5/25/2024

REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RWANDA 2023-2027 PARTNERSHIP COMPACT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS.

Rwanda Education For All Coalition

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Abbreviations

ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIR	Gross Intake Rate
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gender Parity Index
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NESA	National Examination and School inspection Authority
NGOs	Non-government Organizations
NCPD	National Council of Persons with Disabilities
NIR	Net Intake Rate
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NST	National Strategy for Transformation
REFAC	Rwanda Education For All Coalition
RPHC	Fifth Rwanda Population and Housing Census
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDMS	School Data Management System
SNE	Special Needs Education
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
TTCs	Teacher Training Colleges
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Definition of key terms.

The following terms, mostly referred to in this report are defined as follows:

Disability: A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation of a person on an equal basis with other persons[1].

Educational Equity: Educational equity measures the extent to which subsections of a population are favored or neglected in relation to each other. The most common population subsections studied are girls, children with disabilities and children from the poorest families.

Efficiency: Efficiency measures the progression rate (promotion rates) of student cohorts from one grade to the next. Indicators of inefficiency are repetition rates and dropout rates.

Gender: The socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

Gender Equality: The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys, and equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to society.

Gender Equity: Included in the broader idea of gender equality, fairness and justice regarding benefits and needs of women/girls and men/boys.

Gender Equality In And Through Education: Gender equality is present in the education system in terms of access, learning and opportunities for girls and boys, and also in the content and delivery of the education, so that learners leave school and contribute to a more equitable society.

Gender-Responsive: Informed by an awareness of the effects of gender norms, roles, and relations as they impact education, and taking measures to actively reduce those effects that pose barriers to gender equality.

Gross Enrolment Rate: Total number of students enrolled in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.

[1] WHO. (2013). A practical manual for using the international classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF). Geneva: WHO.

Gross Intake Rate: Total number of new entrants in the first/or last grade of a given cycle, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official school-age of being at that level.

Drop-out Rate: Proportion of pupils from a cohort enrolled in a given grade at a given school year who are no longer enrolled in the following school year.

Gender parity index: Ratio of female to male values of a given indicator.

Impairment: Any temporary or permanent loss or abnormality of a body structure or function, whether physiological or psychological. An impairment is a disturbance affecting functions that are essentially mental (memory, consciousness) or sensory, internal organs (heart, kidney), the head, the trunk or the limbs[2]

Promotion Rate: The number of pupils entering a given level of education as a percentage of the pupils who were enrolled in the previous year at previous level.

Repetition Rate: The proportion of pupils enrolled in a given grade and a given school year who study in the same grade the following school year.

[2] Barbotte, E., F. Guillemin, N. Chau & the Lorhandicap Group. (2001). Prevalence of impairments, disabilities, handicaps and quality of life in the general population: a review of recent literature. 79(11): 1047-1055.

Executive summary.

This report on the review of effective implementation of the compact is significant as it informs the implementation of the compact in the remaining year. This Partnership Compact demonstrates the strong commitment of the Government of Rwanda to the transformation of education in Rwanda by ensuring **inclusive quality teaching and learning for all girls and boys**. It aims to contribute to policy reform area with the following outcomes: *(1) Improved foundational literacy and numeracy, (2) Timely enrolment and progression in foundational grades and beyond, and (3) Enhanced education sector capacity, coordination, leadership and financing.*

Rwanda Education for All Coalition (REFAC) through GPE funding is implementing 3-year EOL project under OC1.3 "Strengthening *national civil society achievements towards participating in Inclusive and Gender-responsive education planning and policy processes"*. Overall, this project seeks to improve civil society capacity to be more active and influential in influencing education policy to meet the needs of Rwandan people especially the most vulnerable and marginalized groups including but not only limited to learners with disabilities and girls.

This report primarily relies on data collected through review of existing education statistics and qualitative information collected from teachers, parents and leaners in five (5) districts in which REFAC implements the project.

The report offers an extensive range of education data covering on three main outcomes of the compact document, namely: Improved foundational literacy and numeracy Timely enrolment and progression in foundational grades and beyond; and enhanced education sector capacity, coordination, leadership and financing.

The report shows that the total number of learners at all levels have increased by 296,637 learners from the 4,159,782 enrolled in 2022. The proportion of females is higher (50.4%) than that of males (49.6%). Specifically, in the 2022/23 academic year, there was an increase in the number of children with disabilities enrolled in schools from 38,899 students with disabilities to 40,342 students. This represents only 0.2% of the total student population. Data on learners with disabilities denotes low participation and access to education for students with disabilities across all levels of education.

In relation to Gender Parity Index in enrolment shows that the GPI is in favor of girls in pre-primary and secondary, which means that at those levels, there are more girls than boys. The GPI is almost 1 in primary education, indicating that the number of girls and boys enrolled in primary education is equal.

In relation to learners performance, the overall results of the analysis of learners' performance for P3 shows that 69.0% of the P3 learners assessed, meet global proficiency benchmarks in Kinyarwanda and 85.2% meet global proficiency benchmarks in Kinyarwanda oral reading of correct words in a continuous text. 68.50% meet global proficiency benchmarks in Kinyarwanda reading comprehension. For English,49.40% of P3 learners assessed, meet global proficiency benchmarks in English foundational Literacy skills while 75.24% meet global proficiency benchmarks in Mathematics.

On promotion, repetition, and dropout rates, data indicates a decrease in the promotion rate from 77.0%to 75.7%. The repetition rate increased from 14.3% to 19.1%, while the dropout rate decreased from 8.5% to 6.8%.

