



Institute of Policy Analysis
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IPAR Observatory Report: The Rwandan Education and Skills

IPAR Observatory Report: The Rwandan Education and Skills System

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AEA	Autonomous Education Agency
CoE	College of Education
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
DfID	UK Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GIE	General Inspectorate of Education
HEC	Higher Education Council
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
ISAE	Institut Supérieur d'Agriculture et d'Elevage
JESS	Joint Education Sector Support
KHI	Kigali Institute of Health
KIE	Kigali Institute of Education
KIST	Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
LTSFF	Long Term Strategy and Financial Framework
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINISANTE	Ministry of Health
MININFRA	Ministry of Infrastructure
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Women in Development
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Services and Labour
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
<i>NUR</i>	<i>National University of Rwanda</i>
PBE	Post Basic Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
REB	Rwanda Education Board
RNEC	Rwanda National Examinations Council

SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring of Ed. Quality
SFB	School of Finance and Banking
SFAR	Student Financing Agency of Rwanda
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TSC	Teacher Services Commission
TTC	Teacher Training College
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WDA	Workforce Development Authority

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I alone remain responsible for the content of the report.

IPAR Observatory Reports

The Rwanda Public Policy Observatory is designed to provide easily accessible guides to the laws and policies of Rwanda. Each guide will provide a brief and simple guide to the laws and policies in a given area of public policy. The guides will be invaluable as an introduction and easy source of reference for all those interested in any given area of public policy.

The intention is to produce a complete set of guides over the next two years. They will be available on the Rwanda Public Policy Observatory page of the IPAR-Rwanda web site www.ipar-rwanda.org.

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1. International Context Summary

1.1 International Law, education and Rwanda

International human rights law provides a global framework on education within which nation states operate. The main documents and conventions which provide this framework are:

- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR), which states that: *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory...education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial or religious groups ...”*
- [The International Covenant on Economic, Social And Cultural Rights](#) (ICESCR 1966), which has a similar position on primary education stating that: *“Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all”*. It also has some slightly stronger statements on secondary education stating: *“... in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education”*. On higher education it states: *“higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education”*.
- [The Convention On The Rights of The Child](#) (CRC 1989), which also has a similar statement to the UCHR on primary education stating that nation states have a responsibility to *“make primary education compulsory and available free to all”*. On secondary education it states that governments must *“encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need”*. On high education it states that governments have a responsibility to *“make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means”*.

Rwanda is a signatory to these conventions with no reservations, which would exempt it from any of the clauses (UN 2010a). One point worth noting is that while the CRC has stronger statements on secondary education and higher education than the UDHR, it also states that these can be achieved “progressively”, or over time. In 2011 Rwanda was subject to a Universal Periodic Review, the peer review process used by the United Nations to assess countries performance against international Human Rights conventions (UN 2010b). This review recognised progress, for example, it was positive about the introduction of 9 Years Basic Education and also the piloting of the One Laptop per Child programme. The

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child [reported](#) last in 2004 (UN 2004). At this time it was more critical stating that it was concerned that: “enrolment in schools is still low and that illiteracy is widespread. The Committee is also concerned at the gender and regional disparities in attendance, the high drop-out and repeat rates, the insufficient numbers of trained teachers, schools and classrooms, and the lack of relevant teaching material.”

1.2 Millennium Development Goals and Education for All

Rwanda is also actively pursuing the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Two of the MDGs are relevant for education. These are MDG 2 and MDG 3 and are shown in full in the box below.

Box 1. MDG Education Goals

MDG goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

MDG Target 2: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

- *Net enrolment ratio in primary school*
- *Proportion of pupils starting grade one who reach last grade of primary school*
- *Literacy rates of women and men aged 15 -24 years.*

MDG goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

MDG Target 3. Ensure that gender disparity in primary and secondary is eliminated, preferably by 2005 and in all levels for education no later than 2015

- *Ratio of boys to girls in primary school*
- *Ratio of boys to girls in secondary school*

The chance of Rwanda meeting these two MDGs was [assessed by IPAR](#) in 2011 (IPAR 2011). MDG 2 was at this stage marked as “green” as were the education elements of MDG 3. DfID, however, sounded a note of caution saying that there is a [risk of missing the MDG2 target](#) (DfID 2011). Indeed, in a more up-to-date assessment IPAR have also noted the slowing down of progress and risk that Rwanda is now off track for achieving MDG 2 (IPAR 2012). Table 1 below shows the progress over recent years.

Table 1: Rwanda's progress against education related MDGs

Education MDG Measure	1990	2010	2015 target
<i>Net enrolment ratio in primary school</i>	62.5	91.7	100
<i>Proportion of pupils starting grade one who reach last grade of primary school</i>		78.6	100
<i>Literacy rates of women and men aged 15 -24 years</i>	72.7	83.7	100
<i>Ratio of boys to girls in primary school</i>	0.90	1.02	
<i>Ratio of boys to girls in secondary school</i>	0.96	1.27	

Source: Abbott and Rwirahira (2012), based on NISR (2012)

As well as the MDG goals, the international community including donors and NGOs often refer to the [Education for All Goals](#). UNESCO is in the lead on these goals and they are as follows:

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes

Goal 4: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

1.3 Leading international partners

DfID and UNICEF are the designated lead international partners on education in Rwanda. They are responsible for leading discussions with MINEDUC on strategic planning and coordinating the views of donors. Because they have considerable influence, it is useful to understand their priorities.

