

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
Ministry of Education, Technology
and Scientific Research (MINEDUC)



P.O. Box. 622 KIGALI
Tel. : 83051/86970
Fax : 82162
E-mail : mineducs@avu.org

**CONFERENCE ON INTEGRATED EVALUATION AND
PLANNING FOR STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR
POVERTY REDUCTION IN RWANDA**

Title :

**THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE POVERTY
REDUCTION PROGRAMME**

Prepared by Eugene MUNYAKAYANZA
Secretary General

Kigali, October 2001.

The role of education in the poverty reduction programme (Kigali 26-30 September 2001)

1. Introduction

The genocide and massacres which occurred in this country in 1994 adversely affected several areas of activity especially the field of education. These tragic events led to the loss of very many skills which must be replaced, both in terms of quality and quantity in order to efficiently face the difficulties currently experienced by the Rwandan economy in general and the educational system in particular. The major priority areas that should be solved within the framework of poverty reduction are as follows:

- Reducing ignorance.
- Providing basic education to all children.
- Increasing the rate of access to education at all levels.
- Reducing the drop out rate.
- Improving the quality of education by producing qualified teachers, adequate teaching materials and providing enough school books, building enough accommodation facilities which meet acceptable building standards.
- Developing programmes which are responsive to labour market requirements.
- Promoting girls' education.
- Reasserting the value of the teaching profession.
- Strengthening the AIDS control programme in schools.
- Promoting technical and vocational training.
- Increasing secondary and higher education attendance rates.

The figures below which give a picture of Rwanda's educational system at all levels, show the challenge which the country is facing.

<u>Primary:</u>	1 428 708 pupils in 1999/2000
	1 475 572 pupils in 2000/2001
	2 093 schools in 1999/2000
	2 142 schools in 2000/2001
	28 689 teachers out of whom 62.7% are qualified (2000/2001)

Teacher/pupil ratio: 55 in 1999/2000
 Gross school attendance rate: 1999/2000: 97%
 Secondary School admission rate (1999/2000): 25%
 Repetition rate (1999/2000): 37 %
 Drop out rate (1999/2000): 12.6%

Secondary:

125,124 pupils (out of whom 68,457 are in government and government aided schools (1999/2001)

5,557 teachers out of whom 42.7% are qualified.

336 secondary schools out of which 187 are private (1999/2000).
 Teacher/pupil ratio: 22.5%.

Higher:

7,224 students in universities and public institutions with 2000 more enrolled in universities abroad (1999/2000)

809 teaching staff in all these institutions

Approach :

The documentary approach was adopted in the process of producing this paper, the following documents were consulted:

- Rwanda's Plan of Action for Poverty Reduction, November 2000
- Rwanda's National Report, May 1998
- Educational Policy and Planning, April 1995.

2.Objectives

In order to achieve its mission, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research has set itself the following essential objectives:

- Providing education to all Rwandese.
- Improving the quality of education.
- Promoting the teaching of science as well as technical and vocational training.

- Promoting multilingualism in the country.
- Promoting an integral education, which is adapted to the country's situation and fosters respect for human rights.
- Inculcating among Rwandans, the importance of the environment, health and individual hygiene as well as the need to protect life and the environment.
- Improving planning, managerial and administrative capacity.

These objectives are in keeping with the national poverty reduction programme and the philosophy of good governance to the extent that the activities that are going to be undertaken in order to achieve these objectives will help in reducing the illiteracy rate and ignorance. These activities will also lead to an increase in human resources and they will be implemented at the decentralized level with the central administration only playing a coordinating role. Once the country reaches a stage where these objectives can be achieved, the illiteracy rate will have been reduced, ignorance will also have been reduced, human resources will have increased and their quality will have improved. All these factors help reduce poverty to the extent that they provide the country with the knowledge and skills that can positively change the economic environment.

3. Achievements

In spite of all sorts of problems, a lot has been achieved in the field of education.

Main problems faced and actions carried out

- Providing education to all Rwandans

Problems:

- Due to rampant poverty in the population, parents' contribution is generally very limited;
- The educational infrastructure is insufficient;
- Culture as an obstacle to girls' education;
- Government's funding capacity is low;
- The boarding school system limits access to secondary and higher education;
- Special education, continuous and pre-school education are not well understood by the population.