The report findings shows that learners with special education needs, female learners and those from the most vulnerable families are a special category that is often left behind in the provision of quality education. Below are the specific challenges that affect gender and inclusive education as revealed by different respondents.

- Low capacity of teachers to support learners with special education needs and to use gender pedagogical practices;
- Schools do not have materials adapted for effective instruction;
- Infrastructure is not disability friendly (lack girls room, lamps for learners with disabilities);
- Limited investment in assistive devices;
- Low funding towards improving the education of children with special needs;
- Inadequate resource centres to promote inclusive practices;
- There is low access to quality inclusive education due to poor health and malnutrition among children from the most poor families; and
- Limited coordination with the health sector to enhance screening and referral system. Similarly, other crosscutting issues such as climate change and gender adversely affect quality and inclusive education.

To address the above challenges, the following key recommendations are important for consideration.

- Expedite the implementation of the strategic plan for the revised Policy for Inclusive and Special Needs Education and establish a budget line/sub-program on inclusive and special needs education under the ministry of education national budget.
- Ensure the accessibility building code is applied to all new school construction, and allocate resources for modifications to be made to existing buildings on a needs basis.
- Ensure all children can access lessons, national exams,
- In addition to remedia support, develop a simple toolkit for all teachers to provide an interim measure of support and guidance on how to make their classrooms more inclusive and child friendly.
- MINEDUC should emphasize more hands on gender-sensitive pedagogy in classrooms to better address teachers' gender bias.
- REAFC should work hand in hand with the ministry of education to promote school-based clubs that support gender equality that reinforce classroom messaging.
- Government should increase investment in teacher training to implement fully new curricula introduced by the special needs and inclusive education policy

- REFAC should conduct community based awareness and mobilizations campaigns for children with disabilities, teen mothers and other vulnerable children to reduce stigma and discrimination issues.

Generally, the report shows that the implementation progress of the compact partnership is positive and presents an opportunity for further interventions to address the existing gaps observed in promotion of inclusive gender responsive education important for transformation of the education system. REFAC intends to continuously conduct analysis of the implementation progress to inform effective implementation of the compact. REFAC recognises the current and potential funding from GPE, as well as the complementary activities of education Development Partners in ensuring inclusive and gender responsive education system.

1. Rationale - Context and Justification

Rwanda spearheads the implementation of national policy and programmatic frameworks aimed to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP 2018-2024), among others, gives a blueprint for an education system that seeks to "ensure Rwandan citizens have sufficient and appropriate skills, competences, knowledge and attitudes to drive the continued social and economic transformation of the country and to be competitive in the global market".

The 2022 Census (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2023) shows that 44.5% of Rwanda's population is under 18 years of age, which presents opportunities for the future workforce, and critical challenges if this large proportion of the population does not acquire quality education to gain requisite skills to become quality human capital. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) at primary school is 149.8%, indicating that there are large numbers of over age children in Primary school, and the net enrolment in Primary school is 98.9% (MINEDUC, 2022a). The GER for Lower Secondary school is 56.9% and for Upper Secondary school is 29.7%, which indicates that there are a large number of dropouts after Lower Secondary school is completed.

Even though the net intake rates for Primary education high, it is estimated that half of the children complete primary education without solid foundational skills. Sustainable future human capital requires investment in the child's early years of life through optimal school readiness programs is needed to provide these foundational skills. Currently, only 25.9% of young children in Rwanda are enrolled in formal early learning programmes. Statistics show that a total of 29,694 children with disabilities attend schools from pre-primary up to lower secondary levels, representing a mere 0.7% of the total population (4,033,046) of learners enrolled in education system (MINEDUC, 2020). This means that there is a large number of children with disabilities out of school, especially in rural areas where basic disability infrastructure and related services are rare. To address this, there has been renewed focus on how better foundational learning can be transformed to be gender and disability inclusive, which will act as a catalyst to education transformation.

Since January 2023, the government of Rwanda through the ministry of education developed a partnership compact. The compact demonstrates the strong commitment of the Government of Rwanda to the transformation of education in Rwanda by ensuring **inclusive quality teaching and learning for all girls and boys**. It aims to contribute to policy reform area with the following outcomes: *(1) Improved foundational literacy and numeracy, (2) Timely enrolment and progression in foundational grades and beyond, and (3) Enhanced education sector capacity, coordination, leadership and financing.*

In addition, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) recognizes that there are some areas for improvement in the education system and remains committed to addressing these challenges. Since January 2024, REFAC is implementing a project titled "Strengthening national civil society achievements towards participating in Inclusive and Gender-responsive education planning and policy processes" funded by Education Out loud (EOL) with the main objective to improve inclusiveness and gender responsiveness of education system in Rwanda.

One of the aims of the project is to support REFAC and its stakeholders in generating evidence and managing it so that the coalition can effectively participate and influence education planning processes that are inclusive and gender-responsive. Besides advocating for more effective education policies with the government, REFAC encourages citizens to participate in advocacy activities and try to maintain strong relationships with all

stakeholders so their voices are heard. The project is using adapted and improved approaches to promote inclusive and gender-responsive education through multi-stakeholder dialogue. In this way, disadvantaged learners can succeed and achieve their full potential.

2. Objectives.

The objective is to provide the status of partnership compact implementation process in relation to its effectiveness. The report will contain key recommendations to be used by REFAC during advocacy and lobbying meetings while promoting Inclusive and Gender-responsive education planning and policy processes. Specifically, the report will be used to: provide a platform for engagement and sharing of information with education stakeholders.

3. Methodology.

Introduction In this section, the methodology of the study is discussed. The section presents the design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedures.

