Exploring the Design and Implementation Process of the Kigali City Education Strategy

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyse how the City of Kigali designs and implements its "education strategy" to ensure successful planning to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4. It adopted a qualitative study approach. Using a semi structured questionnaire, sixteen interviews with the key actors involved in the city's education policy including elected officials and education staff of the city hall; the district and sector education actors, civil society organisations and private sector companies were conducted; and eight focus group discussions with school community members. The study illustrates a clear commitment of the City of Kigali for education but also reveals an indirect involvement of some actors such as parents and private schools in designing the city education strategy, yet they play a key role in its implementation. It recommends recognising education as a top-level priority and setting up a specific education unit at the city level to coordinate education plans and activities.

Keywords: City of Kigali, sustainable development goals, education, education strategy, cities

Introduction

The importance of education is recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development where SDG 4 is exclusively dedicated to education and learning with the aim of ensuring "inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2018). In the same context, cities have become key centers of thought and actions when it comes to the achievement of the SDGs. Therefore, there is a need to explore the role and complementarity of education and cities as basic to answer the central question: How can cities ensure successful planning to achieve SDG 4?

On one side, cities play the role of both a learning environment and a learning resource, while contributing to learning communities and strengthening social cohesion (André, 2012). Cities are home of a variety of learning institutions and media, through which all types of learning programmes can be provided. They are also home to the diversity of populations entitled to diverse learning opportunities for all categories. Failing that, the city can only develop unevenly and unsustainably (UIL, 2021).

On the other side, education is at the heart of cities sustainability. It is an important element for making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable as stipulated in SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities (UN, 2018). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that education is an essential component of everyday city life by contributing to cities sustainability promoting the principles of social justice, ecological resilience, economic productivity, political participation, and cultural vibrancy (UNESCO,

2021). The question now remains how do cities design and implement their plans to ensure their responsibilities to provide their residents with the opportunities to all types of education?

Rwanda ratified the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and committed to implement all SDGs. Concerning the SDG 4, a number of education policies and their strategic plans have been adopted to respond to that goal. These include: the Free Twelve Year Basic Education Policy, Special Needs Education Policy, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy, Higher Education Policy, Teacher Development Policy, Girls Education Policy, National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, Adult Education Policy, ICT in Education Policy, and School Health Policy (MINEDUC, 2018). Inherently, since 2000, Rwanda has adopted the policy of decentralisation of public services and consequently various responsibilities, including education, have been assigned to local level administrative entities.

The city of Kigali stands as a decentralised entity at the province level. It is currently subdivided into multiple administrative entities following the national administrative structure established in 2005 that go from the national level to Province, District, Sector, Cell, down to the Village (Republic of Rwanda, Organic law no. 29/2005). Kigali is subdivided into three districts : Gasabo, Kicukiro and Nyarugenge. These three districts are divided into 35 sectors, 161 cells and 1,061 villages (MINALOC, 2022). In the framework of decentralisation, the city elaborates its integrated development strategy incorporating city education planning guidelines, and most of the education activities are managed at the district and sector levels. The city level plays the role of coordination.

In this vein, this study intended to explore how the city of Kigali designs and implements its education strategy in a bid to achieve the SDG 4. The terminology "strategy' was adopted by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) as an umbrella to cover different realities and specificities of education plans that are developed at a micro scale like cities encompassing both political and technical dimensions (policies and projects). The city education strategy is therefore a generic concept for different terminologies like territorial education project, city education policy, city education project or city education plan (Lugaz, 2021; UNESCO IIEP Learning portal, 2022). In the context of Kigali, the analysis of the City Education Strategy consists of making an account of the involved human and financial resources for education; the strategy design including the main characteristics and the preparation process, the implementation procedure by exploring the main thematic priorities, the collaboration of actors and the monitoring and evaluation; and lastly the inventory of the challenges and opportunities of the education strategy.

This study was conducted in the framework of the research project "Global challenges, local imperatives: cities at the forefront to achieve Education 2030", developed by the UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP), and implemented in collaboration with the University of Glasgow through the Centre for Sustainable Healthy Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods (SHLC). After a pilot phase in France, the research was implemented in

a set of cities around the World: Kigali, Rwanda; Manila, The Philippines; Medellin, Colombia; and Dhaka and Khulna, Bangladesh.

Cities and Education Planning

Currently, a large amount of the world's population is getting more concentrated in urban centers. In 2022, about 56% of the world's population – 4.4 billion inhabitants - were living in cities and it is expected that by 2045, the world's urban population will increase by 1.5 times to 6 billion (World Bank, 2022). The issue is not the number of populations getting concentrated in cities; it is rather how city authorities plan to respond to their needs like social inclusion, new technologies, cultural diversity, environmental sustainability, and of course quality education service delivery.

