

Hindrances to Quality of Basic Education in Rwanda

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Abstract

Though policy and legal documents on basic education are in place in Rwanda, the implementation faces hindrances to achieving high quality education. It is within this perspective that the paper aims at exploring these in both urban and rural nine- and twelve-year basic education schools to awaken policy makers for appropriate measures. From a population of 1016, random and purposive sampling techniques led to the sample size of 224 individuals. Respondents include students, teachers, Headteachers/Directors of Studies, local education authorities and other stakeholders of Northern, Eastern provinces and Kigali city. Document analysis, structured questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from all categories of research participants. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to analyse data. Findings indicate that key local education stakeholders are aware that basic education in Rwanda is a key leading to sustainable development; that there is no quality education in these schools due to difficult school and home conditions. Expansion of various and well managed school funding programs can help to raise the quality of basic education in Rwanda.

Key Words: Hindrances, Quality of Education, Basic Education, Nine Years Basic Education (9YBE), Twelve Years Basic Education (12YBE), Socioeconomic Conditions.

1. Introduction

The right to education is not only the right to access education but also the right to receive an education of good quality (UNICEF, 2000). Quality education can have many meanings (Unterhalter, 2019) but in Rwanda, it is defined as “all children leaving school equipped with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed for Rwanda’s economic and social development and for their own further educational and social development” (World Bank, 2011, p. 90). In this line, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has adopted quality standards for primary, secondary and higher education institutions, which focus on the basic dimensions of quality education as put forwards by UNICEF (2000) including quality learners, quality learning environments, quality content, quality processes and quality outcomes. It is in this sense that quality education is understood in this study.

Aiming at achieving access to quality, equitable and effective education for all, at all levels of education (MINEDUC, 2013), the Rwandan education sector has significantly invested in expanding access to basic education from nine to twelve years (MINEDUC, 2014a). Compulsory and free education lasts nine years and covers primary and lower secondary and is commonly known as “Nine Years Basic Education” (9YBE) (MINEDUC, 2014b). All learners who complete this level have the right to a further three years named Twelve Years of Basic Education (12YBE). The key difference between 9YBE and 12YBE is that the first one is mandatory while the second one is an entitlement (IPAR- Rwanda, 2012) and all these schools are non-boarding.

Basic education is grounded in international goals including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) together with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Education for All (EFA). It is underpinned by national legal and various policy documents which reflect the national aspirations of building a knowledge – based economy through a highly skilled population. According to MINEDUC (2013) and Rwanda Education Board/REB (2019), these documents include the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015, Rwanda's Vision 2020, Seven Year Government Program 2017-2024, Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) II 2013-2018, Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) (2018/19–2023/24), Girls Education Policy (2008), Special Needs Education Policy (2008), National Early Childhood Development Policy Strategic Plan of MIGEPROF (2016 to 2021), Language Education policy, ICT in Education Policy (2014), Quality Standards in Education (2008), Nine-Year Basic Education Strategy (2008), Draft Strategic Plan for Technical Education (2008-2012), the law n° 02/2011/OL of 27 July 2011 governing organization of education in Rwanda, the law n° 23/2012 of 15 June 2012 governing the organization and functioning of nursery, primary and secondary education, and the regional commitments made as part of Rwanda's membership of the East African Community (EAC). These policies led to high enrolment rate (MINEDUC, 2014a).

From this context, it is noticed that in the post-genocide against Tutsi era, the quality of education is become an important political concern, and no specific study was conducted to specifically highlight its hindrances in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Rwanda. Hence, this research pursues two objectives: (1) to explore how curriculum implementers and other stakeholders perceive the quality of education offered in 9 and 12 YBE schools and; (2) to identify the factors that hinder the quality of basic education. In this regard, the study seeks to answer the following research question: how curriculum implementers and other education stakeholders perceive the quality of education offered in 9 and 12 YBE schools and what are the factors that hinder this quality?

This study is in fact worth conducting because MINEDUC (2013) recognizes that an important challenge for the Rwandan Education sector remains the need to address quality education throughout the system. Indeed, Vaishnav and Srivastava (2012) argue that there are many factors which impede the purpose of education by directly or indirectly creating hurdles in the process of education. As teachers and learners are at the heart of quality education (UNICEF, 2000), these hindrances affect teachers' effective teaching and students' effective learning and understanding and make it hard to grasp the concepts being taught (Muhammad, 2013).

