



The

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Rwanda Basic Education

Newsletter



**TECH IN EDUCATION TAKES
CENTRE STAGE DURING
TEACHERS' DAY CELEBRATIONS**



REB | **RWANDA BASIC
EDUCATION BOARD**

THE FOUNDATION OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY IS LAID ON OUR TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGES

Dear valued reader,

Education stands as a cornerstone of progress, empowering individuals and driving societal advancement. At the heart of this process lie teachers, architects of young minds and shapers of futures. But in a globalized world, where information and connection transcend borders, equipping teachers with robust English language skills becomes not just crucial, but indispensable.

This fourth edition of the Rwanda Basic Education newsletter delves into the profound impact of cultivating strong English proficiency among teachers-in-training. It goes beyond mere fluency, advocating for a deeper understanding and confident use of the language.

This emphasis transcends the benefits for teachers themselves, creating a powerful ripple effect that empowers learners and enriches the entire educational landscape.

Imagine a classroom where the teacher navigates complex concepts with articulate ease, using English as a tool to unlock new worlds of knowledge for their students. Picture the excitement ignited in young minds as they engage with diverse resources, collaborate with international peers, and express themselves clearly on a global stage. This is the transformative power of an English-proficient teacher – a catalyst for enhanced learning, broadened perspectives, and future-proofed communication skills in their students.

The foundation for such impact is laid in teacher training colleges. By entrenching English within the curriculum, fostering active practice, and nurturing a commitment to lifelong language learning, we equip future educators with the tools they need to thrive. This, in turn, creates a positive feedback loop. Confident teachers create confident learners, leading to improved academic performance, enhanced critical thinking skills, and a greater ability to access and contribute to the global knowledge conversation.

Beyond academic benefits, fostering English proficiency in teachers fosters cultural understanding and inclusivity. It enables them to connect with students from diverse backgrounds, celebrate difference, and create classrooms that reflect the richness of our interconnected world. In a globalized society, where collaboration and understanding are critical, teachers serve as bridges, and English becomes the language of connection.

However, achieving this vision requires a multi-pronged approach. We must provide effective training programs, cultivate a supportive learning environment, and encourage continuous professional development. By investing in teachers, we invest in the future, fostering generations of empowered learners and responsible global citizens.

So, let us turn the pages, engage in the discourse, and commit to fostering a generation of educators who can confidently guide their students towards a brighter, more connected future, armed with the invaluable tool of language. For in the words of Nelson Mandela, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart.” Let us equip our teachers to speak to the hearts and minds of their students, not just in their native tongue, but in the language of the world.

Like the previous one, we produced this newsletter in partnership with the World Bank.

Dr. Nelson MBARUSHIMANA
Director General, Rwanda Basic Education Board

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GREENING MINDS, GROWING FUTURES: THE JOURNEY OF ECO-SCHOOLS IN RWANDA

In Rwanda, a pioneering initiative has been reshaping the landscape of education and environmental consciousness. Since 2020, the Eco-Schools Program in Rwanda, led by the Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS) in collaboration with Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and various stakeholders, has evolved into an inspiration of sustainable education and environmental stewardship.

Supported by the Civil Society Development Fund (CISU) through the Danish Outdoor Council (DOC), the program has left an indelible mark on 40 primary and secondary schools over four transformative years.

The Eco-Schools initiative spans from early childhood education to university levels and operates in 73 countries worldwide by members of the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). In East Africa, the program is implemented in Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda. In the last two mentioned countries, the program is implemented by ARCOS.

The Eco-Schools Program is designed to cultivate active citizenship and empower young people to make positive environmental changes to their school and wider community. It starts in the classroom and expands to the community by engaging the next generation in action-based learning. The program, in Rwanda, is aiming to infuse the principles of Education for Sustainable Development into the existing Competence Based Curriculum. Operating in four districts—Bugesera, Kirehe, Rutsiro, and Rulindo—40 schools actively participated in the Eco-Schools Program between 2020 and 2023. Over this period, an astounding 1602 teachers and 48,869 students underwent training on various approaches, including the Investigation-Vision-Action-Change (IVAC) approach and strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

A standout achievement of the program is the establishment of “Green Learning Zones” in each participating school, featuring tree nurseries, green food gardens, composting facilities, and livestock management. These zones serve as vibrant hubs for fostering eco-friendly practices, embedding sustainability within the daily lives of students and the wider community and improving education

programs including school feeding, waste management, water harvesting, etc.

In addressing gender-based violence and barriers affecting girls’ education, the Eco-Schools Program trained 120 individuals, including students, teachers, parents, and community members, reflecting a commitment to promoting gender equity and creating an inclusive educational environment.

Jean Bosco Kagabo, a teacher at GS Kibungo, provided insights into the profound impact of the program on communities: “Education is the key to change, and the Eco-Schools Program has unlocked the potential within communities. It’s not just about teaching students; it’s about fostering a holistic approach that involves teachers, parents, and the wider community. This collaborative effort ensures that sustainability becomes a way of life.”

Future Endeavors of the Eco-Schools Program

Looking ahead, the Eco-Schools Program



aims to extend its reach to 500 primary and secondary schools in Rwanda within the upcoming 5 years, with at least 15% of them having been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award by 2028. The next five year ambitious plan also involves enhancing teachers' capacity through the dissemination of the Eco-Schools' Teachers Training manual and training of at least 12,000 teachers (5,000 in primary schools and 7,000 in secondary schools) on Eco-Schools methodologies and Education for Sustainable Development. Looking forward, the program's commitment to sustainability and dissemination is evident in its strategic collaboration with

16 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). This partnership, extending from the development of the Training Manual to the ongoing implementation of the program, underscores the dedication to ensure the longevity and widespread impact of the Eco-Schools Program in Rwanda.

Furthermore, the program envisions empowering 25,000 students to develop and implement climate-resilient micro-projects at both school and household levels, with a focus on enhancing entrepreneurship skills and improved livelihood. In parallel, 12,000 parents and the local community are targeted for empowerment to support students' initiatives on climate change resilience and contribute to schools' governance, advocating for quality education.

Dr. Sam Kanyambwa, Founder, and CEO of ARCOS, expressed his visionary outlook, stating, "As we move forward, our commitment intensifies. We aim to strengthen collaboration with educational actors, including CSOs, NGOs, Ministries, and other Government Agencies, to mobilize resources and promote quality Education for Sustainable Development.

The journey of the Eco-Schools Program in Rwanda is not merely a testament to the past; it is a promise for a sustainable and ecologically conscious future."



48,869

1602 teachers and 48,869 students underwent training on various approaches, including the Investigation-Vision-Action-Change (IVAC) approach and strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation



40

40 schools actively participated in the Eco-Schools Program between 2020 and 2023



Students present to the District Director of Education the GLZ

NURTURING A GENERATION OF ENGLISH PROFICIENT EDUCATORS

Imagine a situation where all the learners in the country use flawless English, teachers are able to effortlessly explain complex concepts, and students confidently engage in discussions without language barriers.

This is not a dream, but the ambitious goal of Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) in its groundbreaking initiative to elevate English proficiency among future educators.

Through the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), REB is nurturing a generation of future teachers by not only equipping them with skills required in their respective fields but also in boosting their spoken as well as written English language, the main medium of academic delivery in Rwanda.

The aim is to promote English proficiency among students by promoting four main skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening – the key elements in any language’s proficiency.

Besides, schools were encouraged to form English clubs that promote the four skills. As a result, all the 16 TTCs have English clubs.

Through the clubs, students – facilitated by English teachers – meet regularly to debate on different topics, listen to recordings, read books and write about different topics.

“We want to nurture a generation of teachers who can speak, read, write and listen in English seamlessly,” says Gerard Murasira, the Director of the Teacher Training Unit at REB.

To be a driving force behind this

transformative vision, Murasira says REB is working hand-in-hand with TTCs to make it a reality.

“We hope that by training TTC students, we are empowering future teachers and this will have an impact in the entire education sector,” he adds.

Over the past years, TTCs received teaching and learning materials which are fueling immersive English experience and helping students to master the English language.

Proficiency competition

But availing teaching and learning materials is not enough for an ambitious country that promotes a competence-based education. REB introduced English Proficiency Competition in TTCs as a platform to showcase students’ talents and potential, push boundaries and groom them to become confident English speakers.

“Learning does not end in textbooks and exploiting other teaching and didactic resources,” says Murasira.

“That is why REB introduced English proficiency competition across TTCs to promote a conducive environment and hone students’ skills,” he adds.

It is from that competition that schools like TTC Gacuba II from Rubavu district and TTC Mururu from Rusizi district demonstrated how they maximally exploited provided learning and teaching materials and excelled in the English Proficiency Competition.

During the inaugural English Proficiency

Competition held last year, TTC Gacuba emerged the overall winner in all skills, while TTC Mururu topped the debate category.