[DfID's overall priorities](#) on education and development focus on continued expansion of access, girls' education but also education quality. As they state: *"It's not just about getting children into school. It's also about making sure they are well taught and that what they learn improves their lives and economic opportunities."* More specifically on standards DfID sets out three priority areas: the curriculum, teacher training and choice for parents. On Rwandan in specific [they state](#) that their priority is *"ensuring more girls and boys complete basic education"*.

UNICEF work predominantly on basic education and early childhood development. They have a significant focus on ensuring that no groups are excluded or drop out of school and, related to this, in designing schools and a curriculum which is suitable to all groups, including, for example, girls and disabled children. Some of their priorities are indicated by the challenges which they list as facing the Rwandan education system on [their website](#). These include:

- Inadequate attention to child-centred and gender sensitive teaching methodology and the use of appropriate teaching and learning materials, including books and readers.
- The lack of an appropriate (and gender-sensitive) curriculum with complementary learning materials that focus on the acquisition of key competencies (such as literacy and numeracy).
- Only 10% of children between the ages of 3-5 have access to any type of early learning or early childhood development (ECD) opportunities.

2. Rwandan Context and Overarching Frameworks

2.1 The Rwandan Constitution and Legal Framework

Reflecting international human rights Law, clause 40 of the [Rwandan Constitution](#) includes the following statement on education:

"Every person has the right to education. Freedom of learning and teaching shall be guaranteed in accordance with conditions determined by law. Primary education is compulsory. It is free in public schools. The conditions for free primary education in schools subsidised by the Government are determined by an organic law. The State has the duty to take special measures to facilitate the education of disabled people. An organic law determines the organization of Education."

Also relevant is a statement on gender equality, which says that Rwanda is "committed to ensuring equal rights between Rwandans and between women and men without prejudice

to the principles of gender equality and complementarity in national development”. Underpinning the constitution are two central strategic documents: Rwanda Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

2.2 Rwanda Vision 2020 and education

The Rwandan Government’s [Vision 2020](#) document places a strong emphasis on investment in the education of Rwanda’s citizens, explicitly referencing human capital theory, which states that investment in education will lead to higher labour market returns to individuals and higher economic growth for a country. The lack of human capital is identified, by Rwanda Vision 2020, as one of the major barriers to Rwandan achieving its goals of becoming a knowledge based and middle income country by 2020 (see section 2.2.v). Section 4.2.i addresses education directly and states:

Rwanda is committed to reaching “Universal Education for All”, which is one of the most important Millennium Development Goals. However, there is clearly a need to educate and train people at all levels: primary, secondary and tertiary, with special attention paid to the quality of education.

2.3 Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy and education

The [Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) (EDPRS) contains the Rwandan government’s high level approach to securing improved development and reduced poverty between 2008 and 2012 (MINECOFIN, 2007). It sets the overall goal of the education system as to: “Achieve sustainable economic growth and social development” and the overall purpose of the Education Sector as being to achieve: “Access to quality, equitable and effective education for all Rwandans”. It then sets out a series of high levels objectives for education, which are:

- Access to education for all
- Quality education at all levels
- Equity in education at all levels
- Effective and efficient education system
- Science and technology and ICT in education
- Promotion of positive values, critical thinking, Rwandan culture, peace, unity and reconciliation

In the 2012 [update on progress on the EDPRS](#) the government reported progress on primary school completion rates (in 2010/11 they reached 79% for boys and 82% for girls compared to the overall government targets of 59% and 58%). However, it also reported continued challenges with the qualified teacher to pupil ratio which was 58:1 in 2010/11 compared to the target of 64:1.

3. Institutional Framework for Education

3.1 The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC)

The Ministry of Education, or [MINEDUC](#), is the lead Ministry for pre-primary education, 9YBE and post-basic education, higher education and science and technology. It is responsible for development of strategies and national programs; planning and budget preparation; and coordinating relationships with international partners. It has one Minister of Education, one Minister of State and the Permanent Secretary. Working under the Permanent Secretary there are three directorates: “Education”; “Science Technology and Research” and “Planning and International Co-operation”. The Directorate of Education is in turn divided into three areas which are: “Post Basic and Higher Education”; “Basic Education” and “Special Programmes in Education”, which includes AIDS/HIV and gender.

3.2 Rwanda Education Board (REB)

The [Rwandan Education Board](#) is the main delivery arm of MINEDUC. It was created in 2011 and brings together a number of institutions which were previously standalone arms-length agencies. The previous organisations, which will still be referred to in many documents were: the National Examination Council (RNC); National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC); Student Financial Agency Rwanda (SFAR); General Inspection of Education (GIE); and Teacher Service Commission (TSC). The issues covered by these organisations are now all the responsibility of one of the six departments of the REB, which are:

- Department of Curricula and Pedagogical Materials
- Department of Education Quality and Standard
- Department of Examination & Accreditation
- Department of High Education Student loan
- Department of ICT in Education and Open distance and e-Learning
- Department of Teacher Education Management and Professionalisation

The REB sets its core aim as being to *“improve Rwanda Education quality, building the capacities and management of teachers, loans and scholarships, monitor the distance learning program, and promote the use of information and communication technology in education”*.

