

JADF PRACTICE BRIEF

Accountable Service Provision & Local Economic Development in Rwanda

CONNECTING PEOPLES CAPACITIES

Issue 1, February 2011

Various experiences show that the **Joint Action Development Forum** (JADF) can be a powerful mechanism to promote constructive cooperation among organizations from civil-, public- and private sectors at district level.

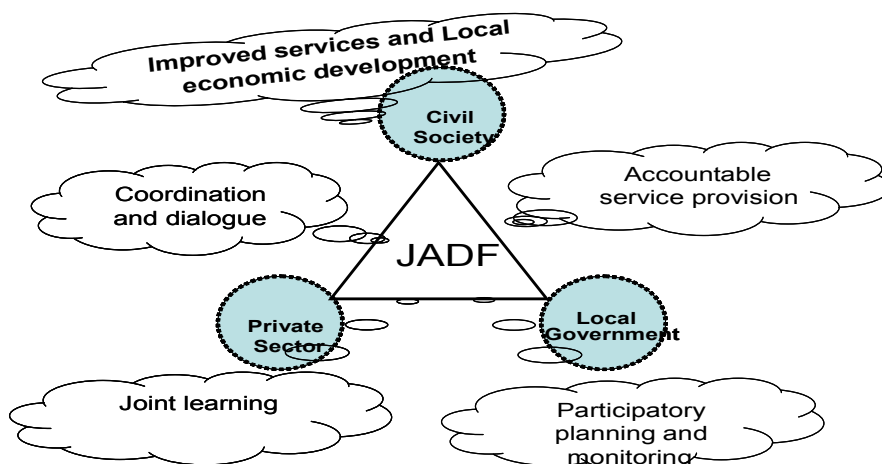
The '**JADF Strengthening Program**' is designed to upgrade facilitation skills and to promote result orientation of the JADF. It reinforces the notion that all JADF efforts are geared towards greater impact in service provision and local economic development.

The JADF mechanism was officially put in place by the Ministerial Instruction in 2007. By now most Districts have regular JADF meetings. Local development actors are learning to conduct open dialogues around common development interest. Experiences are building up on participatory planning and monitoring of agricultural development, water and sanitation, health, and education.

This Brief presents an overview of the current status and ongoing developments in the JADF. Apart from some encouraging examples it also highlights the need for further practice and learning to achieve the full potential of the JADF.



Honourable Minister of Local Government (MINALOC) James MUSONI during the launching of the JADF Strengthening Program in June 2010



Accountable to whom?

The Joint Governance Assessment (2008), refers to horizontal and vertical accountability in both upwards and downwards directions between different levels of government and between government and citizens. It also includes mutual accountability between donors and government.

National
Decentralization
Implementation
Secretariat



Netherlands
Development
Organization



Context: Governance in Rwanda

Changing priorities

Top Reformer

"The State will ensure good governance, which can be understood as accountability, transparency and efficiency in deploying scarce resources" (*Vision 2020*, p.15). In the long term development plan *Vision 2020*, increased productivity and income are linked to an effective and capable State, underpinned by good governance.

Rwanda is building an international image for being a good place to do business. Rwanda has a growing international reputation for being safe and clean, and for its zero tolerance of corruption and is now among the least corrupt countries in Africa. The disciplined progress in removing barriers for doing business is visible and measurable. The World Bank Business Report 2010 and 2011 identifies Rwanda as a top global reformer. Furthermore, government policy discussions and parliamentary debates focus more and more on human rights and development issues, through development of new policies and laws and review of existing ones. (Examples: National Land Policy, HIMO (*Haute Intensité de Main-d'oeuvre* or Labour Intensive Public Works).

Over the last few years numerous policies, institutions and mechanisms have been put into place to address governance. Among others: Office of the Auditor General, Rwanda Governance Advisory Council, Office of the Ombudsman, regulating entities, Annual National Dialogue, Gender Monitoring Office and Annual National Children's Summit. A law for access to information is in the making. Evidence-based changes are promoted. In 2009 the Skills Audit Report and customer care report saw light.