This article is made up of five main sections namely introduction, hindrances to quality education through the lens of literature, methodology, presentation and discussion of key findings as well as the conclusion and suggestions for further research.

2. Hindrances to the quality of education through the lens of literature

The quality of education is mainly hampered by different interlinked barriers mainly related to the inadequate school and home conditions especially in underdeveloped countries such as Kenya (Anekeya, 2015), Zambia (Mkandawire, 2010), and Zimbabwe (Moyo, Wadesango & Kurebwa, 2012). Key hindrances are described below.

Questioning the quality of educational professionals

Okello and Kagoire (1996, p.125) point out that “the quality of education of a country largely depends on the quality of teachers”. However, there is shortage of qualified teachers especially in rural areas since teachers are not willing to go to those areas (Mkandawire, 2010). This situation hinders quality education because these teachers are not in a better position to help children learn better (Moyo, Wadesango, & Kurebwa, 2012). In Rwanda, the introduction of the 9 YBE program resulted in high student enrolment requiring more recruitment of qualified teachers. Even those in-service teachers who upgrade are not ipso facto remunerated accordingly and this definitely ends up with discouragement. In fact, as Muligande (2010), the lead Minister of Education noted, Rwanda is still experiencing limitations in recruiting and retaining more qualified teachers.

Time insufficiency

Various authors have found that teachers spend long hours at work (Belliveau, Liu, & Murphy, 2002; Nzabwirwa & Nkiliye, 2012) and teachers' lack of assigned time to prepare classes can negatively impact on their interaction with students (Belliveau, Liu, & Murphy, 2002). In Rwanda, teachers are required to teach eight hours a day; i.e. 40 hours a week and complain to not having time for other classroom related activities such as lesson planning, marking, reporting, etc. It is difficult to expect quality education if teachers do not have adequate time to collaborate and reflect on their work (Dibbon, 2004). On the other hand, insufficient time allocation for completing learning tasks leads students feel themselves overworked and this increases their tendency to abandon deep learning and encourages surface learning approaches (Karjalainen, Katariina, & Jutila, 2006). Learner's absenteeism from school or lack of punctuality also deprives him/her of the learning time and this may lead to ineffective learning that leads to academic failure (Mkandawire, 2010). In order to succeed academically, children must attend school consistently because a child's exposure to curriculum significantly influences achievement (UNICEF, 2000).

Lack of teacher motivation

Well trained and motivated teachers are likely to boost effective students' learning and performance. Selemani (2011) argued that teacher motivation is affected by low salaries and frustrating teaching and learning conditions, which is the case in Rwanda. Teacher motivation survey conducted in Rwanda by the World Bank (2011) revealed that teachers are becoming increasingly concerned about poor job satisfaction and low motivation. This is mainly attributed to poor monetary rewards and deteriorating standards of living compared to other professionals with the

same level of education. In the same vein, Ntahomvukiye (2012) underlined also that extrinsic factors such as lack of resources and teaching facilities, increased workload, low public esteem of teaching as a profession, and low salary decrease teacher job satisfaction in Rwanda. In addition, Nizeyimana (2013); Nizeyimana and Osman (2013) found that most student teachers were reservationists (against the profession) due to the poor image of the teacher in the community at large, an image which is linked to their lower economic status. Nzabalarwa and Nkiliye (2012) have also underlined that the difficult conditions in which Rwandan teachers work significantly de-motivate them and decrease their efforts to achieve better results at work. In fact, Bennell and Kwame (2007) note that teachers' low motivation results in not attending effectively to teaching duties.

Non mastery of the medium of instruction

Teaching is by essence communicating and the mastery of the channel of communication - the language - is indispensable. Killen (2010) notes that learners' understanding of the taught materials depends on the teacher's ability to use the language of instruction and on the learners' mastery of the language. Muhammad (2013) adds that learners cannot learn well if their level of literacy in the language of instruction is low.

In 2008, the Government of Rwanda adopted English as the medium of instruction with effect from 2009 at all levels of education. This is likely to hinder quality as MINEDUC (2010) noted that levels of English language proficiency amongst teachers and learners are low and their exposure to English is also limited, particularly in rural areas. Nizeyimana (2013) also found that more than 50% of the university student teachers and 2/3 of the lecturers interviewed reported to be more comfortable in French whilst the medium of instruction is English.