“TTC Gacuba II was awarded as overall winner, that is for all the skills, but since we have a serious issue with spoken English, we thought of making an exception in debate, that is why we had debate at the grand final and TTC Mururu won in that category,” Murasira explains.

The competition was organized at different levels, starting from school level then to the zonal level where TTCs competed based on their location before being taken to the national level, according to the officials.

Schools share their secrets

For Gerard Bahizi, the principal of TTC Gacuba II, emerging the overall winner in the English Proficiency Competition was not something they achieved by chance. It is a result of teamwork and consistency. Over the past four years, the school established an English club, which consistently helped students improve their English language across the major elements of speaking, writing, reading and listening.

For instance, the school has dedicated one hour every Monday where students meet and debate on different topics.

“Students are given topics and divided into two groups: Proposers and opposers, some teachers act as judges while other students are the audience,” Bahizi explains.

“Apart from the debate, the principal says that students are assisted to work around other skills given their respective competency and preference.

Students from TTC Gacuba II interact with one of Zimbabwean teachers as one of ways to improve English proficiency.



Some have joined a group that focuses on listening, others in reading while others are in a writing group.

“But we make sure that all skills are nurtured fairly,” he adds.

Bahizi says the English club has been an important platform for students to improve English skills and prepare them for the English Proficiency Competition.

More efforts, according to him, were put in when TTCs started preparing for the English Proficiency Competition.

“After we identified students to compete at school level, we started intensive training and organized rehearsals for them...they also trained regularly in all skills and were ready for the competition the moment it started,” he says.

“But the main secret was that we inculcated confidence among the students and ensured time management during the debate.”

The school was awarded a trophy and six students were awarded with computers that will help them in their studies.

“We are glad our school emerged as overall winners and was awarded. We are also happy that our students were given laptops, students and teachers are now more motivated than ever, we are committed to keeping the spirit and winning more competitions in the future,” Bahizi says.

According to Elie Twagirayezu, the principal of TTC Mururu, students are encouraged to use English language only at school.

To do that, every class is given a card that is passed on to any students who speaks other language and the report is produced to see which class that violates the mandatory use of English.

Besides, students also have an English club where they improve the four skills like in other TTCs.

“Our English club meets every Saturday but we promote the use of English in our daily life. We have cards that we give to someone who speaks Kinyarwanda to encourage English speaking, students are punished for speaking Kinyarwanda and this helps improve English,” he says.

“We have particularly nurtured debaters at our school and ensure that students understand different aspects so that they are able to engage themselves in any topic, we encourage them to read and write about

different topics as well,” Twagirayezu adds.

That culture of debate, writing and reading helped TTC Mururu students to emerge as the best debate team and were recognized for that.

TTC Mururu has 743 students.

“We are eager to keep the spirit and even train more so that our students are fluent as it helps them learn well and will help them when they leave the school and start teaching. We are happy we are grooming a generation that will promote English proficiency in schools in the future,” Twagirayezu says.

TTC Mururu debate team made up of seven members won seven laptops as a recognition of their outstanding debate skills.

The Zimbabwean teachers' effect

It is almost impossible to talk about enhancement of English skills in TTCs without mentioning the role played by the recently recruited Zimbabwean teachers. The teachers were recruited by the government to help improve quality education and boost English skills.

According to heads of school, Zimbabwean teachers are key pillars in promoting the English language and will undoubtedly contribute to the attainment of English proficiency in TTCs.

“Zimbabwean teachers are very active and have changed the way English is taught in our school,” says Bahizi.

“They have introduced a more participatory approach of teaching where learners play a big role and drive the learning process. They teach, coach and mentor students in a way that is enjoyable.”

He says that almost two years after the Zimbabwean teachers started working at TTCs, there is a remarkable impact in English skills not only for students but also for teachers who also learn from their foreign colleagues.

The journey is long but schools are prepared and there is hope English proficiency will be attained.

“We are grateful that we have got the competent Zimbabwean teachers who are significantly changing how English is taught, our students are improving their skills and are so motivated to speak freely and learn from the teachers,” says Twagirayezu, who also hailed REB for

availing required learning and teaching materials.

Lindiwe Sibanda, a teacher from Zimbabwe, teaches English at TTC Gacuba and is a mentor in the English club.

She says that she was amazed to see how eager students are to learn English and master the four skills and expressed optimism that proficiency will one day be attained.

“Being interested in a second language requires motivation especially to older learners so what I do is to use rhymes, games or music that's related to what I want to do with them so that they are eager to listen,” Sibanda says.

She says as teachers they encourage students to tell them anything in English so that they feel confident and comfortable enough to talk freely as they know they have the support of teachers.

“So, I teach them songs, games and rhymes. We also do this during formal lessons. Another way is to show them people who excelled against all odds. Learners need to dream big, have ambitions and that's what we are trying to do,” Sibanda adds. She also thinks that English should be used in all school activities if learners are to fully benefit.

“For instance, at the moment English isn't being used at assembly which in my opinion is a hindrance to learners. Training a few students for competition benefits only those ones but if the entire school used it from morning to 5pm, I believe that our national performance will definitely improve.”

For TTC students like Merveille Akamanzi, a conducive environment and provided support would enable them to become more skilled in English and competent enough when they start teaching.

“We are happy that we have an English club and qualified teachers who are helping us improve our English. I am particularly happy that I am among the first beneficiaries as I participated in the English Proficiency Competition and emerged the second winner in the reading category,” says the second-year student at TTC Gacuba II.

“I am ready to keep learning and taking on any challenge, I hope that with the rate of progress we are making, I will be able to improve my English skills even further and make an impact when I start teaching a few years from now,” she adds.

THERE ARE POCKETS OF SUCCESS IN RWANDA'S QUALITY OF EDUCATION, BUT THERE REMAINS MUCH TO DO – MOS IRERE



Minister of State for Education Claudette Irere

To start with; let us talk about English language proficiency; lately the education sector has been putting focus on improving English language proficiency starting with teachers' training colleges. Why that?

English being our language of instruction, it is very important in our curriculum. And we are cognizant of the fact that we are a monolingual country and as such teaching and learning in a foreign language is not as easy as one would expect. While we are observing significant improvement in students' grades in national exams when it comes to English, we are not observing the same when it comes to sciences and one of our key assumptions is that their understanding of the language is not enough to allow them to understand and perform well in science courses.

It is therefore important that English proficiency takes center stage if we are to see improvement in students' performance overall. Going forward, our recruitment of teachers is going to consider their overall English proficiency and candidates that do not meet the set threshold will not be considered. Similarly, continuous routine

proficiency tests will be administered and tied to the different incentives teachers get.

It's our belief that if teachers continuously improve and invest in themselves intellectually and in the language, students are better for it. And at the core of our policy to teach in English, is that it is a language that connects us to the rest of the world and allows for smooth integration of our human capital into regional and global workforce.

Let's talk about robotics, a subject I know you are very passionate about. How are these helping you in the quest to improve academic delivery?

So many subjects are taught to students in abstract. For instance, maths, chemistry and physics or even biology are difficult to comprehend until you can relate them to practical examples. The beauty of robotics is that it's one of the tools that connects theory to practice or real life problem solving.

So by introducing robotics to our schools, students are able to practically understand many of the subjects they learn in theory as well as prepare them for a world where

technology is at the centre of all operations. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, so to speak.

While robotics can be seen as trendy, for us it goes beyond the trends in education and technology; it is a tool we use to help our students to easily comprehend what they otherwise learn in abstract and at times not even understand.

At the event to mark the Teachers' Day, you unemphatically said that technology was going to be at the centre of learning in Rwanda. Why the call now and paint for us a picture on the state of technology in Rwanda.

I think Rwanda had done a good job before Covid in ensuring that schools are connected and have devices that teachers are trained to use but when Covid hit and schools had to close for almost two years, no one was using any of the technologies that we had deployed in schools. We had to resort to radio and television for academic delivery, which really was not efficient because you cannot assess if anyone is really following.

While we will continue to equip schools

INTERVIEW

with connectivity, devices and content, we want our interventions going forward to be centered around resilience with sustainability in mind, should there be any other event that forces us to close again.

Our education system relies heavily on the teacher and therefore if they have all the tools, they can teach from wherever they are. And with that in mind, we want to design schemes that allow teachers to own devices with connectivity and content at an affordable rate.

We want to also see how we can create an environment for learners to interact and like technology; good tech activities that are exciting; be it events, be it spaces at the schools because the young people are demanding such.

Can you give us an example of some of the things that you are doing to help schools create a good environment for learners to enhance their affinity to technology?

For instance, we launched the robotics competition last year bringing together several schools and we try to mobilize and prepare learners ahead of time... for example, if you start mobilizing by December for a competition that is going

to be held in March, then you are building excitement and demanding of teams to work towards the big event. And in tandem, we have also organized the AI hackathon and the finals will be held at the same time.

While students are working towards the big day, they are forced to work in teams and use these facilities that they have. We have encouraged their teachers to also participate and the private sector to also come in and support the schools.