Social Values

The designed policies, structures and governance processes are intended to replicate the social values, accumulated knowledge, wisdom and capacities in the Rwandan society. For example, the GoR revives and adapts traditional concepts like the *Ubudehe* and *Umuganda* for local collective action, as well as *Gacaca* for local justice, *Itorero* for civic education and the innovative practice for perform-

ance contracts called *Imihigo*, which was initiated as a means of accountability between the central level and the districts but which now is extended to all local government levels and even up to the household level.

Untapped voices

Rwanda scores low in accountability and voice in most ratings and remains behind most neighbouring countries (www.govindicators.org). Lately however, several mechanisms have been implemented to enhance accountability towards its citizens and the level of effort in accountability is increasing. President, Paul Kagame, in the presence of his ministers, gives monthly press conferences with private radio stations, answering questions from the public in response to current issues. Rwandans are encouraged to challenge hospitality and customer care and critically look at local development and denounce bad examples of service provision. The appreciation of citizens related to service delivery is measured through Citizens' Report Cards and Community Score Cards done on yearly basis.



"Someone calling themselves a customer says they want something called service."

Making budgeting more participatory

In 2008 the International Budget Partnership (IBP) Rwanda scored 0% and ranked among the 25 countries that provided scant or no budget information to the public (www.openbudgetindex.org). During 2009 a series of activities were implemented to improve information dissemination and increase the involvement of the civil society in the budgeting process. A representative of the *Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme au Rwanda* or Umbrella organization of Human Rights (CLADHO) organizations in Rwanda) was invited more than once to budgeting meetings and has shown excitement about the room given to participate in the process. The first time the representative was invited, he complained about not having information prior to the meeting. This was corrected and now he receives the proposals and reports beforehand and is then able to analyze them and come well prepared to the meetings. During the course of 2009 even more reports are available online and a public guide to the national budget of Rwanda for the 2009/10 financial year was developed; "This guide has come to improve transparency and accountability in the Rwanda public financial management system and facilitate access for members of the public and civil society to understand and actively participate in the budgeting process".

Development Dialogue

Decentralization and JADF

The Joint Action Development Forums is one of the key mechanisms to support the implementation of the Decentralization Policy. Decentralization is a major policy and is based on the Government of Rwanda's commitment to empower its people to determine their own future (<http://www.minaloc.gov.rw/spip.php?rubrique3>). A climate conducive for collaboration between civil, private and public sectors is one of the main conditions for development to happen. JADFs make accountability tangible for the players at the local level.

Mile stones JADF history

- First Multi stakeholder forum Province Gitarama (2001)
- Replication in Kigali-Ngali y Gikongoro provinces (2005)
- With decentralization implementation in the districts of Ngororero, Nyamasheke, Musanze, Gisagara (2006-2007)
- JADF Ministerial Instruction 2007
- Integration in Decentralisation Implementation Program (DIP)
- Pilots: Agri-Business clusters, Health, Education (2008-2009)
- Program JADF strengthening (Dec 09)
- Partner MOU signed for implementation: NDIS/MINALOC, RALGA, SNV, EKN (Dec. 09)

Institutionalization of the JADF

SNV advisors played a substantial role since the emergence of multi actor dialogues end 2000. It started with the set up of a provincial pilot. SNV documented the first experiences and defined the concept in first draft guidelines then known as 'JAF Vademecum'. The provincial as well as national administration saw the emerging benefits of stimulating dialogue and cooperation between the development actors. SNV subsequently supported, among others, the institutionalizing of the Joint Action concept which materialized in a Ministerial order in 2007.

