

Family-related challenges, particularly school dropouts and teenage pregnancies, remain among the most pressing concerns in Rwanda's Eastern Province, Governor Pudence Rubingisa said during a two-day provincial retreat this week.

The retreat, held in Rwinkwavu Sector, brought together provincial leaders, district executive committees, council chairpersons, and representatives from government institutions operating in the province. Discussions focused on obstacles undermining community development, including family conflicts, child labor, teenage pregnancies, and school dropouts.

"Family issues are our biggest concern. We have families in conflict and children who are not attending school because they are being used for labor. Even if the numbers are not large, it worries us because these are our children. Even one child missing school is unacceptable. We also have girls who fall pregnant, and while we support them, those responsible must be held accountable," Rubingisa said.

He noted that these challenges often lead to other problems, preventing families from focusing on improving their livelihoods. He stressed that local leaders had committed to working together to address these issues.

Gatsibo District Mayor Richard Gasana said the retreat provided an opportunity for leaders to share innovative practices and strengthen collaboration across different levels of local government.

"Where we identified challenges, we committed to solving them by involving all administrative structures, from the district to the village level. We realized not everyone had been working in harmony, so we came out of this retreat with a clear resolution to collaborate better," Gasana said.

The retreat concluded with additional resolutions, including boosting innovation to address community challenges, building staff capacity, strengthening teamwork to fast-track national programs, improving service delivery, and using technology for data collection and performance tracking.