On the final day, you have not only built excitement around these but students have also learnt to work in teams, the tech spaces they have at school have been put to good use and in support of their school teachers and parents. We have seen many schools responding to this with excitement and we think that by creating more of these initiatives that students work on during school time is more efficient.

More closely related, I want you to also talk about STEM. How are we performing on that front?

Specifically about STEM, I would say right now we are not doing very well, especially in our day schools. Many of our day schools are still not equipped with the tools necessary for learners to comfortably

study STEM subjects among many other challenges.

But that is what we are going to focus on during the upcoming fiscal years. We have already planned for that and we are looking at different alternatives because STEM needs a dedicated environment which is at times costly.

So I would say it's a journey...have we made progress? Yes, a lot; but are we where we want to be? No, we still have much to do ahead of us.

Can you explain why boarding schools are doing better than day school when it comes to STEM?

Many of the boarding schools are older schools; they've been here for a while and so they've been able to garner support in terms of different facilities, while many of the day schools are built as the need arises...our idea is to ensure that in every community, students can access schools easily first and then equip the schools as we go.

For instance, apart from the IDP (Integrated Development Programme) schools, and a few other exceptions like border schools and some Presidential pledges; we haven't built any other boarding facility in a span of





say five years. So now that we are at a place where we can comfortably say that schools are within the proximity of our learners, equipping them is going higher up in terms of priority.

What then is the uptake of STEM amongst girl learners?

For girls, it is the same; the situation is not as we would want it but then when it comes to girls it even becomes more difficult because of the traditional mentality that STEM is hard and therefore it is for boys.

However, we have also seen encouraging trends and I think it's because they are seeing many cohorts of women that have graduated in STEM doing well for themselves and becoming role models.

Also, the awareness activities that many of our partners embarked on to encourage girls to pursue STEM are yielding encouraging results.

More to this, from a personal bias- there is also one beautiful thing I personally like and that is the establishment of girls-only schools that are exclusively teaching STEM. This is good because once these schools are

able to increase their enrolling capacity, we will be able to see more girls joining.

Let's talk about foundational learning. So much has been talked about in the recent past regarding the very deliberate efforts to improve foundational learning in the country. Also, please shed some light on Foundational Learning Policy that is in the pipeline.

Different assessments have revealed that our students have learning gaps and while



While we will continue to equip schools with connectivity, devices and content, we want our interventions going forward to be centered around resilience with sustainability in mind

there are many known reasons why that is the case, our primary concern has been to address the foundational learning because it is the basis for the learners' progression in school and in their careers later. Because of the urgency to address this challenge, a policy was imperative to ensure that it is prioritized and backed up by support and necessary funding.

For if we address the foundational learning challenges – that is literacy and numeracy – and equally improve the learning and supporting environment; many of the quality of education issues will have been addressed for the long run.

Well, it's been one year since the ministry announced this major subsidy for the school feeding programme. Do you think this has really yielded the results that you had envisaged?

From the education perspective- school feeding has exceeded our expectations. We have seen increased attendance and significant reduced drop out. Many more students are starting school on time and every child that is at school is sure to at least have one meal per day.

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We are cognizant of the fact that feeding more than 3 million school children a day is a major undertaking and we are mindful of all the processes it involves. Our biggest preoccupation has been to ensure that the primary role of schools is to teach, and feeding is to support the students.

We're also being very mindful of the impact school feeding might have on the environment and that's a conversation we are yet to address with different relevant partners.

Parents' contribution has not been forthcoming as we would want it and we are still seeking ways to make parents' aware of their share of responsibility in this long term journey we are on.

As we conclude, I want to ask a general question; how would you rate the quality of education in our country?

We haven't achieved the level of quality that we want universally. But we have pockets

of success. And those are worth being celebrated.

And so when I hear people talk about how the quality of education has deteriorated I think many times the statement is subjective because many of us are products of the same system that we all blame.

We must recognize that for every change made in the education system, it takes about seven years to see the results. And they are fundamental changes that the Government had to make to ensure that there is a system to start with. Many of these are translated into inputs and the outputs are expected in years to come.

Access to education for instance- one of the inputs for this is investing in infrastructure. To get to a level where primary education up to K12 becomes universal requires a lot of investment. And this we have superseded our targets and this is worth celebrating. Our challenge now is to retain the students and to graduate them throughout our

education levels while ensuring that quality is achieved. Doing so requires a strategic supporting environment which at times is costly but possible.

Investing in our teachers- one of the inputs here is the establishment of dedicated teacher training colleges and heavily subsidizing the cost to study to attract the best in the field. Has these yielded results yet? It's early to tell but we can for sure see that it will if we continuously improve the state of these colleges and the welfare of teachers in general.

Investing in technology- one of the inputs here is the establishment of dedicated technology schools like coding academy and to heavily subsidize its cost to attract the best in the field- again, still early to claim success but already seeing results in numerous ways. The challenge is to continuously sustain the investment and to diversify the offering in many fields as well. TVET and professional education are also on the rise.



TECH-IN-EDUCATION TAKES CENTRE STAGE DURING TEACHERS' DAY CELEBRATION

Teachers are the anchor of every profession because of their pivotal role in education, shaping and empowering leaders of tomorrow. Their work spans time and distance.

At the height of Covid-19 pandemic and its associated lockdown measures taken across the country, education had to continue and teachers had to employ technology to go beyond the geographical hindrances to keep the flow of knowledge.

It is without a doubt that technology is part and parcel of education in today's world. During the celebration of World Teachers' Day in Rwanda, it was emphasized that teachers play a crucial role in advancing the use of technology in education.

The ceremony, which took place at Intare Conference Arena under the theme, "The teachers we need for the education we want:

The global imperative to reverse the teacher shortage," brought together teachers from across the country, government officials, and development partners to celebrate the achievements and discuss solutions to some of the current issues in the education system, and reflect on the role of families and societies in advancing the sector.

There are about 121,354 teachers across the country, with 5,588 in TVET, 104,720 in government and government-aided schools, and 11,046 in private schools, according to figures from the Ministry of Education.

To boost the use of technology in the education sector, the government, through the Ministry of Education and its affiliated institutions like Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), has put in place different initiatives aimed at promoting ICT skills among teachers, access to digital devices, and digitizing the profession as a whole.

Gaspard Twagirayezu, the Minister for Education, saluted teachers for their invaluable contribution in promoting the quality of education, saying that they are central to the development of the country which is building on the pillar of digital transformation.

The minister said that to promote the quality of teachers, the government rolled out an e-Recruitment platform. This would not only help drive transparency and accountability in the profession, but also ease the recruitment and transfer processes using digital means.

"It is important to recognize that while technology is a formidable ally, it stands as a complement and not a replacement of our dedicated educators," Twagirayezu said.

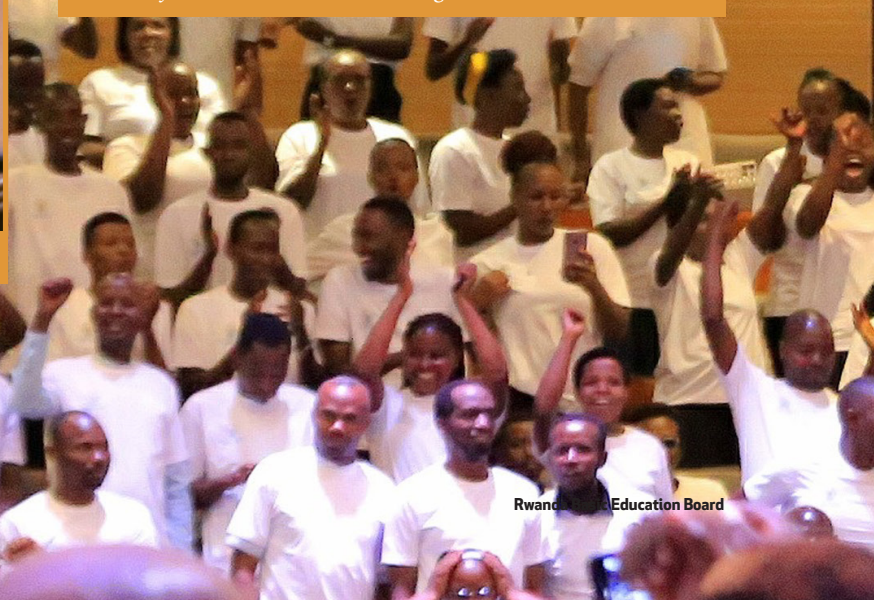
"This innovative tool substantially enhances the capabilities of our teachers, amplifying their impact within our classrooms. But



Minister of Education Gaspard Twagirayezu



Minister of ICT and Innovation Paula Ingabire



Rwanda Education Board

these are tools that need to be used properly to be productive.”