Lack of in-service professional development

To be effective, teachers need to continually expand their knowledge and skills in order to address students' learning challenges (Mizell, 2010). Unfortunately, not all teachers benefit from such exposure because of their big number coupled with limited funds allocated to professional development programs (Rechard, 2013). In the same line, Peeraer, Nzabalarwa, Uworwabayeho, Nizeyimana & Kabanda (2016) concluded that a significant proportion of teacher educators do not engage regularly in professional development. Yet, educators who are not regularly exposed to continuous professional development do not improve their knowledge and skills; hence student learning suffers (Mizell, 2010). A Partner in Education (APIE) (2013) also found that Rwandan teachers are not receiving the in-service trainings required.

Lack of readiness to learn

Researches (Killen, 2010; UNICEF, 2000) show that the lack of learners' readiness takes many forms and is most commonly related to cognitive, physical, language and literacy development, emotional stability, self-efficacy and self-esteem, motivation, prior knowledge, and attitudes towards school and learning. Health-related factors such as hunger, physical and emotional abuse, and chronic illness can lead to poor school performance (Dunkle & Nash,

1991). Health-risk behaviors such as early sexual initiation, violence, and physical inactivity are consistently linked to poor grades and lower educational attainment (Carlson, Fulton, Lee, Maynard, Drown, Kohl, & Dietz, 2008; Spriggs & Halpern, 2008; Srabstein & Piazza 2008; Harper & Lynch, 2007). Students who haven't eaten nutritious meals have trouble concentrating in class and students who suffer from mental health issues can act out in ways that hinder their development and disrupt the learning of their classmates (University of California, 2011). This is why the Government of Rwanda has established the school feeding programme though parents' participation is still very low.

When students are emotionally healthy, safe and have a sense of personal belonging, they are more likely to attend school and ready to learn (University of California, 2011). This shows that emotional issues hamper effective learning as students suffering from emotional problems become more disengaged with their own learning. In addition, Killen (2010) notes that if learners are being told by teachers, peers, parents or others that they are slow or incompetent, their success is hindered as their motivation to learn is low. Learning also depends on how students are familiar with the knowledge essential to learn new skills (Stawert, 2014). This prior knowledge is important for the new learning to take place (Meyer, 2004). Students who lack prior knowledge find it more difficult to comprehend new information (Stawert, 2014).

Furthermore, both teachers, parents and parents' attitudes towards the school and learning may prevent learners engaging in the types of activities necessary for quality learning to take place. Teachers should believe in the capabilities of their students to achieve. Seehorn (2013) notes that the community too may believe the school is hopelessly failing. Besides, if students do not see the relevance of the program, there is the likelihood that they will not be motivated to learn (Hazel & Parungao, 2012). With the introduction of 9YBE program in the Rwandan education system, people had and still have negative attitudes towards the programme. Some teachers say that learners entering the program are not capable because they obtained low grades and this may reduce their motivation to teach them. Some learners, parents and even the community are still questioning about the relevance of the programme. This may lead learners to not attend school regularly, to drop out from school or parents and community may end up by not adequately supporting their learners. There are even some names given to 9YBE schools such as "*Nyanyazi schools*" (Kinyarwanda verbal deformation of the word "Nine Year schools"), showing that people do not give value to those schools.

Overcrowded classrooms

Children learn better and teachers are more effective in smaller classes (Schanzenbach, 2014). Unfortunately, it has become almost impossible for the teacher to render individual pupil attention (Mkandawire, 2010) due to big class size. Consequently, Cueso (2014) notes that students' academic achievement and performance are lowered. In these classes, management of problems reduces teachers' time, the intended content is not completed, and learners' time to concentrate and complete a given task is reduced (Kelly, 1999). Indeed, overcrowded classrooms have a great impact on students' involvement in learning (Nizeyimana, 2013). This turns into a lack of motivation to try to do

well, which limits student achievement where some students may begin to not care about doing homework, passing tests and moving up to the next grade (Sheahan, 2014). In Rwanda, teachers and learners are still experiencing the challenge of large classes though with the introduction of 9YBE program, one of the targets was to reduce pupil: teacher ratio from 70:1 to 45:1 by 2015 (MINEDUC, 2008). Unfortunately, according to 2017 Ministry of Education statistics, the pupils: teacher ratio in primary education was 58 while it was 26 in secondary (MINEDUC, 2018).