JADF Strengthening program (2009-2012)

In 2008 SNV was requested to document the experiences of the JADF so far. The result was the study: "JADF in Rwanda; experiences and lessons learned



Minister of Local government, ambassador of the Netherlands, coordinator of the NDIS, CEO of RALGA, Director of SNV and advisors from EKN, RALGA and SNV. (2009)

(2009)". The study identified that the JADF had helped to increase the social cohesion of the local actors around development challenges of the district.

The study found that not all districts benefitted from the JADF and that there was an untapped potential to empower the mechanism. The JADF study informed subsequently "The JADF Strengthening Program". The program was implemented with the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat (NDIS) under the Ministry of Local Government in partnership with the Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities (RALGA). The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) was ready to fund the concrete proposal for participatory governance at the District level.

JADF Program outcomes

1) Enabling environment

Progress in local governance needs a favorable updated policy environment. It also needs a public well aware of the mechanism and achievements. It also requires provisions for (financial) sustainability.

2) Improved Voice and participation

Dynamic development at local level depends on vocal citizens that know how to express their needs through their organizations. Local organizations need capacities to foster and support active participation and representation of the citizens.



Multi Stakeholder Platforms

3) Accountable service provision

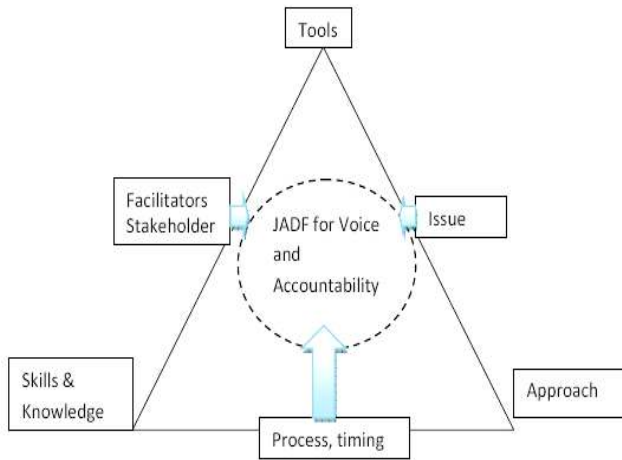
Local authorities and service providers need to develop attitudes and capacities for being accountable to the consumers and the people.

4) JADF Facilitation

The Development actors need to developed capacities to interact and manage constructively the space of the JADF. The JADF need to be consolidated as a space for sharing information, analyze policy changes and match supply and demand around local development

5) Continual learning

Capacity development is impossible without a continual and gradual learning. Lessons learned from the previous cycles are incorporated in next steps.



JADF dependence on public leadership

- From its inception, JADF effectiveness has relied on public leaders' understanding and competence. This is especially true with regard to Mayors and Vice Mayors in charge of economic affairs. So their performance, willingness, availability and turnover tend to have a considerable impact on JADF performance too. A Vice Mayor does not have time to run the JADF and the CDC alongside other duties.
- JADF is too much identified with the district and seen as an instrument of the district due to the fact that the chairperson is often Vice Mayor. People are more positive in cases where the JADF president represents a non-governmental organization.

JADF in Rwanda. Experiences and lessons learned (SNV, 2009)

tive interaction between the development actors can take place. The JADF is the space where organized vocal citizens meet accountable service providers. People who have learned about budget tracking can apply their knowledge in participatory planning and monitoring to better interact with the public and private sector in the JADF. One of the most important functions of the JADF is to provide a space for participatory planning and monitoring of the District plans. The JADF provides a system for consultation rounds before the plans are presented and validated with the development actors.

The JADF mechanisms as well as accountability days strengthen the participation of the people in the development process.

