the provinces of Rwanda and try those who are guilty without exception.

With the existence of this Gacaca Court, it is considered to have succeeded in helping Genocide survivors to punish and accept decisions for the 1994 genocide suspects. This was proven on the first day of the trial. Gacaca had sentenced 34 suspects to prison sentences ranging from one to 30 years to only being sentenced to work for their country (public service). This is far more than the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which operates in Tanzania. In ten years, the international tribunal has only indicted 81 people, of whom 20 were convicted and three were acquitted. The 54 defendants who have been tried by the ICTR cannot be tried again by the Gacaca Courts. Since its inception in 1995, the Tribunal has only indicted 93 people who are considered responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda in 1994. This shows that the Gacaca Tribunal can be an effective solution to help process and punish the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide in a short time and at an affordable cost.

b. **Girinka Programme**

As part of its efforts to reconstruct Rwanda and foster a shared national identity, the Government of Rwanda drew on traditional practices in Rwandan culture to adapt its development programs to the needs and context of the country. The result was a series of Home Grown Initiatives (HGIs), culturally owned practices translated into sustainable development programs. One of these programs is One Cow per Poor Family, known as Girinka in Kinyarwanda(Rwanda Government, 2024) The program was started in 2006 with the main objective of reducing poverty through dairy farming, improving livelihoods through increased milk consumption, and increasing incomes. The program also increases agricultural productivity through the use of manure as fertilizer, improves soil quality, and reduces erosion through planting grass and trees using compost from animal waste.

During the Umushyikirano (National Dialogue Council) retreat in December 2006, leaders discussed the dire socio-economic situation and decided to adopt a policy of distributing cows to poor households to combat child malnutrition. The scheme was later developed by the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB) and named Girinka, a term that can be loosely translated as "may *you have a cow." (*Rwanda Government, 2024). It is also

a way of greeting in Kinyarwanda where one wishes others well. The idea of giving cows to the poor was originally intended to address the challenge of child malnutrition, but it was also inspired by the traditional Rwandan practice of giving cows as a sign of friendship, appreciation, or as a wedding dowry. Of course, Girinka joins other existing HGIs.

Since its inception in 2006 up to July 2017, Girinka programme has provided more than 297,060 cows to a cumulative number of 297,060 Rwandan poor families virtually helping around 1,238,740 individuals (Kagame 2012). The program has succeeded in increasing the income of poor families and with an increase in the average annual income of households in some districts, with an estimated increase of about 15,325 Rwandan francs (about $175) per year. Not only that, the program has succeeded in improving children's health because of the frequent consumption of milk; the health of children in beneficiary families also showed improvement.

"*In 2006 before I was given a cow from the Girinka programme, I had nothing but a small plot given to me by the government (Umudugudu). Right now, I own 10 hectares of land for farming and I've recently added 4 more acres of pine plantation to my collection*" said a proud Gervais Uzabakiriho from Gicumbi District, one of the Girinka programme beneficiaries (Kagame, 2012).

Girinka contributed to the increase in agricultural production in Rwanda. Milk production increased due to the increase in the number of cows in the country. Between 2010 and 2019, milk production increased by 119%, from 372,619 liters in 2010 to 816,000 liters in 2019. The construction of milk collection centers also increased, and by 2019, there were over 126 milk collection centers operating nationwide. Girinka also reduced the percentage of food security in Rwanda, from 28% in 2006 to 19% in 2018. In the health sector, according to the 2020 Demographic Health Survey, the percentage of children with stunting decreased from 51% in 2005 to 33% in 2020; in the same period, the percentage of children suffering from malnutrition fell from 5% to 1% and the percentage of children with low body weight fell from 18% to 6. Girinka also became one of the tools to unite the various indigenous Rwandan tribes that were divided after the Genocide. because the selection of cows in the Girinka program adapted from the customs of the indigenous Rwandan tribes.