Constrained education support

Inadequate human, financial and material support to both teachers and learners hinders the quality of education. Rechar (2013) noted that for an effective curriculum implementation to take place, the principal or headmaster must execute the supervisory functions. In addition, parents should support their children because children whose parents make education a high priority and stay consistently involved will be more successful academically (Derrick, 2013). It is known that, parents' level of income and education has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school (UNICEF, 2000).

The inadequate resources are said by teachers to not support the implementation of the curriculum (Laralundang, 2013). In addition, there is a weak community engagement. In fact, parents and members of the community, who are not members of School General Assembly (SGA) and School General Assembly Committee (SGAC), are generally unaware of schools' activities and are an underutilized resource that could support school management and leadership (IPAR- Rwanda, 2012). Stakeholders such as professional organizations, NGOs, religious organizations, and the government can influence curriculum implementation in providing schools with financial resources and school materials (Rechar, 2013). The government has a great influence on curriculum implementation (Hazel & Parungao, 2012). In Rwanda, the lead Ministry for the education sector (MINEDUC) has the responsibility of formulating policies, monitoring and evaluating at the national level (MINEDUC, 2010). The main delivery arm of MINEDUC is the Rwanda Education Board (REB) represented locally by the Districts. District Education Officers play a vital role in education policy monitoring and evaluation. At the level of a sector, cell and village, there is also one person in charge of education (MINEDUC, 2010). There are also many other partners in Rwandan education sector such as UNESCO, UNICEF- Rwanda, Rwanda Education Commons and others (MINEDUC, 2010) who support financially and technically basic education, influencing thus its quality.

It is very difficult to implement a curriculum successfully if the education system has limited funding capacities (Mkandawire, 2010). In developing countries, numbers of pupils and teachers have kept on rising but government money available for education is less (Sibulwa, 1996) leading to inadequate teaching and learning materials and this hampers the teaching and learning processes (Mkandawire, 2010). In the case of Rwanda, MINEDUC (2010) recognizes the insufficient supply of quality textbooks and learning materials across all subjects.

3. Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey which used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study used document analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, structured and semi – structured questionnaires to gather relevant data from respondents. Data were qualitatively analysed. Triangulation of the information collected from various categories of respondents as well as member check technique helped to increase validity and reliability. The survey was conducted in two provinces of Rwanda and Kigali City. The Northern and the Eastern provinces as well as Kigali city were purposefully sampled because the survey had to consider rural and urban areas as this may enormously influence the way participants perceive various factors influencing the quality of education in basic education schools. Districts, Sectors and Schools were also sampled in the same way. Indeed, particular circumstances of each school influence curriculum implementation concerns (Rechard, 2013). In fact, the author argues that, schools in poor economic environments experience difficulties in implementing the curriculum compared to schools located in rich socio-economic environments and those having adequate human and material resources, influencing thus, quality of education. Schools that were surveyed responded to the criterion of having the complete cycle of basic education, namely primary and secondary. Two schools per District were chosen. In Kigali City, Kicukiro District, G. S. Remera Protestant and G. S. S' Pallotti Gikondo; in Northern Province/Gicumbi District, G. S. Akanyange and G. S. Gaseke; and in Eastern Province/Rwamagana District, G. S. Rwamagana A and G. S. Muyumbu were randomly sampled.

The total research population was 1046 including 900 students, 120 teachers, 6 Headteachers/Directors of Studies (HT/DoS), and 20 local education authorities and other stakeholders. Random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of students and teachers leading to 120 and 30 respectively. In addition, purposive sampling was used to select 48 students who participated in focus group discussions and 26 HTs/DoS, local education authorities and stakeholders interviewed as indicated in the next paragraph. Therefore, the total sample size was 224 individuals. To gather quantitative data, 120 questionnaires for students were indirectly or directly administered in the 6 schools, that is, 20 questionnaires per school at five levels (P₆; S₁; S₃; S₄ and S₆). This means that four questionnaires for students were administered per level. 30 questionnaires for teachers were administered. Consequently, five teachers per school were sampled and therefore one teacher per level ignoring the rotating system of teachers. No mortality questionnaire occurred. Eight (8) P4 and P5 students per school were also purposefully sampled for focus group discussions lasting between 30 and 45 minutes as they were judged not to be efficient when answering the questionnaires in writing compared to their counterparts of P6 who were ready to sit for national examinations.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants purposefully selected. These are Head teachers / Director of studies (6); President / V/President / Secretary of the School General Assembly Committee (6); Sector Education Officers, SEOs (6); District Education Officers (DEOs) (3); as well as 2 key informant persons from