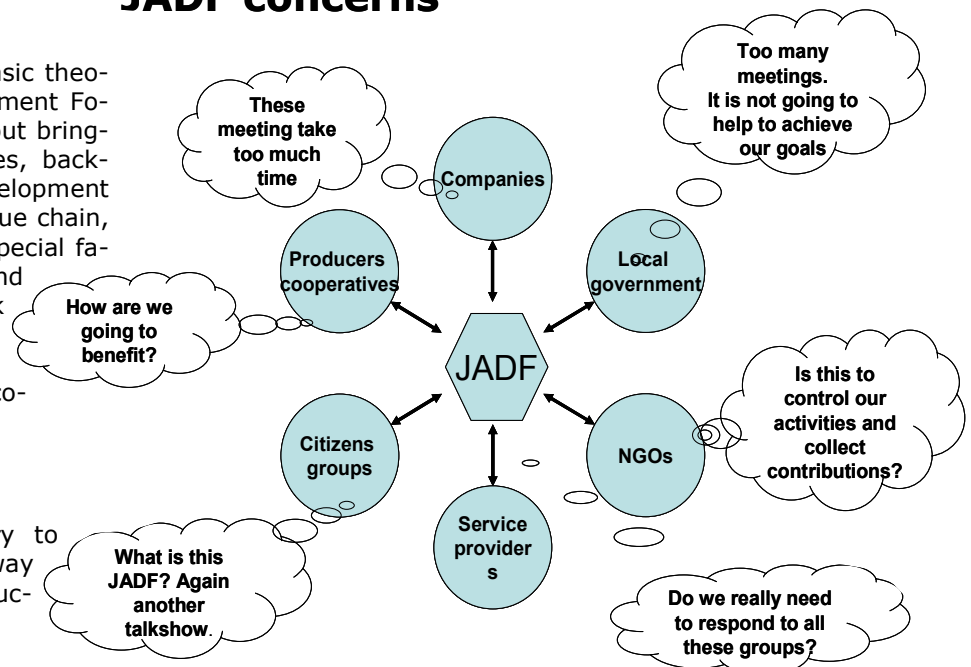
MSP for development

Multi Stakeholder Platforms (MSP) is the basic theoretical concept for the Joint action Development Forums. An Multi Stakeholder Platform is about bringing together actors with different capacities, backgrounds and interest around a common development issues. This can be an economic cluster, value chain, sector issue of public interest. It requires special facilitation skills to develop respectful and meaningful dialogues. The MSP framework provides tools and guidelines to enhance the quality of the dialogue and achieve results for improved service delivery and economic development.

Voice meets accountability

The JADF is different and complementary to other civic participation initiatives in the way that it creates the mechanism were construc-

JADF concerns



Questions



Answers

SNV Role

SNV role in the JADF changed slightly with the implementation of the strengthening program. The key challenge was had to improve quality and productivity of multi actor dialogues in the JADF. The program offers capacity development support in a more struc-

Safe and clean drinking water and sanitation is a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights". (UN July 2010.)

ured and systematic manner. SNV recognizes the need to improve voice of the civil society groups but emphasizes the JADF facilitation of the space where voice and accountability come together.

Training and coaching

MDF (Management for Development Foundation) together with SNV developed a Training module that incorporated voice, accountability and JADF facilitation. A first lot of selected Trainers from Districts and interested NGO's was trained in 2010. An MDF facilitator underlines the practical hands-on training: "Seeing a trainer facilitating a MSP is one thing, doing it is another. If you stand there in front of the group you really see how difficult it is to participatory. You easily give the word to the most vocal participant and forget the others".

The methodology used is experience based. Instead of stressing the theoretical aspects it looks at the practice. People participate in the trainings by bringing in their own experiences on the JADF. People



search together what is said about JADF in the national policy documents.

Replication of the trainings at sub national level is planned for early 2011. Meanwhile SNV advisors support the JADF facilitators with the implementation of the JADF facilitation guidelines. The Dutch Embassy gave useful guidance from the sideline and in some cases advocated for the JADF program in the donor coordination platforms and.

Partnerships

Civil society organizations are strengthened by institutions like the Civil Society Platform, Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA), German Technical Cooperation GIZ, Trocaire and the Millennium Challenge Corporation program (MCC). These institutions and programs give targeted trainings and support the civil society organizations at the local and national levels. Through these programs people are trained in participatory approached and tools as budget tracking, participatory planning, the use of citizen report cards and community score cards.

