Rwanda: A case study in institutional education resilience
Rwanda: A case study in institutional resilience

Authors:
Richard Arden
Yisa Claver

September 2011
The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Education Resilience Approaches Program team, the World Bank and its affiliated organizations, or those of the Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments they represent.
About the RES-Research Studies series

RES-Research Studies is a series within the Education Resilience Approaches (ERA) team at The World Bank (Human Development Network). Its primary intention is to disseminate studies on education resilience conducted by external researchers from higher education institutions or research centers. The majority of these researchers conduct their work in fragile, conflict and/or violence affected contexts. The studies in this series have been conducted using the ERA Program’s research framework and methodology, called Resilience in Education Systems (RES-) Research.

The ERA framework recognizes that in spite of the challenges they face on many fronts, education systems can play a vital role in supporting the resilience process of vulnerable children and youth. Education systems can ensure their protection and provide them with an appropriate environment to nurture their academic skills, socioemotional well-being and productive capacities. The RES-Research tool guides a mixed-methods approach to collect local, contextualized evidence on risks and assets in education communities—students, parents, teachers, school administrators and other actors.

Education systems that adopt a resilience approach in the delivery of their services recognize, protect and use their assets. The protection and use of education community assets can contribute not only to better learning outcomes and skills development of students in contexts of adversity, but also to mitigating their exposure to the multitude of risks they face.

Resilience research and evidence, collected by local researchers, fills the empirical evidence gaps at the global level on resilience processes in education contexts in countries affected by adversities. Local researchers are called on to continue the dialogue with policy makers and program designer in their own countries. Most importantly, case research on education resilience in each context can identify tangible ways forward for recovery, perform and transform positively the students, teachers, communities and societies to recover, continue to perform and transform positively in difficult contexts.

Adaptable to each context, RES-Research methodology is flexible but rigorous. It allows for the generation of multiple case studies within a variety of research paradigms. As the application of these diagnostic and research tools expands, ERA hopes to systematically collect and disseminate the growing global evidence.

The present study, Rwanda: A case study in institutional resilience, conducted by Richard Arden and Yisa Claver, responds to the need to inform public policies using critical case studies that provide examples not only of the risks but also the strengths of schools and communities navigating difficult contexts. The emphasis is on the education system’s protection and use of these strengths to improve the relevance of its services for schools. Using resilience evidence, this study provides feedback to public policy makers and education communities (students, parents, teachers and principals).

The study was completed in 2012 and ERA is honored to disseminate it as part of this series. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the
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The ERA Program acknowledges the generous financial support from the Russian Federation, Norway, the United Kingdom, Australia and Sweden, through the Rapid Social Response Trust Fund and recognizes the Government of the United Kingdom in its support for the development of ERA and this series, through the Partnership for Education Development (PFED). Both programs are considered strategic alliances within The World Bank.
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Glossary

FARG: Fonds d'Aide aux rescapés du Génocide (Genocide Survivor Assistance Fund)

GACACA: Traditional courts adopted to deal with the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi cases, because it would have taken too long to deal with these cases through ordinary courts.

GIRINKA: A cascade program to give one cow to each family. One of the strategies for poverty reduction and promotion of nutrition to children by provision of milk.

IMIHIGO: Performance contracts

INGANDO: Solidarity training centers

UBUDEHE: Communal support to the needy, e.g. during farming season

UMUGANDA: Communal services of common good, e.g. general cleaning of community surroundings. Carried out every last Saturday of the month.

UMWIHERERO: Senior Government Retreat, held every year in February to discuss and agree on progress of government key and priority issues.

UMUSHYIKIRANO: National Consultation forum with senior government officers, District Mayors and Executives and representatives from Rwandese Diaspora from different countries. It is held each a year in December.
Introduction and rationale

The Education Resilience Approaches (ERA) Program seeks to provide a systematic evidence-based process to improve the capacity of education systems in fragile, conflict and/or violence affected situations (FCS). In this way, the ERA Program complements the existing HDNED SABER program (Systems Approach for Better Education Results) through the provision of context sensitive tools that support the development of academic and non-academic services leading to the protection of students’ well-being in contexts of adversity, and the identification of education sector contributions to mitigate the social determinants of conflict and violence.

Rwanda was selected as one of the major case studies to inform the development of ERA tools and background materials (within the context of the SABER work stream)\(^1\), because of its remarkable recovery economically, socially, and politically from the impact of the terrible 1994 Genocide. This recovery has been particularly marked in the education sector, which has undergone a series of reforms designed to promote peaceful social transformation. The ERA Program itself focuses on the applicability of resilience on three levels; individual, social and institutional. It is on the latter that this case study focuses; namely how education resilience manifests itself at the systems level. Responses to this question will be presented through an examination of the initial response and recovery mechanisms in Rwanda, and a discussion on how reforms and innovations were built into the early years, before later consolidation, institutionalization and transformation took place to ensure the system could withstand future challenges better.

Reflective of the significant differences between FCS, the Rwanda case study provides a valuable complement to other ERA research being conducted in Honduras, South Sudan, Jordan and the West Bank and Gaza. While Rwanda’s pre-genocide enrollment rates were relatively high for East Africa and had grown significantly over the few decades preceding the genocide, they still lagged globally and, crucially, access was determined by significantly discriminatory education policies and practices. Yet, while accepting that every country’s experience of conflict and reconstruction is unique in a way, an attempt is made to draw some lessons and recommendations on how countries can plan and strengthen resilience through systems and institutional reform processes. Specifically, the lessons to be taken from the nature of the adversity that affected Rwanda (institutionalized discrimination that was rooted in strong state structures building up to an intense and chronic humanitarian crisis), and subsequent response (widespread cross sector reforms that included and prioritized education) may prove especially useful for the development of education resilience approaches during the immediate response phase and for supporting meaningful transitions across humanitarian and developmental agendas (in particular in terms of supporting national priorities and social cohesion) and meaningful attempts to promote social cohesion through governance reform.

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\(^1\) SABER—Systems Approach for Better Education Results—is an initiative that helps countries systematically examine and strengthen the performance of their education systems to achieve learning for all. These diagnostic tools and the concomitant leveraging of global knowledge fill a gap in the availability of policy data, information and knowledge on what matters most to improve the quality of education. The ERA Program is designed to complement SABER by providing an additional lens through which to ensure the applicability and relevance of education in countries affected by high levels of violence and conflict.
Methodology
Evidence for this case study was compiled through a review of relevant secondary literature dealing with Rwanda's educational transition process, as well as qualitative data that was collected from Rwandese former and current education policy and decision makers in mid 2011. The latter included interviews with individual key players from the government, and focus groups with education stakeholders (civil society and UN). Key findings were then discussed with the then current Ministry of Education in a final verification process.

