



POLICY RECOMMENDATION

THE STUDY ON ASSESSMENT OF LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF WORKERS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The case of Karongi, Kicukiro and Rulindo Districts of Rwanda

November, 2023



Roll out affordable Housing Scheme for teachers



Establishment of sectoral minimum wage in education sector



Fostering teacher capacity building and Continuous Professional Development

I. Executive Summary

In 2023, COTRAF-Rwanda and FES Rwanda commissioned a study geared towards assessing living and working conditions of workers in the education sector.

The study was conducted in Karongi, Kicukiro and Rulindo Districts of Rwanda and covered primary, secondary, TTC¹, and TVET² teachers. The study aimed to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i. Assess the status of labor conditions in the education sector;
- ii. Identify the factors that have facilitated or impeded the establishment of a minimum wage in the education sector, and
- iii. Formulate recommendable actions, strategies, and measures to ensure the achievement of social protection and decent work in Rwanda's education sector.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It used semi-structured questionnaires and interviews targeting mainly teachers, head teachers and parents' committee representatives. The sample size was 98 from three districts. Also, interviews were conducted at national level with key informants in key educational institutions. Finally, qualitative data were collected through focus groups discussions to triangulate relevant information.

From the findings of the study, COTRAF-Rwanda and FES Rwanda aimed to formulate actionable recommendations and strategies designed to improve social protection and the overall quality of work within the education sector.

The main findings of the study show that all teachers in primary and secondary schools work under permanent contracts, as confirmed

1 TTC: Teacher Training College

2 TVET : Technical and Vocational Education and Training

by 100% of respondents in all investigated districts. The class size remains high especially in primary: for example it stands between 40 to 50 students in Karongi and 40 to 60 in Kicukiro. Most of the teachers benefit from a weekly day off (93.9%), however they spend this day mostly for teaching preparation. The majority of the respondents benefited from regular working promotions as established by the law. Teachers in primary and secondary schools did not appreciate their salaries as confirmed by 100% of respondents from Kicukiro and Rulindo districts. More than 80% of the respondents benefited from bank loans, especially in Umwalimu SACCO. Nevertheless, the accessibility to loans does not necessarily mean that teachers are living an easy life. Some of them are confined to a cycle of asking for and repaying loans and this can generate social strain and anxiety among teachers and their families. Most of the teacher respondents have no other source of income : this is confirmed in secondary schools by 90% of respondents in Karongi District, 85.7% of respondents in Rulindo District, and 69.6% of respondents in Kicukiro District.

Briefly, the findings of the study show that challenges faced by teachers are interlinked. The most salient is the reward system. The recent increase in salaries does not reflect a real increase in teachers' purchasing power and has been accompanied by the loss of existing bonuses especially in urban areas.

Further challenges include:

- i. The teachers' low social status: teachers' lives look challenging when compared with other civil servants in their localities.
- ii. Non-operational Trade Unions: teachers confirm that they solely interact with Trade Unions when it is time for seeking membership contributions payment. The advocacy from Trade Unions remains low.

- iii. Poor and insufficient school infrastructure: teaching aids, especially books, are not enough for all students. Some teachers do not possess computer literacy skills and computer materials and they experience poor internet connectivity.
- iv. The non-existence of a sectoral minimum wage is another core issue: to cope up with the cost of living and improve their welfare, competent authorities should fast-track the establishment of the sectoral minimum wage so as to benefit teachers.

The study identified the multifaceted factors that have either facilitated or impeded the establishment of a minimum wage within the education sector. The study pointed out both external and internal factors contributing to the wage structure. They include legal and policy frameworks, limited financial resources, consideration of national and foreign investment, prevalence of informal economy to name only a few. It's noteworthy to mention that among inhibitor factors is the fact that the employer (the Government) is at the same time the regulator, decision and policy maker and implementer in the education sector.

II. Policy Recommendations' Goal

The goal of the policy recommendations is to not only address the challenges faced by teachers but also to elevate their status within society. Through the implementation of these strategies by different education stakeholders, Rwanda would be creating a sustainable framework that nurtures a thriving and motivated educational workforce.

III. Scope of the Policy Recommendations

These recommendations apply to all teachers in both public and private schools up to the completion of the secondary stage of education, whether primary, or secondary, including TTCs and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Policy recommendation	1. Fast-track the establishment of sectoral minimum wage in education sector	Primary Responsibility: MIFOTRA	Key stakeholders MINEDUC, MINECOFIN; MINALOC; Parliament; Districts; COTRAF-Rwanda and other Trade Unions; FES Rwanda; Faith based Organizations; Development Partners	Time-line
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a sectoral minimum wage that will uplift the salary of teachers. This wage should be determined based on the cost of living in different districts and other relevant factors like the overall economic conditions to ensure that teachers receive a fair compensation for their work. 2. Ensure gradual and phased increases in the sectoral minimum wage to minimize shock to employers especially those from the Private Sector. 3. Index the sectoral minimum wage to inflation to ensure it keeps pace with rising costs 	MIFOTRA		1-5 years
Key activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out comprehensive research on the cost of living of teachers for evidence-based decision making regarding the sectoral minimum wage in education 2. Feasibility study on the implementation of the sectoral minimum wage and indexing it to inflation to ensure it keeps pace with rising costs 	MINECOFIN MIFOTRA		
Key Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research conducted to consider urban and rural areas to account for varying living expenses and inform the determination of sectoral minimum wage in education 2. Sectoral minimum wage in education determined 3. Living standards of teachers improved 4. Sectoral minimum wage indexed to inflation to prevent the real value of wages from eroding over time. 5. Compliance of the sectoral minimum wage by employers especially in Private Sector. 	MIFOTRA		
Policy recommendation	2. Fostering teacher capacity building and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in ICTs	MINEDUC	MIFOTRA, MINEDUC and Affiliated Agencies REB, RTB, NESA; Teacher Training Institutions; Development partners like UNESCO; COTRAF-RWANDA and its Unions	1-5 years

Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Roll out foundational digital literacy trainings as part of the CPD Program, ensuring that teachers have a strong grasp of basic ICT skills including emerging technologies like robotics and Artificial Intelligence (AI). 2. Utilize blended learning models for CPD delivery, combining in-person workshops, webinars, and self-paced online courses to accommodate various learning styles and schedules 3. Implement a certification scheme for teachers who successfully complete CPD courses: this is to open up opportunities for career advancement such as leadership roles, promotions, higher competitiveness or increased compensation 4. Feedback loops: establish mechanisms for teachers to provide feedback on CPD programs and suggest improvements 	MINEDUC		
Key activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of the foundational digital literacy module including emerging technologies for basic education for teachers 2. Conduct the Training of Trainers (ToT) across the Districts on digital learning literacy 3. Roll out the emerging technology foundational literacy course into schools by trained teachers (Master trainers) 4. Certify teachers who complete planned ICT and CPD courses 5. Guarantee monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the ICT and CPD courses for teachers 	MINEDUC	MINEDUC and Affiliated Agencies REB,RTB,NESA, Districts and Development partners	
Key indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundational digital literacy integrating emerging technologies module developed 2. Training of trainers conducted across the districts 3. Each and every teacher trained on ICT essentials including emerging technologies (basics of ICT) 4. Teachers who successfully complete ICT CPD course certified 	MINEDUC		

Policy recommendation	3.Roll out affordable Housing Scheme for teachers	MININFRA	MINEDUC and Affiliated Agencies REB,RTB,NESA, MININFRA, MINECOFIN, RHA, Development Partners; PSF; Kigali City and Districts; BRD; Umwalimu SACCO Trade Unions	1-5 Years
Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher Housing Grants: establish grants or forgivable loan programs to help teachers cover housing costs. These grants could be tied to years of service, encouraging teachers to stay in the profession (similar to incentives given to students-teachers in TTCs and UR College of Education) 2. Housing allowance: include housing allowances or stipends as part of teacher compensation packages especially in high-cost areas 3. Increase the financial capacity of Umwalimu SACCO to provide affordable and long-term loans to reduce the burden on low-wage teachers 	MINEDUC		
Key activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of teacher housing grants policy 2. To develop housing allowance policy for teachers in costly-areas 3. Increase the financial support from the Government to Umwalimu SACCO 	MINEDUC		
Key Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guidelines or housing grants policy for teachers available 2. Policy on housing allowance for teachers in high-cost areas developed and approved 3. Increment of the Government financial support to Umwalimu SACCO effected 			
Policy recommendation	4. Raise living and working standards of teachers so that teaching becomes an attractive profession (valuing teaching profession)	MINEDUC	MINEDUC and Affiliated Agencies REB, RTB, NESA; MINALOC; MIGEPROF, GMO, NCDA, COTRAF- RWANDA, FES RWANDA; TRADE Unions; Civil Society; Kigali City and Districts and Development partners	1-5 years

Strategies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuously increase school infrastructure on annual basis in order to reduce teacher-student ratio and ensure improved quality of education 2. Support teachers' Trade Unions and collaborate with them to raise awareness of teacher's challenges and advocate for fair policies 3. Media partnerships: collaborate with media outlets to produce documentaries or series that showcase the challenges and triumphs of teachers and highlight the global impact of teaching 	MINEDUC		
Key activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing classroom construction in different districts 2. Engage Teachers' Trade Unions on all education policies and programs 3. Conclude formal partnerships with local, regional, and global media for the promotion of best practices of teachers in Rwanda 4. Awareness campaigns to awaken teachers for joining Trade Unions to make their voice strong and ensure effective advocacy 	MINEDUC MINEDUC MINEDUC Trade Unions		
Key Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Classrooms built in different districts per year 2. Functional teachers' Trade Unions 3. Increased involvement of teachers' Trade Unions in education policies and programs 4. Teaching profession becomes more attractive 5. Increased teachers' success stories published by local and international media 6. Number of teachers who joins Trade Unions and trained 7. Financial viability of teachers' Trade Union increased as a result to teachers' monthly contributions 8. Active committees of teachers' representative in Trade Unions. 			

Conclusion

COTRAF–Rwanda and FES Rwanda are convinced that the adoption and implementation of the policy recommendations mentioned would enhance the living and working conditions of teachers in Rwanda, which will ultimately contribute to better educational outcomes and the overall well-being of teachers and their families. The implementation calls for a multi-sectoral approach and collaboration with all education stakeholders.

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