Chairlady of the District council: "Now that I have participated in the JADF and the JADF commissions I finally know the organizations who are working together for the development of the District".

Representative of civil society organization: "The JADF is presented as a nice mechanism for participation of the people but in reality the authorities use the JADF to control the NGOs and local organizations".

The JADF strengthening program regularly brings the partners together to coordinate activities.

Changing mindsets

District authorities are traditionally the ones that used to decide what is going to happen in the district. They informed the people and told them what to do. They were not used to listen to the people and respond to questions or demands from their constituents. People did question little and were rather passive because they were used to it. The people also feared to risk negative consequences of expressing themselves. In 2010 the district officers concluded that they are overcharged with work and should therefore delegate the JADF leadership to the civil society and private sector. This conclusion was communicated by the JADF program coordinator during a national meeting of vice mayors. Everybody agreed which means that an increasing number of JADF will be championed by actors from civil society organizations and private sector.

Experiences and results

Bringing actors together across agricultural value chains and sectors to discuss common development issues is showing results. Multi actor collaboration experiences are building up in education, WASH, agriculture (coffee, potatoes), health and tourism. In the following sections we highlight a few cases.

1. JADF and Education

In the past the district education officer (DEO) used to be pretty alone in organizing and overseeing the education sector. He or she has very little information and knowledge on the performance of the sector and therefore to give direction to the policy implementation in the District. District Education officers with the help of SNV Education advisors have learned to structure and resume performance indicators for access to and quality of basic Education. District officers became able to really communicate with the sector and to know the issues. The JADFESC helped the DEO and other sector players to be better informed on what is happening in the field and at policy level.

SNV supported the multi actor approach in Education at three levels: a) School (via the Parent teacher Association), b) the District (via the Education commission of the Joint Action Development Forum) and c) at national level in the Rwanda Education NGO's Coordination Platform (RENCP).

At school level SNV's support was through interns and training of some pilot PTAs. The interns supported head teachers and teachers in aspects as teaching methodology, organization of peer to peer learning of teachers, improved school management and by organizing school competition tests referred to clearly defined 'model school' performances. The idea of the pilot schools is to concretize school management issues on the ground in some cases in collaboration with VSO volunteers. The information coming out of the pilots fed subsequently discussions in the PTAs, the JADFESC and the national platform.

SNV supported some DEOs with the collection of data about the education situation conduct school assessments; organize the PTA's. The data found was presented and analyzed with the stakeholders in JAFESC; SNV was also the facilitator of a national education platform for the first year of operation (March 2010 to April 2011), comprising actually 23 member organizations composed of INGO's and some national Umbrella Organizations.

The JADFESC at district level is linked with the platform at national level through the conceptualization and design of new PTA guidelines. The PTA guide was finally decided in its structure and content in a workshop organized by the Ministry and several development partners at national level. The final document to be released in early 2011 will give a clear mandate to PTAs and will be the starting shot for a