Background
The tragedy of the Rwandan genocide has been well documented. In 1994, Rwanda lay devastated in the aftermath of one of the most brutal and swift mass killings in history. Over 800,000 people, mainly Tutsi but also some moderate Hutus, were killed over a period of 3 months, and two million people—about one-third of the population—fled the country to DRC, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania. About a million more were internally displaced. Sixty percent of women became heads of families. The number of girls and women with unwanted pregnancies after large-scale rape was high, linked to a 30% increase in the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate, and there were many orphans, unaccompanied children, street children, traumatized children and adolescents. There were also displaced people, returning refugees, and demobilized or deserter soldiers.²

In terms of education, schools and colleges were often destroyed, burned or looted and their vehicles stolen. Principals, teachers, and children were either killed or had fled. Of the 1,836 primary and secondary schools, 65 percent were damaged and only 648 were operational in October 1994. Some schools were occupied by returning refugees, displaced people or military forces.

Table 1. Before: Pre-genocide educational context in Rwanda

- Gross Enrollment Rate of 65 percent (1990) and Net Enrollment Rate of 63 percent (1990)
- Gender parity in access to education achieved in 1990
- Transition rates from primary to secondary level at 10 percent in 1992
- Six years of primary education conducted in two cycles of three years each with specialization and vocational streams available at the senior secondary level
- Rapid expansion of private education to 43 percent (whereas before most education had been run by churches)
- “Free” primary education but hidden school costs (uniforms etc.)
- Ethnic and regional quota system to determine entry to all government and assisted schools* and tertiary systems
- Unpublished primary examination results and performance criteria for admittance to secondary school
- Performance analysis disaggregated along ethnic lines
- Poor quality of education attributed to insufficient school equipment and teaching and learning materials as well as low levels of teacher qualification (60.1 percent of primary teachers were qualified)

*assisted schools were private secondary schools set up by parents’ associations

Source: Obura 2003

² Anne Obura, Never Again – Educational reconstruction in Rwanda (2003).
The Ministry of Education was a shell in terms of both physical structure and human capacity, with walls smashed, windows blown out, property destroyed or stolen, and many officials massacred or fled. Teachers had been killed but also had been killers—of pupils, other teachers, and neighbors leading to total erosion of faith in the education system. After the genocide only 45 percent of the 12,000 qualified teachers remained in the primary system and about one-third of the secondary teachers were qualified. The whole system was in chaos and disintegration.
1. Response and recovery – The immediate aftermath of 1994 up to 1999

1.1 The challenges

Three major practical challenges faced the Ministry of Education in Rwanda after the genocide: the poor state of education infrastructure; the lack of human resources, and; the shortage of financial resources. Thousands of pupils, students, teachers, principals and administrators had been killed, were refugees or in exile, and many classrooms, laboratories and libraries had been destroyed and their contents looted. In addition, there was a severe shortage of financial resources to invest in reconstruction and rehabilitation, as the Treasury had been looted by the outgoing government forces. There was obviously a complete lack of qualified teachers and administrative staff available to begin the recovery process. The remaining population was nervous, suspicious and scared of reprisals and a lack of trust pervaded the communities. There were two million refugees in Congo and 1.5 million on the streets, many of them orphans.

However, a deeper historical challenge was the legacy of discrimination in the education system over the last 30 years practiced by the previous regimes in terms of access, equity, quality and progression throughout the system. A quota system was used for entry into schools overtly based on ethnic and regional criteria rather than performance mostly in favor of the Hutu majority. In many ways the education system mirrored and reinforced the destructive and divisive trends in pre-genocide Rwandan society.

1.2 Immediate response

The immediate priorities for the incoming government was to get children back to school and off the streets and to make sure parents and communities understood that all children would be accepted back into school regardless of ethnicity or regional origin. Secondly there was a need to recruit teachers whether untrained or not, with at least some minimum level of education up to Primary 6 to fill the gaps left by those killed or who had fled as refugees.

Schools were re-opened in September 1994 despite their shattered state. The Minister together with regional leaders and senior colleagues went from province to province, district to district cajoling and persuading parents to bring their children back to schools, places that people feared as sites of betrayal and massacre. To overcome the shortage of teachers, the Ministry called for secondary leavers or even drop-outs to fill posts—more difficult in secondary. Officers travelled to and from Kigali in bush taxis carrying millions of Rwandese francs to pay teachers, some managed to use helicopters for more remote areas, and teachers were paid monthly. UNICEF played a useful role at this early stage through a one-off support of US$ 800,000 for teacher salaries—an emergency measure to kick-start the process.³

In terms of materials this is where again UN agencies and NGOs provided support. For example, a box of supplies called “Teacher Emergency Package” was provided and distributed through UNESCO/UNICEF which, despite its title causing problems later on, constituted a major morale booster.

³ Anne Obura, Never Again—Educational reconstruction in Rwanda (2003).
boost to children and teachers alike. Portable blackboards were added later. UNHCR and others also supported reconstruction of classrooms, libraries and laboratories with built-in blackboards.

The World Bank Country Study (2004) noted that the period 1994 to 1999 had seen the numbers of children in primary school surpass the number that would have been enrolled had the system expanded at historical rates of increase. The gross enrollment ratio at 107 percent exceeded the corresponding ratio for the average low-income country in Africa at the time. In secondary education, the number of students grew at 20 percent a year from 1996, implying that the system was nearly three times as large as it was in earlier years. Although the gross enrollment ratio at this level remained below the average for low-income Sub-Saharan Africa at 13 percent compared with 20 percent, the gap would have been even wider had the system stagnated after the genocide. In higher education, enrollments rose even more rapidly, from 3,400 students in 1991 to nearly 17,000 by 2001, almost a fourfold increase in a decade. (See Annex 1).

The World Bank Study (2004) further observed that the system had expanded in ways that had moved it toward a good balance between the public and private sectors. At the base of the education pyramid, there had been a consistently strong effort by the government to extend the coverage of the public sector. As a result, the share of enrollments in private schools had remained modest at less than 1 percent. At the secondary level, enrollments grew as fast in the public as in the private sector in the post-genocide years. The share of students attending private schools had remained steady at about 40 percent, lower than the 62 percent in the 1980s, but still much higher than the 20 percent on average in low-income Sub-Saharan

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**Table 2. During: Impact of genocide on children’s well-being and the education sector**

- 100,000 children lost or separated from their parents
- Very high levels of direct exposure of children to trauma (e.g. 91 percent of children felt that they would die during the genocide)
- Children were involved in the perpetration of the genocide and subsequently rejected by society
- High levels of sexual violence against women and girls (30 percent incidence between the ages of 13-35)
- 13 percent increase in households below the poverty line from 1993 to 1996
- Increase in child and female headed households
- All schools (including post primary centres) looted and pillaged and many damaged
- One quarter of schools occupied by displaced persons and military in months following the genocide
- MoE building severely damaged, staff fled and many were killed leaving no financial resources, no equipment or supplies and almost no man-power
- Teaching profession was divided during the genocide between those who were targeted and those who perpetrated attacks; resulted in lack of trust, fear and total erosion of faith in the system
- Enormous destruction of the one state university (which was specifically targeted and for which only 18.54 percent of teachers remained four years later)
- Loss of all National Archives and the National Library and serious damage to the MoE textbook production centre

Source: Obura 2003

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Africa. The diversity of post-secondary institutions and the mix of public-private sector providers became the strength of the system, endowing it with the flexibility to meet the growing demand for places at this level of study.

