

Survey Response and Data Quality in the Evaluation of the Rwanda Threshold Program (RTP)

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International Workshop on Comparative Survey Design and
Implementation

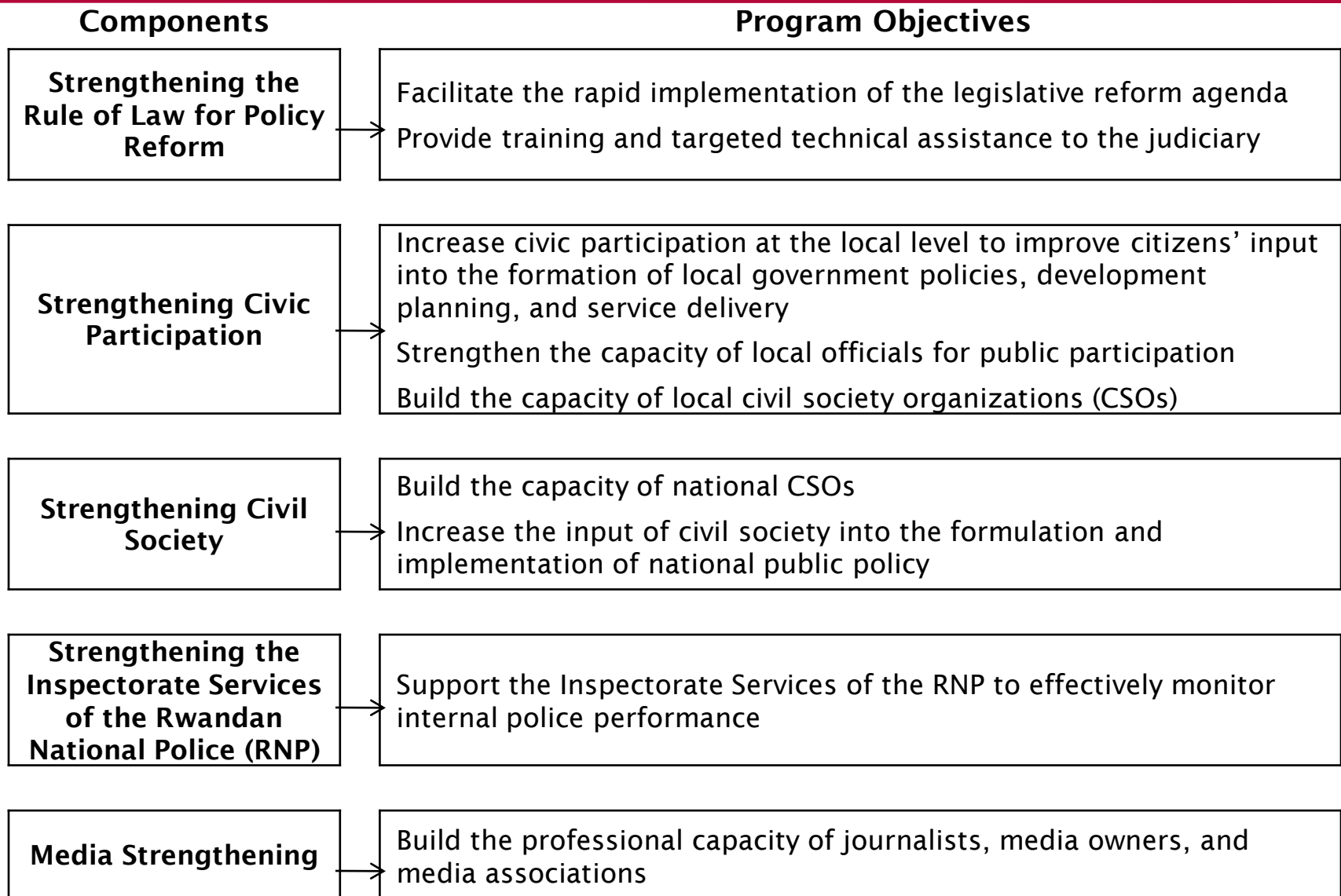
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MATHEMATICA
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Program Facts

- **RTP goals: expand political liberties, civil rights, and citizens' voice and accountability**
 - Strengthen justice sector
 - Increase civic participation
 - Promote civil rights and liberties
- **Three-year project**
 - October 2008—threshold program signed
 - Q3 2009 to Q1 2010—implementation begins
 - March 2010—program evaluation begins
- **Program cost: \$24.7 million**

Program Components



Program Areas Evaluated

- **Civic participation**: improving the local government's ability to interact productively with citizens and civil society to formulate policy and deliver services
- **RNP's Inspectorate Services**: establishing a public system through the Office of Inspectorate Services for collecting and resolving citizens' complaints about police conduct
- **Media**: promoting free, responsible media in Rwanda through the establishment of two community radio stations

Evaluation Design: Civic Participation

- **Treatment**: support for CSOs' efforts to advocate for local issues and train local government officials to be more responsive to citizens' priorities
- **Outcomes of interest**:
 - Ability to analyze and monitor the government's performance
 - Knowledge of mechanisms and opportunities for civic participation?
 - Public input into local policymaking and governance
 - Satisfaction with the provision of government services

Evaluation Design: Civic Participation (cont'd.)