However, Twagirayezu noted that there are still areas that need more effort to achieve quality education in the country. These include foundational learning, students’ participation in the learning process, collaboration with parents, adoption of technology, and instilling Rwandan values in the education system.

The introduction of ‘ICT-in-Education’ policy in 2016 paved the way for REB to launch a four-year project dubbed ‘CADIE’ (Capacity Development for ICT in Education).

The program, facilitated in partnership with the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KICA), seeks to establish centers of excellence countrywide as a new and innovative concept to train Rwandan in-service teachers while contributing to the national strategic goal of improving the quality of education.

According to UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers, governments are required to rethink the role of teachers in applying ICT to enhance and transform

learning.

Paula Ingabire, the Minister for ICT and Innovation, noted that teachers play a crucial role in advancing the use of technology in education and should first be equipped with knowledge and transmit it to students in primary, secondary, and tertiary levels so that they can join the labour market at least with basic knowledge in ICT.

“Technology allows the teacher to better prepare learning materials, employ innovative teaching approaches, and effective follow-up on students, especially those that need particular attention,” Ingabire said.

Rwanda has reached 59 percent of technology adoption in the education sector and, to build on this trajectory, Ingabire said the government will continue to make progress in providing every teacher with a digital gadget (a laptop and smartphone) as well as ensuring that all schools have access to the internet by the end of 2024.

Research has shown that technology has a positive impact on student engagement since it can, among others, help teachers create exciting, engaging and memorable lessons.

Jean Pierre Nambajimana, the math teacher at FAWE Girls School, Gisozi, thanked the government for putting in place training programmes that facilitate teachers to upgrade their knowledge and contribute to quality education in the country.

He said they are trained in various programmes, including ICT, languages, and project-based learning, in addition to gadgets that enable them to make research and conduct online assessments for students.

Nambajimana called for regular training programmes and that the ministry can increase the number of scholarships provided to teachers to improve, as well as increasing the number of affordable housing to improve the teachers’ livelihoods.

The World Teachers Day celebration saw 1,058 outstanding teachers awarded with smartphones to promote ICT in education. Five best performing schools in the 2022/2023 national exams, in general education, and TVET were also awarded.



Netflix Chief Executive Officer Reed Hastings



Airtel Rwanda Managing Director Emmanuel Hamez

INNOVATION AFRICA SUMMIT: EQUIPPING FUTURE LEADERS WITH MARKET-READY SKILLS

Africa's biggest asset, its young people, need to be equipped with technological skills to be competent in the contemporary modern setting and future labour market on the continent and at the global stage.

At the Innovation Africa Summit 2023, hosted by Rwanda at Kigali Convention Center from November 30 to December 2, government officials, researchers, academicians, and technology experts emphasized the imperative of advancing technology in education.

The high-level ministerial summit designed to focus on ICT for education, digital transformation, TVET, skills development, scientific research, and artificial intelligence for innovation, gathered more than 400 delegates from, among others, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Rwanda, Botswana, Uganda, Ghana, Mozambique, and Zambia.

In light of the current skills gap on the continent, the summit featured different panel discussions on topics like African advancements in the development of STEM skills and technical education where Rwanda showcased TVET Centers of Excellence equipped with modern facilities and expert staff, and strides towards embracing cutting-edge technologies like robotics, Internet of Things, and 3D printing to cultivate a skilled future workforce.

Discussions also revolved around the future skilling of teachers and students



Prime Minister Dr. Edouard Ngirente

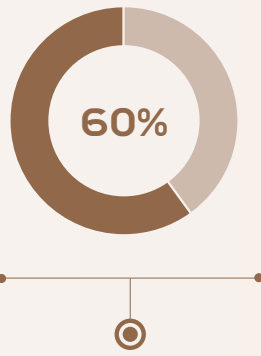
for successful e-Learning, policies and technologies for inclusivity to overcome barriers to learning, strengthening university research and intra-African scientific collaboration, as well as investing in higher education and innovation to unlock Africa's potential.

Speaking at the summit, Prime Minister Dr. Edouard Ngirente said for the young

Africans to actively contribute to shaping the global future, they must have access to quality education and programs that equip them with necessary skills to succeed in the technology-driven labor market.

"Young Africans must have access to quality schools, infrastructure, teachers and modern technology tools and equipment," Dr. Ngirente said.





To address the mismatch in the labor market, Rwanda targets 60% of students pursuing TVETs

“In this regard, we should also focus on technical and vocational schools that provide them with the skills needed to use modern technologies and be competitive in the labor market.”

While different technologies are essential for the development of these fields, Dr. Ngirente noted that ICT comes in as a cross-cutting enabler for other technologies to advance.

“By putting emphasis on the development of these skills, young people can be better equipped to address current and future challenges, and make a positive impact on the world. Let us turn potential into impact,” he added.

Rwanda has been making strides in advancing quality education by innovatively addressing different challenges whereby the government scrapped tuition fees in all primary and lower secondary public schools to achieve universal education.

Additionally, coupled with providing smart classrooms in all schools, Rwanda has achieved an internet connectivity rate of 54% in primary schools and 73% in secondary schools to enhance digital infrastructure.

It is also worth noting that to address the mismatch in the labor market, Rwanda targets 60% of students pursuing TVETs.

Hon. Gaspard Twagirayezu, the Minister of Education, said that the summit’s theme: “The Future of Education: Technology, Resilience, and Quality,” indeed resonates with the country’s ambition of achieving quality education in the ever-evolving technological era.

“

By putting emphasis on the development of these skills, young people can be better equipped to address current and future challenges and make a positive impact on the world. and make a positive impact on the world.

He said over the past 11 years, the Innovation Africa Summit has become a forum that brings together government officials and the private sector players to establish collaborations on solutions to individual national challenges.

This, Twagirayezu said, should be an impetus to collaborate, exchange, and build bridges that will empower young generations of future change-makers by exploring strategies to transform education systems, integrate tools, and enhance quality learning.

To navigate the evolving landscape of education, Paula Ingabire, the Minister of ICT and Innovation, said technology has emerged as an indispensable tool for enhancing learning experiences, empowering educators, and fostering innovation.

“In recent years, Rwanda embarked on an ambitious journey to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology for all students and, as we look to the future, technology will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the education landscape,” Ingabire said.

“Let’s envision a future where technology seamlessly integrates into the education system, empowering learners and educators to achieve their full potential.”

The conference also featured presentations on building capacity through skills development, funding model for education devices and ICT infrastructure to ensure equitable access to digital learning resources and key reasons on scaling equitable gains in learning and teaching.



INSIDE RWANDA'S NEW FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING STRATEGY



Ensuring that children can read and perform basic numeracy operations in the early years of learning is key for their further success along the education cycle.

Despite Rwanda's tremendous progress in achieving universal access to education at 98.9 percent net-enrollment rate, learning outcomes still indicate that more efforts need to be put in ensuring children achieve age and grade specific benchmarks in literacy and numeracy.

Patrick Niyibizi, a primary school teacher at GS Rubirizi, Kanombe Sector, Kicukiro District, says there is an obvious gap in students' performance particularly comprehension and practice of foundational skills as seen in assessments of English and Mathematics subjects.

He said that there was a gap when you compare the students' ability to comprehend and formulate basic English sentences against the standard of other schools at the same level.

"This affects other subjects since we have English as the language of instruction."

According to Niyibizi, there are several factors that contribute to this drawback and it requires a cross-cutting approach to address it. He highlighted the critical role played by parents and teachers as people who set an environment that can either light or dim a learner's ability to acquire such foundational skills.

Simply put, foundational skills are required to make children proficient in reading, writing, counting, reasoning and problem-solving. They are building blocks for a life of learning, without which children find it difficult to think critically and solve problems creatively.

The Ministry of Education working with its partners has put together a new Foundational Learning Strategy (FLS) that will be implemented through 2026/27, which focuses on a unique window of opportunity in the schooling of young learners, covering pre-primary to lower primary levels.

The five-year plan aims to equip all children with basic literacy and numeracy skills, and to instill in them a love for learning from an early age when their

brains are developing rapidly.

Exacerbated by Covid-19 pandemic that heavily impacted the education sector, the latest Learning Achievement in Rwandan Schools (LARS) assessment carried out in 2021 indicates that substantial learning losses were incurred.

Numeracy levels were more positive when assessed in Kinyarwanda at 60.94%. However, it dropped to just 16% when assessed in English.

Nelson Mbarushimana, the director general of Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), noted that lost foundational learning affects dropout and repetition rates and eventually lead to children not completing basic education, adding that those who complete despite a lack of or a limited foundation in basic skills attain lower skill levels, which in turn reduces productivity.

"Investing in improved quality of learning during early grades and lowering repetition rates could help reduce costs and allow greater investments in other critical areas of the education system,"

Mbarushimana said.

The 2022 UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report Rwanda Spotlight showed that the people, systems, and resources most closely linked to foundational learning in Rwanda require a more intense and refined focus to improve educational quality and foundational learning outcomes.