Concerning education and cities, goal 4 and goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development determine targets and indicators to achieve inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable learning cities (UN, 2018) to guide countries and cities plans. Some cities responded to the 2030 Agenda by initiating plans to allow, encourage, and enable citizens of all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances to learn throughout their life and in all aspects of their life, thereby fostering cities that value and respect all forms of learning and personal development (Jackson, 2017). Taking the examples of some cities in the United Kingdom, for the developed countries, the City of London developed "The Skills Strategy 2019-2023" that highlight the 'Six Strategic Goals' considered as education destinations to reach by 2023 (City of London, 2019); the city of Leeds elaborated the "Best City for Learning Strategy 2016–2020"(Leeds City Council, 2016) and city of Southampton the "Southampton's Children and Young People's Strategic Plan for Education 2022-2027" targeting children and young people in Southampton to get a good start in life, live safely, be healthy and happy and go on to have successful opportunities in adulthood (Southampton City Council, 2021).

In Africa, the trend of rapid urbanization and its impact on education delivery was recognized by the African Union (AU) through its Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016-2025) (African Union, 2016). The AU recommended integrating mapping of education facilities and infrastructure into urban and rural planning (African Union, 2016). However, most of the cities have not yet embarked on the processes of specific planning of education activities in accordance with their specific education needs. In the framework of decentralisation policies, they instead implement education policies issued by the ministries in charge of education through Education Sector Strategic Plans or simply incorporate some education activities in broad integrated development plan. Some examples include the Nairobi City County Integrated Development Plan 2023 – 2027 (Nairobi City County, 2023), and the City of Johannesburg Integrated Development Plan 2021-2026 (City of Johannesburg, 2021).

The management of education at the decentralized entities involves several local stakeholders including the District Education Officers (DEOs) as education experts, local elected actors, schools, parents through Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) or School Management Committees (SMCs), civil society organisation, private companies and the

local public administration (Lugaz, 2021). It is therefore critical to understand how the transferred education responsibilities from the central to local governments, including cities, are planned and managed by the cities authorities and their stakeholders; examine the priority given to educational planning in a city-integrated and co-designed planning process; and highlight the main challenges when planning and managing education and stimulate knowledge sharing and strategic thinking among cities and countries on how to successfully plan for SDG 4 at the city level.

Background on Education in the City of Kigali

From the MINEDUC to the administrative sector level (local governance), different institutions share responsibilities in planning, implementing, and monitoring of education. At the city level, most educational activities are managed by the District Education Offices, Sector Education Inspectors (SEIs), and the latter work hand in hand with school leadership.

Key Education Indicators, School Categories and Schools Distribution

The rapid growth of Kigali city in terms of space and population, coupled with constant mobility of people constitute the bottlenecks for the desired changes (Manirakiza et al. 2019). The city authorities manage efforts to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. This is proved by the substantial increase of the education indicators at all levels of basic education (nursery, primary, secondary and TVET) during the last decade (2010-2020) mainly students' enrolment, the number of schools and other learning facilities and the number of staff as highlighted in the table below.

Table 1

Trends in increase of student's enrolment, number of schools and teaching staff in the City of Kigali

School levels	Student's enrolment		Number of schools		Teaching staff	
	2011	**2019**	**2011**	**2019**	**2012**	**2019**
Nursery	14,544	34,181	134	334	641	1716
Primary	163,483	209,317	175	247	3094	4683
Secondary	49,022	66,214	110	158	1893	3157
TVET	1,295	12,696	14	50	108	804

Source: MINEDUC statistical year books (2012, 2021/2021)

As it can be depicted from the table 1, the two levels of nursery and TVET have registered a significant change as they were lagging behind compared to primary and secondary education. This is because the government is committed in promoting nursery and technical education and therefore the city responded to that commitment.

Schools are grouped into three main categories. Public schools that are fully funded by the government represent 12.2% of all the schools. Government aided schools which are primarily owned by religious bodies, represent 62.3% of all the schools. The government supports such schools by providing staff salary and school materials. Public

and government aided schools are 'fee free' schools and many students come from low-income backgrounds. The third category is private schools that represent 25.5%. Many of the students in these schools are from middle-income and high-income families. Learning conditions are better in the private schools compared to the other two categories. Teacher-student ratios in private schools are relatively lower and school transport is much better.

Schools in Kigali are unevenly located across the city. Most public and government aided schools are located in rural setting sectors such as Gikomero, Nduba, Rutunga, and Mageragere where most children walk to reach schools. On the other hand, most private schools are concentrated in the urbanized zones of the city, close to main transport routes, which makes it easier for students to access these schools.