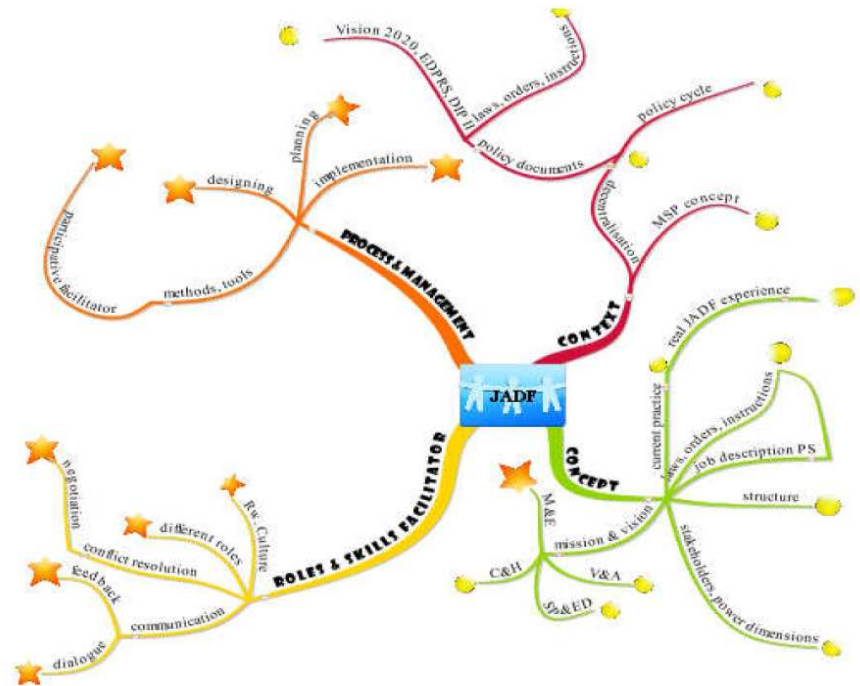


Photo 1: Mind map of JADF facilitator training.

● issues treated in this training session, ★ issues next training session.

nation wide campaign to give PTA's a stronger role in school management.

2. SME's lobby for better conditions

The Private Sector Federation lobbies on issues such as tax, transport costs and illegal trade. Some of these themes were firstly put on the table in JADFs in certain districts. The result is that these issues discussed in JADF helped to widen support and create momentum. One of the agenda's points was the requirement to close all businesses when a national authority visits the District. Complaints from the local level were conveyed and taken up on a national level. Some led to response, such as the announcement made by the Minister of Local Government during the Innovation Day (2009) that businesses do not need to be closed during the visit of national authorities.



Experiences and results

3. Addressing exploitive Child labor

SNV is partnering with Winrock International and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in the program Rwanda Education Alternative for Children (REACH). Awareness raising is a major strategic component on the way to withdraw children from exploitive labor situations. SNV decided to pitch the child labor issue in the JADF meetings. SNV developed information packages on child labor issues including (inter)national policy (e.g. child labor in agriculture, tourism and construction) and to the situation at local level. The JADF groups gathered base line information for joint analysis of the child labor situation in the districts. For example school drop out figures for children were used to sensitize Parents and teachers and create a basis for action.

4. WASH governance

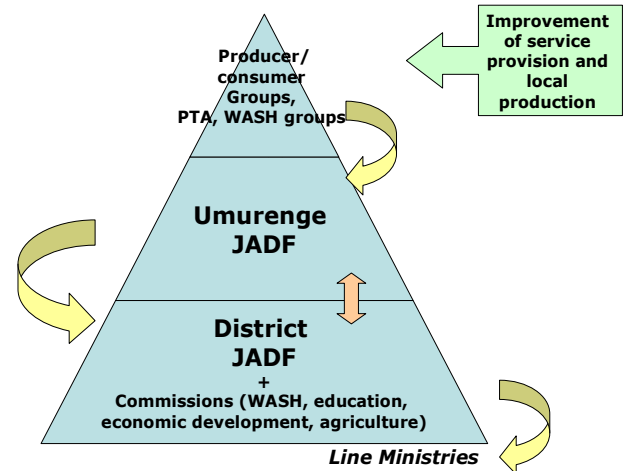
SNV is partnering with UNICEF in the implementation of a WASH program in Volcanic region. After earlier experiences it was found that more attention is needed to develop capacities in WASH. Therefore the program applies the multi stakeholder approach for large part of the capacity development component. In the UNICEF program people learn to see WASH not as a gift from the donors or the district authorities but as a human right. By stressing rights it motivates people to claim quality services and par-



Who is accountable for dysfunctional latrines?

ticipate in the provision. SNV facilitated WASH commissions to allow members to set decisions on how to improve the implementation of the WASH program. During the commissions meetings WASH program progress is evaluated and recommendations are made collectively. The following meeting follow up is done by all the stakeholders. The JADF mem-

Linking the local organizations with JADF mechanism



SNV

Connecting People's Capacities

bers set up strategies to resolve different issues pointed out by the members. The JADF platform was for example used to analyze the pros and cons of the experiences with ecological sanitation (ecosan).