Focus areas of new strategy

During a workshop organized by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with World Bank Rwanda under the theme: “Stepping back to accelerate forward: innovation potential and success factors for foundational literacy and numeracy”, it was highlighted that drivers of low foundational learning uptake include limited instructional time, limited parental support, inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM), inadequate teacher preparation programs, a new language of instruction and insufficient supervision and monitoring.

The new strategy seeks to significantly increase reading fluency and comprehension of Kinyarwanda; English; and numeracy.

It lays out a set of actionable, prioritized, and evidence-based interventions necessary to improve learning outcomes at the foundational years.

Of the five highlighted priorities in the FLS to address foundational challenges specific to Rwanda, three of them focus on core processes of teaching and learning in the classroom, while the other two relate to families and local communities in their role of sustaining children’s interest in lessons.

The pillars include improving instructional quality through teacher development and support, implementing an evidence-aligned foundational skills curriculum, providing effective teaching and learning materials (TLM) in sufficient volume to all teachers and learners, mobilizing parental and community support for foundational learning, and strengthening systemic quality assurance and performance management.

Clement Uwajenza, the country director of Rwanda Equip, a government-led initiative to improve learning outcomes across 761 pilot schools in Rwanda, noted that the single shift model works much better to improve foundational learning outcomes and data-driven school

supervision allows for better monitoring of lesson completion and teacher attendance.

Caroline Dusabe, the education advisor at Save the Children, is of the view that learning is a continuum from birth, and investing in early childhood development programs positively impacts the capacity of children to acquire foundational skills later in life.

“Roots of literacy and math begin in early childhood and children not receiving adequate parental support early on or being exposed to stressful environments enter P1 without basic skills and lag behind,” she emphasized.

Rwanda’s FLS is integral to the country’s broader plan for human capital development, one that spans the entire learning cycle – from early childhood to primary and secondary education, to tertiary education and skills development.

Equally, the FLS benefits from the substantive input of the country’s development partners who fund and implement a range of initiatives aligned to this strategy.



HOW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM HAS HELPED IN-SERVICE TEACHERS ADVANCE CAREERS

Augustin Ayindimwe has a simple outlook to acquiring advanced knowledge and qualification: it means he is boosting his capacity and confidence to deliver quality education as well as improved welfare.

The history teacher at College de Butamwa located in Nyarugenge District speaks of career growth with unmistakable positive energy, looking back at how he started and where he is going.

The 37-year-old started teaching history at Butamwa in 2013 after completing secondary education and acquiring a Diploma in Education with a bias on History and Geography.

However, his long-standing desire was to continue pursuing studies at tertiary level.

The Government of Rwanda, through the Ministry of

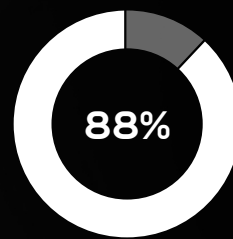
Education, launched a scholarship program in 2019 aimed at fostering quality education by facilitating in-service teachers' access to improved knowledge at different levels of education.

In this arrangement, primary teachers who graduated from Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) teach for three years to qualify for the scholarship for a bachelor's degree at University of Rwanda's College of Education.

For secondary school teachers who hold bachelor's degrees from various universities, they have to teach for five years to get a scholarship offer at Master's level.

Aware of this program, Ayindimwe always followed up to know updates on the requirements and schedule of enrollment. He secured an admission at UR Nyagatare campus where he started in the second academic year, while simultaneously taking some courses from the first year.

Ayindimwe said this was an opportunity to be grabbed at all cost

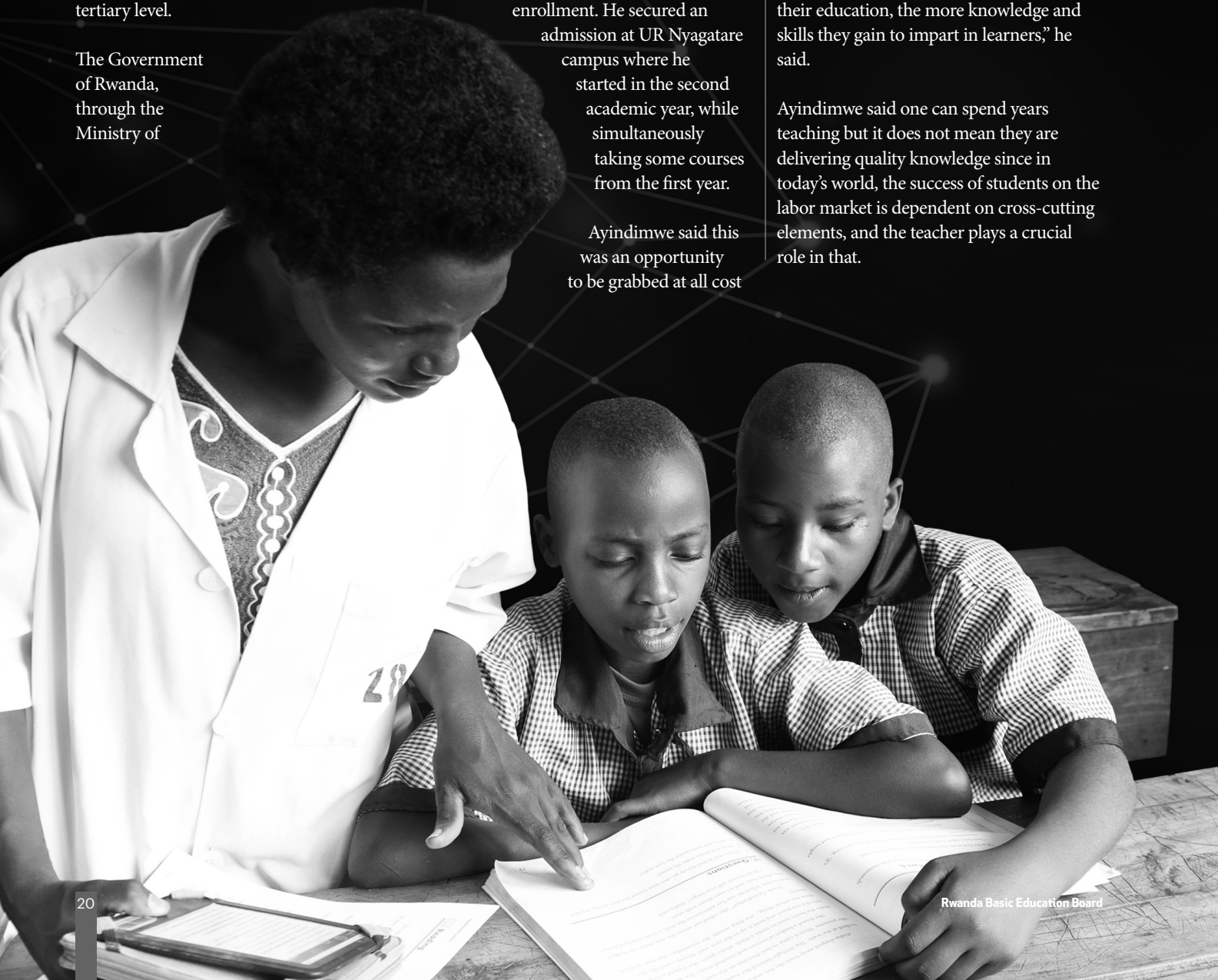


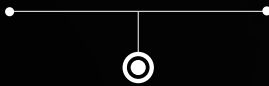
Primary teachers received an 88 percent salary increment in 2022

because a teacher has to remain relevant in the evolving world of knowledge.

"It is obvious, the more teachers advance their education, the more knowledge and skills they gain to impart in learners," he said.

Ayindimwe said one can spend years teaching but it does not mean they are delivering quality knowledge since in today's world, the success of students on the labor market is dependent on cross-cutting elements, and the teacher plays a crucial role in that.





3,591

The first cohort of 3,591 teachers on scholarship program graduated in November 2023

For instance, he noted that they studied new courses, including leadership and management as well as career guidance and counselling, which are fundamental for understanding students, as well as preparing and delivering content tailored to the specific needs and stage in life of learners – including beyond classrooms.

“Besides that, my content has really improved as I would sometimes be forced to go an extra mile to acquire certain knowledge on a given topic which I wasn’t informed well enough because of my limited education level,” Ayindimwe said.

“It also improved my proficiency in English as the language of instruction and the use of ICT in education.”