a. **Mutuelle De Sante**

Community Based-Health Insurance (CBHI) as known as 'Mutuelle de santé', is a partnership between local communities, healthcare providers, and the government, funded by member premiums, taxes, and donor support. It is rooted in the country's traditional values of community solidarity and mutual help, and it pools resources at different levels to cover various healthcare needs, from primary care at the local level to secondary care at the district level and tertiary care nationally (Health Watch, 2024) The

aim of the program is to ensure that all Rwandans have equal access to health services, especially poor families. The health insurance program can also help reduce the burden of high health costs that are a burden on most poor families. The community-based program is managed by the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), which is responsible for managing contributions, registration, and distribution of insurance benefits. Mutuelle de Santé covers all health services at local health centers and specialized services at district and national hospitals through referrals from local health centers.

Before the CBHI program, patients had to pay RWF 200 ($0.14) for consultations and generic drugs at public health facilities. Additional charges also applied for specialised services. In some cases, patients were charged an extra RWF 5,000 ($3.73) for antiparasitic drugs, which was not included in the insurance package, adding to overall medical expenses. With this program, it is hoped that Rwandans from low to high income levels will be able to enjoy equal health care. Rwanda actually has many types of medical insurance, but they only cover certain groups, such as the Military Medical Insurance, the University of Rwanda Medical Insurance Scheme, and various private health insurance plans. This leaves many Rwandans uninsured because their previous insurance had limited coverage. With this health insurance, the government covers the premium costs for individuals who live in extreme poverty or are unable to work due to factors such as old age, severe disability, or chronic illness, thereby ensuring that the most vulnerable segments of the population have access to essential health services (Kagame, 2012). The CBHI has experienced remarkable growth since its inception as a pilot project in 1999, expanding from a mere 7% population coverage to a staggering 91% the improvement if the CBHI has also led to a surge from 75% in 2016 to 91% in just eight years. This represents a significant milestone in the country's efforts to ensure universal access to healthcare (Kagame, 2012).

c. Umuganda

The word "Umuganda" comes from the Kinyarwanda language, meaning "coming together for a purpose," and has its roots in the Nguni proverb that "a person is a person through others." The concept has been around since before colonialism, with an early form known as Ubudehe, which focused on preparing for the agricultural season. Modern Umuganda was reintroduced by President Paul Kagame in 2009 as part of the reconstruction efforts following the 1994 Rwandan genocide and aims to build community hygiene and awareness. Umuganda involves all Rwandans aged 18 to 65, with older residents volunteering. Activities include cleaning the environment as well as infrastructure such as schools and health centers. Within Umuganda, local leaders often use it as a forum to convey important information and discuss issues facing the community. The Umuganda program has been successful in improving hygiene and infrastructure in Rwanda, with contributions estimated at over $60 million since its reintroduction (All About Rwanda, 2024).

d. **Vision 2020**

Vision 2020 is a development program launched by the Rwandan government in 2000 under the leadership of President Paul Kagame. The main objective of the program is to transform Rwanda into a knowledge-based middle-income country while reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of the people.Vision 2020 was a result of a national consultative process that took place in Village Urugwiro between 1998-1999. There was a broad consensus on the necessity for Rwandans to clearly define the future of the country. A framework for Rwanda's development, it sets out key priorities and provides a guiding tool for Rwanda for the future. It supports a clear Rwandan identity while demonstrating ambition and imagination in overcoming poverty and division (Liputan 6, 2024). All of the policies mentioned above are part of the programs to realize Vision 2020 initiated by President Kagame.This process provided the basis upon which this Vision was developed. The Pillar of Vision 2020 :

1) Good Governance and a Capable State
2) Human Resource Development and a Knowledge-based Economy
3) Private Sector-led Development
4) Infrastructure Development
5) Productive High Value and Market Oriented Agriculture
6) Regional and International Integration

Pillars of Vision 2020	Cross-cutting areas of Vision 2020
1. Good governance and a capable state	
2. Human resource development and a knowledge-based economy	1. Gender equality
3. A private sector-led economy	2. Protection of environment and sustainable natural resource management
4. Infrastructure development	
5. Productive and market-oriented agriculture	3. Science and technology, including ICT
6. Regional and international economic integration	

Picture 1 : Pillars of Vision 2020 and its cross-cutting areas

The Implementation of Good Governance in Rwanda

Good governance is often translated as good governance, also known as civil society. Good governance can also be defined as the implementation of development

management, empowerment, and services that are in line with democracy (government from, by, and for the people) (Widianti, 2022).