CSOs (Civil Society Organizations); 2 native and / or member of REFAC organizations; and 1 policy maker from Rwanda Education Board (REB). Data were presented in a narrative way and were analysed using percentages and content analysis.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1 Curriculum implementers' awareness of the policy and legal documents about basic education in Rwanda

On one side, the majority of respondents were aware that basic education in Rwanda is from nursery up to the completion of secondary education as confirmed by 82.5% of students and teachers as well as the interviewees. The study revealed that curriculum implementers are aware of the existence of the policies and legal documents about basic education in Rwanda. On the other side, the survey evaluated teachers' knowledge about educational policies and their implementation. Students, teachers, head teachers, local leaders in charge of education at the district and sector levels as well as members of SGAs are aware of the existence of the Government political will that basic education in Rwanda is a key leading to the sustainable development of the country. This was confirmed by the majority of respondents, 96.7% of students, teachers (88.9%), and interviewees. This implies that basic education policies are established and known by those implementing them. The study found also that 89.2% of students and 70.4% of teachers and various interviewees are aware of the official documents that put in place basic education in Rwanda including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Vision 2020, EDPRS, and Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) and other official documents.

About free and compulsory basic education in Rwanda, the findings indicated that various education stakeholders have different perceptions on the meaning of free and compulsory basic education. For the majority of students (66.6%) and teachers (70.3%), basic education in Rwanda is free and compulsory while interviews and focus group discussions' results showed that basic education schools are not free of charge, but they are compulsory. For this reason, much need to be done to make people understand the real meaning of free basic education in Rwanda.

4.2. Hindrances to quality education in Rwandan basic education schools

4.2.1. Perceived quality of education in basic education schools

The study revealed that the majority of key education stakeholders do not appreciate the quality of education offered in basic education schools and have a negative attitude towards school and learning. Interviews indicated that some parents do not value the quality of education offered in basic education schools because some parents name these as "Ndererindaya" (*Educate for me prostitutes*), "Nyanyazi" (Kinyarwanda verbal deformation of the word "Nine Year schools"), "Nararumbije" (*I was not fruitful*) which are pejorative terms in Kinyarwanda language to undervalue the education offered in these schools. This is evidenced by the fact that when a parent has two children one in a

boarding school, another in a 9 or 12YBE school, the former is fully supported while the latter is given less attention. In fact, all participants interviewed value boarding schools based mostly on their improved teaching and learning conditions. This perceived image of 9 or 12 YBE schools constitutes a strong hindrance to the quality of education and, as Seehorn (2013) notes, the community should not see the school hopeless.

From interviews with various head teachers revealed that there is no quality education due to some constraints such as poverty, professorial system of rotation which makes learners to be unfamiliar with teachers, and the double shifting system which makes learners to waste learning time in upper primary. Besides, the focus group discussion results with students and interviews pointed out that these schools are for the poor people because students from 'rich families' attend schools of excellence/boarding or private schools. In addition, it was reported that students who are admitted to 9 and 12 YBE schools are those who get the low grade in national exams while high graders go to boarding schools. This was reported as a challenge since all secondary students follow the same curricula and sit for the same national exam.