3.3 Districts and Sectors

While policy development is highly centralised, much of the government administration and delivery system is devolved to the local level, mostly the 30 Rwandan Districts or one of the *Sectors*, which operate at the next administrative level down. Districts in particular play a significant role in planning local school systems, something which has been crucial in the delivery of 9YBE. For example local areas must decide which schools develop into 9YBE, offering “all through” education from P1-S3 and which remain primary school just with years P1-P6. A similar planning function is also going to be important in the delivery of 12YBE.

Districts also play an important administrative function in relation to the funding system. While they do not control budgets (as we show below most of the funding in the Rwandan education system is devolved direct to head teachers or paid direct to teachers as a salary) they do provide central government with information on the number of teachers and the number of pupils in each school in order to accurately allocate funding to these schools.

3.4 Higher Education governance

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Rwanda are in theory self-governing and independent, but with oversight from government.

Internally HEIs are required to have a governing structure which includes (a) a Board of Directors; (b) a “Senate” and (c) an Executive Council. The Board of Directors plays a strategic role, for example through the approval of a strategic plan, annual reports and the budget. The Senate is more focused on the academic aspects of the institution and the Executive Councils focus mainly on financial management.

Management and oversight of HEIs from the central government is, in most cases, from MINEDUC. However, there are some exceptions. For example, the Ministry of Health has administrative control over the Nursing colleges. On issues of quality control, however, all HEIs are subject to the [Higher Education Council](#) (HEC) which lists as its core functions:

- Ensuring Quality Control
- Upholding International standards so our graduates are credible and competitive anywhere in the world

Financing of Higher Education is the responsibility of the [Student Financing Agency for Rwanda](#) (SFAR). This was previously a standalone independent organisation, but is now part of the new Rwandan Education Board. It provides the funding for public universities and also operates the Rwandan higher education loans system. Eligibility for student support is increasingly means-tested, and the amount of the entitlement depends on the estimated unit costs of the subject in which the student is enrolled.

4. Overview of Rwanda’s Education System

4.1 Rwandan Government Strategic Documents

The overall strategy for the Rwandan education system is set out by the government in a series of five years strategies: their Education Sector Strategic Plans (ESSPs). These documents cover the education system from pre-primary through primary and secondary school to Post basic education (PBE). The [latest of these was published in 2010](#) and covers the period between 2010 and 2015 (MINEDUC 2010a). It was also [reviewed positively](#) by the major international partners (MINEDUC 2010b). The next iteration of the ESSP and underpinning financial statements are planned for later in 2012.

The existing ESSP presents the overall framework for the education sector for the period 2010-2015. While the government use these frameworks to inform their policy making, this

does not mean that major decisions are not made between ESSPs being published. This was the case with the announcement of 12YBE. Never-the-less, the list of priorities included in ESSPs is a good guide to the government's current thinking. The priorities in the latest ESSP were listed as:

- *Improving completion and transition rates whilst reducing drop-out and repetition in basic education*
- *Ensuring that educational quality continues to improve*
- *Developing a skilled and motivated teaching, training and lecturing workforce*
- *Ensuring that the post-basic education (PBE) system is better tailored to meet labour market needs*
- *Ensuring equity within all fields and throughout all levels of education and training*
- *Strengthening education in science and technology*
- *Strengthening the institutional framework and management capacity for effective delivery of education services at all levels*

The ESSP itself also includes a detailed assessment of the financial implications of policies. This presents various scenarios for spending on the Rwandan education system, including an open assessment of the existing funding shortfalls in the MINEDUC budget (MINEDUC, 2010a). The ESSP informs specific documents on the long and medium term spending priorities for the education sector in Rwanda.

4.2 Overall structure of Rwandan education

The overall structure of the Rwandan education system is evolving rapidly. When the World Bank published a [major review of the education sector](#) in Rwanda in 2010 (World Bank 2010), they described a system which divided into five phases: (i) pre-primary, (ii) primary, (iii) lower secondary, (iv) upper secondary and (v) post 19 including higher education.

However, this structure has changed considerably in recent years with the introduction of 9 Years Basic Education and now the beginning of the introduction of 12 Years Basic Education. Rwanda is effectively introducing a radical restructuring of the system into one with four phases. Each phase is briefly described below and then, in table 2, the system as a whole is presented graphically:

- Pre-primary education. This phase is 3-6 years before they start primary school.
- 9 Years Basic Education (9YBE). 9YBE is now becoming a more coherent single phase, in theory for 7-15 year olds, although in practice over age pupils remain common. In theory again it is compulsory for all children to complete 9YBE, at the end of which they will have a choice of options for post 9YBE learning. However, there are two caveats to describing 9YBE as a coherent phase in the system. First, there are still exams at the end of P6, the last year of what was primary school. Second, not all schools are "all through" 9YBE school. Some are, but others are still P1-P6 and effectively operate as feeder primary schools for neighbouring "all through" 9YBE schools.
- "Upper Secondary" of 12 Years Basic Education (12YBE). From 2012, all pupils who reach the end of 9YBE have an entitlement to a further three years of education.