Main Education Issues in the City of Kigali

The rapid spatial and demographic growth of the city, and the increase of students due to the fee free 9 and 12-year basic education system coupled with the provision of the capitation grant (money given to schools to help in their daily operations) generated a mismatch between the demand and supply of education provision especially in public and government aided schools. The capitation grant was introduced in 2003 for fee free education in primary and lower secondary schools (MINEDUC, 2003). It is calculated based on the number of students. As a result, the net enrolment rate in primary school directly went from 75% in 2002 to 92% in 2003 (TI-Rwanda, nd) and kept growing for the following years. Schools were unable to accommodate a rapidly growing number of students. Although this promoted the inclusiveness and universality of primary education, it threatened the principle of equity and quality of education because of the overcrowding of public and government aided schools.

This situation led rich families to send their children to private schools, especially for primary education, where the class size is around 29 students, unlike some public schools where the number goes above 80 students (MINEDUC, 2013, 2016, 2018). Consequently, there has been an increase in the number of private schools. For example, in Gasabo district, among its 110 schools in 2017, 32 (29.1%) were private (NISR, 2018). According to the city database in 2021, the total number of schools in Gasabo had increased to 163 schools of which 80 (49 %) are private. That corresponds to an increase of 90.56% for private schools compared to 9.44% for public and government aided schools. In terms of cost, private schools are expensive which leads to complaints among parents. The school fees range between 100,000 to 500,000 Frw per term. School bus costs, which vary from Frw 15,000 to 50,000 per month and other costs such as textbooks, school uniforms and others are in additionally observed. Thus, sending children to private schools negatively affects the family budget in Kigali. This is different from public schools as parents do not pay schools fees but modestly contribute to the running cost of the school. It was revealed that parents and guardians in Kicukiro urban District spend eight times the cost of education than the counterpart in Nyaruguru rural district (IPAR, 2012).

School dropout rates is another issue affecting education for all although it is less, compared to other provinces of the country. For example, in 2016, 1.1% children aged 7 to 12 dropped out of school in Kigali, a rate which is relatively low in comparison to 4.5% in the Eastern Province, 2.8% in the Southern Province, 1.8% in the Northern Province and 1.7% in the Western Province (MINEDUC, 2017). Cases of school dropout also increased with the COVID 19 outbreak in 2020 because of children who emigrated to rural areas with their parents escaping poverty and unemployment linked to lockdowns in the city and did not go back to school after the pandemic (MINEDUC, 2020). Constant mobilities of families in the city looking for better living conditions is another issue that not only leads to dropping out but also to the learning instabilities related to changing schools and poor academic performance.

Methodology

This research is exploratory and descriptive. It used a qualitative case study design deemed the most suitable to unearth the nuances, which is important in appreciating the significance that people attach to a social issue (Creswell 2009). The case study affords the opportunity for a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a small number of events and the way social issues are interlinked together (Schweitzer, 2022; Gummeson, 1988). In the context of exploring the city education strategy, this approach is suitable to examine various education actors' perceptions and relationships.

The study used primary and secondary data. Secondary data were drawn from different sources including journal articles and reports, mainly the annual reports of the Ministry of Education as well as statistics compiled from the schools in the city of Kigali in 2021. For primary data collection, the study used semi structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Different categories of key actors involved in the city's education policy were targeted for the interviews. They included the elected officials and education staff of the city hall; the district education office; schools; local administration, civil society organisations and private sector companies. The participants in the FGDs included the students, teachers, Parents' Teacher Associations (PTA) representatives and other non-teaching employees. These categories of participants were purposively selected to ensure the richness and depth of the information they provide and of the analysis in order to make the study more focused and useful.

To determine a sample size, the study adopted a combination of reputational and snowball technique. Reputational sampling (also known as key informant sampling) to select "people with great knowledge and/or influence (by reputation) who can shed light on the inquiry issues" (Patton, 2002: 268) was employed. To ensure the most accurate data collection process, researchers worked with a member of the city hall education staff, as a focal point for the research, to select the key informants at city, district, and sector levels. Other participants were selected by dwelling on the researchers' networks and the snowball technique by consulting with the initial participants for additional relevant contacts. In total 16 semi-structured interviews with key actors and 8 FGDs at two schools (one private and one public) were conducted.

The thematic-based approach was applied for data analysis. To check if no data is left out, the researchers reviewed all the transcripts then extracted chunks of data that are directly relevant to the major themes and patterns of the research: the resources involved in education strategy, the process of design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the education strategy and, the strengths and challenges of city's education strategy.

Findings

This section presents the results of the research articulated in the major themes viz educational actors and resources involved in the city education strategy, its design and implementation process and associated strengths and challenges.

Resources Involved in Education Strategy

City Human Resources for Education

This study revealed that the city human resource for education is made up of elected, appointed and recruited officials who participate in designing, implementing, and monitoring the city education strategy. Their intervention is recorded at different levels from the city hall to district, sector, and school. Elected officials works in commissions and education is discussed in social commissions of the city, district, and sector. The city appoints staff at different education departments and levels of the city. As of 2021 when the field research was conducted, the number of permanent education staff in Kigali was 45 including 1 Education specialist based at the city level; 9 staffs based at the three districts of the city (3 at each district). The district staff includes one District Director of Education (DDE) and two District Education Officers (DEOs). At each of the 35 administrative sectors, there is one Sector Education Inspector (SEI).