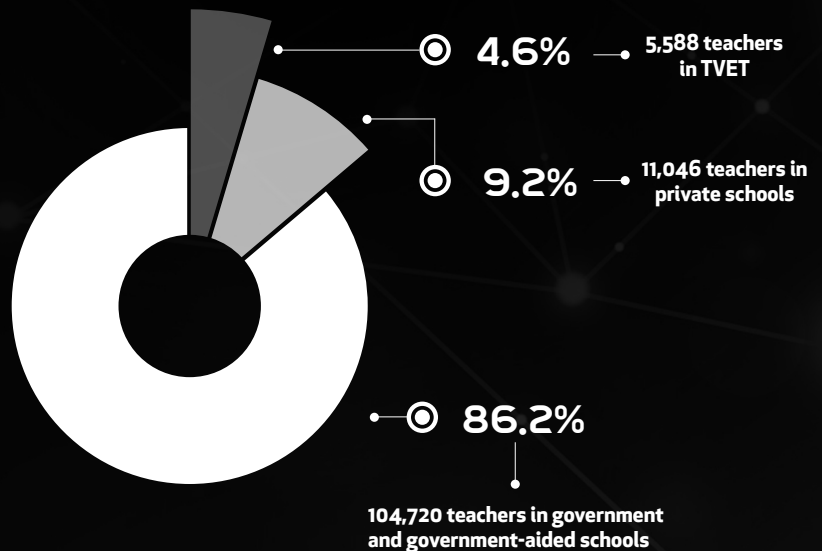
Léon Mugenzi, the head of Teacher Development and Management Department at Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), said this program is one of the many deliberate efforts to improve the quality of education in the country.

The government has been pursuing a knowledge-based economy.

Mugenzi noted that the selection is done in collaboration with district leadership whereby 10 teachers from each district across the country are given scholarships, eight teachers with secondary education certificate (A2) and two with post-secondary certificate (A1).

The programme also facilitates teachers to pursue advanced education without worrying about their livelihoods.

“We continued receiving our monthly salary because we were still considered employees on government payroll who were simply pursuing advanced knowledge,” Ayindimwe said.



“Additionally, Mineduc signed an agreement with the Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD) to provide us with a monthly allowance like other students on government scholarships.”

Currently, the father of one was able to start a Bachelor’s Degree in Law from the increased income that covers all family expenses and his school fees thanks to the high qualification that ultimately increased his salary as a teacher.

The first cohort of teachers on scholarship program graduated during the ninth UR’s graduation ceremony in November 2023, with the College of Education boasting the highest number as 3,591 graduates received their degrees.

Promoting teacher’s welfare has been the government’s priority for the previous years,

including the increment of teachers’ pay in 2022.

Primary teachers received an 88 percent salary increment, while secondary school teachers will receive a 40 percent increment.

Other solutions expected to raise the education standards include the government’s relentless efforts to construct new classrooms with the target to reduce the distance to 2 kilometers for secondary school students and 1 kilometer for primary level learners, and consequently reduce the teacher-to-student ratio.

Data from the Ministry of Education shows that there are about 121,354 teachers across the country, among which 5,588 in TVET, 104,720 in government and government-aided schools, and 11,046 in private schools.

1KM-2KM

Government aims at constructing new classrooms with the target to reduce the distance to 2 kilometers for secondary school students and 1 kilometer for primary level learners, and consequently reduce the teacher-to-student ratio



JAMES MUGISHA: AN ASPIRING TEACHER EAGER TO MAKE AN IMPACT

At the age of 19, James Mugisha is already a champion of English proficiency. He is a public speaker, a talented debater, smart listener and a passionate advocate for education.

Mugisha, from Rubavu district, has overcome numerous challenges and defied expectations to reach where he is today.

The third-year student in Languages with Education at TTC Gacuba II in Rubavu district heads both the English club and debate club with 64 and 52 members respectively.

In fact, Mugisha does not shy away from complex topics; whether it's talking about post-colonial literature, real life and social issues and global health challenges, among others.

This champion debater and public speaking hopeful readily took on our interview in English, his words flowing like a well-rehearsed poem.

Mugisha's fluency wasn't born of privilege. It is a testament to resilience, defying expectations, and a burning passion for education that propelled him from humble beginnings to the national stage.

"My love for languages, especially English, began with a simple joy of reading," Mugisha says with a smile. "I'd devour any book I could find. At a tender age, I had mastered words and could speak English without any challenge."

His passion for languages, especially English, grew further when he enrolled at TTC Gacuba II and joined the English club, which meets once a week to discuss topics that help them improve their English proficiency.

The English club focuses on four skills; listening, reading and writing. Besides the club, Mugisha also initiated a debate club, which only focuses on speaking where members meet regularly and debate on different topics.

"We meet regularly and work on ways to improve our English proficiency, we have enough materials and support from the school, both clubs have been very useful for us to enhance our level of English," he says.

Mugisha's efforts to improve his proficiency paid off when he participated in the just-concluded inaugural English Proficiency Competition that brought together all the 16 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) where he emerged the champion in the listening category.

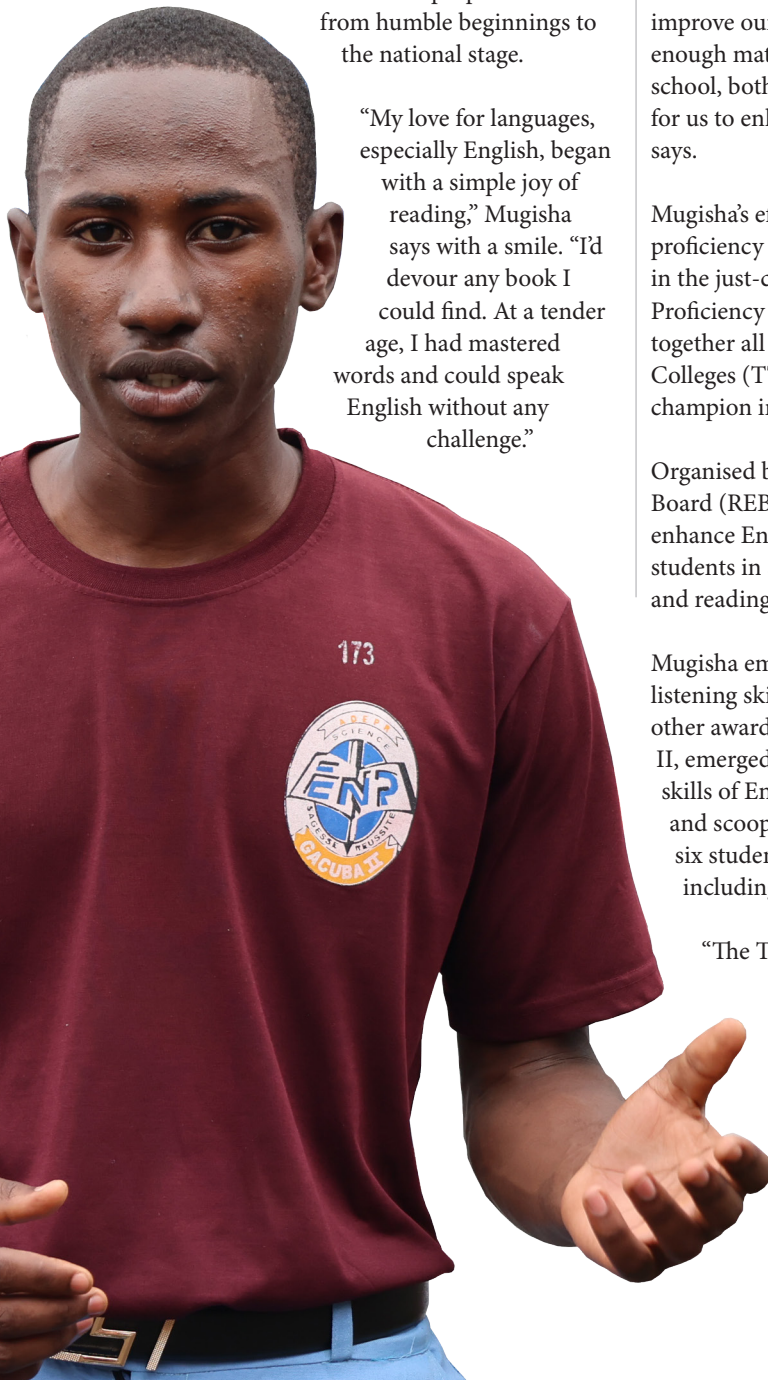
Organised by Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), the competition sought to enhance English language among TTC students in speaking, writing, listening and reading.

Mugisha emerged the overall winner in listening skills, bagging a laptop, among other awards. His school, TTC Gacuba II, emerged the overall winner in all skills of English proficiency competition and scooped an award while other six students won different awards, including laptops.

"The TTCs English proficiency competition was intense," Mugisha admits, his eyes glinting with the memory.

"I trained for months, devouring practice materials and honing my listening skills. It

Mugisha, A Year III student emerged the best in Listening category in the REB's English competition that brought together all the TTCs





was such a tough competition and every aspirant was eager to win so I was lucky that I managed to use the acquired skills to beat others,” he adds.

Mugisha recognizes the role of his school that encourages students to work hard in their English club to improve their proficiency. More importantly, he is grateful to his English teachers, especially the recently recruited Zimbabwean teachers who are supporting TTC schools in boosting English proficiency.