3.1. Study Design.

The review used Qualitative methods. Review of existing education documents, Interviews and focus groups sought to examine the extent to which the partnership compact is effectively implemented, and to understand how the education is being inclusive gender – responsive. This report draws on education statistical data from different sources:

- School Data Management System (SDMS) for data
- National institute of statistics of Rwanda (NISR)
- Validation workshop at district and national level

3.2. Target Population.

The desired target population for this study was learners, parents and teachers in five schools from five districts in which REFAC is implementing the project.

3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Procedures.

The Study used random sampling to select schools in which to conduct the qualitative assessments. In each district, each district 15 teachers and 30 learners including 10 with disabilities. In total 75 teachers and 150 learners, including 50 with disabilities in 5 districts were interviewed.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure.

Prior to the data collection exercise, de-briefing meeting with staff from five (5) REFAC member organisations was conducted. This was an opportunity for the member's organization who were going

to collect the qualitative information to complement the findings from review of existing education documents to understand the procedure and to ensure uniformity in the process.
Data collection in each school under the supervision of REFAC monitoring and evaluation officer.

3.5. Data analysis.

Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Data were transcribed and cleaned before reading for identical topics that made up the themes. Coding was done and verbatim excerpts were selected to confirm participants' expression about the project impact.

4. Key Findings.

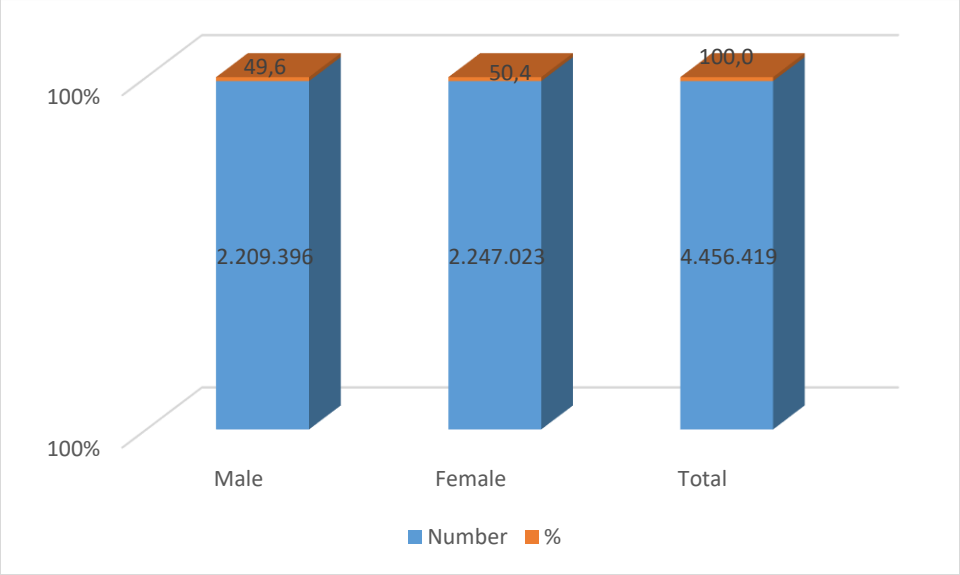
Under this section, we present findings on number of learners including those with disabilities, progress on compact indicators and the status of inclusive-gender responsive education in Rwanda.

4.1. Number of learners.

Learners are essential elements of the education system. Without them, the education system would serve no purpose. The education system receives a variety of learners with diverse needs and expectations. The GPE compact partnership emphasis that education system should be able to provide opportunities for learners to fulfill their potential.

Under this section we present the number of learners including special considerations such as gender and inclusion. It provides details on the status of learners.

Number of learner's desegregated by Sex



From the graph above 4,456,419 learners enrolled in pre-primary, primary, secondary, TVET L1-L5, higher education, TVET short courses, and adult literacy. This represents 33.6% of the projected total Rwandan population in 2023, which is 13,499,135. This year saw an increase of 296,637 learners from the 4,159,782 enrolled in 2022. The proportion of females is higher (50.4%) than that of males (49.6%).

Gender Parity Index in enrollment shows that the GPI is in favor of girls in pre-primary and secondary,which means that at those levels, there are more girls than boys. The GPI is almost 1 in primary education,indicating that the number of girls and boys enrolled in primary education is equal. The GPI is in favorof boys in Higher education and TVET, indicating that boys are enrolled in these levels more than girls.

4.1.1. Learners with disabilities.

Rwanda has made significant progress in increasing access to nine years' fee-free and compulsory education. Pre-primary is a growing sector and primary schooling boasts one of the highest enrolment rates in Africa. Data indicate that access to primary education has increased most significantly amongst the poorest and most rural sections of the population. In lower secondary education the provision of more classrooms has supported growing numbers of students. The country has made a significant commitment to the right to education for children with disabilities, including ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008 and establishing the National Council for People with Disabilities (NCPD) to act as an advocacy body, coordinate activities, and monitor progress towards this commitment. Rwanda has laws and policies to allow for the inclusion of children with disabilities in education, which are reflected in the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2017/18–2024 and the GPE partnership compact. One of the priorities is increasing equitable access to education for students with special educational needs within mainstream and special schools.

Table 1 showing number of learners with disabilities.