According to (Herizal et al. (2020), there are three pillars involved in governance, namely: 1) public governance, which refers to government institutions, so it can be interpreted as good governance in government institutions; 2) corporate governance, which refers to the business world, so it can be interpreted as good corporate governance; and 3) civil society or the wider community.

These three pillars cannot be separated but are fully integrated. This is because change is the task of all elements that require good coordination and consolidation. We can conclude that good governance cannot be achieved if the three pillars (government, private sector, and society) are reluctant to work together, especially if they blame each other. All aspects are integrated and cannot be separated, because good governance is a system that will stand if its elements work harmoniously and are coordinated in accordance with applicable rules and mechanisms.

Based on the United Nations Development Program (UNDO) Document, the characteristics of good governance are as follows:

1) Involving all parties to be accountable and transparent as well as fair and effective.
2) Upholding the rule of law.
3) Ensuring that social, political, and economic priorities are based on community consensus.
4) The interests of poor and disadvantaged groups are always taken into account in the decision making process for the allocation of development resources.

Rwanda has experienced end-of-world poverty where everything was destroyed by genocide; this is a high achievement and reflects poor governance. Rwanda rose four ranks in 2018 to 62nd position from 66th position last year, according to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index (GCI). This makes Rwanda the most competitive economy in the East African Community and the third most competitive country in the sub-Saharan Africa region after Mauritius, which is ranked 1, and South Africa, which is ranked 2. This is a significant achievement of good governance adopted by the Rwandan government 23 years ago. The Rwandan government has started by rescuing the genocide survivors and continues to focus its development strategy on promoting the poor and targeting the overall development of the country. A series of policies and programs have been put in place. Some of these are the following:

1. **Vision 2020**

The main focus of this vision is to create a safe environment, and all facilities are accessible to all. Rwanda Vision 2020 is a long-term development strategy launched by President Kagame in 2000. The main goal of Vision 2020 is to transform Rwanda from a low-income country devastated by genocide to a middle-income country with a stable, prosperous, and inclusive society by 2020. This document serves as a guide for the

country's economic, political, and social reforms, with a focus on sustainability, innovation, and improving the quality of life for all Rwandans.

The 7 Rwanda Vision 2020 and its implementation are:

1) **Good Governance and A Capable State**: The Rwandan government implements a transparent and accountable governance system through the "Imihigo" program, which is a performance contract for public officials. It increases community participation in decision-making and promotes accountability.

2) **Human Resource Development and a Knowledge-Based Economy**: Focus on education and skills training, with increased access to primary, secondary, and higher education. Programs such as "Education for All" and investment in information technology have been introduced to build a knowledge-based economy.

3) **Private sector-led economy**: Rwanda encourages private investment through business-friendly policies and infrastructure development. Industrial development programs and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been launched to strengthen the private sector.

4) **Infrastructure development**: Massive investments in transport, energy, and information technology infrastructure have been made. Projects such as the construction of roads, bridges, and electricity provision have helped improve connectivity and accessibility.

5) **Productive and marked-oriented agriculture**: The government is implementing an agricultural modernization program with a focus on sustainable production and improving food security. The Girinka (one cow per family) program is a prime example of this effort.

6) **Regional and international economic integration**: Rwanda is active in regional cooperation through the East African Community (EAC) and participates in international trade agreements to improve market access for Rwandan products.

7) **Cross-cutting areas:**
   - **Gender equality**: Rwanda has one of the highest levels of female representation in the world in parliament, with over 61% of seats held by women.
   - **Environmental protection**: Environmental protection policies are implemented, including a reforestation program that increases forest cover from 24.5% to more than 30% between 2012 and 2020.