“It wasn’t just about me,” Mugisha emphasizes. “This award belongs to the teachers who tirelessly supported us, especially the Zimbabwean volunteers who transformed our English club into a haven of learning.”

To prepare for the competition, Mugisha says that students were given enough materials for rehearsal.

“Like in my case, I was given enough recordings that I listened to consistently. From the recordings, I could answer all the questions and rank myself. By the time we went for competition, I was ready

enough to beat others,” he adds.

Eager to support others

Beyond personal accolades, Mugisha’s true calling lies in empowering others. He views his peers not just as classmates, but as fellow future teachers.

“In the English club,” he explains, his voice brimming with enthusiasm, “I help them find their voices, discover the magic of crafting sentences, and build confidence in their own words.” For Mugisha, English transcends mere grammar and vocabulary.

“It’s a bridge” he says, “a way to connect across cultures, understand different perspectives, and ultimately, build a more just and peaceful world.”

The debate club, Mugisha says, has also become his training ground, where he witnesses the transformative power of language firsthand.

“It’s incredible to see me and fellow students blossom,” he beams, “as here we learn to think critically, articulate our

arguments, and be able to speak fluently and listen critically.”

Mugisha’s journey is far from over. He dreams of becoming a teacher and ignites the same love for language that propelled him forward.

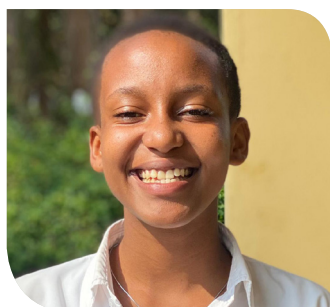
“English is the medium of instruction,” Mugisha says. “I want to use my skills to empower others and help them reach their full potential.”

My dream is to teach the young generation as I will soon be a teacher after completing my secondary school. However, I don’t think that will be the end of the journey as I plan to further my studies at university,” he says.

“But my story doesn’t end there,” he confesses, his eyes gleaming with ambition. “I aspire to delve deeper into the world of literature, perhaps even become an author.”

Mugisha’s aspiration is not just from nowhere and the hope to have his dream never fades as he is surrounded by more willing, able and dedicated teachers and school management that enables an improved learning environment.

HOW TO BALANCE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE WHILE MINDFUL OF MENTAL HEALTH



Yes, high school can be like that crazy rollercoaster ride that quite often leaves us scared and overwhelmed. However, it's important to keep a healthy mix between schoolwork, family life, and our mental health despite the immense pressure to do well in school and pursue the dreams we harbor as we grow up.

Regardless of age, we need to think of prioritizing self-care and managing stress effectively.

As a high school student myself, I understand these challenges well. I may be no expert to exactly know how to deal with stress and take care of myself, but I have found a few easy tactics that help me.

One thing I do is make plans for the day ahead of time. Apart from setting aside time for schoolwork, I also plan breaks and things to do during those breaks. Whether it is doing things I enjoy, like

singing, dancing, talking to friends, or just taking care of my hygiene and eating well, I make sure to set time for these things into my schedule.

It may not be possible for you to plan ahead when you go to a boarding school or live with a strict family where everything is planned for you, but a trick that helped me is to make sure I do everything I need to do and then find a hobby outside of school that is allowed during free time.

Proper time management is important for both academic excellence and staying mentally healthy. I think you should make a schedule that includes time to study, breaks, and fun things to do. You can make sure you have a balanced schedule that takes care of both your schoolwork and your personal health by giving various tasks specific times that you should abide by.

It is equally important to be aware of your limits and set reasonable expectations for yourself. Avoid overloading yourself with too much homework or extracurricular activities. By taking on a manageable workload, you can reduce the chances of burnout and keep your mental health in good shape by taking on work that you can handle. Also, don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

Set clear limits for your mental health if you want to put it first. As you go through school, learn how to balance your responsibilities with the things that interest you. It's okay to take breaks and do things that make you happy and relax. Remember, taking care of your mental well-being is just as important as studying for that upcoming exam.

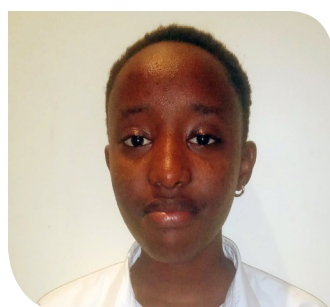
It's important to include self-care activities in your daily plan. Do things to refresh your body and mind, like working out and getting enough sleep. Taking care of your body and mind will not only make you feel better overall, but it will also help you concentrate and move faster on your schoolwork.

Creating a realistic academic plan can also help avoid unnecessary stress. Divide your work into smaller steps that you can handle. You'll avoid getting overwhelmed and have a better chance of succeeding if you only do small amounts of work at a time.

Remember that you're not going through this process alone, and it is okay to put your mental health first. Take care of yourself, ask for help when you need it, and enjoy the chance to learn as you also grow as a person.

Josiane is a Senior Five (MEC) student at IFAK Don Bosco, Kimihurura

BEYOND THE BOOKS: BENEFITS OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



I have come to realize, through personal observation, that learning goes beyond the classroom and the books. I firmly believe that we should start taking extracurricular activities more seriously because they help us grow as a people.

Getting involved in clubs and activities isn't just about having fun —it helps us to get better grades —as you are more

refreshed to learn when you come back from a little fun. Students who participate tend to manage their time better, stay disciplined, and stay motivated to learn.

By joining different clubs and teams, we can learn useful skills that will help us even after our academic journey. From leadership skills we acquire in clubs to the teamwork spirit we grow in sports teams, I believe these activities give us

COMMENTARY

the life skills set we will need to deal with challenges in the future.

Extracurricular activities aren't just for keeping us busy at school; they also give us the chance to network, make friends and learn more about ourselves. As we interact with different people, we get better at dealing with others, solving problems, and handling emotions—a key part of growing up.

Boosting confidence: Excelling on the field or doing well in club events makes students feel more confident in their abilities. This confidence goes on to affect

how you do in school, and even later when you graduate.

Activities outside of school also help us discover new interests, which can lead to hobbies, talents, or even possible job paths. What makes it even more interesting is that at this stage, you can take on as many as you want, drop some, fail or love others with no one policing you.

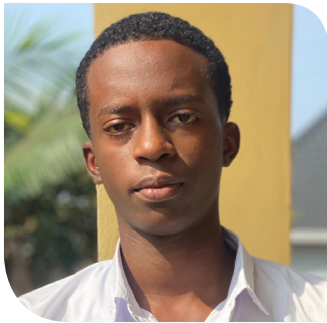
Giving back and being a leader: Doing community-centered activities, like joining the Scouts, or being in charge of a club teaches us how to be responsible

at a young age. It's not just about growing as a person; it's about shaping future citizens who sincerely care about their communities.

In short, joining clubs and teams shouldn't be seen as something extra; they are actually secret tools that can help you do well in school and in life after your academic journey. Schools that support a wide range of activities are setting the stage for smarter, more accomplished students who will help make the future bright.

Cassie Estrella Kanamugire is a Senior Three student at IFAK Don Bosco.

TIPS TO OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION



Procrastination is defined as an action of delaying or postponing a task you have to perform.

It is a common struggle among high school students like myself. We all know how it feels to put off studying or not completing assignments until the last minute. Nevertheless, here is the thing - procrastination doesn't do us any favors. In fact, it can seriously affect our academic performance.

Here are a few tips on how to overcome procrastination, from one student to another;

Eliminate interruptions: First things first, we need to eliminate interruptions. Trust me, I understand the temptations of social media notifications and the need to scroll through our favorite websites. But in order to fully concentrate on our studies, we have to minimize these distractions. Turn off those notifications, use website blockers if needed, and

find a quiet space where you can focus on your school work without constant interruptions. By doing this, we can give ourselves the time and focus we need to succeed in exams.

Avoid distractions: Distractions can easily derail our study sessions and distract us from achieving our goals. Some distractions might even lead us down the wrong path, like falling into bad peer groups or getting caught up in things that could harm our future, such as drugs or early pregnancy. So, let's be smart and



It is a common struggle among high school students like myself. We all know how it feels to put off studying or not completing assignments until the last minute. Nevertheless, here is the thing - procrastination doesn't do us any favors.

avoid these distractions that could put our dreams at risk.

Prioritize tasks: Instead of trying to tackle all tasks at once, let's focus on the assignment that is due the soonest. By prioritizing tasks and tackling them one by one, we can avoid feeling overwhelmed and ensure that we complete our work on time.

Set SMART Goals: Set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals for each task. Clear goals provide a sense of direction and motivation. When we set clear and realistic goals for each task, we become more determined to achieve them, leading to success in our academic work. However, we all know it is easier said than done. So here's how all these can become realistic.