It is also the responsibility of the city of Kigali to manage school staff in its boundaries. Staff at school include school administration and teaching and non-teaching staff. The recruitment of administrative and teaching staff follows the public servant's recruitment process, i.e., the Public Service Commission closely collaborate with Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) to organize written tests and interview for successful candidates in written tests.

> *"The head-teacher, deputy head-teachers, teachers, secretaries, and accountants are now recruited by REB. If an employee has done education, he/she is given one year of probation after which they get civil servant contract," (said SEI).*

The recruitment of non-teaching staff like librarians, cleaners, school guards, cooks and others - who make sure that the school environment is conducive - is done by schools in collaboration with the parent's school council. Once recruited, they sign a one-year renewable contract.

For private schools, teachers as well as other non-teaching staff are recruited by the school Head Teacher (HT) in collaboration with the school managers such as the parents committee or the school owners.
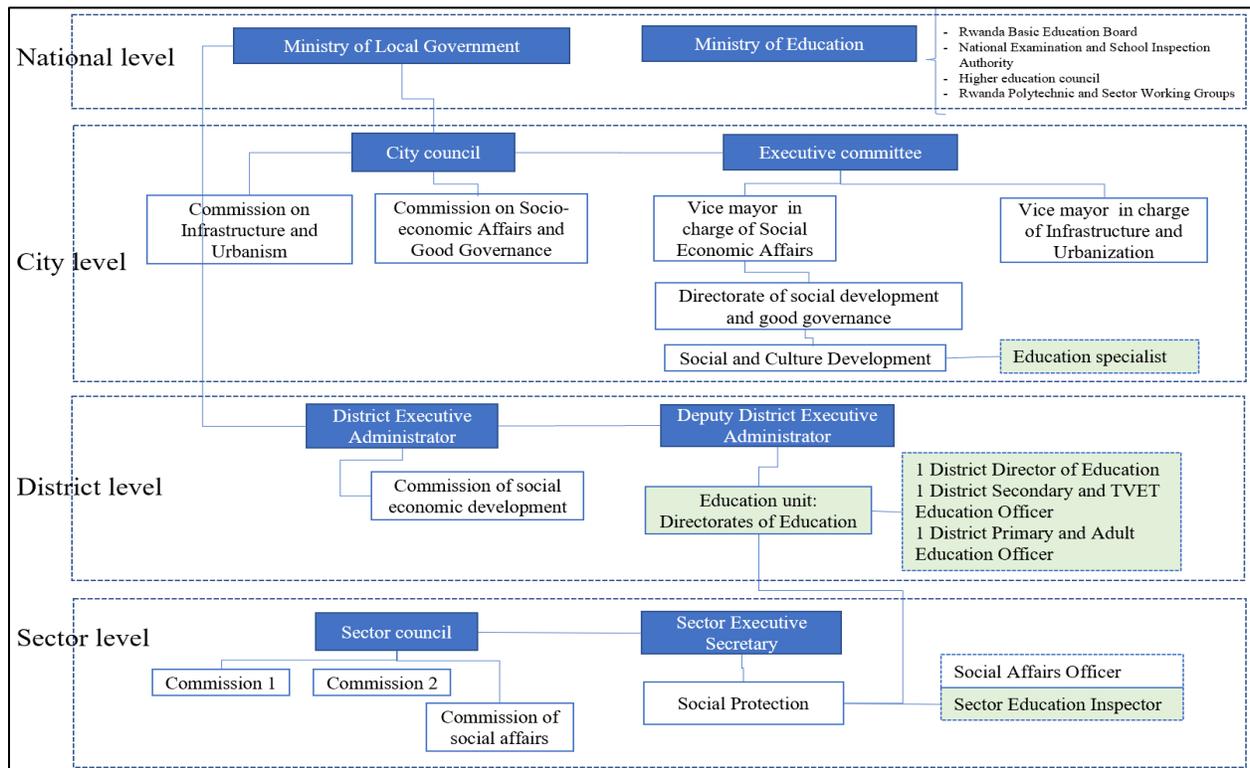
The study noted a strong collaboration between education institutions at city level. Both elected officials working in commissions and education appointed staff of the city collaborate to fulfill the mandate of education. This was highlighted by the head of social development and good governance department as follows:

"The directorate of social development and good governance department develops action plans and are submitted to the vice mayor in charge of social economic affairs. Combined with other action plans from other directorates, the Vice-Mayor presents them to the city council for approval. Once approved, action plans are scaled out to the districts, which also plan in accordance".

In short, elected education officials and staff at Kigali city work and collaborate in accordance with the structure ranging from the city to school level as highlighted in Figure 1 below. At each level, there is a hierarchy in the team.

Figure 1

Structure of education.