4.2.2. Home conditions that affect the quality of basic education

In this study, it was shown that home conditions of students attending basic education schools play a great role in negatively influencing the quality of students' learning. Findings indicate that poor socioeconomic conditions of students in their families hinder the quality of education as exemplified by students' poor feeding and insufficient time to revise lessons at home as well as inadequate support from parents and local authorities. In fact, even if the majority of learners (75%) confirmed that the socioeconomic conditions of Rwandans allow these schools to provide quality education, results from interviews and focus group discussions contradict this. Indeed, 75.8% of students and 77.7% of teachers confirmed that the problem of poverty coupled with big family sizes unable parents to support their children academically and financially with poor feeding at home. These findings concur with the University of California (2011) that students who haven't eaten nutritious meals regularly have trouble concentrating in class. Dunkle and Nash (1991) recognize also that health-related factors such as hunger can lead to poor school performance and yet, this is a sign of poor quality of education. This study brought out that students (69.1%) are not equipped with sufficient scholastic materials. Teacher (59.3%) also confirmed this. Interviewees also confirmed that some students do not have all the required materials namely uniforms, books, notebooks, pens, school bags, study tables at home etc, because of poverty of their families and this is likely to hamper their learning. This problem was especially observed in rural areas. In addition, ignorance of some parents about the value of sending their children to school was also reported to be a barrier where some parents tell their children that themselves did not study and yet they are able to feed them; *"twe ko tutize ntitubabeshjeho?"*, they said in Kinyarwanda language.

In basic education schools, students do not get enough time to revise lessons at home as the majority of students (73.3%) confirmed. As Karjalainen, Katariina and Jutila (2006) noted, time insufficiency to deal with learning

requirements may lead to academic failure because when there is no time to undertake learning activities, it is impossible to learn. Many students (80.8%) and interviewees asserted also that parents do not help children in their studies at home and this has a negative academic impact (Derrick, 2013). In fact, 82.5% of learners come to school without completing their homework as reported by the teachers interviewed. The low level of parents' education may explain the reasons why the majority of them did not follow up learners' homework. This is corroborated by UNICEF (2000) that less educated parents are not familiar with the language of the school and thus cannot help academically.

With regards to how often parents' communicate with teachers about their children's learning, it was noticed that parents do not really comply with this as the majority of teachers (83.3%) and students (72.1%) were of this view. These findings were reinforced by the head teachers that a great number of parents do not come to school to inquire about their children learning unless they were invited by the school upon their children's bad behaviour.

Concerning the involvement of local authorities in basic education, the results from interviews showed that local authorities are not involved in education because in most of the village and cell meetings, local authorities do not give much emphasis and importance to education aspects. Head teachers reported that only very few attend school meetings and some of the local authorities do not attend. These findings are consistent with MINEDUC (2010)'s views that there is an issue of weak community engagement and this hinders the quality of education.

4.3. School conditions that affect the quality of basic education

Findings indicate that school conditions do not enhance the quality of education due to insufficient school equipment, limited and delay of school financial resources, lack of teachers and learners' motivation, the non-mastery of the medium of instruction by both teachers and students, large class size, overloaded teachers, lack of teachers' training and involvement in establishing educational policies.

In fact, the findings underlined that there is no sufficient teaching/learning resources such as textbooks, computer labs, and science kit equipment, poorly equipped libraries and insufficient computers in schools. This was confirmed by 79.2% of students and 88.9% of teachers as well as interviewees. Consequently, learners are not exposed to appropriate learning experiences (Moyo, Wadesango & Kurebwa, 2012) and teachers fail to implement the curriculum effectively as they lack the necessary resources (Kelly, 1999). Studies (Muligande, 2010; Mkandawire, 2010) as well as our interviewees confirmed this. Lack of resources leads to low motivation to learn. In this study, majority of students (60.8%) and interviewees indicated that students are not motivated to learn because the image that people have of them, how they consider themselves, and lack of support by parents who send them to school simply because they fear being punished. Moreover, it was clear that, teachers are not motivated to teach due to the low salary and lack of incentives like their colleagues in boarding schools. For example, in one rural school of Gicumbi district, a well experienced (20 years) teacher who had upgraded to Bachelors' degree was complaining that she is still earning 40,000 Rwfs which is the net salary of an A2 certificate holder instead of 113,000 Rwfs of A0 degree holder. These data concur well with the findings of the World Bank (2011), Ntahomvukiye (2012), Nzabaliwa

and Nkiliye (2012), Nizeyimana (2013) and Nizeyimana and Osman (2013) that teachers in Rwanda are demotivated due to low salaries. In fact, as this study found out, teachers who are dissatisfied with their jobs and are poorly motivated, are not likely to perform well (Bennell & Ntagaramba, 2008) and this impacts the quality of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, with regard to English as the Medium of Instruction (Mol), the study found that both learners and teachers are struggling. Majority of learners (76.6%), teachers (92.6%) and interviewees confirmed this and learners reported that they have problems of using English, their teachers too as their English pronunciation confuses them. Similarly, even if teachers (81.4%) agree that they master the Mol, learners say that teachers also struggle with it. Thus, it is clear from this study that the non-mastery of English hinders the quality of education. This corroborates with the findings of The Rwandan Focus (2012), Nizeyimana (2013) and Muhammad (2013).