Another element of the approach is that hygiene behavior activities are mainly managed by local teams including local leaders, community health workers, representatives from school hygiene groups. By giving local people these roles they feel really involved and valued for their capacity. Sharing responsibilities for the implementation beyond the conventional technicians, helped mobilizing social affairs staff to assume tasks and responsibilities at sector level. Another advantage of multi actor dialogue surfaced when discussing the contractual arrangements between the private water company and the district. By sharing more information local authorities and water consumers became aware that water price is not defined by the entrepreneur but based on calculations and agreed upon between District and company with participation of the consumers.

5. Strengthening social cohesion

This example concerns the construction of a new complex for the main marketplace in Butare. A cooperative had purchased the land and wanted to build a kind of modern shopping mall on it, with space for the traders who were already using the marketplace as well as for modern shops. A conflict emerged between the traders and the cooperative. Initially the local leadership was torn between the two positions

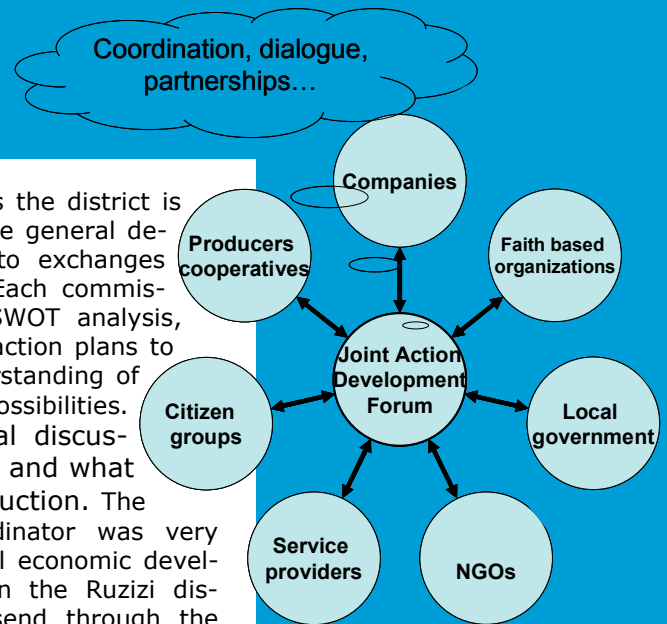
JADF for Local Economic Development

and was unable to mediate an agreement. Then the issue was taken to the JADF for discussion. In this multi-stakeholder setting, the actors managed to identify common interests and objectives. A JADF member explained how they realized that not reaching an agreement could result in foreign investors taking the lead, and all local actors losing out. Eventually the discussion and analysis of the issue in the JADF led to an agreement.

6. Rusizi goes developmental

The Rusizi district in the Southwest of Rwanda is championing the JADF dialogue for real development. Special JADF commissions treat: agriculture, infrastructure and environment and education. Through emphasizing the

thematic commissions the district is moving away from the general development dialogue to exchanges on concrete issues. Each commission uses tools as SWOT analysis, joint field visits and action plans to reach a shared understanding of the challenges and possibilities. This led to practical discussions of what works and what not in the rice production. The JADF program coordinator was very pleased with the local economic development orientation in the Rusizi district. In a circular send through the JADF network the coordinator invites other districts to come and learn from the Rusizi experience.



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Colophon

This Brief is jointly prepared by SNV Rwanda and the National Decentralization Implementation Secretariat (NDIS).

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SNV Netherlands Development Organisation advises local organisations in the fields of agriculture, renewable energy and Water ,Sanitation & Hygiene.

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