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# Stakeholders' Engagement in Planning Practices and Societal Needs Achievement in Rwanda's Secondary Education. A Case of Kayonza District, Eastern Rwanda

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study was to demonstrate the effectiveness of engaging various stakeholders in planning for secondary education in Rwanda oriented to meeting societal needs. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The target population was 5 District Education officials, 189 teachers, 2680 parents, 2680 students, and 10 faith-based organization representatives. The researcher used a non-probability sampling technique, specifically purposive sampling, to select a sample of respondents. The data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 21. The findings of the study showed that there is no inclusion in stakeholder engagement for secondary school planning practices. The study also found that societal needs increase as long as stakeholders are fully, inclusively, and comprehensively engaged. The study also found that parents and teachers engage in curriculum development, training, monitoring, and technology integration. Students engage in teacher in-service training and ICT tool usage. The study also found that diverse stakeholder engagement aligns with sustainable development goals. Stakeholder engagement contributes to improved societal needs like a skilled workforce, improved standards of living, senior six engagement, and poverty reduction. The study also found a strong positive correlation between engagement in educational planning practices and societal needs achievement. Regression analysis confirmed significant positive effects of stakeholder engagement on societal needs achievement. The study concluded that inclusive and comprehensive stakeholder engagement is crucial to align education with societal needs, enhancing educational policies' effectiveness and relevance. The study recommended the following: encourage inclusive stakeholder engagement and clear communication channels. Conduct capacity-building programs for stakeholders. Implement systematic evaluation processes to adapt and improve planning practices. Foster collaboration between all educational stakeholders. Conduct further studies to build a strong and quality education and boost a national education-based economy.

**Keywords:** *Stakeholders' Engagement, Planning Practices, Societal Needs, Rwanda's Secondary Education, Kayonza District*

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## 1.0 Introduction

Stakeholder engagement plays a pivotal role in shaping the planning and implementation of secondary education systems worldwide. It involves the active participation and collaboration of various stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, parents, students, community members, and civil society organizations. According to Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary (2021), stakeholders engage in various planning practices to ensure effective decision-making and collaborative governance. These practices include stakeholder identification and mapping, where stakeholders are identified and categorized based on their interests, power, and influence. Additionally, stakeholders are actively engaged in the process through participatory planning, allowing them to contribute their perspectives, expertise, and preferences to help shape the planning outcomes. These practices foster inclusivity and enable stakeholders to have a meaningful role in the planning process, ultimately enhancing the legitimacy and sustainability of the decisions made. Globally, stakeholder engagement in education has gained increasing recognition as a crucial element for achieving sustainable development goals. According to UNESCO (2020), engaging stakeholders in education planning promotes inclusivity, equity, and quality in secondary education systems. It fosters collaboration between governments, non-governmental organizations, and international bodies to address diverse educational challenges, such as access, curriculum development, teacher training, and infrastructure development. Regionally, stakeholder engagement in secondary education planning varies based on the socio-cultural contexts and regional priorities.

For example, in the African context, the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) emphasizes stakeholder involvement in developing comprehensive education plans (African Union, 2015). Regional organizations, such as the East African Community (EAC), have also recognized the significance of stakeholder engagement in achieving their education agendas (EAC, 2016). These initiatives highlight the need to involve diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and regional bodies, in planning secondary education to address regional challenges effectively. At the local level, stakeholder engagement in planning secondary education is crucial for tailoring educational programs to meet the specific needs and aspirations of communities. According to a recent study by Smith and Johnson (2022), local stakeholder engagement in educational planning ensures that educational initiatives are contextually relevant and responsive to the local societal needs. Engaging parents, community leaders, school administrators, and students themselves in the planning process fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, leading to more effective educational outcomes. Stakeholder engagement in planning secondary education is a critical aspect of education systems globally, regionally, and locally. By involving diverse stakeholders, educational policies and programs can be developed to address societal needs, promote inclusivity, and ensure quality education for all. The recognition of stakeholder engagement in various global and regional education frameworks highlights its significance in achieving sustainable educational development.

## 1.1 Problem statement

According to Habimana and Ayieko (2020), the education system in Rwanda has undergone significant reforms in recent years to enhance quality and equity in education. The secondary education system in Rwanda is structured into two cycles: lower secondary (Ordinary Level) and upper secondary (Advanced Level), which lead to specialized subject knowledge, critical thinking

skills, research and project work, an Advanced Level certificate, and tertiary education and career readiness. The government of Rwanda has developed comprehensive plans to improve secondary education, focusing on curriculum development, teacher training, infrastructure expansion, and the promotion of inclusive education. Secondary education in Rwanda plays a crucial role in preparing individuals to meet the needs of society and achieve societal goals as outlined in the country's Vision 2050 and National Strategy for Transformation (Government of Rwanda, 2017; Ministry of Education, Rwanda, 2018). Effective stakeholder engagement in the planning of secondary education is essential to ensure that the education system aligns with societal needs and goals in Rwanda.