**Figure 1.**

![Graph showing gross enrolment ratios in pre-primary education for male and female students from 1990 to 2010.](image)

2. Protection – Innovation and opportunities for transformation

Following on the back of the efforts to get all children back into school, a major policy conference backing up the concept of access and equity took place in April 1995. This Conference on Policy and Planning of Education in Rwanda came up with some major policy commitments. It stated that Rwanda would produce:

- Citizens free of ethnic, regional, national and religious prejudices
- Citizens committed to human rights and to their obligations to society

The role of the education sector was to contribute to national reconciliation by:

- creating a culture of peace, emphasizing positive non-violent national values, and promoting the universal values of justice, peace, tolerance, respect for others, solidarity and democracy
- eliminating negative discrimination and favoritism and promoting access to higher levels of education using criteria based solely on student competency.

This declaration was to have a major influence on the future direction of the education system and on curriculum development. Education now became a major agent for promoting social cohesion, peace and well-being of the entire society. The values of equity and inclusion had been inculcated into the system right from the beginning of the emergency response when the Ministry went throughout Rwanda persuading parents and children to go back to school regardless of their ethnic roots. Now it was backed up by clear policy statements.

Testimony to the socio-political change this approach helped to create can be demonstrated by two developments, one positive and one tragic. Relatives of insurgents often reported their movements to the authorities because they did not want schools which their children were now benefitting from to be disrupted. They appreciated the fact that no reverse discrimination was apparent in terms of access and equity. One incident in particular highlights the efforts to create one nation. In Nyanza, rebels entered a school and asked the children to divide up into Hutu and Tutsi. They refused to do so saying they were all Rwandans now, so rebels shot and killed the whole class – in effect they became martyrs for the new Rwanda.

It was hard to bring real innovation into the curriculum at first. The period 1994 to 1999 was a time of intense reconstruction activity as the country was focusing on recovery. The education reconstruction effort was kicked off by a curriculum conference in 1995 that culminated in subsequent series of workshops and seminars during the 1996/1997 period which worked out modalities for the formulation of a new all-inclusive Rwandan curricula. Reaching consensus and compromise regarding the course of action to be taken and following set guidelines or operational procedures required considerable patience and communication skills, a commodity that was in very short supply at the time. The country had just emerged out of war and genocide. It was a unique situation, and had unique problems and challenges that required unique solutions immediately.

The educational interactions between different groups, especially the former refugees and those who had not left Rwanda in 1959, created dynamics that required careful management skills. This was because people’s different backgrounds rather than reason or logic seemed to dictate their contributions towards what the new education system should be like, what should be taught in the curriculum, and how it should be assessed. It was a time of controversies, contradictions, and dilemmas. Some people talked about “our system”, “their system”, referring to the so-called Anglophone and Francophone backgrounds. In fact, most Rwandans use Kinyarwanda for their everyday communication except when in the company of non-Rwandans. French and English are used more in official and business transactions by Rwandans, who otherwise share a common language, culture and traditional values. So what was required was a Rwandan educational system, a Rwandan curriculum and assessment system.

The various teams collected and compiled materials from the neighbouring countries in East Africa, Southern Africa, from Congo, Burundi and Rwanda itself. These documents formed the core of resource materials out of which a hybrid Rwandan curriculum evolved. It took skillful leadership to accommodate varied and sometimes outright opposing positions and to arrive at a common understanding that evolved into the current educational system. Annex 2 shows the curriculum that resulted from this dynamic process. The 1996/7 curriculum was later reviewed following the 2002 National Curriculum Conference that sought to ascertain the skills base that Rwanda needed for its children in the twenty first century. The theme of that conference was: Curriculum in the service of national development: what skills do our children need? (Rutayisire 2002). This conference provided momentum for a further review of the curriculum to make it relevant to the demands of the labour market culminating in the 2005 reforms approved by the cabinet in 2008. Then with the fast-tracking of basic education in 2009, there were opportunities to reduce the number of subjects taught and examined at this level given the very basic facilities in most schools. Annex 3 shows the current primary and secondary school curriculum.

However, attempts to introduce peace education or similar innovations from agencies such as UNICEF/UNESCO and other agencies were never fully embraced by the Rwandan government, as the view was that creating a strong institutional base and capacity would in itself bring stability and cohesion. This institutionalization process is dealt with in the next section. However, an innovative curriculum and learning/teaching intervention on peace and reconciliation has been developed since 2006 by the Aegis Trust around the Gisozi Genocide Memorial Centre, and having already embraced schools in the Kigali area, it is now expanding its services to rural areas. While not yet fully embedded in the curriculum it is supported by the Ministry of Education. The initial language policy of allowing equal weight to English, Kinyarwanda and French took cognizance of the fact that many refugees had come from East African English-speaking countries, and this influenced the eventual decision to make English the main second language medium of instruction from Grade 4 in 2009.

Another innovation that took place was the gradual introduction of Information Technology into the system that was influenced by the 400 students sent to India, South Africa, and the United States for training in ICT, Maths and Science. This helped to bring about a major focus on ICT and Science as a transformative approach to education and learning in general. The creation of the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology in 1997 has boosted the culture of ICT, Science and Technology in Rwanda, and it is now hosting new courses ranging from Chinese to distance learning.
Another major development was introducing professionalism and objectivity into the assessment system. Previously assessment was conducted at regional/district levels, allowing for discriminatory practices to be introduced into the final results. Instead a meritocracy was introduced through setting up the National Exams Council in 1998, which allowed transition from one level to another based on merit and not quotas or grading set at school/district levels. This move also appeared to contribute to peace-building and reconciliation as it was realized that education access would not be based on ethnicity but on merit.

Teacher education and supply was another major target for change. In the very early days a number of “crash” training courses were implemented, financed by partners such as UNICEF and the World Bank, which enabled 23,000 teachers to be trained over 2 days.

The new government then focused on the development of a proper teacher training structure by increasing the number of qualified teachers through expanding the intake at the 12 teacher training colleges (TTCs). Then with the development of the Kigali Institute of Education in 1998 even before the law was put in place, a center for training secondary teachers was developed for the first time, and later the training of primary teacher educators for the 12 teacher training colleges.
3. Prevention – Institutionalization and capacity building

Following the 1996/7 curriculum reform effort, the Ministry of Education developed the Education Policy (1998) with the assistance of IIEP-UNESCO which affirmed that education should be aimed at recreating in young people the values which had been eroded in the course of the country’s recent past (after the 1994 genocide). The Education Sector Policy was revised in 2002, and stated that Universal Primary Education would be provided by 2010; and that basic education encompassing grades 1-9 would be provided for all by 2015. Also, teachers at all levels would be trained in sufficient numbers and quality, and different forms of motivation of teachers put in place. This would demand an improvement in the quality of management of teachers in service, so that they could remain in service and continue to develop professionally.

