



UBUNTU Swiss-Rwandan Organization
WE CAN'T HELP EVERYONE, BUT EVERYONE CAN HELP SOMEONE

Educational system in Rwanda:

The origin of the educational system

The educational system in Rwanda was introduced by German missionaries around 1900. The word "Ishuli" in the local language still refers to this origin. In 1979, a school reform was conducted: the state took over sovereignty of the schools and introduced compulsory education for children between the age of 7 and 26. Regardless of the current difficulties caused by the civil war, many children in Rwanda can only attend school for one or two years, or not at all. This is also true despite compulsory schooling by law. The reasons for this are long distances to school (up to 4 hours) and the rather, one could think, low school fees which is often unaffordable by Rwandan standards (only for exercise books, pencils and school uniforms). In addition, the children are not available for domestic work while they are at school. For these reasons, the graduation rates are still not at the desired level.

Classification of the system of the classes:

Pre-Primary Education, for children of preschool of age of 3 to 6

Primary Education, for children of age of 7 to 12, 6 years

Secondary-Education, for children and young people of age between 13 - 18 years, 6 years. Breakdown in 3 years of **lower secondary** and afterwards 3 years of **upper secondary**

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), subdivided in **Technical Secondary Schools (TSS)**, **Vocational Training Centers (VTC's)** and **Technical Tertiary Institutions** (with diploma and CAS).

Tertiary Education, with 7 Levels (1st level = Certificate of Education, 2nd level = Diploma in Higher Education, 3rd level = Advanced Diploma in Higher Education, 4th level = Degree, 5th level = Bachelor's Degree with Honors, 6th level = Master's Degree, 7th level = Doctor)

Adult Literacy Education, for adults who are illiterate and want to acquire the basic knowledge of reading and writing.

Completion rate:

Although the enrolment rate is now around 95%, there are still about 14.3% of pupils who do not finish primary school and about 18% of pupils who repeat. In secondary school the rates are 14.7 % of pupils who do not finish and 11.6 % who repeat. These figures are based on statistics from the Ministry of Education, Kigali, 2014. There are no more recent figures and evaluations to date.

Equipment:

Especially since the looting and damage during the civil war, there is a lack almost everywhere of sufficient basic equipment for schools (classrooms, school furniture, teaching and learning materials, exercise books, pencils, etc.). Many school buildings are still in poor condition. Benches and chairs are often too few or none at all existing, and the pupils sit on mud bricks or on the ground, or they stand during lessons. Especially in the primary schools (grades 1 - 3), classes are held in two shifts due to the important number of pupils. The first shift is taught in the morning, the second in the afternoon. Due to the lack of paper, the little ones sometimes write on slates. The older ones receive a booklet every year. There are hardly any schoolbooks, and if any at all, only for the teachers. The teachers often write on blackboards on the wall.



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Lack of teachers:

The increasing number of pupils at primary level and the creation of rural and craft teaching centers require intensified efforts to increase the number of teachers and the quality of education. In the mid-1980s, the Teacher Training Institute was established to improve the standard of teacher and school support staff. However, these efforts were thwarted, as many teachers were killed during the civil war unrest. As a result, retired teachers or graduates of secondary schools are often used in the school service. The teacher/pupil ratio in 2014 was still around 1:58 in primary schools and 1:21 in secondary schools, these figures are also based on statistics from the "Ministry of Education, Kigali, 2014" and apply to the whole country. In the schools that we looked at, the ratio is far from the same, especially in secondary schools, where the ratio is more like 1:80. The ratios are therefore different for each district and region.

Professional education:

Before the civil war, primary school graduates had the option of an additional three-year training in an integrated rural craft centre, the CERAI (Centre d'Enseignement Rural et Artisanal Intégré). This course of education which did not lead to a qualification, served to vocational preparation in agriculture as well as in household and handicrafts. In addition to deepening general education, it primarily imparted practical knowledge that is useful and important for development in rural areas. The CERAI can be described as a 3-year full-time vocational school which training program was co-determined by regional needs and opportunities for economic development. The boys were mainly trained in bricklaying, locksmith and carpentry, the girls in sewing, home economics and health education.

Professional education (the continuation):

As this branch of craft training had been controversial for some time, most CERAI did not resume teaching after the civil war. Vocational training currently takes place in out-of-school youth training centers. In addition, some new technical schools have already been founded. (*)

(*) These texts are taken from the websites of the Rhineland-Pfalz and Rwanda Development Cooperation.

Higher education:

The National University of Rwanda (founded in 1963) is located in Butare. It offers training places for about 10 % of secondary school graduates. Due to the limited number of places and limited teaching opportunities, many Rwandans study abroad, especially in Belgium, the former colonial power, as well as in France, Canada and in the United States. Preferred courses of study are Engineering and Agricultural Economics as well as Business Studies. (*)

(*) These texts are taken from the websites of the Rhineland-Pfalz and Rwanda Development Cooperation.