	Number of learners			**Preprimary**			**Primary**			**Secondary**			**TVET**		
Type of disability	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**
Physical and Motor Challenges	7,180	5,535	12,715	509	388	897	5,197	3,865	**9,062**	1,145	1,011	**2,156**	175	98	273
Specific Learning Difficulties	4,338	3,518	7,856	202	203	405	3,863	3,058	**6,921**	256	240	**496**	17	17	34
Visual impairment	2,916	2,490	5,406	216	111	327	2,130	1,751	**3,881**	492	553	**1,045**	36	36	72
Hearing Impairment	1,421	1,258	2,679	108	67	175	1,069	965	**2,034**	186	169	**355**	48	39	87

Developmental challenges	1,454	1,180	2,634	57	54	111	1,284	1,037	**2,321**	112	84	**196**	1	5	6
Speech, language, and communication difficulties	3,004	2,118	5,122	451	281	732	2,274	1,621	**3,895**	238	177	**415**	31	30	61
Multiple disabilities/ Difficulties	2,106	1,700	3,806	181	151	332	1,699	1,343	**3,042**	159	154	**313**	50	35	85
Intellectual disabilities/ challenges	69	37	106	63	36	99	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**	2	0	2
Autism spectrum disorder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**	0	0	0
Emotional and behavioral disorder	9	9	18	0	0	0	2	1	**3**	3	4	**7**	0	0	0
Deaf blind				3	4	7	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**	0	0	0
Total	**22,497**	**17,845**	**40,342**	**1,790**	**1,295**	**3,085**	**17,518**	**13,641**	**31,159**	**2,591**	**2,392**	**4,983**	**360**	**260**	**620**

***Source**: School census, Ministry of Education*

The table above illustrates the number of learners with disabilities by types. Data shows that learners in total learners with disabilities are 40,342 including 22,497 males and 17,845 females. This represents only 0.2% of the total student population.

The table shows that learners with physical and motor challenges constitute the majority, representing 31.5% of the total students with disabilities. They are followed by learners with specific learning difficulties, which represents 19.4%. Leaners with visual impairment come third, representing 13.4%. Learners with speech and languages difficulties are also many representing 12.6%.

In addition, the number of Learners with disability in pre-primary is 3,085 while they are 31,159 in primary level. Male students with disabilities are higher than female students in both pre-primary and primary schools. In pre-primary, learners with physical disability constitute the majority followed by learners with speech and language difficulties. In primary level, majority are learners with physical disabilities followed by learners with specific learning difficulties.

Amongst secondary students and TVET trainees in 2022/23. The results show that 4,983 students in secondary schools are learners with disabilities and the highest share (35.9%) in this category have physical and motor challenges. Amongst secondary learners with disabilities, 1,045 (17.4%) have visual

impairment while 415 secondary students have speech, language and communication needs. Amongst TVET trainees, 620 are learners with disabilities, and the highest share (44%) have physical and motor challenges

5. Progress on the implementation of Compact.

Under this section, we present progress on 2 main indicators of the compact namely; improved foundational literacy and numeracy, and timely enrolment and progression in foundational grades and beyond.

5.1. Outcome 1. Improved foundational literacy and numeracy

The increased GPE focus on foundational learning in Rwanda provides a welcome and renewed opportunity to ensure that all children achieve what they deserve from education. Action to improve foundational learning for all remains critical for the life chances and choices of vulnerable and marginalised children in Rwanda.

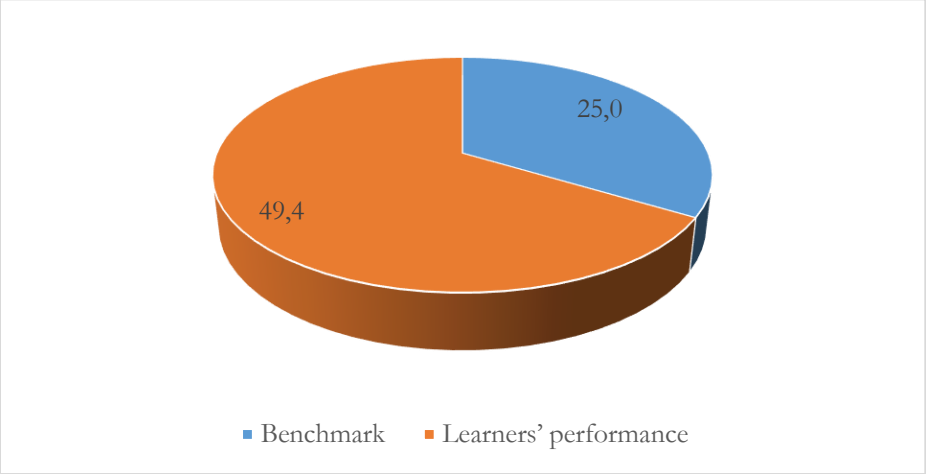
In 2011, Rwanda introduced LARS, an assessment measuring learning according to the national curriculum with particular focus on literacy and numeracy. This section focuses on whether children and young people are learning, to understand who is benefitting from efforts to improve foundational learning, and more importantly, who is at risk of missing out.

The section generally referred to Learning Achievement in Rwandan Schools (LARS) in 2023 analysed using the global proficiency benchmarks. Acting on this information will enable all children to learn the basics and will ensure progress on foundational learning at scale, globally. The fundamental right to education and global commitments to improve foundational learning for all, require that delivering foundational learning at scale and delivering for the most marginalised children is not seen a binary choice. Both are needed and are mutually beneficial. The assessment considers English, Kinyarwanda and Mathematics.

5.1.1. P.3.Learners meeting benchmark for English

In 2008 the Rwandan government made English language of instruction from prom upper primary (GAHIGI, 2008). The cabinet meeting held in 2010 decided that Kinyarwanda has to be used as the only language of instruction in lower primary schools. This means that others were to learn using English language as an instructional language and Kinyarwanda was to be taught only as a subject in upper primary upward. Magogwe (2007) says that English language was adopted in Rwandan education system in order to facilitate Rwandans to get easily integrated within regional and international communities for Rwandan development and sustainability.