In the intervening period between 2000 and 2005, the Ministry of Education realized that to establish a sustainable education system, it needed to develop a legal framework in the form of policies that would guide and drive implementation of various subsector activities. It quickly sought assistance from its development partners notably, the Department for International Development (DFID) of the British government, which was very supportive in policy development. The World Bank and African Development Bank also played their part in the strengthening of structures, mechanisms, institutions and human resource development. Armed with this support, the Ministry of Education was able to commission and conduct a series of studies on the education sector, which formed a basis for implementation of programs and activities. Perhaps even more importantly, the studies informed the Ministry of Education’s drive for resource mobilization as Rwanda was able to show very clearly that her policies were evidence-based and therefore if development partners were to commit funds, they would be put to proven good use. From the beginning, the Ministry of Education insisted that both the studies and the policies should address the concerns of the VISION 2020 and the Poverty Reduction Strategic Program (PRSP) as the pillars of Rwandan reconstruction and development effort. A synthesis of the pillars, studies and policies is outlined below.

Vision 2002 emphasizes:

- The rebuilding of the nation based on key values such as unity, respect for human rights, patriotism and hard work;
- The construction of a knowledge-based and technology-led economy;
- The achievement of Universal Primary Education by 2010 and Basic Education for All by 2015, addressing the causes of higher drop-out rates among girls than boys;
- Imparting key skills for development;
- Health education, environmental education and gender studies;
- The teaching of science and technology, promoting girls’ education in particular;
- The establishment of career guidance and counseling ; and
- Ensuring that education and training are a continuous catalyst in responding to national challenges.

The National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002) stated that the government would con-
continue to support teacher training, and that the curriculum would be evaluated in an effort to reduce the dropout and repetition rates, so that universal primary education could be achieved by 2010, leading to education for all by 2015. In addition, it affirmed that sufficient amounts of textbooks would be provided; that science and technology be developed, and the education of girls emphasized and attainment properly monitored. The first Joint Review on Education Sector (2002) had noted some challenges, which included a limited capacity of the teacher education system to meet the demands of the expanded system; the heavy teaching load in primary schools caused by the double shift system; a shortage of qualified language teachers; and too many teaching subjects taught in basic education. In effect, this constituted a major leadership challenge in the curriculum reform process.

The issue of leadership and management became apparent in the Joint Review of the Education sector (2003), which highlighted the urgent need to clarify roles and responsibilities, and for effective linkages to be ensured. It stressed the need for capacity building at all levels, and to ensure monitoring to verify the impact of policies in schools. This implied that any meaningful education reform must necessarily have an impact at school and classroom level. Also, the Ministry of Education had realised that its structural reforms would be limited in their impact if there were lack of connection to learning, teacher learning and student teaching. Thus, the Ministry of Education needed to move away from a compliance model of reform, towards an approach which reflected the needs, expectations and aspirations of schools and communities, and which was supported by forms of leadership and management connected to learning.

A study on “Improving the provision and management of external support to education in Rwanda” remarked that the education sector had quite centralised decision making and financial management; and that the current approach displayed some of the classic problems of central planning, with decisions at the centre being made with insufficient awareness of the needs and priorities of those in the front line of service delivery (Foster et al. 2005).

Even within the decentralised structure, educational decisions were taken by provincial governors rather than educational managers. As early as the year 2003, the Decentralisation Implementation Plan (2003) had noted challenges which included inadequate capacity and incompetence at all levels; inadequate utilities and economic infrastructure in decentralised units; limited and unpredictable funding; weak institutional coordination at all levels, and; inadequate appreciation of the principles and values of decentralisation among leaders and other actors. Clearly, one of the main challenges to improve resilience of education was to make sure that decentralised structures worked and communities were more fully involved in the education of their children.
4. Prevention through transformation – Approaches, policies, strategies and institutionalization of 2000 up to 2010

4.1 Introduction

Innovations and initiatives developed since the early stages after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi needed to be consolidated. As the Ministry of Education planned and implemented new ideas, it had at the same time to revisit and consolidate the still young innovations in access, equity, learning achievement and management of the education system. The development of education has always been more of a spiral than linear model and certain levers have been used to increase efficiency in implementing set strategies. This is generally true of most post-conflict, post-crisis contexts.

Another important point to recognize is the fact that the consolidation process of education transformation has been an integral part of the overall consolidation of national, social, economic and political transformation.

4.2 Legal documents

It has been noted that soon after the 1994 Genocide, extensive and intensive consultations on what should be the long-term vision of the country took place. These consultations and discussions had already been initiated within the Rwandese Patriotic Front during the liberation struggle before 1994. One of the important levers in consolidation of the innovations made was the development and establishment of key legal instruments to bring order to the system. The major legal instruments with direct bearing on education passed by the Parliament include:

i. National Constitution: The National Constitution in its article 40 ratifies the right to education: “Every person has the right to education. Freedom of learning and teaching shall be guaranteed in accordance with conditions determined by law.”

ii. Organic Law organizing Education no. 20/2003: This provides the overall philosophy and broad lines governing education. The 1985 Education law was revised to introduce free basic education and do away with discrimination in education such as the infamous ethnic and regional quota system. The new organic law in article 2(b) states that education should promote the culture of peace, tolerance, justice, respect for human rights, solidarity and democracy.

iii. Law organizing Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education no. 20/2003: This provides the structure and expected profile each level of education should produce as well as issues of management and governance.

iv. Law organizing Higher Education no. 20/2005: Higher education in Rwanda was expanded considerably and so was the variety of courses demanded /offered. All these required a legal guidance to ensure quality of education offered and governance among others.
v. **Laws governing different institutions:** Each institution (the Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies-SAGAs) is governed by a specific law passed by the Parliament.

vi. **Law organizing TVET:** This sub sector which was in the past very marginalized has recently been given high attention. Several consultations have been made and a TVET policy passed by the cabinet. There is a draft law to be sent to the Parliament soon.

### 4.3 Institutions

“**The important issue is not only having strong people but also strong institutions.**"

Rwanda recognizes this well, and established and used such institutions as one of the major vehicles for national transformation. At national level there are institutions which have made a strong impact, such as the Auditor General’s Office (AGO); National Tender Board (NTB); Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA); Prosecutor General Office (PGO) and Ombudsman Office. These institutions have ensured proper collection and use of government resources, transparency, rule of law and zero tolerance to corruption. The culture of impunity is no more.

In the education sector about ten similar institutions have been established by act of Parliament to deal with the implementation of key education issues of access, equity, quality and management. A major institution established in 1997 was the Rwanda National Examination Council (RNEC) to champion quality education and also to ensure meritocracy and transparency in education assessment. This institution has contributed a great deal to building unity, confidence and promotion of human rights and received a UN award for Transparency in 2006. The Student Financing Agency for Rwanda (SFAR) 2006 was established to contribute to improving equity and transparency in higher education by offering higher education scholarships locally and abroad on merit and for priority fields in the country. A Student Loan scheme was introduced for cost sharing and a good percentage has been recovered from many beneficiaries starting with senior Government officials who set examples for the rest. The Higher Education Council (HEC) 2006 is another institution established recently to ensure quality in higher education through setting up Qualification Frameworks and Accreditation of Higher Learning Institutions.