This further study can either be in a General Secondary (GS) school, which is more academic; a Teacher Training College (TTC) or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). TVET at this level is divided into Technical Secondary Schools (TSSs) or Vocational Training Centres (VTCs). A key difference between 9YBE and 12YBE is that while 9YBE is compulsory, 12YBE is not – instead it is an entitlement.

- Post 19 education. There is a mix of (a) TVET, (b) HEIs and (c) non-degree awarding high education. Taking each in turn:
 - TVET: TVET is discussed in more detail below.
 - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): There are currently six public HEIs, which are the [National University of Rwanda \(NUR\)](#); the [Kigali Institute of Science and Technology \(KIST\)](#); the [Kigali Institute of Education \(KEI\)](#); and the [Kigali Institute of Health \(KIH\)](#) . As well as the public institutions there are more than twenty private universities which, while regulated by the state, are fully privately funded. As chart 1 below shows, enrolment in private universities is now higher than in public institutions.
 - Non-degree awarding higher education: As well as the degree awarding universities there are a number of other specialist institutions including Colleges of Technology (CoT), Colleges of Education (CoE) and Nursing Colleges.

Table 2: The four key phases of the Rwandan education system

Phase	Pre-Primary	9 Years Basic Education									12 years Basic Education			Post-19 education
Age	3-6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19+
Year		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	
	PP													
		GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS	GS				
		P	P	P	P	P	P							
											GenS	GenS	GenS	
											TSS	TSS	TSS	
								VTC	VTC	VTC	VTC	VTC	VTC	
								IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP	IP
														HEIs
														CoE
														CoT

KEY

PP = pre-primary schools

GS = Group Scoliares, or 9YBE schools catering for pupils from years 1-9

P = Primary schools catering for pupils from year 1-6 (the old “primary school”)

VTC = Vocational Training Centres, which currently cater for year 7-9 pupils as well as 12YBE pupils

TSS = Technical Secondary Schools

GenS = General Secondary School

TTC = Teacher Training Colleges

HEI = Higher Education Institutes

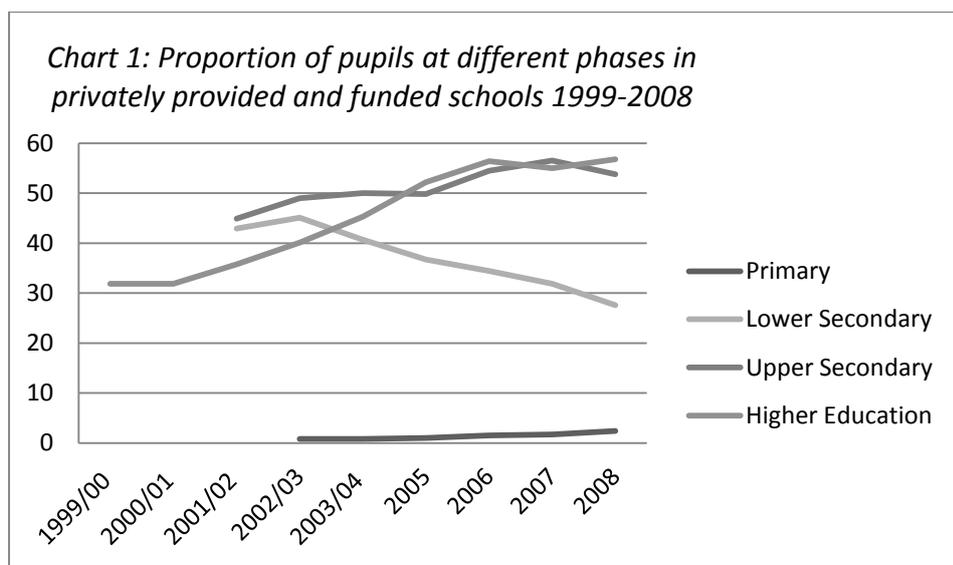
CoE = Colleges of Education

CoT = Colleges of Technology

IP = Integrated Polytechnics

4.3 Private provision in the Rwandan education system

The role of the private sector in the Rwandan education system is different in different phases of the system. It plays a major role in secondary education, higher education, TVET and in pre-school provision, but a relatively minor role in primary education. The picture is, however, very fluid and likely to change in the coming years with the full implementation of 9YBE and introduction of 12YBE. Chart 1 below looks at the trends over time for each phase of the system over the last decade.



Source: World Bank (2011) based on MINEDUC statistical year books and World Bank calculations.

The chart shows a significant fall in the proportion of pupils in private schools at the *lower secondary level*, from over 40% in 2002 to under 30% in 2008. This is very likely to have fallen further. For example, in the school Inspectorate report that in 2010 under 20% of schools at the lower secondary level were private (MINEDUC 2011a). This shift is linked to the introduction of 9YBE which led to an increase in the number of publically funded school places at this level.

Another interesting trend in this chart is the increase in the proportion of pupils being educated in private “upper secondary” schools and universities. The main drivers of this are likely to have been (i) an increase in the size of the cohorts graduating from lower secondary (ii) a lack of supply of publicly funded provision and (iii), until the introduction of 12YBE, higher fees in public schools than in the private sector. One of the key challenges for the delivery of the 12YBE policy will be how the Rwandan government manage to use existing capacity in the private sector.