In addition, classrooms are overcrowded especially in senior 1 and senior 4 because even those who are admitted to boarding schools but do not get school fees, attend free basic education schools. The over crowdedness concurs well with the findings of MINEDUC (2008a) and Nizeyimana (2013). As a result, teacher's effectiveness is hampered (Mkandawire, 2010) and students' academic achievement and performance are lowered (Cueso, 2014).

The findings also indicate that the quality of education is hampered by some cases of students' indiscipline, absenteeism, lateness and dropout. The majority of participants in focus group discussions and interviews confirmed that students in 9 and 12YBE demonstrate indiscipline than those in boarding schools. Basic education schools do not have patron and matron or director of discipline, headteachers reported. Almost all the participants reported that students go to school very late and sometimes are absent. Lateness results from long distance to school for some learners while absenteeism was related to learners' involvement in domestic works and other activities that generate income like working in tea plantation of Gicumbi.

The survey found also that quality of education is hindered by insufficient time for teachers to deal with teaching and learning requirements. Although 55.5% of teachers confirmed that there are moderately overloaded, the remaining 44.5% and results from interviews revealed that teachers are overloaded. This corroborates with Nzabalirwa and Nkiliye (2012) that teachers spend long time at work and consequently, it is difficult to expect quality education if teachers do not have adequate time to collaborate and reflect on their work (Dibbon, 2004). Though the majority of teachers are qualified in education related courses, it was reported also that teachers do not get trainings to update their knowledge. Schools do not organize trainings for teachers whereas these are supposed to be done through capitation grant, Head teachers said. These results concur well with A Partner in Education (APIE) (2013). Yet, educators who do not experience effective professional development do not improve their skills, and student learning suffers (Mizell, 2010).

Finally, the survey found that teachers are not involved in planning educational policies and yet, they are their implementers. On this issue, it was reported that one of the reasons for poor quality education is that policies come from the top down. It was revealed that teachers implement some of the policies due to the fear of the law or the consequences they might have but not because they are willing to do so. Respondents gave an example of the use of mobile phones with recorded lessons provided by BLF (Building Learning Foundations), an Education Partner with REB in primary schools, for which teachers were not prepared to use them effectively.

5. Conclusion and suggestions for further research

This survey revealed that students, teachers, head teachers, local education authorities and school general assembly committees are aware of the existence of the government political will that basic education in Rwanda is a key leading to the sustainable development. Results indicate that there is no high quality in basic education schools due to poor quality of learners joining these schools; inadequate human, material and financial support; poverty of parents and professorial system. It was also found that there are negative attitudes towards basic education schools.

The survey found that there were home and school conditions that hinder the quality of education. Home conditions include poor socioeconomic conditions of Rwandans, such as poor feeding of students, insufficient scholastic materials, and time to revise lessons at home, lack of parents and local leaders' engagement. School conditions include among others insufficient teaching/learning materials and financial resources, lack of motivation and non-mastery of English as the language of instruction, overcrowded classrooms, cases of indiscipline, lateness, absenteeism and dropout, overloaded teachers, insufficient trainings and imposition of educational policies to teachers.

For basic education schools' quality education in Rwanda, various strategies need to be taken by the government of Rwanda, parents and the community with regards to increasing not only school fundin (known as capitation grant) and constructing more new schools, but also expanding various poverty reduction programs because many barriers were rooted in limited financial resources. The Government of Rwanda should pay special attention to teachers' working conditions if 9 and 12 YBE schools have to improve.

This study contributes to knowledge production by describing how curriculum implementers and other education stakeholders perceive the quality of education offered in 9 and 12 YBE schools in Rwanda and by highlighting the factors that hinder this quality. The study highlights areas that teachers, students, and other stakeholders feel influence the quality of education but does not provide solutions. The article suggests "Maintaining quality of education in a resource constrained environment" as area for further research and thus directs the development of the field of quality education.

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