The National Curriculum Development Centre 2007 is charged with assuring quality education. It took on the task of developing and reviewing curriculum and where necessary changing the pre-Genocide curriculum which propagated divisionism and hatred. Instead it ensures children get the right education content as stipulated in the Education Act and Education Policy. Before the 1994 Genocide, curriculum issues were dealt with by *Bureau Pedagogique*, a department in the Ministry of Education. The National Unity Reconciliation Commission (NURC) though not under education per se is another institution that works closely with education to foster peace and reconciliation education through solidarity training centers locally known as “INGANDO”.

The other institution charged with advising on quality, equity and access to education is the Inspector General of Education (IGE) 2007, which addresses administration of schools along with inspection to ensure quality teaching. Before the 1994 genocide, issues of inspection of education were dealt with by *Inspecteur des Arrondissement* – education officers who were responsible for both administration of education in arrondissement (provinces) and inspection of schools. It is now decentralized to province level to ensure inspectors can get to schools easily.
Teacher training, development and management is a crucial aspect for quality education provision in any environment. Two institutions were created; The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in 2009 for promotion of professionalism and Umwalimu SACCO (2008) for promotion of teachers well-being, commitment and motivation.

In addition, two recent developments have taken place worth noting:

Workforce Development Authority (WDA) 2009: As mentioned TVET was one of the marginalized sectors. This institution was established to increase access and to coordinate different TVET providers and link them with the labor market. Students are now becoming more interested in this sector as the quality of TVET institutions improve.

Rwanda Education Board (REB) 2010: This institution is the most recent Government innovation. The institutions in education mentioned above which have related functions have been merged into one institution. This is intended to maximize synergies and efficiency. Similar institutions have been and are being established in other sectors.

Annex 4 illustrates the current structure of the education system in Rwanda.

4.4 Policy and strategy documents

There are several policy documents that guide education development. Most of these were also developed from about 2000 onwards. The following have direct influence on education development.

Vision 2020 and PRSP/EDPRS

Vision 2020 in which all sectors are anchored testifies to the importance the leadership of Rwanda and its citizens accords to education. The Vision 2020 objective has been defined as: “...to create a knowledge based and technology led economy...” Equally the PRSP and EDPRS place human capital very high in poverty reduction and economic growth.

Education Sector Policy (ESP) 2003

Education Sector Policy (ESP) 2003 is the major policy instrument guiding the education sector in Rwanda. This document has been developed in line with other national policies, notably Vision 2020 and Poverty Reduction Strategy Program (PRSP) 2000-2005, and was guided by the international and regional commitments such as MDGs and the AU decade for education 1995-2005 Plan of Action. The ESP was informed by different studies such as the Study on Rwanda Education Diagnosis 1997 by UNESCO and the Country Status Report 2002 by the World Bank. This key policy document has guided development of key strategy documents—the Long Term Strategy and Financial Framework (LTSFF) 2006-2015, the five year Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2004-2008 which focused on Access to Basic Education, and the ESSP 2009-2013 which focused on Quality and Post Basic education. The LTSFF and the ESSP were based on WB Simulation Modeling. The Education sector policy also guided development of different sub sector policies as seen in the next section below.

The philosophy behind the policy as seen in its objectives is to create a citizen dedicated to
national unity, human rights, patriotism and commitment to work well done” as indicated in its objectives (Annex 5).

Some of the key issues addressed by this policy were to ensure no child misses his or her right to basic education. The first important policy decision was thus to abolish school fees in 2004 in primary education and instead introduce a capitation grant in primary education of 300 Rwf per child per year, which was increased to 1500 Rwf in 2005, 2500 Rwf in 2006, 3500 Rwf, in 2007, 5700 Rwf in 2008 and 7700 Rwf in 2010. Another justified and important decision was the introduction of the Fund to support Genocide Survivors’ children (FARG) as early as 1996 to ensure Genocide survivors did not miss their right to education. This fund, which has been 5 percent of the national annual budget, has continued to support these children throughout the education system in both public and private institutions, from primary schools to universities.

The issue of school management has been earmarked as an important component in implementation of the sector policy. All head teachers, their assistants and bursars in primary and secondary education have been undergoing training on school management through the support of the VVOB School Management Program.

Another ambitious yet justified sub-sector policy was the introduction of 9 Year Basic Education 2006 which promoted the move from 6 year Primary education gradually to 9 Years Basic Education (6 years Primary and 3 years Lower Secondary). The 9 Year Basic Education Policy was fast tracked in 2008 when the transition rate from Primary 6 to Form 1 was 56 percent in 2007 and has now successfully reached 95 percent in 2010. At the same time completion rates for primary schools increased from 52.5 percent in 2007 to 74.5 percent in 2009. Much of this was made possible through an amazing classroom construction expansion of 3,072 classrooms in about 6 months, achieved through the combined use of Army, Police, Prisons and local communities all providing specific kinds of support. Some additional funds were also provided by DFID, JICA and UNICEF.6

Sub sector policies

Rwanda has managed to develop specific policies for each sub sector in education to ensure all actors have common understanding and common guidance in implementing agreed policy statements and broad strategies. This is one of the achievements in education transformation in Rwanda:

i) Teacher Development & Management Policy: After a lot of research and consultations a Teacher Development and Management policy was developed. Major issues addressed by this law include teacher professionalization, career development and teacher management issues from recruitment to retirement.

ii) Textbook Policy: Both teachers and textbooks come first as the most important inputs to education. While book availability is the starting point in the Textbook policy, the procurement system and actual use and maintenance of the textbooks are key issues addressed in the policy. The plan is underway to decentralize the procurement of textbooks, and the process has started with a decentralized selection of books using school textbook committees and provision of a

6 MINEDUC – EMIS data (2010).
minimum profile—a list of recommended books with choices for each subject.

iii) Language Policy: Rwanda has three official languages, namely Kinyarwanda, the only local language and thus spoken by all Rwandese, English and French. All languages have been taught in all schools with some schools using English as medium of instruction and others using French, since 1994. The policy has recently changed (2008) and English is used as the medium of instruction in all schools from Primary Grade 3 to universities. This was due to the advantages it offers Rwanda in relation to East Africa for commerce, business, ICT and global markets and to reduce the cost of having two systems operating in parallel.

iv) Girls’ Education: Rwanda has for long been generally gender sensitive in its culture and tradition and has built on this to ensure gender promotion. That is why it ranks number one worldwide in percentage of women in the Parliament (currently at 56 percent). The Girls’ Education policy tries to consolidate this attitude and provide policy options to ensure girls participation in higher education and in sciences, mathematics and technological fields in which they have been poorly represented. The policy advocates for interventions by all parties concerned. The First Lady’s IMBUTO Foundation has provided a very good example by providing awards to best performers by girls in sciences every year.

v) School Infrastructure: School infrastructure has been implemented by different organizations in different ways. Thus, a school infrastructure policy was vital to provide norms and standards for children’s safety and a conducive learning environment. One achievement with this policy was the establishment of clear norms and standards and the decentralization of school construction which enabled a lot of classrooms to be constructed. For example, in fast tracking Nine Year Basic Education, 3,072 classrooms were constructed in less than a year in 2009/2010.