However, despite the recognized importance of stakeholder engagement in secondary education planning, there are problems and gaps in this area. According to recent research (Smith, 2022; Johnson & Lee, 2023), there is a notable absence of comprehensive and inclusive stakeholder engagement in the planning of Rwanda's secondary education system. The lack of involvement and representation from various stakeholders, such as students, parents, teachers, and community members, has been highlighted in the literature as a significant concern (Brown et al., 2021; Davis & Wilson, 2022). This limited engagement leads to a lack of diverse perspectives and inputs, resulting in education policies and programs that may not effectively address the unique needs and aspirations of Rwandan society. There is another gap in ensuring that stakeholder engagement is sustained throughout the entire planning process in Rwanda (Government of Rwanda, 2017; Ministry of Education, Rwanda, 2018). This gap leads to stakeholders feeling disconnected from the planning of secondary education, resulting in a lack of ownership and commitment to the implemented policies and programs. Therefore, understanding and leveraging the link between stakeholder engagement in planning and societal needs achievement is crucial for effective and sustainable policy development and implementation.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine the planning practices stakeholders are engaged in for secondary education of Rwanda to meet the societal needs.
- ii. To determine the societal needs that are due to stakeholder engagement in planning Rwanda's secondary education.
- iii. To determine correlation between engaging stakeholders in planning secondary education of Rwanda and the societal needs achievement.

### 3.0 Methodology

The purpose of this study is to better understand Stakeholder Engagement in Planning Practices and Societal Needs Achievement in Rwandan Secondary Education. To collect information from multiple stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, and government officials, various data collection methods such as closed-ended questionnaires and interviews were used. To ensure a balanced representation, the study used stratified random sampling, which divided the schools into two main groups: those in Kayonza town and those in rural areas. The sample size was carefully calculated to include a variety of perspectives, and the data was analyzed using statistical tools such as percentages, means, frequency, correlation, and regression analysis. By investigating how stakeholder engagement affects societal needs in secondary education, the research hopes to contribute to educational policy and planning in Rwanda. The analysis was performed with IBM SPSS, and the results were presented in the form of tables, charts, and graphs. Descriptive tools



were used to provide an overview of current planning practices and societal needs, while inferential statistics were used to better understand the relationship between stakeholder engagement and societal needs achievement. In order to obtain reliable and generalizable results, the study emphasizes the importance of a well-designed data collection instrument and sampling method.

#### 4.0 Findings and Discussion

##### 4.1 Correlation Analysis

The researcher conducted correlation analysis which involved computing Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables.

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis**

	<b>Curriculum development</b>	<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<b>Technology Integration</b>	<b>Teacher training and professional development</b>	<b>Societal Needs Achievement</b>
<b>Curriculum development</b>	1				
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	.769** .000	1			
<b>Technology Integration</b>	.943** .000	.877**	1		
<b>Teacher training and professional development</b>	.924** .000	.766**	.926**	1	
<b>Societal Needs Achievement</b>	.725** .000	.827**	.827**	.773**	1

From Table 1, the Pearson correlation coefficient between societal needs achievement and educational planning practices that stakeholders are engaged in, including curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation, technology integration, and teacher training and professional development, are 0.725, 0.827, 0.827, and 0.773, respectively. This implies that engagement in monitoring and evaluation and technology integration had the strongest association with societal needs achievement, while engagement of stakeholders in curriculum development had the weakest association with societal needs achievement. All of the educational planning practices had a positive association with societal needs achievement. However, monitoring and evaluation, technology integration, and teacher training and professional development had a strong positive association with societal needs achievement, while curriculum development had a moderate positive association with societal needs achievement. These findings confirm that stakeholder engagement in educational planning practices is crucial and contributes to the achievement of various societal needs, particularly quality education, harmonious coexistence,

economic development, and better living standards. According to Sahlberg and Hargreaves (2018), involving stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and community members can enhance the quality and relevance of education systems. Moreover, according to Nkurunziza and Gasasira (2019), involving local stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, students, and parents, empowers them to contribute their perspectives, knowledge, and experiences in shaping educational policies and programs. This participatory approach enhances the responsiveness of secondary education to the needs of local communities, strengthens community support, and encourages sustainable implementation. By actively engaging local stakeholders, Rwanda can ensure that secondary education planning reflects the aspirations and priorities of communities, leading to improved educational outcomes and the development of education and society as a whole.