Graph 1 showing Percentage of learners meeting benchmark for English in P3.

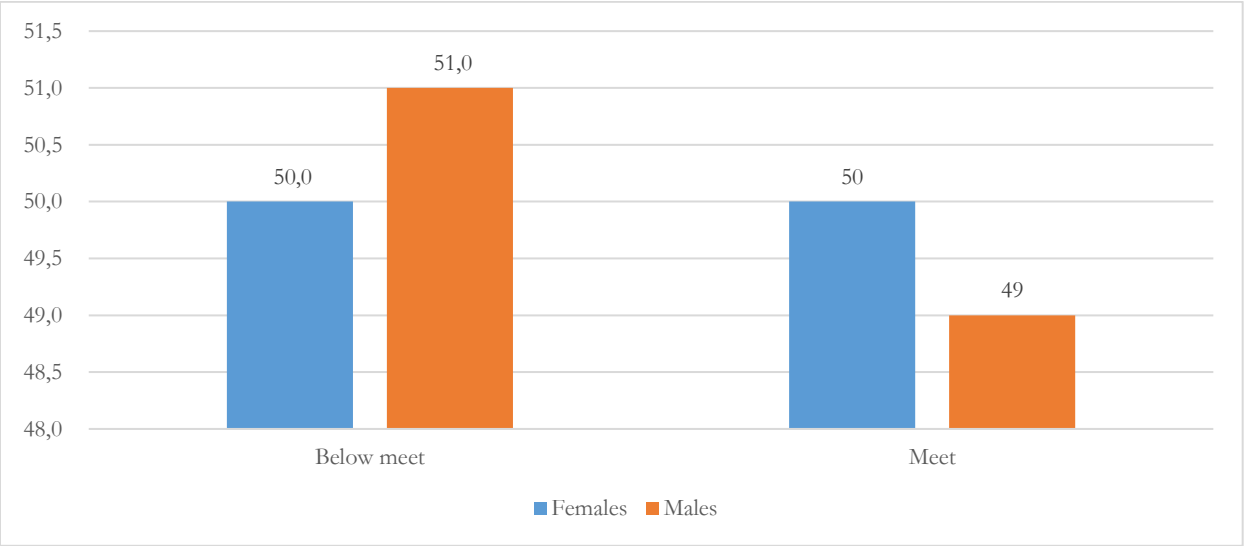


Source: LARS 2023 (Primary data)

The data presented in the figure above indicates that 49.4 percent of P3 learners surveyed across Rwandan schools meet the global proficiency benchmarks in English. The LARS 2023 learners' performance is higher than the global proficiency benchmark, which is 25 percent.

In addition, the findings of LARS 2023 show that males performed better (50 percent) than females (49 percent) in English foundational Literacy skills. The graph below shows the performance of girls and boys.

Graph 2 showing percentage of girls and boys learners meeting benchmark for English in P3.



Source: LARS 2023 (Primary data)

Importantly, the qualitative data collected from learners shows that is good subject that can be understood and performed better but teachers' and parents' support is still limited because the majority of them do not have the required skills in English to support their children.

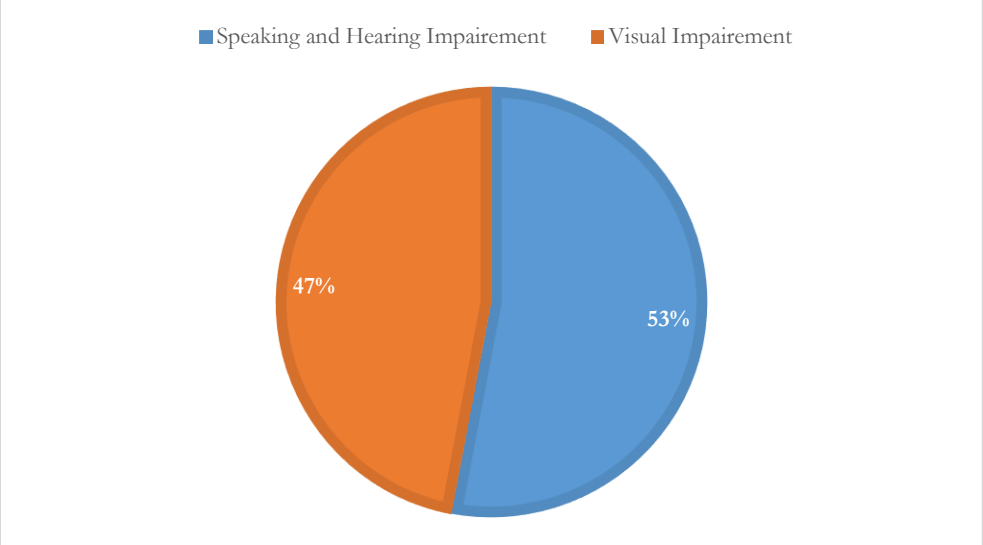
This findings is complemented by the national findings which shows that overall, 22 percent of the population in Rwanda never attended school, and more than half of the population (54 percent) has primary education level; 15 percent have completed secondary education while only 3 percent have some level of university education. Among those who have attained a certain level of education, only 30.7 percent are literate in English[3].

5.1.2. Performance of learners with disabilities.

Students of all abilities and backgrounds want school environment that is inclusive, friendly and convey respect. For those students with disabilities, the school setting may present certain challenges that need accommodation and consideration.

As shown in the graph below, the analysis of P3 learners' performance by types of disability shows that those learners with speaking and hearing impairment performed better (37.5 percent) than those with visual impairment (33.3 percent).

Graph 3 showing percentage of P3 learners with disabilities meeting benchmark for English.