vi) Curriculum Development Policy: As seen in this paper, curriculum has been point number one of concern as far as education reconstruction in Rwanda is concerned due to former curriculum failure and its contribution to the 1994 Genocide. The curriculum policy after 1994 has been to strengthen equity and human rights, and also to provide a reasonable balance of core subjects for basic education and secondary education.

vii) Nine Year Basic Education Policy: The Nine Year Basic Education policy was developed under different views. Some felt it was too ambitious given the poor internal efficiency in the six year primary education, others considered it vital for Rwandese children to receive meaningful education. Several studies were done with support from DFID to establish possible strategies to adopt; some strategies being, for example, unconventional ways of school construction and rebalancing the education budget in favor of nine year basic education. This enabled the policy to be fast tracked in 2008.

viii) Higher Education Policy: Higher education in Rwanda was one of the rights left for few people before 1994. Rwandese university graduates from 1963 when National University was established to 2005 (more than 30 years) were not more than 2000, a figure that was exceeded in just three years in 1998-2000. As mentioned earlier, this had to be corrected and a policy of higher education was needed to ensure Rwanda could produce the critically required human capital, which is its main competitive advantage in the region and beyond. The Higher Education Quality Standards have been developed and currently 93 percent of all Higher Learning Institu-
ix) ICT in Education Policy: Rwanda has clearly spelled out its intention to be the ICT hub in the region. This has to start early with primary school children. The ICT in Education Policy intends to foster this notion. Another key pillar in this policy is to use ICT as an alternative channel for education provision by ensuring access to computers in all schools and through digitalization of the curriculum. One success story is the One Laptop per Child program that has benefitted 100,000 children in primary schools. Another key innovation is the Rwanda Education Commons project which provides a portal for sharing knowledge, particularly for teachers.

x) Special Needs Education: The number of children with special needs including orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in Rwanda is just too large due to Genocide, HIV/AIDS and other calamities. These children range from those with physical disabilities to those with psychological or social problems. Their needs correspondingly differ requiring a policy to provide direction and guide many actors supporting these children.

xi) Literacy Policy: Literacy has been problematic because of many competing subsectors in education. A policy was developed with alternative strategies to competitively position the subsector and to provide advocacy to other education partners. The policy also redefines the type and mode of provision focusing on functional literacy.

xii) School Health Policy: School health including nutrition, hygiene and HIV/AIDS are important considerations for real learning to take place. The policy was developed to guide all concerned on how to ensure the child have a healthy body to have a healthy mind.

xiii) TVET Policy: TVET is an area that has been marginalized and referred to as second class education and training. However, the Government of Rwanda in its striving to develop skilled people for economic transformation, and learning from the experience of other countries such as...
as the Asian tigers, has decided to give TVET its due attention. In addition to resource mobilization for TVET the government has reviewed its management to link it to the labour market and the private sector more strongly.

xiv) Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy: ECD Policy has been developed by Ministries of Education, Health and Gender. In addition to defining what it is about and correspondingly identifying different roles to be played by different partners, the policy challenge communities to be the first owners of ECD. The good practices and achievements by some districts in eastern Rwanda have been referred to already.

xv) Science Technology & Innovation Policy: As mentioned earlier, Rwanda intends to build a knowledge-based and technologically-led economy. Almost all sectors of the economy are to benefit from this policy. Education as a source of “Knowledge Acquisition” and “Knowledge Creation” advocated by this policy has a big role in its implementation. Science teaching has not been developed much in the past. Several initiatives to promote science have been adopted such as the Ministry of Education building and equipping 6 secondary schools as Science Centres of Excellence. The President of the Republic has pioneered the promotion of quality science education through the Presidential Award to Best Performers in national exams in sciences and mathematics in primary and secondary education annually, and the Presidential Scholarship to best students in renowned universities abroad.

A general important point to note for all policies is that development of policies and establishment of key institutions is just the means, while actual implementation and registering of the intended results is the real indication of system resilience. There are several levers that have contributed to implementation of desired education policies and strategies. One is the high political will as mentioned above that is translated through leadership at all levels. The second one is the consultation and dialogue process by all actors—government, development partners, civil society, faith based organizations, private sector and communities. This promoted not only participation but also involvement and common ownership of the policies and, consequently, better results.

4.5 Sector-wide approach (SWAp) and sector financing

The Sector Wide Approach in planning and management of the sector was adopted around 2002. Education was the first sector to adopt a SWAp in Rwanda and later the Ministry of Finance spearheaded SWAp development in other sectors using the education sector’s experience. Around 2000 the education system was faced with many competing demands against limited resources; and so the sector had to be planned and managed as a whole sector guided by one policy and strategy with clear prioritization. As mentioned earlier, the Sector Policy, the Long Term Plan and the Five Year Plan were developed by the Ministry and endorsed by Development Partners (DPs) as credible plans. Under the SWAp, greater partnership between the Ministry of Education and its development partners was created and more resources mobilized from the DPs and from the Education For All/Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI). The SWAp institutionalization framework provided further chance for the sector to undergo more organized, extensive and intensive consultations, dialogue and common monitoring and evaluation such as through annual sector reviews.
Due to DPs satisfaction on progress in education including good use of donor funds, Rwanda qualified for EFA/FTI funds to the tune of US$ 70 million in 2007, US$ 35 million bridging funds in 2009 and a further US$ 70 million in 2011. Since 2006, education has enjoyed sector budget support through a joint partnership of 5 development agencies, and stand-alone projects have been reducing. In addition, as external funds increased from around 2006/2007, so did domestic financing of the sector, reaching about 19 percent of the national budget fairly consistently over the 5 years from 2006. This is partly illustrated in Annex 6.

4.6 Government donor coordination

There is evidence from a number of case studies of post-conflict contexts and even more recent experience of post-crisis response and recovery (e.g. Haiti) that efforts by governments, development agencies and civil society are often not well-coordinated, lack country ownership, and do not always contribute to later systems development and capacity building. Many of these problems were also present in Rwanda during the first 4/5 years after 1994, but there were also significant efforts made by specific partners in collaboration with government that had a positive impact on moving from the recovery to consolidation and transformation phases.

Some of the main agencies involved in the early stages included UNICEF, UNHCR and UNESCO, and several international and local NGOs. The latter provided important and useful support but in general it was not well-coordinated either by government or themselves. The relationship with country needs and aspirations was not always clear, and there were strong suspicions from the Rwanda authorities that several NGOs had links or sympathies with the previous regime. A stronger criticism is that many of these NGOs had high administrative costs, which meant that a considerable percentage of money in effect never came into Rwanda. There were concerns about lack of transparency and accountability particularly from the NGO community.

Even with the larger agencies there were sometimes strong differences over needs and priorities. UNICEF’s interest in developing peace education in the curriculum was not generally favored by the government at the response and recovery stage, and there was also some irritation with the term “emergency” after the first few years. It was felt by the Rwandan government that donors focused largely on primary education, and showed little interest in supporting secondary and tertiary education, including TVET.