Completed and ongoing activities

- Gradually handing over the management of boarding schools to parents or to private operators;
- Setting up an Education Loan Fund;
- Building at least one secondary school per district.

➤ Improving the quality of education

Problems

- Insufficiency of skilled human resources;
- Insufficiency of financial resources;
- Inadequate programmes;
- Ineffective inspection services;
- Inappropriate and outdated legislation;
- Overcrowded class rooms;
- Inadequate teaching materials;
- Unmotivated teachers.

Completed and ongoing activities

- Establishing a general inspectorate of schools,
- Recruiting qualified people for the National Curriculum Development Centre (CNDP) and equipping the Centre;
- Reviewing school programmes and legislation;
- Providing initial and continuous training for teachers;
- Opening higher institutes of education and teacher training colleges;
- Identifying and adopting mechanisms that will motivate teachers;

- Making teaching materials and school books available.

➤ Promoting the teaching of science as well as technical and vocational training

Problems

- Insufficient technical, vocational and science schools;
- Lack of laboratories and equipment;
- Insufficiency of qualified teaching staff;
- Lack of a guidance body;
- Undeveloped private sector.

Planned actions

- Recruiting qualified staff in the field of guidance and counseling for the "CNER";
- Building at least one science, one technical and one vocational school per province and equipping them.
- Organizing continuous education courses for teachers;
- Advising students to join teacher training colleges.

➤ Promoting multilingualism in the country

Problems

- Lack of equipment and appropriate teaching material;
- Insufficient number of language teachers.

Completed and ongoing activities

- Teaching the three official languages from the 1st year of primary school and make English and French the teaching languages from Primary Four;
- Opening a language teaching centre
- Providing schools with teaching books and materials which are appropriate for language teaching.

- Promoting an integral education which is adapted to the country's situation and fosters respect for human rights

Problems

- Fundamental rights were trampled upon by the genocide and massacres which destroyed the country's social fabric;
- Development of counter-values.

Activities

- Regularly reviewing and adapting school programmes;
- Integrating education for peace, tolerance, respect for individual rights and liberties in the curricula.

- Inculcating among Rwandans, the importance of the environment, health and individual hygiene as well as the need to protect life and the environment

Problems

- The Rwandan population is not sensitive to environmental values and to the importance of health and hygiene;
- Insufficient means for health and environmental protection;

Completed and ongoing activities

- Including health concepts in the curriculum, especially in subjects like geography, biology and other related disciplines;
- Popularising, through conferences, debates, specialised magazines and talks, strategies aimed at protecting the environment and health.

- Improving planning, managerial and administrative capacity

Problems

- Insufficient qualified staff;
- Lack of a data collecting unit;
- Insufficient financial and material resources.

Completed and ongoing activities

- Reviewing the school map in order to rationalize it;

- Reviewing and updating school legislation;
- Making decentralization effective;
- Making educational data available;
- Working out education financial plans and raise funds required to implement such plans.

➤ Management and administrative measures adopted in the framework of good governance programmes

In 1997, the Ministries of Primary, Secondary and Higher Education (MINEPRISEC and MINESUPRES) were merged, forming one single Ministry, MINEDUC.

□ Central Administration

- 7 technical directorates
- 4 supporting directorates
- One AIDS control unit and 2 divisions under the General Secretariat

□ Local administration

In the process of implementing the national decentralization policy, many skills and responsibilities shall be transferred to districts and decentralized urban entities. The district is expected to become a centre that will provide services which have a direct impact on local populations.

This is why many educational services which were under the direct management of the central administration have been transferred to local governments. Some outstanding examples are the District Inspectorates (Inspections d'Arrondissement) which have become Provincial Directorates for Education and Youth at Provincial level and the Sub-District (*Secteur*) Inspectorates which have now become Social Service Departments at district level.

The central administration will still be in charge of coordination, planning, general supervision, evaluation, programmes and training.

Institutions involved

- Schools (Principals/Headmasters);
- Parents committees;

- District Social Service Departments;
- Provincial Directorates for Education and Youth;
- District Councils;
- Provincial Councils.

The constraints and obstacles faced by these institutions are as follows:

- Lack of material;
- Lack of financial resources;
- Insufficient human resources.