Set timetable: By planning out our days and allocating time for studying, we can ensure that we use our time wisely and achieve good marks in our subjects. But remember, each of us has a unique daily schedule. We have classes, extracurricular activities, home chores, and social engagements. So, it's essential to create a personalized schedule that works for us. By taking all these commitments into account and finding a balance, we can have full control over our time and make the most of our high school years.

Josue Ntwari is a Senior Four student at IFAK Don Bosco

LEADING BY EXAMPLE: HOW REB VOLLEYBALL TEAM IS INSPIRING LOVE FOR SPORTS IN SCHOOLS

The substantial importance of sports in one's daily life transcends physical and mental wellness to become a pillar of organizational strength and development.

In a country like Rwanda that is aspiring to become a sports hub in the region through a mindset shift, investment in infrastructure development, and strengthening the ecosystem, it only makes sense to drive sports in education as a stepping-stone to access its multifaceted benefits.

While there are many efforts geared at propelling sports activities in schools, it is equally important to inculcate sports culture in different institutions of the country.

As the leading organization in the education sector, the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) established its

Volleyball team in 2022, to champion this agenda.

From inter-department to annual staff tournaments, the team continues to grow in reflecting a competitive, passionate, and motivated institution. It is now shining in the countrywide inter-institutional competition.

Dr. Nelson Mbarushimana, the Director General of REB underscored the importance of setting the precedence of promoting sports in schools, particularly through leading by example.

“We created this team principally because we are responsible for sports in schools where we have to set an example. We have staff in charge of sports promotion, including those in the curriculum department, teacher training departments, and others. The government is responsible for sports development in schools, and the schools have to learn from the leaders. If the leader sets a good example, others will follow.”

In 2022, during the team's first tournament, REB would emerge as the third-best volleyball team in all the public institutions.

Mbarushimana attributes the victory to periodic training, usually conducted at the institution's volleyball court every after a busy day.

“Because all the employees are at the institution it is very easy to coordinate our sports activities.”

In March this year, REB, spearheaded by its volleyball team, is expected to launch a nationwide campaign in schools starting with 16 Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs).

As part of the campaign, the team plans to compete against all TTCs in Gicumbi district, on both administration and student levels.

“During this campaign, we will once again remind TTC leaders that they should promote sports in schools,” he said.

Mbarushimana said REB is also seeking sponsors for its volleyball team which can provide beyond financial support.





“We want the team to be a strong one in the future where all staff from the education ministry interested in sports can participate during national competitions. We have embarked on providing sports equipment to different schools,” he noted.

He explained that REB started with a volleyball game since it was easy to quickly build their capacity considering they have the field at their workplace.

“We want to see how far this team can go, and in the future, we will introduce other games including basketball and football given that our staff are interested in all these games. By 2025, we are looking at potentially being the strongest.”

Promoting teamwork

For REB, according to Mbarushimana, teamwork and collaboration are vital aspects of a functioning workplace.

As work becomes more complex and specialized, greater collaboration is required to succeed.

“With sports promotion among the staff, the first thing is that teamwork is fostered, it increases the camaraderie among the employees, and it is useful because in general, our workplace gets better.”

“Sports is a social network and a channel that can be used for campaigns. We are grateful to the Rwandan government for

promoting sports among workers,”

Currently, he said that all the players of the team are REB employees.

“We want to grow, and play major competitions in the education sector together with students and teachers.”

REB team’s coach Germain Ndagijimana Nyandwi reiterated the role that sports play in maintaining the fitness, focus, productivity, and overall health of employees.

“Having a designated playground at our workplace is a tremendous advantage. After the workday concludes, we dedicate two hours to practice, significantly contributing to our well-being and enhancing our daily performance,” he remarked.

He emphasized the transformative impact of sports on employees, citing the development of essential skills such as teamwork and strategic thinking.

The REB volleyball team, comprising exclusively players from the institution, showcased a strong sense of camaraderie, he noted.



EMPOWERING RWANDA'S YOUTH THROUGH DIALOGUE



Young people are at the forefront of the diverse world we live in, bringing together unique identities, ideas, and perspectives that enrich our lives. As they navigate through life as individuals and global citizens, they require essential skills to learn from and collaborate with others who come from different backgrounds and hold unique perspectives.

Dialogue becomes instrumental in this context, as it establishes secure environments for open communication. Through dialogue, we can appreciate and respect the voices of young individuals, forging meaningful connections and cultivating a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives.

Rwanda's Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) have joined forces with the Tony Blair Institute's (TBI) education programme, [Generation Global](#) to bring global citizenship education to over 4,000 Rwanda youth. Together, their goal is to empower young people of Rwanda with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to thrive in an interconnected and diverse world.

As a first step in this partnership, the Generation Global team trained 69 teachers from 10 schools in Kigali, during the month of July. Teachers learned about dialogue pedagogy, its distinctiveness from other communication methods, core skills, practical activities and lesson plans to incorporate dialogue-based learning

“

This is an exciting pilot initiative that will support young people in Rwanda to think critically, embrace diversity and navigate complex issues in a peaceful way. We are hopeful that their experiences with the programme will help them to become open-minded to difference

into their everyday lessons, enhancing the educational experience for their students.

During the training, a teacher shared, “The two days of training have been truly transformative, and I am immensely grateful for the knowledge, insights, and skills you imparted during our time together.”

Following this training, Rwanda Basic Education Board and Generation Global are gearing up to embark on a series of

crucial steps to ensure the successful implementation of the programme. These steps include a variety of key actions, such as finalisation of lesson plans, preparing comprehensive implementation packs tailored for educators, student registrations, and video conferencing set up in the 10 schools.

In the new school year starting in October 2023, young people will have the opportunity to practice dialogue skills within their subject classes and dialogue on the most pressing global issues and sustainable development goals, through live video conferences with peers around the world. They will develop future ready skills such as global communication, active listening, critical thinking, reflection, and questioning.

Lucy Hayter, Director of Generation Global at the Tony Blair Institute, expresses her enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, “This is an exciting pilot initiative that will support young people in Rwanda to think critically, embrace diversity and navigate complex issues in a peaceful way. We are hopeful that their experiences with the programme will help them to become open-minded to difference and able to contribute to a more inclusive, tolerant and harmonious world.”

We are excited to witness the positive change taking root, as the possibilities for this transformation are boundless. Together, we are actively shaping a brighter future for the youth of Rwanda.



REB | RWANDA BASIC
EDUCATION BOARD

Requirements for private schools that want to order for Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) textbooks from printing companies which were contracted to print and supply them

- **A letter addressed to the Director General of REB requesting to have access to CBC textbooks at affordable prices**
- **In addition to the letter, the following information should be provided:**
 - ✓ *Address of the school*
 - ✓ *Telephone number and email of the school head teacher*
 - ✓ *Title and quantity of needed textbooks per title and per level/class*
 - ✓ *Number of students per class*

Required information for private schools to order for CBC textbooks

The Schhol Address:

- ✓ *School name:*
- ✓ *District:*
- ✓ *Sector:*
- ✓ *Cell:*
- ✓ *Tel. Number for school Headteacher :*
- ✓ *Active school/ Headteacher's email:*

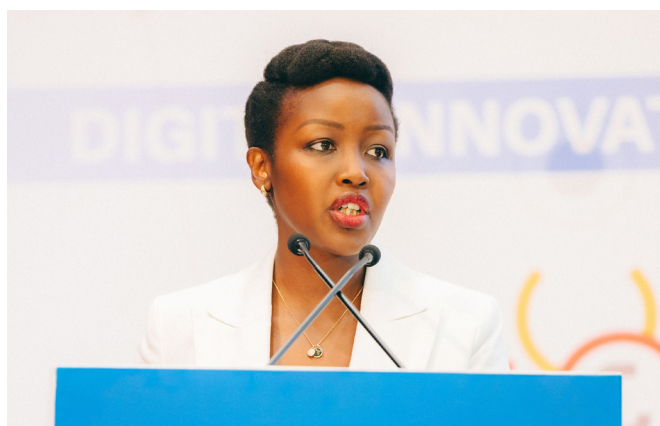
	Textbooks' titles	Textbooks quantity per level														
		N1	N2	N3	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
1																
2																
3																
4																
...																

Note: Information regarding the number of student per level should be also provided.

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INNOVATION AFRICA SUMMIT 2023



PICTORIAL





VISION

The vision of REB is to promote the quality of education in basic, specialised and adult schools



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REB | RWANDA BASIC
EDUCATION BOARD

REB has the following main responsibilities:



To prepare and distribute curricula, teaching materials, teacher's guides, methodologies and establish teaching methods for nursery, primary, secondary, specialised schools and adult literacy schools;



To establish and monitor the E- learning program in basic education;



To promote the use of information and communication technology in basic education;



To coordinate programs and activities to ensure teachers development, build their capacities and monitor their management;



To contribute to the development of education policy;



To coordinate and fast track basic education programmes and activities aimed at providing to all categories of Rwandans the quality education;



To advise Government on all activities which may fast track basic education development in Rwanda.

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