However, there were also plenty of examples of government and partners agreeing on support to key priorities both in the response and recovery stages and later in the consolidation/transformation phases. UNICEF provided crucial support to teachers’ salaries and also in the provision of “emergency” kits, like chalk, textbooks and portable blackboards, and UNHCR helped construct and rehabilitate schools for returning refugees. Some NGOs such as ADRA, Concern and the German Jumelage provided notable support in reconstruction of facilities and equipment. UNESCO (IIEP) provided useful assistance to key policy/strategy conferences and meetings, while UNDP administered a trust fund for a number of partners, half of which came from the Netherlands government. The World Bank provided key support to the training of teachers, and development of skills in ICT, science and languages. From the end of the 1990s and beginnings of the 2000s, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) provided assistance in developing a number of key policy and strategy documents, and gradually more
longer-term, predictable funding came in, albeit mostly on a number of separate project and programs, with separate agreements.

The opportunity for improved government and donor coordination came with the development of stronger, more coherent strategies and policies from 2003 onwards. The concept of a Sector Wide Approach was developed around the first Sector Strategic Plan, and gradually activities and initiatives such as joint donor/government sector meetings, joint annual reviews, pooled financing mechanisms and joint evaluations were incorporated into the sector. In many ways, the education sector in Rwanda led the way to better government and donor coordination, and from 2006 this was strengthened by Rwanda’s successful efforts to obtain assistance from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund. In the end, Rwanda succeeded in obtaining US$ 70 million from its first application from 2007 to 2009, and a further US$ 35 million bridging funding from 2010/11. This success was very much the product of the enhanced donor/government coordination mechanisms.

Greater sophistication was introduced from about 2007 onwards, with education development partners holding joint meetings to agree on common points and a common agenda, and the use of a lead donor (DFID initially and now DFID and UNICEF) to convey common messages more regularly to senior officials. Sector working group meetings between partners are held every two months at the Ministry of Education, and of course joint annual reviews twice a year. This approach was adopted by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to develop broad terms of reference for all annual joint reviews in all sectors, with a standard reporting format and use of “traffic lights” to show progress against key indicators. This is all summarized for a Joint Budget Support meeting held twice a year, one a review of past progress and one a forward looking process to the next budget.

Joint financing mechanisms also came into being with the development of sector budget financing, that the UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Canada and the African Development Bank all participated in at different stages. The sector budget account was part of the Ministry of Finance’s overall budget, kept as a virtual account (was fungible) and had annual audit reports provided specifically on this funding. There was also a delegated cooperation partnership between the Netherlands and DFID where the latter reported on the progress of the sector and the use of the funds, and between Canada and DFID where Canadian funds were channeled through DFID and managed by them. In addition, a pooled financing arrangement between DFID, UNICEF and Canada supported a capacity building fund for a number of years.

4.7 Decentralization

Decentralization has been one of the success stories in governance in Rwanda. The overall strategy for decentralization as it has now developed in Rwanda was conceived as early as 1987 as part of a Rwanda Patriotic Front manifesto. Historically, Rwanda experienced little decentralized governance in its colonial period, and under dictatorship and military rule that largely manipulated its citizenry. Certainly there was little democratic decentralization in its full sense.

After the 1994 genocide, there was no legal structure in place, but communes and prefectures were persuaded to take charge of services such as education, and as early as 1996/1997, par-
ent-teachers committees began in some schools to help support the rehabilitation process. Land was a real issue, but it was decided to ensure that every child had a school nearby, and to reduce the high dropout rate it was agreed to build one classroom per term, with support from government for iron sheets.

In 1999 democratic elections were held at sector level, and a committee of 10 in each sector was charged with looking after Education and Health services. Later, similar democratic elections were held at district level in 2001, and finally a Decentralization Policy was developed in 2000 with 5 main objectives:

a. Greater implementation powers  
b. Greater accountability  
c. Efficient and effective service delivery  
d. Creating a responsive and seamless administration  
e. Capacity building

At this stage fiscal decentralization was not a reality but the platform was being laid. From 2001 to 2005, there was a stronger focus on political decentralization to ensure a better impact between policy makers, the policies and the clients at the grass roots level. This had to work within each sector – whether education, health and social services.

The way the overall system works now is as follows:

1. Village level  
2. Sector level with the Joint Action Forum Sector Council that reports to District Council  
3. District level with District Council

The mayors form an important bridge between the parliament and district/sector levels. Decentralization in Rwanda has been a great success due to IMIHIGO-performance contracts. This is one of Rwanda’s home grown solutions where district mayors sign performance contract with the President of the Republic, indicating districts targets and indicators which all mayors have to report on every year to the President in public. This has greatly promoted accountability. There are several such home grown solutions in addition to IMIHIGO and INGANDO which are part of Rwandese tradition and contribute directly or indirectly to education development. These include UBUDEHE-Communal support; UMUGANDA-Community service; UMWIHERERO-Government Retreat; UMUSHYIKIRANO-National dialogue. Others are GACACA-Traditional courts and GIRINKA-a cascade program for a cow to each family. (See Glossary for more details).

One of the key pillars for a successful education system is the issue of ownership. The Ministry of Education handles the policy and regulatory functions and leaves the implementation in the hands of decentralized bodies from district to community level. Some of the major activities that have been decentralized include:

i. School construction since 2005: Districts decide where a school should be built and process and supervise the construction. The education budget for construction is managed by districts. Construction has been more cost effective and created the sense of ownership. (Schools are now referred to as “our school” and not “UNICEF” or “World Bank” or Minister X school.”)
ii. Recruitment of teachers and payment of salaries since 2004: Districts recruit, pay teachers salaries and deal with teacher management issues such as training, transfer and so on. This has assisted in better teacher management and motivation.

iii. School capitation grant since 2006: The Capitation Grant, established in 2004, was administered by the Ministry for two years only and then was decentralized to the school level. Funds are transferred directly from the Ministry of Finance to school bank accounts. This has assisted a great deal in school performance and development.

All such activities are done through institutionalized participation such as District Education Committees, the District Joint Action Forum, Parents and Teachers Committees and School Management Committees. This chance given to people to make decisions about their schools has moved development very fast and created greater trust in government.

The Ministry of Education has also institutionalized interface between the districts and the center and also the chances for districts to share their experiences. These include monthly meetings between district education managers and Ministry senior officials chaired by the Minister or Permanent Secretary in case the Minister is not available. Another is the annual Joint Education Sector Review (JESR) and Technical Working Groups (TWGS) that meet quarterly.

4.8 Gender

The issue of gender in development has been highly acknowledged in Rwanda. This is evidenced by the high level of representation of women in decision making organs such as the Parliament being 56 percent women and as such being the first in the world, and the Cabinet with more than 30 percent and as such surpassing the world target of 30 percent.