Source: LARS 2023 (Primary data)

While there is commendable support for learners with disabilities, findings further shows that learners with disabilities have difficulties in reasoning quickly to comply with the limited time allocated to the test. It has been recommended that more time should be allocated to learners with disabilities to facilitate the completion of the assignment in the next LARS.

Focus group discussions with learners revealed that teachers use both English and Kinyarwanda in teaching to help them understand lessons more deeply. For some of the interviewed teachers,

[3] NISR (2023). Idem

combining English and Kinyarwanda (also known as code switching and code mixing) helps learners to better understand the lessons because it is difficult for them to understand the lessons taught using English only

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Another issue raised is the limited capacity of parents to use English. Parents limited proficiency in English is a barrier to supporting their children at home. Indeed, the 5th Rwanda Housing and Population Census indicated that overall 77% of Rwandan population are literate in at least one of the four main langauges of the country: Kinyarwanda, French, English and Swahili. Kinyarwanda is the most widespread language of literacy as 54% of Rwandan residents population aged 15 years and above are literate in Kinyarwanda. Only 14% of the Rwandan population are literate in English and Kinyarwanda, 4% percent in English and French, 2 percent in English, Kinyarwanda and French and 1.2 percent in Kinyarwanda, English, French and Swahili[4]

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While taking into account of the Rwandan population's Literacy skills in English as reported by the Censuses 2022, it can be noticed that the mastery of English by learners and teachers is still low. Different barriers contribute to this performance, including the limited use of English at school, which could boost learners and teachers proficiency levels in English.

The teachers of English who were interviewed suggested that the best way to improve proficiency levels in English is to improve its use in teaching and learning and being motivated to use it everywhere.

Factors associated with learners' performance in Primary 3 English

- **Demographic factors:** Only learners' age and parents or guardians' employment were found to be statistically significant. Older learners scored lower in English tests, with each additional year of age being associated with a 1-percentage point drop in their score on both tests.
- **School structure factors:** Learners who travel from 1 to 3 kilometers to go to school scored 2 percentage points lower than those who travel less than 1 kilometer.
- **School and home activities related factors:** Learners who do homework or have someone who reads to them at home more frequently score 1 percentage point higher in both instances.
- **Head teacher reported factors:** The existence of disciplinary problems such as absenteeism and misbehavior cases at school level substantially decreases learners scores in English (-9 percentage points).

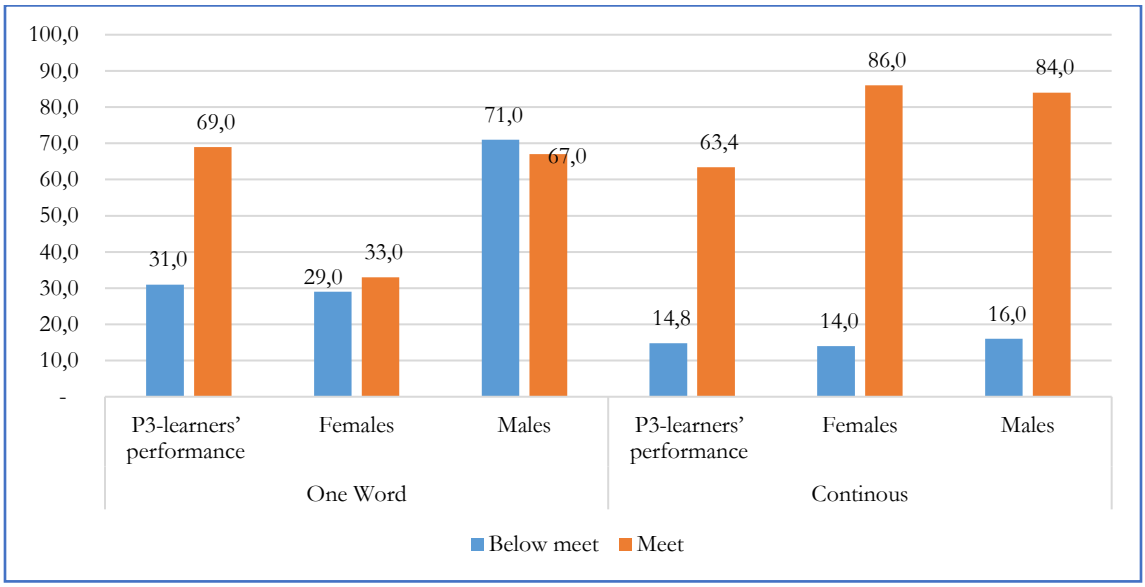
5.1.3. P.3.Learners meeting benchmark for Kinyarwanda disaggregated by girls and boys, and disability.

To assess the level of learner's performance, oral Reading of isolated words was used to measures learners' ability to read isolated familiar words with fluency and accuracy in 60 seconds. Learners were given a sheet of 50 isolated words to read as many words as they could within 60 seconds (one minute).

[4] National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda; The fifthy Rwanda Population and Housing Census, Main Indicators Report, February 2023

The same words were also used in LARS 2021, and they were selected from P1, P2, and P3 Kinyarwanda reading materials (e.g., textbooks) available in the classroom. The international standard used to measure a learners' oral reading fluency is the number of Correct Words Read per Minute.

Graph 4 showing Percentage of learners meeting benchmark for Kinyarwanda in P3 disaggregated by girls and boys, and disability.



Source: NESA-LARS 2023.