2. **Mutuelle de santé**

The Health Insurance Program for Poor Families is one of Rwanda's ways of trying to create good governance in its country. In accordance with the

characteristics mentioned in the UNDP document on Good Governance, "The interests of poor and disadvantaged groups are always taken into account in the decision-making process for the allocation of development resources" is the basis for the creation of this program. Initially, there was no health insurance program that focused on the common people; there was only health insurance that was specifically aimed at certain groups. President Kagame realized this inequality, and finally he formed a program aimed at poor families so that they could get the same access to health as other Rwandans without having to think about the high costs.

3. **Girinka Programme**

The One Cow for Every Poor Family program was launched by Rwandan President Paul Kagame in 2006. This program is carried out in two stages: First, poor families are given a cow for free. Second, when the cow gives birth, the first female calves are given to a neighbor, and the neighbor will give the female calves to another neighbor, and so on. The distribution of cows is carried out with a clear and measurable mechanism; this shows transparency in the implementation of the program and accountability because families who receive assistance are also responsible. The program targets vulnerable groups such as genocide survivors, orphans, and widows, in line with the principles of good governance that prioritize inclusion and protection of individual rights, especially the disadvantaged.

DISCUSSION
Transferability of Rwanda's Experience

Rwanda has demonstrated significant application of good governance principles, particularly through various programs designed to rebuild the country after the genocide and improve the quality of life of its citizens. Rwanda's experience in implementing good governance can serve as an example for other countries in the East African Community (EAC), albeit with due regard to their local contexts. One prominent program is Vision 2020, which aims to move Rwanda towards middle-income country status. The program includes a series of policies focused on economic development, education, and infrastructure, all aimed at reducing poverty and improving people's well-being. Prioritizing the growth of agriculture, tourism, and information technology.

Rwanda has created an environment for investment and innovation. In addition, the Usiange program has been an important tool in strengthening community participation in development. The program not only provides financial support to poor families but also engages them in community projects that improve local infrastructure. This fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens and strengthens social networks in the community. The implementation of the One Cow per Poor Family

program also reflects Rwanda's commitment to social inclusion and equity. By providing cattle to poor families, the program not only helped increase their income but also created a system of giving back that benefited neighbors and the community as a whole. This approach encouraged social solidarity and mutual assistance, two values essential to building a sustainable society.
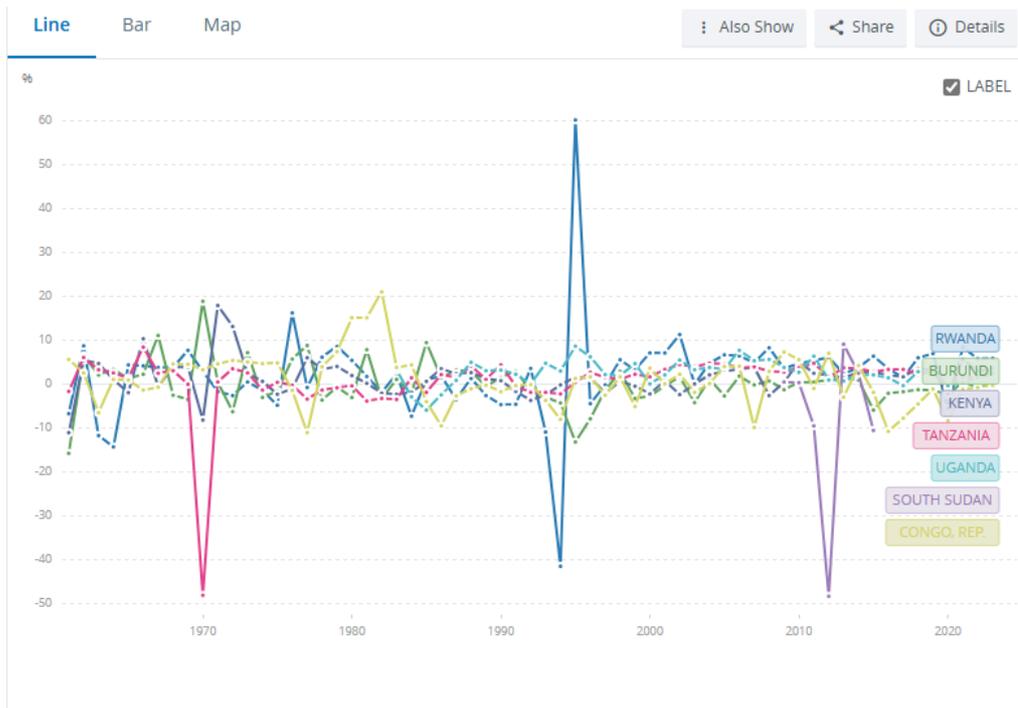
Picture 2 : Table of GDP each Country in EAC