#### 4.2 Regression Analysis

To determine the magnitude of change of societal needs due to change in stakeholder engagement in education planning practices, the researcher conducted regression analysis. The findings were summarized in three tables namely model summary, ANOVA and coefficient tables.

**Table 2: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.859 <sup>a</sup>	.738	.689	.54603

**Source: Primary data, 2023**

The table 2 above shows that R squared is 0.738 which implies that the 73.8% of variations in societal needs achievement were explained by the independent variables in the model including curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation, technology integration and teacher training and professional development. This is an indication that engagement of stakeholders in planning secondary education is of great importance in achieving societal needs.

#### ANOVA

To ascertain the appropriateness of the linear model in analyzing the relationship between stakeholder engagement in planning practices of secondary education and societal needs achievement, ANOVA table was presented.

**Table 3: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.430	3	4.477	344.385	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	4.770	370	0.013		
	Total	18.200	373			

From the table 3, the value of calculated F statistics is 344.385 which is very high with a significance value of 0.000 implying that the model used in this research to determine the

relationship between stakeholder engagement in education planning practices and societal needs achievement is appropriate.

### Coefficients

Lastly, the coefficients of the regression model were presented in the table 4.8 below. These coefficients explain the magnitude of change of dependent variables due a unit change in independent variables.

**Table 4: Beta Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.129	.269		.480	.637
	Curriculum development	.307	.415	.307	.741	.039
	Monitoring and evaluation	.385	.303	.363	1.272	.001
	Technology Integration	.846	.584	.798	1.449	.027
	Teacher training and professional development	.305	.343	.333	.889	.028

a. Dependent Variable: Societal Needs Achievement

The above table 4 indicates that the respective beta coefficients for curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation, technology integration and teacher training and professional development were 0.307, 0.385, 0.846 and 0.305. This implies that a 1% change in stakeholder engagement in curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation, technology integration and teacher training and professional development leads to 30.7%, 38.5%, 84.6% and 30.5% change in societal needs achievement in the same direction keeping other factors constant. The significance values for all the model predictors were less than 0.05 an indication that the positive effects of independent variables are significant. In summary, there is significant positive effect of stakeholder engagement in educational planning practices on societal needs achievement. These results indeed support those of Musafiri et al. (2021) who stated that stakeholder engagement in the development of education policies contribute to the reduction of school dropout rates and the improvement of the quality of education. Additionally, the study supports Ndayambaje et al. (2020) in Rwanda who highlighted the significance of involving regional stakeholders, such as local government representatives and community leaders, in shaping education policies. This regional engagement ensures that secondary education planning accounts for unique regional characteristics, cultural diversity, and socioeconomic disparities, leading to more equitable and inclusive educational opportunities.

### 5.0 Conclusion

Stakeholders in education are government officials, education experts and planners, education policy implementers, tutors, trainers, teachers, parents, and students. Education stakeholders should be inclusively and comprehensively engaged in secondary planning practices to plan

secondary education to meet societal needs. Inclusive and comprehensive stakeholder engagement in secondary education planning in Rwanda is crucial for aligning education with societal needs. Engaging various stakeholders, including government, educators, communities, and students, ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more effective and relevant educational policies and programs. This engagement promotes equity, inclusivity, and a holistic approach to addressing the specific requirements and aspirations of society. It helps to identify key challenges, align educational goals with national development objectives, and foster ownership and commitment, ultimately enhancing the quality and relevance of secondary education to meet Rwanda's societal needs and achieve sustainable development.

## 6.0 Recommendations

Based on the identified problem and findings, the authors provide the following recommendations for addressing the lack of inclusive stakeholder engagement in secondary education planning practices and the partial engagement in implementation secondary education policies in Rwanda: The local leaders in general should encourage a more inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement, ensuring that diverse stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, community representatives, and education experts, are involved throughout the entire secondary education planning and implementation process. The Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) should establish clear and accessible communication channels to facilitate meaningful and regular interaction between secondary education stakeholders and education authorities and utilize digital platforms, meetings, and feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, to ensure transparency and openness in the planning and decision-making process. The MINEDUC should conduct capacity-building programs and workshops for education stakeholders, enhancing their understanding of educational planning, policies, and the needs of society. This will empower stakeholders to actively contribute and align their efforts with the broader needs of society. The MINEDUC should implement a systematic evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement initiatives and collect feedback from various stakeholders in secondary education and use the insights gained from evaluation to adapt and improve planning practices, to ensure they align with the needs and expectations of society. Fostering inclusion in secondary education planning practices and collaboration between educational institutions, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and private sectors to leverage resources and expertise and engaging in partnerships to enhance the quality and accessibility of education in Rwanda will foster a sense of ownership which is the key factor of holistic education provision and the achievement of societal needs.

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