On primary schools the position is more one of continuity rather than change. In so far as there is a trend it is towards a modest in absolute, if not relative, terms increase in the number of pupils attending private primary schools.

5. Pre-Primary School: Policy and Impact

5.1 Key policy on early child development and pre-primary

Early Child Development (ECD) policy is based on a comprehensive understanding of children's development between birth and starting school. As such it is not just an issue for the education system. It has implications for a number of Ministries and policy areas including health, social protection, nutrition and education. The Rwandan government describe ECD as "the processes by which children from pre conception to six years grow and thrive physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially". "Pre-primary schooling" or nursery schooling is an important part of ECD.

In 2011 the Rwandan government published, for the first time, an [Early Child Development Policy and Strategic Plan](#) (MINEDUC 2011b). This set out the government's thinking on pre-school services and child development. At the centre of the plan is the creation of at least one *multi-service ECD centre* in every Sector in Rwanda by 2014/15 – that will mean over 400 across the country. The document states that "*pilot Community-based Integrated ECD Centres will be designed during 2011/2012, and implemented and evaluated in each District and Sector during the lifetime of the Strategic Plan. The Centres will be designed to go to scale rapidly in all Sectors*" (MINEDUC 2011b).

MINEDUC is in the lead on the policy at a national level, but there is close co-ordination with other relevant departments, namely maternal and child health, nutrition and sanitation services in MINISANTE and MININFRA; and social protection services in MIGEPROF and MIFOTRA.

5.2 Recent trends on pre-primary

Before the Child Development and Strategic Plan were published, relatively little policy attention has been given to pre-primary education. Take-up remains very low, although there was an increase from 6.1% to just over 10% between 2010 and 2011 according to MINEDUC (2012). The vast majority of this take-up will be in the private sector. The government inspectorate report that in 2010 there were just two public nursery schools in the whole of Rwanda (MINEDUC 2011a)

6. 9 Years Basic Education: Policy and Impact

6.1 Key policy documents and decisions

9YBE is a major priority for the Government of Rwanda. As set out above it increasingly replaces the distinction between primary (school years P1 – P6) and lower secondary school (schools years S1 - S3). [Policies that Rwandan has implemented](#) in order to deliver 9YBE include:

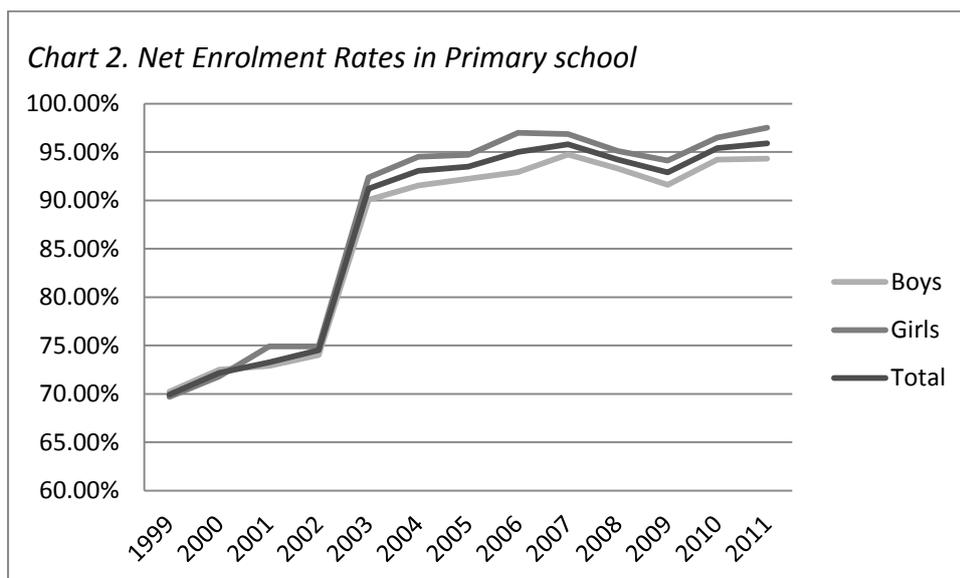
- Introducing subject specialism for primary teachers, rather than year group teaching.
- Reducing core courses in the curriculum from 9 to 5 in years P1 - P3 and from 11 to 6 in years P4 - P6.
- Double shifting with one group of children being taught in the morning and a different one in the afternoon.

All these measures were taken largely to make 9YBE more affordable and deliverable (MINEDUC 2008a). There has also been a large scale school buildings programme to provide the infrastructure for more pupils to attend school. Many of the school buildings have been built with the support and help of local communities through Umuganda, a Rwandan tradition of collective community work.

In the remainder of this section we first set out some recent progress on 9YBE. We then go on to discuss some specific aspects of primary education in Rwanda: these are decisions about the language of tuition, assessment and examinations and school governance and accountability.

6.2 Trends and progress on 9YBE

The chart below shows the recent trends on net enrolment rates in primary. It shows that there was a significant increase in the early 2000s. This was around the time that officially sanctioned school fees were abolished in Rwanda and replaced with a per pupil capitation grant. Since then levels have remained relatively steady, still with around 5% of children still not enrolling in primary school. This high level of initial access to primary school is broadly confirmed in the [recently published EICV household survey](#): this showed that between 2005/6 and 2010/11 the net enrolment rate in primary school increased from 86.6% to 91.7%. These figures, slightly lower than the MINEDUCU data, are regarded as the more accurate official statistics.