Source: Adapted from MINALOC (2011) and REPUBLIC OF RWANDA (2021).

The City Financial Resources for Education

The study revealed that a large share of the education budget comes from the government through the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and the approved national budget through capitation grant scheme calculated based on the number of students. The number of students is provided by the schools' head teachers through School Data

Management System (SDMS) software. SDMS is a database managed by the Ministry of Education in which all data of schools are uploaded such as the number of teachers and their qualification, numbers of students registered, their attendance, registration for national exams, etc. The city also gets funds from the internal revenues collected at district level. Overall, the city education budget fluctuates around 18% of the total budget of the city. Of that percent, the government, through the Ministry of Education provides 16% while the city internal revenues allocated to education are estimated at 2%. However, depending on some special activities, like school construction, the education share can be increased. Civil society organizations and international organizations also contribute to education funding. For instance, in 2022, the World Bank supported classroom construction across the country including the city of Kigali. At school level, funds are also sourced from parents in the form of school fees and other school incentives approved by the parents' assemblies to cover various daily activities. The budget of the City of Kigali (CoK) is distributed to the districts depending on the number of students, number of teachers, number of examination centers, number of students in boarding schools and other related factors.

Concerning the allocation of budget for education, a big share of education budget - around 90% - is allocated to salaries, school feeding, maintenance, and operations. It also goes to the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, school feeding for students, paying bonuses for teachers, school development and social affairs activities. Expenditures are also inputted to purchasing teaching materials and office furniture, payment of different services like ICT maintenance, communication and internet, transport mission allowances, hygiene and sanitation, water and electricity consumption, organisation of exams and tests, sport activities, teacher trainings, salary of temporally teachers in case of maternity and sick leaves, etc. It is important to note that private schools do not receive any funds from the Government. They rely on the school fees paid by parents as approved by the school assembly.

City's Education Strategy Design

This section discusses the design of the local education strategy by highlighting its main characteristics and the preparation processes.

Main Characteristics of the Education Strategy

The study revealed that the city's education strategy is not designed in a single approved document. The education projects are embedded in the Integrated Development Strategy (IDS) and the city follows the National strategies to define its IDS which also contains education component. The city's IDS is a six-year plan (2018 -2024) that is structured towards achieving a new vision of Kigali as a centre of Urban Excellence in Africa", a city of diverse, vibrant, and inclusive economy (CoK, 2019).

The main education projects highlighted in the city IDS focus on TVET, quality education in primary and secondary education, improvement in management and deployment of teachers, enhancement in the use of ICT in

teaching and learning and the completion of school readiness programs by all children (Kigali, 2019). The education projects stated in the city IDS have been prepared considering the national, regional, and global development agendas to ensure harmonization of targets and indicators. These include the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), Rwanda Vision 2050, East African Community (EAC) Vision 2050, African Union Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

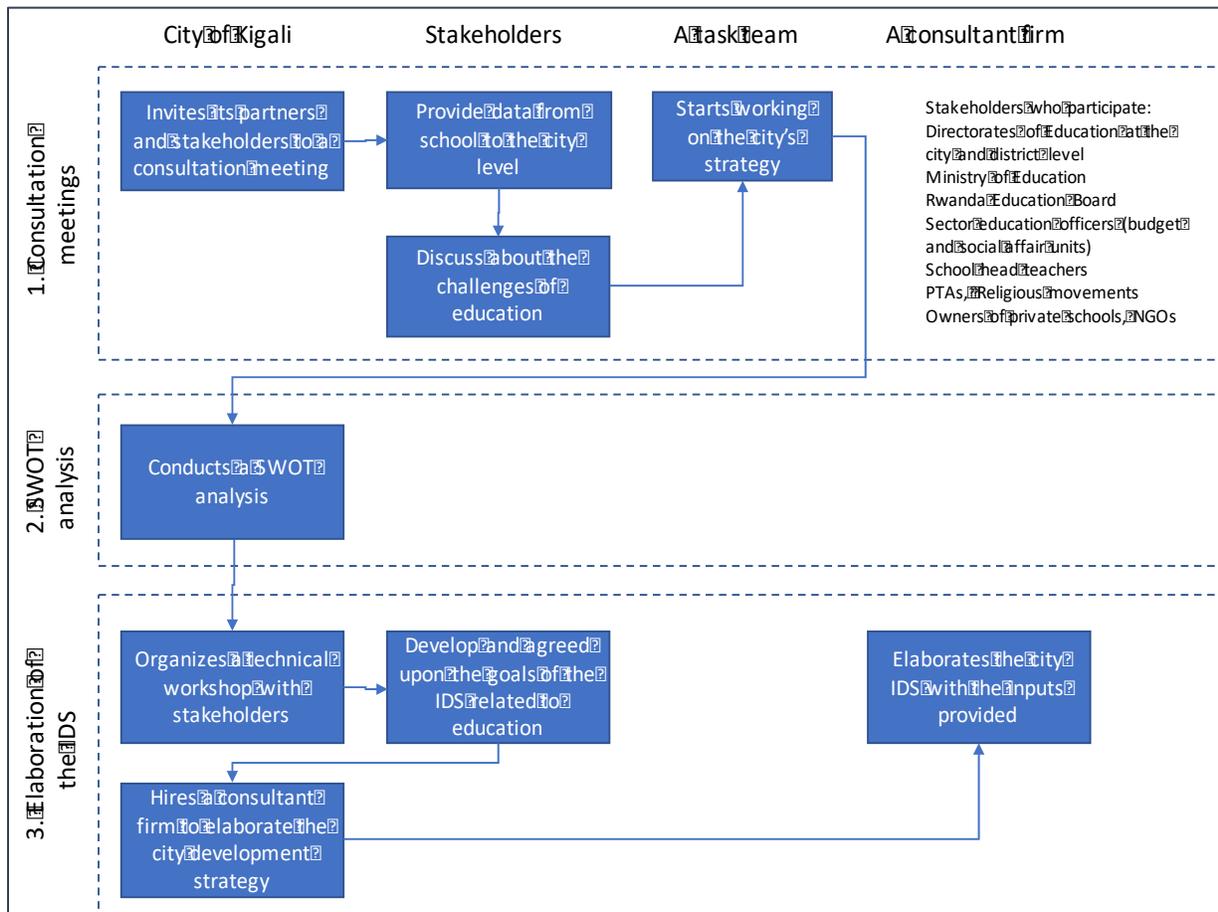**Preparation Process of the Education Strategy**