■ Random assignment:

- Pairs of districts were matched using population data and economic indicators
- Within each pair, one district was randomly assigned to receive benefits during the project's first year

Evaluation Design: Police

- **Treatment: 250 complaint boxes across Rwanda**
- **Outcomes of interest:**
 - Citizens' understanding of disciplinary procedures
 - Citizens' confidence in how the police handle complaints
 - Citizens' views on whether police conduct has improved?
- **Nonrandom evaluation design:**
 - Treatment group—citizens living in sectors with complaint boxes
 - Comparison group—citizens living in sectors without complaint boxes
 - 208 of Rwanda's 416 sectors have complaint boxes (some have multiple boxes)

Evaluation Design: Media

- **Treatment**: two new community radio stations
- **Outcomes of interest**:
 - Awareness of the broadcasts and programming of the community radio stations
 - Knowledge of local current affairs
 - Access to reliable and objective news sources
- **Nonrandom evaluation design**:
 - Pre-post design of citizens living in the broadcast regions of the two RTP-supported radio stations

Implementation: Household and Respondent Sampling

- **Target sample for baseline survey: 10,000 respondents nationwide**
 - Calculated sample targets by sector, with the population proportionate to the national population
 - Chose households using a “random walk” method
 - Randomly selected an adult respondent from each selected household

Implementation: Questionnaire Design

- **Focused on 10 outcomes of interest**
- **Modules:**
 - Demographic Information
 - Media/Radio (Services and Programming)
 - Local Media/Radio (MCC-Funded Radio Stations)
 - Civic Participation (Activities)
 - Civic Participation (Opinions and Perceptions)
 - Government Services
 - RNP (Complaint Procedures)
 - RNP (Confidence in Police)
- **Translated into Kinyarwanda**

Implementation: Pilot Study

- **The questionnaire was tested in a pilot study of respondents across three districts**
 - **Four observers: staff from the Rwandan National Institute of Statistics, USAID, and local data collector**
- **The pilot study tested:**
 - **The clarity of the survey questions**
 - **Sampling procedures**
 - **Interviewers' ability to meet production goals**

Implementation: Baseline Data Collection

- **Baseline data collection occurred between January 15 and February 8, 2011**
- **Data collection was conducted by a local data collection firm**
- **Response rate was 96.3 percent**

Challenges: Design Phase

- **Lack of existing surveys on governance and civic participation**
 - **Issue:** Few examples of questionnaires related to key outcomes of interest in this study, including citizen participation and citizens' perceptions of the government; no examples of surveys on governance or civic participation in Rwanda
 - **Response:** Adapted similar survey questions where possible
- **Rwandan government's authority over data collection efforts**
 - **Issue:** Approval requirements affected survey design
 - **Response:** Maintained open dialog with stakeholders throughout the process; obtained approval with few changes

Challenges: Implementation Phase

- **Hard-copy questionnaires vs. computer-assisted personal interviewing**
 - **Issue:** Though less expensive and easier to use, hard-copy questionnaires left more room for interviewer error related to skip patterns, unclear markings, and spelling variations
 - **Response:** Thoroughly reviewed text variables during data cleaning
- **Absent respondents**
 - **Issue:** When a respondent was absent, interviewers moved to the next randomly selected household and completed the process again, which raised concerns about nonresponse bias
 - **Response:** Confirmed minimal bias by comparing demographic variables in data set to demographic data available from the World Bank and World Health Organization

Challenges: Implementation Phase (cont'd.)

■ Cultural norms and practices

– Issues

- Culture of deference to authority
- Sensitive nature of the questions paired with the authoritarian nature of the Rwandan government

– Responses

- Added introductory scripts to assure respondents that we wanted to hear their opinions regardless of their education level or background
- Emphasized the confidentiality of respondents' information and the importance of the data
- Used norming statements, hypothetical questions, and questions on basic government knowledge to gain insight into respondents' civic engagement while reducing the sensitive nature of the questions

Discussion

- **Existing survey methods may be adaptable in this context**
- **Triangulation, using multiple methods, could show whether responses are biased**
- **It is crucial to assess the development of on governance and civic participation measures**

For More Information

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