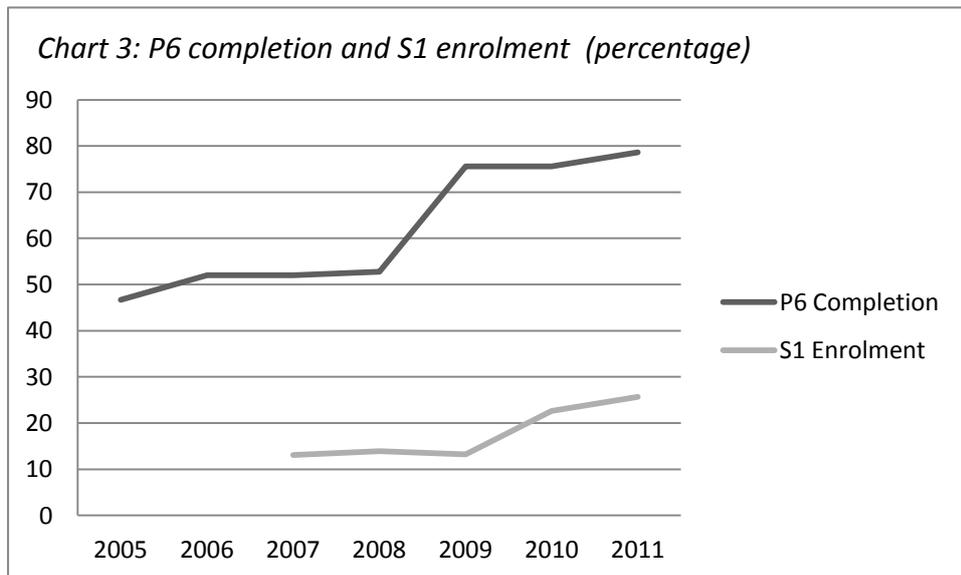


Source: MINEDUC (2012), based on EMIS data which allows for assessment of annual changes, but is less authoritative than NISR (2012) data.

There have also been increases in the completion rate for primary school: up to over 70%, but still relatively low progression rates onto the last three years of 9YBE. The chart below shows this using MINEDUC administrative data. This low transition rate has previously been the result of a lack of supply of places at the lower secondary level. Indeed, the P6 exams were explicitly used to restrict entry to the next phase of the system by setting a “pass grade”. This has, however, changed with the introduction of 9YBE, which you would expect to result in large increases in the transition rate from P6 to S1. However, this does not yet appear to be happening. In the EICV household survey there has been a significant increase in the number of “over age” children in primary school. The report states:

“In 2005/06, for every five children aged 7 to 12, there was one over 12 years attending primary school. In 2010/11, for every two children aged 7 to 12, there is one over 12 years attending primary school.”

This could potentially be understood as a side effect of the success in increasing enrolment rates and reducing dropout rates. More children are staying in school for longer, but because of the poor quality of provision are not progressing at the right age. So while thus far, as the EICV report states *“a direct consequence of children’s late completion of primary school is a lower net attendance rate at the secondary school level”*, in time secondary enrolment rates will start to increase faster.



Source: MINEDUC (2012) based on EMIS data

This paper does not assess other aspects of the performance of the Rwandan education system, for example class sizes, teacher motivation and numbers and learning outcomes. For a good recent overview of the performance of the system see the [World Bank’s Country Status Report](#) (World Bank 2011). For the position of Rwanda compared with other countries on a range of measures there is a useful [recent report from UNESCO](#), which contains comparative information on public spending on education, spending on different

phases of education (i.e. the extent to which governments focus on primary vs. tertiary education), teacher pay and pupil teacher ratios (UNESCO 2011).

6.3 9YBE issues: language of tuition

In 2009 English was adopted as the language of tuition in Rwandan primary schools. Prior to this nearly all schools in Rwanda used French, with only a small number already using English. The goal of the reform is to further integrate Rwanda into the East African Community (EAC) and to improve the country's chances of becoming a sub-regional leader in trade, tourism and science and technology. However, after challenges in training all teachers to teach well in English and also following the weight of evidence on the importance of children learning first in their mother tongue (Gove and Cvelich 2011), the government decided that Kinyarwanda should be the language of tuition for the first three years of primary school, with English taught as a subject and then after that for English to become the language of tuition across the curriculum.

6.4 9YBE issues: assessment and examinations

Exams have traditionally been taken at three stages in the Rwandan education system: (a) at the end of what before the introduction of 9YBE was the primary phase; (b) at the end of lower secondary in year S3; and (c) at the end of upper secondary.

The exams which were traditionally taken at the end of primary school remain, but they are now at year 6 in the 9YBE phase. As discussed above, in the past they were used to allocate a pass-fail grade on the basis of which access to lower secondary was decided. This changed in 2009 when a new system was introduced whereby each pupil was given a grade from 1-9 which is intended to be more of an objective measure of pupil attainment. The exams taken at the end of lower secondary are now taken at the end of 9YBE; they are "O-levels". The exams taken at the end of general upper secondary, which is the academic route for learners as part of 12YBE, are called "A-levels".