This study identified three main steps in the design of the city education strategy that are consultation meetings, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis and elaboration of the IDS (Figure 2). Before the IDS is drafted, various thematic consultation meetings of the city partners and stakeholders take place to discuss different challenges of the thematic area.

> *"The city invites its partners and all stakeholders in a consultation meeting where all issues related to education are discussed. They also use some data gathered from different level of education from school level to city level. Then a task team is formed to work on the strategy"* (Education Specialist at the City Hall).

Participants in the consultation meetings include staff from directorates of education at the city and district level, representatives from the Ministry of Education and Rwanda Education Board, Sector education officers, school Headteachers, representatives of churches and religious movements, private companies that own schools in the City of Kigali, non-governmental organization (NGOs) grouped into Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) at district levels. The main role of these actors is to provide ideas in the consultation and validation meeting.

Figure 2

Flowchart of the process of designing the Kigali IDS 2018-2024,

Source: City of Kigali, 2019.

Implementation of the City's Education Strategy

This section discusses the implementation of the city's education strategy. It pays specific attention to priority areas of the strategy, modalities of implementation and collaboration with the local education community. It also covers the main strengths of the implementation of the strategy and key challenges.

Main Thematic Priorities of the City's Education Strategy

As discussed in section 4.2.1, the key thematic priorities of the city education strategy are embedded in the City IDS under the second pillar, which is social transformation. These priorities also define the implementation orientations for education in the city. The city is therefore focusing on TVET, quality education in primary and secondary education, improvement in school management and deployment of teachers, enhancement in the use of ICT in teaching and learning and the completion of school readiness programs by all children (City of Kigali, 2019).

Project activities currently being implemented include among others the construction of more TVET schools, rehabilitation and construction of new schools and classrooms, organization of reading, writing and debate competitions in primary and secondary schools, conducting school peer evaluation in primary and secondary schools, enhancing quality teaching and learning (through schools' inspections), conducting school peer evaluation in primary and secondary schools, training teachers to use SMART classrooms at secondary and primary levels, strengthening continuous professional development and management of teachers, ensuring that learners enter school at the correct age and successfully completing 12 years basic education, increasing students enrolment in higher education and adult literacy and numeracy programmes, to name a few.

Collaboration with Stakeholders in Education

The preparation and implementation of the city education strategy require interventions of different stakeholders. The main responsible implementation organs are the CoK, districts, sectors and schools.

At school level, education community actors include the Head teacher who is the manager of the school, the teaching staff who deal with teaching and learning activities, non-teaching staff that provide support in their respective services, and the students.

At sector, district and city level, the collaboration between CoK education institutions is expressed in addressing concerns related to infrastructure, school material school staff by authorities from the school head teacher to the directorate of education at district level.

> *"When I have a challenge at work, I raise it to the head teacher, then the head teacher discusses with the SEI before it is transferred to the district if need be* (Teacher)*.*

The city also collaborates with civil society through Joint Action Development Forum (JADF). JADF members intervene in different ways, mainly training teachers, providing financial support to schools and students from poor families to get school fees and materials (RGB, 2022).

