



INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION: ENSURING THE BEST OUTCOMES FOR RWANDA'S CHILDREN

This briefing paper presents the key issues raised among RENCP members concerning investment in education for Rwanda's children.

CONTEXT

Over the years Rwanda has made great progress in education; building national infrastructure at primary level, and increasing access to primary school and achieving progress in key areas such as gender equality, increasing completion rates and reducing drop out rates. However, recent data indicates that significant challenges are emerging at the primary level. Repetition rates at primary level increased significantly (from 12.7% in 2011 to 18.3% in 2013) and drop out rates at primary level also went up (from 10.9% in 2011 to 14.3% in 2014). Combined with the growing financial pressure on the education budget, especially on the primary allocation,

there is a need to carefully monitor resource allocation at pre-primary and primary levels, as well as seeking to use the currently available resources in the most efficient and equitable manner.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that Rwanda will now be working towards, place equitable progress at the heart of education goals. There is also significant emphasis on relevant and effective learning outcomes. This requires that we maximise resources available for children and invest these in the most efficient and equitable way possible.

Photo: Colin Crowley/Save the Children



PRIORITY ISSUES

#1: Increase the education budget share to a minimum of 20% of the national budget. The education budget has been receiving a decreasing share of the national budget year on year for a significant period of time. The increasing pressure on the education budget and the prioritisation of secondary and tertiary spending has resulted in the de-prioritisation of spending at the primary level and pre-primary provision has a large financing gap. Evidence of the worsening outcomes at primary level, with drop out and repetition rates increasing, could be the result of these budget trends. Increases to the national budget share for education would enable adequate budget for primary and pre-primary education; reversing the recent trend of spending for primary and addressing insufficient spend for pre-primary.

#2: Greater equity in education funds allocated across Districts with an aim at establishing targeted budget to improve quality of education in the most disadvantaged areas. Analysis of education budgets across districts has shown large disparities in 'spend per student' across Rwanda. The poorest districts are often receiving budgets significantly below those of the richest districts. These factors are causing and exacerbating significant equity gaps and the disparities are growing. The Government of Rwanda needs to implement a more equitable system of targeting resources at the District level to ensure funds are prioritised to support the education of the most vulnerable children.

#3: Improvement in the collection and reporting of, and access to, education data in terms of quality, range, disaggregation and timeliness. There is a need for improved data related to budgeting, coding, allocation and disaggregation to provide a more complete and detailed picture of spending by District, socioeconomic status, disability and gender. Currently there is not consistent disaggregated data published on the pre-primary level of spending in the MINECOFIN budget execution reports. There is also no specific budget line related to meeting students' special educational needs at pre-primary or primary level. In the MINEDUC statistical yearbook, there is no data on children's *ubudehe* (socio-economic) status and little information disaggregated in relation to disabilities to inform planning and support for children with particular needs.

#4: Increased direct funding for quality related issues in basic education, with a minimum target of a 50% increase within education budget lines addressing quality. Recent trends in the budget allocations have shown decreases in the key budget lines related to addressing the quality of education delivery. These funding restraints need to be addressed to ensure improved learning outcomes. During a time when critical changes are being made in the education system, programmes related to education quality are consistently suffering budget cuts. This is also while we observe increasing drop out rates and repetition rates

Photo: Colin Crowley/Save the Children





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at primary level, particularly for children with special education needs.

#5: Quality early childhood education is treated as a basic right, with fee-free school and community-based services guaranteed for the most disadvantaged families in Rwanda. Significant policy gaps affecting children's access to quality pre-primary need to be addressed, particularly those relating to quality oversight and funding. Formal ECCD/ECE services are expensive for parents and do not reach all children ages 4-6 years. Specific services that can support/enhance the children's readiness should be introduced for all children, including those with educational limitations such as disabilities and special educational needs. Special measures should be in place to undertake educational assessment and placement for the most appropriate education provision. There is limited quality oversight of ECCD/ECE services and the quality of teaching appropriate to the level of pre-primary is generally poor.

About the Rwanda NGO Education Coordination Platform (RENCP)

The Rwanda NGO Education Coordination Platform (RENCP) was established to strengthen coordination, collaboration and learning among civil society/NGO partners within Rwanda's education sector. With 80+ member organizations and growing, our mandate is to serve as a body for NGO representation, information sharing and coordination within Rwanda's Education Sector. We collaborate and learn together, with the Ministry of Education and its various affiliated institutions, and with local government to ensure better coordinated, better informed, and better quality of educational service for Rwanda's children.