There has been some debate more recently on the importance of testing or assessing the literacy and numeracy of pupils in the first three years of primary school. One catalyst for this has been the concern from around the East African region about the quality of primary education. [UWEZO](#) is an excellent organisation to look at for further details, including assessments of the performance of Rwanda's neighbours, Tanzania Kenya and Uganda. These concerns around the region are reflected in Rwanda in the 2011 piloting of the [Learning Assessment in Rwandan Schools \(LARS\)](#) programme. This assessed pupils' level of literacy and numeracy at the end of P3 and could potentially provide the basis for an important part of any future system of assessment and school accountability. At the time of writing results from the LARS pilots are not available.

Rwanda is not at present involved in cross-national surveys of pupil attainment, such as PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS or even the regional survey operated across the EAC by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality ([SACMEQ](#)).

6.5 9YBE issues: school governance and accountability

Schools are deemed to have a high degree of autonomy in Rwanda. School Based Management was introduced in 2003 and when, in 2003/4, the capitation grant was introduced to replace income from fees, this was seen as resulting in an increase in school autonomy (World Bank 2011). More recent policy changes, such as a decentralisation of textbook procurement, have also increased school autonomy.

At the school level, Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), which do not directly involve parents in the governance of schools and involve large numbers of parents, and Parent Teacher Committees (PTCs), which are more engaged in school governance and smaller organisation, exist in almost all schools. A survey in 2008 found that 84% of schools had a Parent Teacher Committee and that half of these committees were involved in hiring teachers and over half engaged in the monitoring and evaluation of teachers (World Bank 2010). Committees can also be involved in budget setting and procurement decisions.

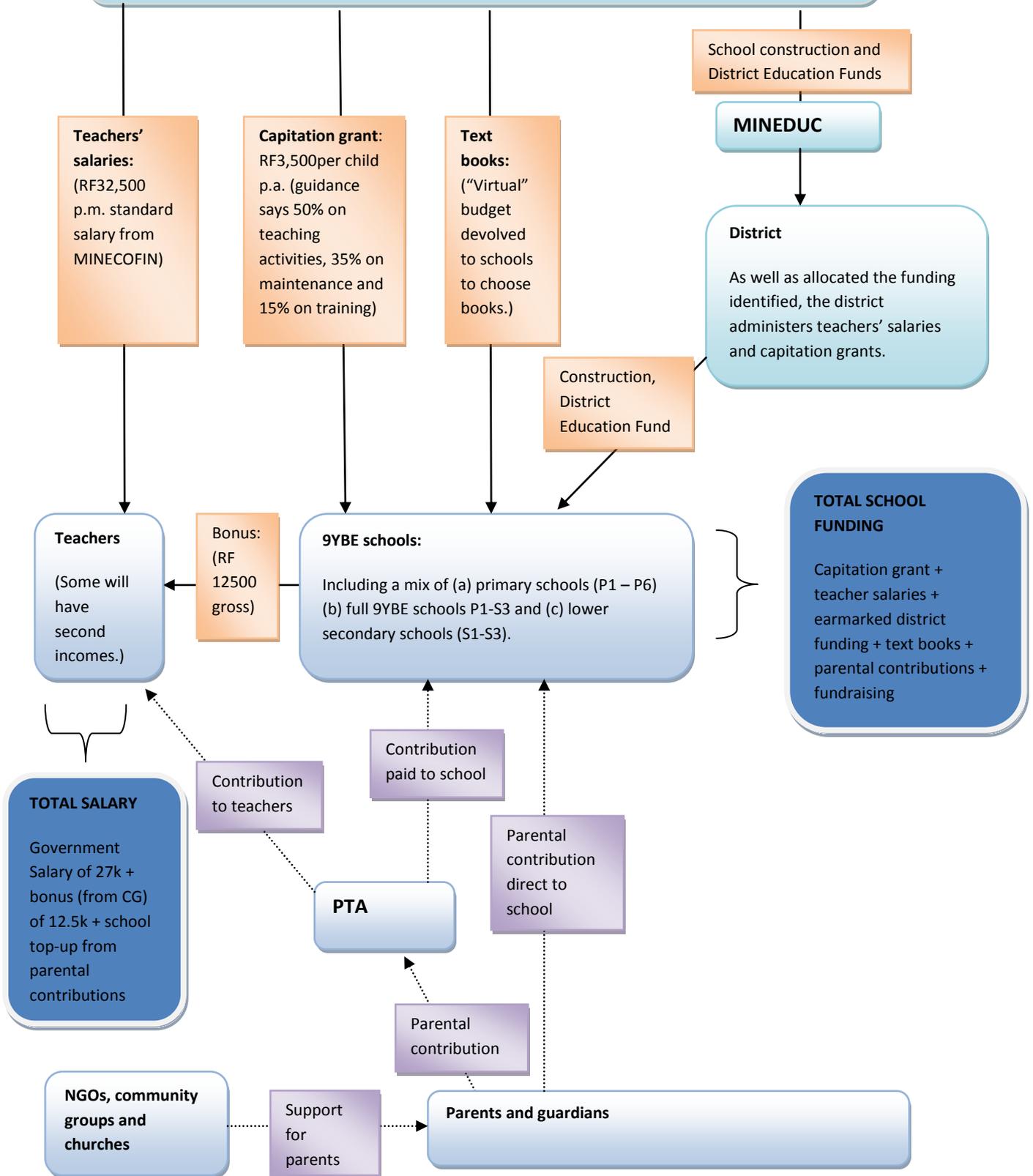
6.6 9YBE: primary school funding

The diagramme on the following page shows the school funding system in Rwanda. The figures presented in are for primary schools, but the overall system of funding, after the introduction of 9YBE, are also the same for lower secondary schools. The largest components of school funding for schools are:

- The Capitation Grant: With the abolition of school fees Rwandan introduced a capitation grant. This is paid on a per-pupil basis direct to the school and the head teacher has discretion over how to spend the money, with only light touch guidance from the centre. In 2010 this was RF3,500 per pupil for primary schools, but higher for lower secondary where it was 11,000 for day students and 21,000 for boarding students.
- Teachers' salaries: The other significant element of school funding is teachers' salaries: this is also paid direct from MINECOFIN, but in this case it is paid to teachers, rather than via the school. As part of their capitation grant schools also have an allocation for a "bonus payment" which can be made to teachers. In theory this is based on performance, but in practice the vast majority of teachers receive the payment as a top up to their salary.
- Parental contributions: There are no fees for school in Rwanda, but schools still receive additional income from parents in the form of different types of voluntary contribution. There is little research on how significant these contributions remain.

Central government: Consolidated Fund Account: MINECOFIN, but held in the National Bank of Rwanda.

This includes a holding account for Education Budget Support funded from Taxation and also from GBS and SBS from Donors.



- i) Schools also hire contract teachers, paid for from their Capitation Grant. They are usually paid less than other teachers.
- ii) 9YBE schools will also receive school food funding from the government for S1-S3

7. 12 Years Basic Education: Policy and Impact

7.1 12YBE implementation and progress

12YBE was announced first in 2010. It will provide all Rwandan's who reach the end of 9YBE with an entitlement to a further three years of education. This learning could either be in a Teacher Training College (TTC), General Secondary or in TVET (which we discuss in more detail below). At the time of writing there is no public strategy document or delivery plan, but [implementation has started](#).

An expansion of opportunity at the upper secondary level is the right strategic decision for Rwanda. It reflects the need to ensure improved access for the larger cohorts of pupils who will finish 9YBE in the future, but also the need for a larger pool of people entering the labour market with higher level skills. However, successful implementation of 12YBE will be challenging. The potential cost implications of having created an entitlement to post 9YBE education are large and without considerable additional funds there will be implications for other areas of the education budget. It will also be important that the education is of a high quality and linked to the needs of the labour market.

7.2 TVET

The TVET system will be vital in the delivery of 12YBE. Above, in table 2, we presented how TVET fits with the Rwandan Education system. Here we set out the different institutions which deliver TVET in Rwanda. The TVET system has three levels: vocational (primarily aimed at pupils in years 7-9 in 9YBE and above), technical (taught as the main TVET option during 12YBE) and colleges of technology (at the post-19 level). The institutions providing TVET can be divided into the following:

- [Vocational Training Centres](#). These were previously called “Centres de Formation de Jeunes” (CFJs) and were mainly for primary (P6) graduates and other who did not complete lower secondary education. The courses typically last from 6 months to one year. It is possible that this will change with the effective introduction of 9YBE and the commencement of 12YBE: [in the future VTCs may play a larger role with upper secondary pupils](#).
- [Technical Secondary Schools](#). These schools take graduates of 9YBE and provide three years of training leading to a “craftsman” certificate. Graduates with this certificate can proceed to university and technical colleges. They provide mainly technical subjects, such as construction, ICT, carpentry and automotive technology.

Finally, the [Workforce Development Agency \(WDA\)](#) is integrating the TVET system through the creation of Integrated Regional Polytechnic Centers (IPRCs). These are now offering all levels of TVET and co-ordinate and facilitate a range of skills programs at different levels. The intent is that people with ability can progress vertically all the way to university education in a track parallel to general education.

7.3 TVET Policies and Strategies

The policy framework for TVET is set out in three main documents: the [Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy in Rwanda](#) published in 2008 (MINEDUC 2008b), a further paper - “Draft WDA Strategic and Action Plan for Implementation of the Integrated TVET System” (December 2009). The *TVET Policy* sets out as main objective: “... *to provide the economy with qualified and competitive workers and to train citizens able to participate in sustainable growth and poverty reduction by ensuring training opportunities to all social groups without discrimination.*” The policy also lays out five priority areas of intervention which entail developing the TVET system, improving access and quality, providing adequate quality of teachers, and ensuring sustainable financing.

Key web resources

MINEDUC:	http://www.mineduc.gov.rw
Rwanda Education Board:	http://www.reb.rw/index.html
SACMEQ:	www.sacmeq.org/
Workforce Development Agency	http://www.wda.gov.rw/
Rwandan Constitution:	http://www.right-to-education.org/country-node/388/country-constitutional
UNICEF Rwanda	http://www.unicef.org/rwanda/education_8323.html
DfID Rwanda	http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Where-we-work/Africa-West-Central/Rwanda/
UWEZO	http://uwezo.net/
Higher Education Council	http://www.highereducationcouncil.org/spip.php
Student Financing Agency	http://www.sfar.gov.rw/

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