> *"NGOs we work with intervene in different education areas including early childhood education, special need education, adult literacy, girl's education, orphans catering. You also need to know that most of the money used in the training of teachers comes from them. They provide us with school materials; they pay school fees and other school materials for children from poor families (DEO)."*

The DEO also specified that the financial support from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in the CoK comes only in the form of funded projects. There is no direct money for specific activities planned by the city.

Parents are the key collaborators who support the implementation of the education strategy through the follow up of school activities and providing financial support to schools. The PTA works hand in hand with the school management and all decisions of the school development are taken by the general assembly.

> *"Parents conduct the day-to-day follow up on how the school performs and once in a year they come to school to assist in the presentation of innovative activities performed by their children"* (Teacher).

The city also works with youth and women councils, different church denominations, trade unions and cooperatives. They support in handling cases of school dropout, teenage pregnancies that prompt girls to abandon schools, home violence which affects student's performance, school feeding programs and others.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the City's Education Strategy

This section examines monitoring and evaluation processes of the city's education strategy, focusing mainly on tools, actors involved, and indicators used.

The indicators used to evaluate the city's education strategy are the expected outputs planned in the IDS (see in section 4.2.1) and the performance contracts[1] signed at school, sector, district, and city levels. Different tools are used to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and performed activities planned. HT and Director of Studies (DoS) use the lesson observation forms designed by REB to evaluate the teachers. SEIs and DEOs use designed school inspections books to evaluate schools. To store the information gathered, printed out documents are often used. There are other very important tools (software) used for a quick and systematic monitoring and evaluation: The Teacher Management Information System (TMIS), the Learning and Teaching Materials Management Information System (LTMMIS), the E-learning platforms and the SDMS.

> *"We use mainly the SDMS as it has quite all education data from the grassroots (school), i.e., numbers of student at schools, teachers and their qualifications, detailed information of each student, number of classrooms, dropout rate of each school, and repetition rate etc"* (DEO).

Teacher performance can also be evaluated via SDMS. The system can assess how teachers are progressing with the implementation of Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) and other information related to the performance of the school and the teachers, etc.

Concerning the processes applied for monitoring, at city level, monitoring and evaluation is performed through periodical meetings convened by the city to evaluate the achievements in the education sector. Meetings bring together educational staff at city, district, and sector level. School HT and parents' representatives are also invited as well as education partners of the city. At the district level, monitoring is conducted by the district directorate of education. Their

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[1] The performance contracts are individual or institutional engagements that contains a number of actions to have been accomplished in a given time. These contracts are signed between the employee and the employer.

main task is to check whether all the planned activities are done through regular inspection. Auditing is also conducted at this level.

> "*This helps to assess gaps in activity funding, detect important unforeseen and unplanned activities as well as doing purposeful budget reorientation in education areas that require more attention*" (District budget officer).

At the sector level, the monitoring and evaluation is called inspection. The SEI inspects schools at least once a trimester. He/she can also inspect a teacher in the classroom and provide post lesson observation advice. The SEI uses an observation checklist that was designed by REB.

At school level, HT and DoS are the main responsible persons to monitor the implementation of planned activities at school through regular administrative and academic inspections. The overall aim of monitoring at school is to see if the curriculum is well implemented. The HT and DoS may visit a teacher to do the inspection or to provide advice. When it is an inspection, he/she uses a tool that was designed by REB and must check everything (lesson plan, scheme of works, attendance list, etc.).

Strengths and Challenges of City's Education Strategy

This study revealed strengths and challenges in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the city education strategy.

Main Strengths of the City's Education Strategy

Regarding the *design,* this study revealed a strong will in the setting of the city education strategy which is based on previous experience from the City Development Strategy (CDS) 2013 - 2018 successfully implemented. It is also designed in line with national, regional, and international policies and agenda. In addition, it involves various actors including the elected officials and staff from the grassroot level to the national levels, local and international NGOs, and others. It is based on updated and real school data stored in the SDMS and also considers the national data (NISR, 2012, 2018, 2021).

As for the implementation, having an educated population in the city constitutes the main asset in the implementation of the education strategy.

> "*We have chances of having an educated population who understand better the value of learning. They are ready to contribute by providing valuable technical support through parents-teachers associations or by investing money in the establishment of private schools and others supported by the government… It is of vital importance to have such a population which is ready to contribute to education infrastructure development of the city*" (Education Specialist at the City Hall).

The direct transfer of operation funds from the Ministry of Finance to schools without necessary transiting to city, districts, and sector, in the case of fund request processes is also an asset. This lessens the burden of bureaucracy in financial management and hence reduces the delay of implementation of school projects.

Regular and robust monitoring and evaluation is another strength of the city education strategy, conducted done at every level of the city education system from the city hall to district, sector and school and reports are shared at every level of education administration. In addition, the use of the Teacher Management Information System (TMIS), the Learning and Teaching Materials Management Information System (LTMMIS), the E-learning platforms and the SDMS enables education leaders at all levels of the city to get instant situation of the city education system, challenges met in the implementation of the city education strategy and, thus, to find adequate solutions in time.