Graph 4 above indicates that 69.0 percent of P3 learners surveyed across sampled Rwandan schools meet the global proficiency benchmark in oral reading fluency of isolated familiar words in Kinyarwanda, while 31.0 percent are below the proficiency level. This means that 69.0 percent of surveyed P3 learners correctly read between 40 and 50 words per minute in Kinyarwanda. The learners' performance (69.0 percent) in LARS 2023 is higher than the global proficiency benchmark expectations (22.6 percent) in reading isolated correct words per minute. The findings show that more females (71 percent) read 40–50 familiar correct words per minute than males (67 percent).

By type of disability, the findings show that learners with hearing and speaking impairment performed better (75 percent) than those with visual impairment (63 percent) in reading familiar words in Kinyarwanda. In addition, the analysis of P3 learners' performance in Kinyarwanda oral reading comprehension by type of disability shows that learners with hearing impairment performed better (83 percent) than those with visual impairment (82 percent).

Qualitative findings shows that some of the issues faced by learners with disabilities include;

- Lack of trained teachers in inclusive education, especially in the use of sign language and the fact that different Braille's use non-harmonized signs.
- Some schools are not inclusive and face issues such as inaccessibility of buildings, technological barriers, attitudinal barriers and the inadequate accommodative system.

- Physically inaccessible infrastructure for learners with limited mobility and lack of, or limited, parents' skills to support their children at home were mentioned as key barriers to quality education for learners with disabilities.
- The lack of awareness about learners with disabilities constitute key challenges as some parents are unaware of the capability of their children with disabilities, which pushes them to invest more in children with no disabilities compared to those with disabilities.

On the other hand, the findings presented above indicate that 63.4 percent of the P3 learners who participated in the test across Rwandan schools meet the global proficiency in Kinyarwanda oral reading fluency of a continuous text, while 14.8 percent do not meet it[5]. In addition, the findings showed that females (86 percent) performed better than males (84 percent)

The higher performance of females compared to males in oral reading of words in Kinyarwanda continuous text was also reported by USAID's end line report which showed that females were able to read more of the passage than males by nine percentage points or more, on average, in all grades, from P1 to P4 (USAID, 2017)[6]. In fact, P4 girls outperformed boys in Kinyarwanda oral passage reading by 15 percentage points, on average.

Factors associated with learners' performance in Primary 3 Kinyarwanda.

- **Demographic and household factors:** Only learners' age, parents or guardians' employment, and province were found to be statistically significant. Older learners scored lower in Kinyarwanda tests, with each additional year of age being associated with a 1 percentage point drop in their score in Kinyarwanda. Learners, whose parents work part time as opposed to full time, perform 3 percentage points lower in Kinyarwanda.
- **Head teacher reported factors:** The existence of more disciplinary problems such as absenteeism and other cases of indiscipline substantially decreases learners' scores in Kinyarwanda (-5 percentage points).

Despite these factors, teachers interviewed through focus group discussions recognize the improvement of learners in Kinyarwanda as results from among others factors of the "Soma Umenye" programme, Rwanda quality basic education for human capital development project and other partners who involved in the development of teacher's skills on leading effectively Kinyarwanda lessons including reading fluency and comprehension.

Teachers and head teachers said that improving in Kinyarwanda is influenced by the facts that it is a common language used in families and environment in Rwanda. Therefore, some parents with a high education level support their children at home. The communities of Practices (CoP) initiatives at schools' level facilitated peer support among teachers of Kinyarwanda.

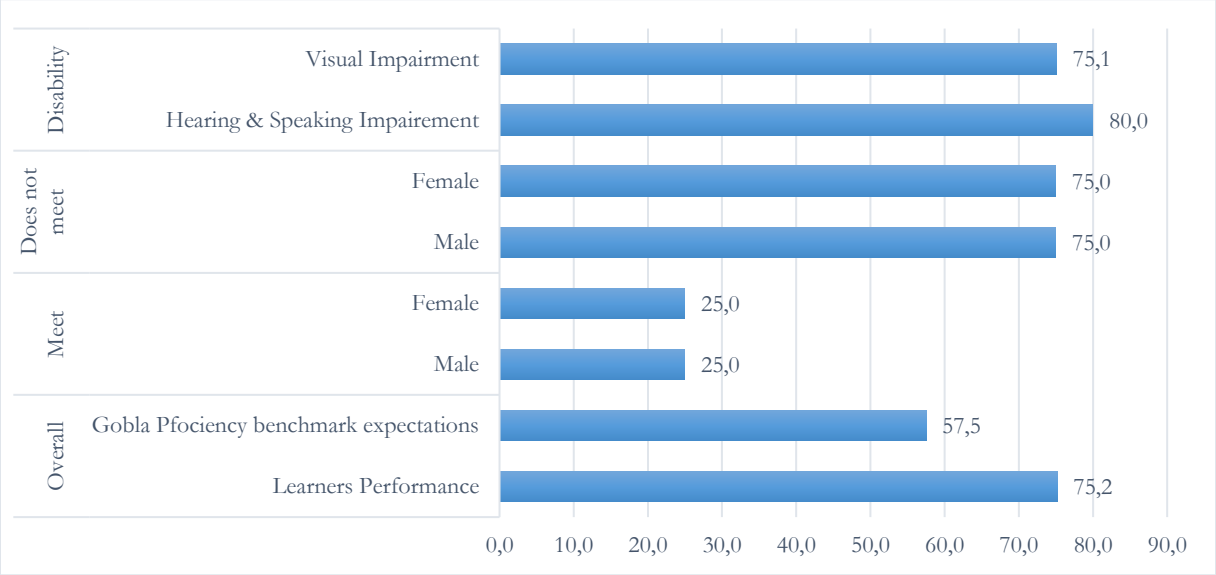
[5] This means that 63.4 percent of surveyed P3 learners correctly read between 42 and 60 words per minute in the test of Kinyarwanda oral reading fluency of a continuous text. Learners' performance (85.20 percent) in LARS 2023 is higher than the global proficiency benchmark expectation, which is 63.40 percent.