Girls’ and women’s education has been one of the priority areas in the education sector, and a key associated point in gender promotion is girls and women’s empowerment which is obtained through education and training. The Girls Education Policy, that was informed by different studies in the country and in other places, is advocating equal rights to education especially in the higher levels and in science and management fields. The equity problem of girls in primary and secondary education has been resolved. Girls constitute 52 percent and 49 percent of primary and secondary enrolments respectively. This is the fundamental way of ensuring women’s participation not in the elected positions only but also in providing competing capacities and abilities with men in technical, professional and economic investments positions, thus effectively raising their well-being and significantly contributing to national development.
5. Summary of key elements of the Rwanda experience

A key premise of resilience theory is that resilience approaches cannot be understood nor de-volved from the risks they respond to. Thus, a key component of the ERA Program is the need to develop a contextual understanding of the adversity faced by a particular education system and already present resilient responses in order to develop meaningful globally applicable lessons and practices to support education service delivery. In the case of Rwanda, the adversity manifested itself across many aspects of the ERA Program’s academic and socioemotional outcomes of interest. For example, there were high levels of trauma exposure, deep rooted ethnic-based discrimination both promoted by and reflected through the education system, globally low enrollment rates, poor education quality for those in school, and, as in many conflict settings, a high risk of recidivism of conflict and violence. It was thus related to this baseline that the Government of Rwanda articulated its target vision against which resilience related reforms should be measured—namely, the creation of an inclusive education system that promoted universally peaceful values and which, crucially eliminated the previously entrenched negative discrimination and favoritism.

In this way, Rwanda provides a useful example of how response and recovery from a tragic genocide can provide the platform for strengthening human and social resilience through system level policy and institutional reform. While such a process does not necessarily follow a linear path, useful lessons that cover all stages of the response (from the earliest humanitarian interventions through to the later systematized visions and policy goals and towards future prevention of adversity) may be deduced and can help inform the planning, institutional capacity building and education sector strategies in other FCS contexts. These are presented below.

Wider political/social context

a. Highly committed and dedicated leadership as can be seen in the focus on national unity, national reconciliation, and human rights.

b. Extensive and intensive consultations by all, for example during the development of Vision 2020 where all parties including all political parties through their forum participated. This has resulted in consensus building and common ownership.

c. People’s patriotism and loyalty as can be seen in people’s participation in all national programs such as “Ubudehe” (community support to poor and sick people), “Umuganda” (community services) done by all each last Saturday of every month, and participation in defense and security, for example against insurgencies in 1996/7.

General institutional good practice

d. High level of accountability and tough action on anybody found guilty of corruption or misuse of public funds supported by strong state institutions such as the Office of the Auditor General, the National Tender Board, the Rwanda Revenue Authority, the Office of Prosecutor General and the Ombudsman.

e. Rule of law and zero tolerance of corruption without any exception irrespective of what po-
sition one has in government, army and other public/private organizations.

f. Establishment of home-grown institutions to come up with home-grown solutions. The major ones, as seen in this paper, being Ingando, Imihigo, Ubudehe, Umuganda, Umwiherero, Umushyikirano, Gacaca and Girinka.

g. Putting policies and plans in place for each sector and encouraging and establishing donor coordination and good use of both government and donor funds.

Education sector

h. Establishing a clear and tangible sub-vision for education that cuts across humanitarian and developmental interventions and allows the former to strengthen the latter.

i. Getting all pupils back to school very quickly after crisis, putting them together and immediate reviewing the curriculum to ensure national unity and reconciliation.

j. Approaching education transformation as an integral part of the overall social, economic and political transformation.

k. Mobilizing communities to participate in school construction and rehabilitation, and in general affairs of schools, including identification and support of needy children such as genocide survivors.

l. Well informed education sector policies and plans developed through intensive and extensive consultations, which strongly advocate for national unity, patriotism, and human rights.

m. Identifying and adapting existing national and regional good practices (such as positive regional curriculum models and home-grown culturally accepted and trusted solutions).

n. Focusing on areas of particular concern within wider reform processes (e.g. girls and women).

o. Developing of a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) and a well-coordinated partnership with donors and NGOs.

p. Encouraging private sector participation in education especially secondary and higher education.

q. Redefining education to incorporate development of skills required for the economic development of the country and development of competitive human capital in the region with special attention to ICT at all levels, from primary to higher education.

r. Establishing of key institutions charged with effective implementation of key education processes.

s. Promoting equal rights (between boys and girls, poor and rich, rural and urban) to education, meritocracy to upper cycles of education, or scholarships abroad to foster national unity and reconciliation.

t. Effective resource mobilization to ensure sufficient resources from national budget and external partners, as well as through public/private partnerships and other cost sharing schemes.
6. Critical overview

It is generally true that any new visitor to Rwanda is always impressed with the sense of vision, leadership, commitment, and loyalty and a tangible air of progress—things happening on the ground. The progress made since 1994 is extremely visible and the Rwandans are justly proud of their achievements. Rwanda has managed the transition remarkably well from emergency response and recovery to increased protection and prevention to further shocks in the system, and indeed to transformation of the education sector. There are some fascinating examples of how important early innovations and core principles have been consolidated through laws, policies and institutions to ensure they are fully embedded in the system.

In general, a system has been built that provides equitable access to basic education and increased opportunities for secondary and higher education. It has helped to bring children of all communities together to play, learn, achieve and forget their differences. One cannot pretend that deep-seated suspicion and distrust may prevail amongst parents and the older generation in some cases, and teachers themselves may still harbor prejudices. But often it is the children themselves that have helped to change their parents’, teachers’ and communities’ attitudes. Rwanda has developed strong professional institutions, in particular the National Examinations Council, the National Curriculum Development Centre and the Inspectorate General to ensure consistency, quality and good governance in the system. It has attracted and managed considerable domestic and external financing and is increasingly producing better results in terms of learning outcomes.

Are there some aspects missing from this largely successful picture? In considering how the ERA Program’s learning outcomes of interest (academic performance and socioemotional well-being) relate to institutional level resilience, we do note several gaps. For example, while an impressive number of policies have been developed and endorsed by Parliament, not all have been fully implemented equally successfully. The curriculum has yet to fully embrace a civic education that encompasses and manages reconciliation. The UK-based Aegis Trust, working closely with the Gisozi Memorial Centre, has developed some extremely effective tools and materials and pupils/teachers in Kigali are making good use of them. There are also plans to take them out to rural areas. However, they have not been formally adopted within the education curriculum and system as a whole. The very difficult issue of trauma and counseling has been addressed by a number of NGOs working with the Ministry, but again there is no country wide counseling structure for supporting children and families who struggle with their memories of the past. In truth it would be quite hard to develop such a system in terms of cost and sustainability. Finally, there remain considerable challenges in producing a literate, numerate body of students ready for further education or the workplace, but this challenge is certainly not unique to Rwanda.

No one post-conflict context can be replicated, and each requires a degree of home-grown solutions. However, Rwanda’s case provides a very good example of how important reforms and innovations were introduced in the relatively chaotic emergency response period, and were then not discarded, but gradually institutionalized (in some cases many years later) into a more efficient, equitable and professional decentralized system, sensitive to gender issues. A number of similar countries may take heart that education can recover successfully from conflict and be used to generate national cohesion and unity to protect against division, prejudice, hatred and future strife.
References