Main Challenges of City's Education Strategy

The main challenge in city's education strategy design is that the process does not involve all stakeholders such as parents, students, teachers, and non-teaching staff yet they are expected to be the key actors in the implementation process. In addition, private school owners are often neglected in the design of the education strategy, yet the city is experiencing a steady growing trend of privatisation of education services at all levels. Finally, the budget allocated to education by the city is still very low in comparison with the continuously growing number of the city population due to migration and natural increase. The challenge in the implementation is linked to the limited financial resources allocated to education.

> *"…if we take into consideration the rapid increase of the population of the city, the annual budget allocated to education is not enough to cover all the raising needs of education. Each year, we need more classrooms, more teachers, and more money to support the school feeding program. In a city environment, we have also to continually fight school dropout. Some students are always tempted to leave school for income generating jobs"* (Education Specialist at the City Hall).

The various and successive administrative reforms that the city has undergone for the last two decades also constituted the bottlenecks to the implementation. They have often caused the change of administrative structures in education at different levels as well as the relocation of certain employees from one working place to another, from one education position to another. Respondents also pointed out CSOs and other local communities operating in the CoK, which have very limited means to support the implementation of education strategy. They focus on advocacy interventions instead of funding education activities and project planned by city.

Concerning monitoring and evaluation, informants at the district and sector levels raised the issue of insufficient financial means to conduct monitoring and evaluation on planned activities. One SEI raised a concern about lacking sufficient and adequate means of transport to visit schools which limit the number of visits they are supposed

to carry out. SEIs also raised the issue of having a heavy workload that sometimes includes other unplanned activities. This prevents them from conducting timely follow-ups on the implementation of the activities indicated in their action plans or in the performance contracts.

The findings from this study have shown that the proper strategic planning of education in cities should focus on availability of both human and financial resources coupled with keen implementation, monitoring and evaluation process. This study has confirmed previous findings that the investment in public education and the participation of communities in the design of educational programs have so far been the key conditions for countries and cities to overcome the challenges of urban education and cohesion (Isabel, A. et al, 2012). The Kigali city education planning case has shown that from building schools to recruiting teachers, the range of cities' responsibilities in terms of education is becoming broader. As highlighted by Lugaz, (2021), the planning and implementation of education strategy in the city of Kigali also involves various actors from public administration, private and civil society organisations, schools and parents. Furthermore, the study confirms that educational planning is becoming a key component of the global urban development plan (IIEP-UNESCO, 2021) the practice can differ from one city to another, or from countries to others. In fact, contrary to the cities in developed countries that elaborate the specific education strategy (City of London, 2019), Kigali's education strategy is not designed in a single approved document. The study proves that Kigali also proceeds like other African cities (Nairobi City County, 2023 ; City of Johannesburg, 2021) of integrating the city education strategy into the city Integrated Development Strategy.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to analyse from the case of Kigali how cities ensure successful planning to achieve SDG 4. The education indicators have proved an outstanding achievement in promoting quality and universal education since the last decade. The findings highlighted that the City of Kigali has laid down ambitious education objectives in its IDS, through five goals that focus on learning, through improved education quality at primary and secondary levels, as well as on strengthening the skills for work, with specific attention given to TVET. A strong focus is given to teachers (attracting, retaining, and capacities building), schools' infrastructures and equipment, through ICT tools and modalities.

Several observations for improvement emerge from the research, for the city to successfully achieve its ambitious education objectives. Among the main noted observations is the design of an overall policy framework recognising education as a priority for the city. The education objectives are clear and ambitious, as stated above, illustrating a clear commitment of the city of Kigali for education. However, several stakeholders interviewed regretted that it is not recognised as a top-level priority, like infrastructures. Such a feeling relied on the lack of alignment between the education objectives and the human and financial resources allocated for education, so that the city could give itself the means to achieve its objectives. This could come through setting up a specific education unit at the level of the city, composed of staff equipped in educational planning and management skills.

Grassroot stakeholders complained of their lack of involvement in the policy formulation process, expressing the willingness to have their voice heard. The literature reflects that such consultation processes allow a stronger ownership and commitment of actors of policies. Involving all education stakeholders through such an event could constitute a useful approach to examine possible collaboration and delegation of tasks between actors, to merge forces. Relayed by a series of related workshops with relevant stakeholders, such an event could constitute the opportunity to discuss further specific concerns that came out from the field research; in particular, designing a sustainable strategy to attract and retain teachers in Kigali, increasing parents' involvement in education through awareness-raising campaigns; improve the coordination between education and other sectors through sharing of data.

In a nutshell, the development of the IDS provides a guideline that must be followed by all actors of education in the City of Kigali and is a blueprint of how the quality of education will be achieved. It constitutes a learning case of how to design and implement an ambitious education strategy in a city that ranges among the fastest growing urban population in Africa.

Acknowledgements

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