Progress made

- Bottom-up decision making process;
- Positive change of attitude towards initiatives;
- The population plays an active role in the development of education in rural areas;
- Increased awareness of the problems hampering education, participation in the search for solution;
- Creation of multisectoral working groups, involvement of parents in the identification of policies for a coherent education.

4.Strategic Actions

The institutions under the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research have been decentralized; their skills and material resources which have been strengthened will contribute towards good governance and will aim at reducing poverty.

In order to promote education at all levels, the Ministry is going to adopt the following strategies:

- To increase available space at all levels of education;
- To increase infrastructure and equipment;

- To progressively make parents increasingly involved in providing education for their children at all levels;
- To promote partnership between the authorities, the private sector, grassroots communities and non-governmental organizations.

These strategies will make it possible to achieve the objective of providing education for all.

The Ministry is also working very hard to build the capacity of human resources by investing in education in order to fill the gap left by the 1994 genocide and massacres. The priority activities undertaken by the Ministry with the view to reducing poverty are described below:

- Providing primary education to all children. In this respect, the government has been making a lot of efforts after the tragic events which the country went through in 1994, with the aim of reaching a gross universal school attendance of 99.9% by 2010.
- Progress has been made at the secondary school level; the number of schools increased from 150 in 1994 to 385 in 2001. Out of these, 186 were government or government aided schools, while 190 were private. It must be pointed out however, that the secondary school attendance rate is still very low and that there is still a lot to be done: quality needs to be improved, the school attendance rate needs to be raised while the repeating and drop out rates which are very high need to be reduced; new schools must be built, commercial education committees and associations must be developed and encouraged, school programmes should be reviewed, guidance and counseling programmes must be strengthened while schools of science and technology need to be founded and equipped.
- In the secondary school cycle, the number of students is still very low in relation to primary school enrolment; girls' enrolment is also generally low especially in secondary schools; poor children face the problems of household chores and the lack of school fees; technical and vocational training must be strengthened in secondary schools while new syllabi that are more adapted to the labour market need to be worked out.
- One of the top priorities should be to improve teachers' working conditions, they should undergo initial training and be given opportunities to participate in continuous education programmes; they should also be given accommodation and means of transport.
- The higher education enrolment rate is very low, access is very limited, the teaching staff is qualitatively and quantitatively wanting.

In conjunction with MINALOC, the Ministry of Education will ceaselessly support private initiatives as well as communal development committees in their efforts to build community schools, increase resources and improve the quality of education in order to achieve the objective of poverty reduction. The private sector should also play a more important role in the development of vocational training while the government's role would be to support the private sector as it promotes education.

5. Implementing educational policies

The major problems which the Ministry is experiencing hinge around two factors: namely, the low enrolment rates at all levels of the educational system and the issue of quality.

If these problems are to be solved, all the institutions which are involved in education will have to put a special emphasis on the following areas:

- Reducing drop out and repeating rates;
- Reducing parents' ignorance;
- Increasing available space in educational institutions;
- Finding/producing sufficient numbers of qualified human resources;
- Increasing school amenities and equipment.

All categories of the population are affected by the population wherever they live in the country (in rural, semi-rural or urban areas). It is important, therefore to strengthen the Ministry's decentralized services so that they can disseminate the kind of information that will help contribute to the development of an appropriate education of system for the benefit of the whole population. Follow up systems should be developed for all levels of the system.

When the above mentioned problems will be solved, the educationnal system will be improved and made more efficient. In the process, a lot of knowledge will have been gathered and this same knowledge shall be used to build the Rwandan, thereby reducing poverty.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

In order to strengthen good governance within the framework of poverty reduction, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research, makes its contribution through its programmes by initiating the population to management practices, environmental exploitation and protection, principles of hygiene and health and to family planning and AIDS prevention. The Ministry also contributes to the qualitative

and quantitative production of knowledge and skills and to the promotion of love for work.

In the final analysis, if good governance is to be achieved in the field of education, the Government must identify and adopt incentives which will help promote education at all levels. It must also put in place clear and efficient cooperation mechanisms between the decentralized institutions and the central body.

Finally the Government must also promote human resource development by providing basic courses and continuous education opportunities for all levels of society so as to equip them with the skills they need to draw benefits from the resources available in their environment.