World Bank data shows that Rwanda's GDP per capita is higher than other EAC countries, which means that it is difficult for other EAC countries to implement Rwanda's policies. Despite Rwanda's success in implementing good governance, challenges remain. EAC countries need to understand that in order to transfer Rwanda's experience, they must consider their respective political, social, and economic contexts. Active involvement of political leaders in driving reforms, support for inclusive programs, and community participation are key to achieving the same goals. By adapting the principles of good governance that have been successfully implemented in Rwanda, EAC countries can take strategic steps to address their own challenges. Rwanda's experience shows that through effective policies and community participation, it is possible to create positive, sustainable change in the effort to build a better society.

Countries ▲ ▼	Government effectiveness, 2022 ▲ ▼	Global rank ▲ ▼	Available data ▲ ▼
Rwanda	0.23	1	1996 - 2022
Kenya	-0.3	2	1996 - 2022
Tanzania	-0.43	3	1996 - 2022
Uganda	-0.58	4	1996 - 2022
Burundi	-1.26	5	1996 - 2022

Picture 3 : government effectiveness from Word Bank

The above statistics show the effectiveness of the governments of EAC member countries in 2022. Rwanda is ranked first in the EAC region, with the RPF-led government and its policies that always prioritize the poor and human equality in gaining various kinds of access. It can be seen that all EAC member countries except Rwanda get minus points (-), which indicates that the effectiveness of their government is very low and it is difficult for them to adapt Rwanda's good governance policies.

One example of the implementation of good governance is in Kenya, where efforts are being made to adopt elements of Rwanda's governance reforms. For example, Kenya has begun implementing a Performance Contracting(Mbua&Sarisar, 2013) program for senior government officials. The program emphasizes the importance of performance targets and results-based evaluation. Kenya has also sought to strengthen transparency through the use of technology, including the development of an online platform for government services that makes it easier for citizens to access information and public services.

The political stability and governance structures of Rwanda and Kenya differ. Under Paul Kagame, Rwanda has a more centralized government with relatively strong political stability. In contrast, Kenya has a more pluralistic and decentralized political system, where political forces and interests often conflict with each other. In terms of economy, Rwanda has succeeded in driving economic development through organized initiatives, such as the Vision 2020 strategy, while Kenya, although it has a larger and more complex economy than Rwanda, has a very uneven distribution of wealth and economic opportunities. The above points show that there are gaps in various aspects between Rwanda and Kenya; this can be a reference that the implementation of good governance owned by Rwanda will be difficult to apply to other EAC member countries due to differences in government systems and political and social challenges between countries.

CONCLUSION

Rwanda has succeeded in changing its governance and social politics; they can rise and change their country, which was devastated by the 1994 Genocide, into one of the developing countries in the African Continent. The policies created by the RPF government under the leadership of Paul Kagame became one of the things that changed Rwanda's political system. With the Gacaca Court policy, which aims to end the post-genocide feud between Tutsi and Hutu. Mutuelle De Sante also makes Rwandans get equal access to health and reduces social inequality. Umuganda as a place to clean public facilities is also used as a place for leaders to have dialogue with their citizens. Rwanda's policy seems difficult to apply to EAC member countries; differences in human resources and political and social differences make the policy for implementation used by Rwanda difficult to imitate by EAC countries.

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