[6] USAID (2017). Literacy, language and learning initiative (L3). National fluency and Mathematics assessment of Rwandan schools. Endline Report. Education Development Center.

5.1.4. P.3 Learners meeting benchmark for mathematics disaggregated by girls and boys, and disability.

The analysis of the data presented in graph 5 below revealed that 75.24 percent of P3 learners meet the global proficiency benchmarks.

Graph 5 showing percentage of learners meeting benchmark for mathematics in P3 disaggregated by girls and boys, and disability.



Source: NESA-LARS 2023

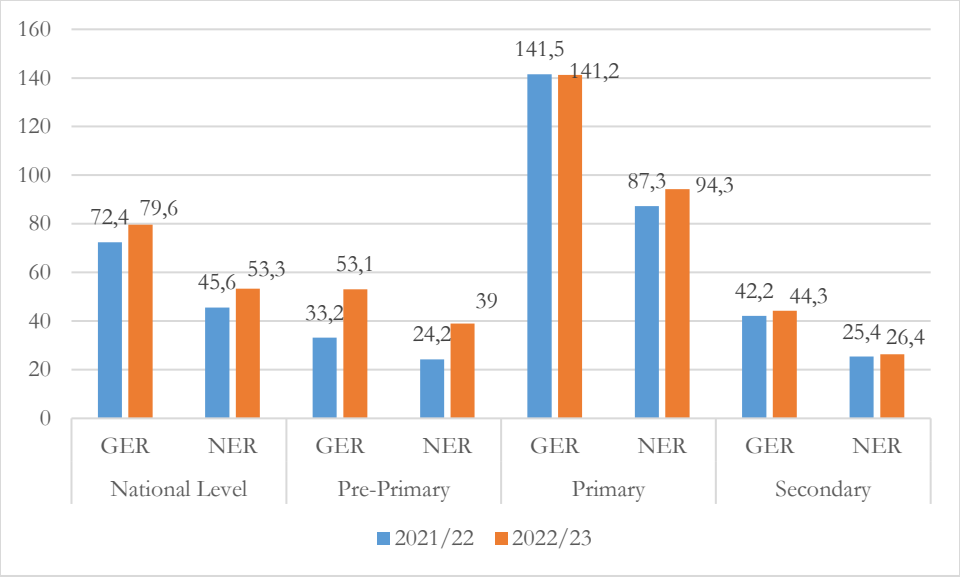
As shown in the graph above, learners' performance in LARS 2023 in P3 numeracy is higher (75.24 percent) than the global proficiency benchmark expectations (57.50 percent).As for gender, P3 female learners performed equally (75 percent) to males (75 percent) in the global proficiency benchmarks. **In terms of disability, t**he findings of the analysis showed that learners with hearing and speaking impairment outperformed learners with visual impairment (80.0 percent and 75.1 percent respectively).

5.2. Outcome 2. Timely enrolment and progression in foundational grades and beyond.

The review of the compact partnership takes into consideration that the Government of Rwanda has made significant efforts to improve the coverage and quality of primary and secondary education. Efforts have included construction of new schools and facilities, the development and implementation of a competence-based curriculum, school feeding, and policies to complement these activities and to ensure that education is inclusive.

Under this outcome, we look at Gross and Net enrollments of repetition, dropouts and over-age children. The graph below shows the Gross and Net enrollments rate at national level, pre-primary and primary level.

Graph showing Gross and Net enrollment rates.

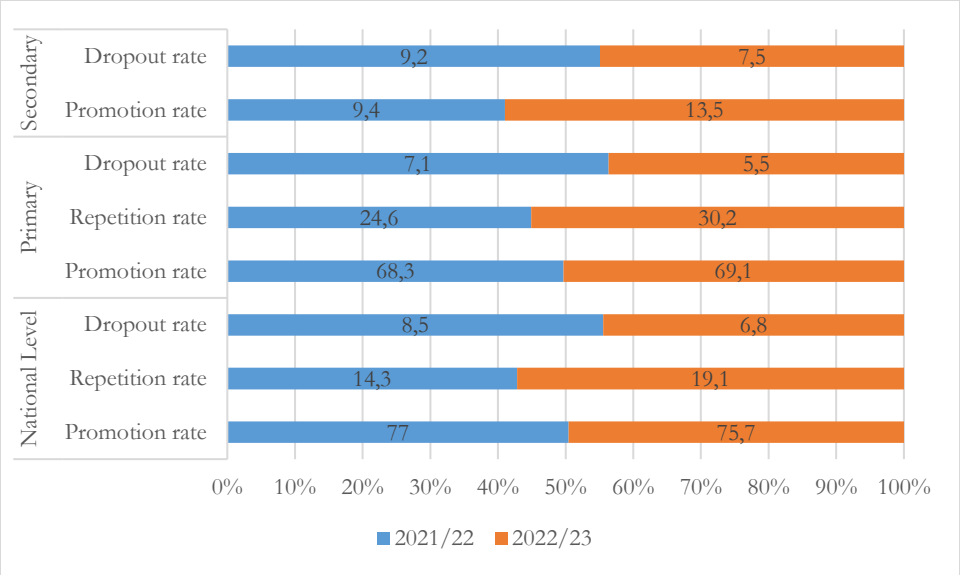


Source: NESA-LARS 2023

Regarding the Gross and Net enrollment rates, the national average data indicates an increase in both GER and NER. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) increased from 72.4% in 2021/22 to 79.6% in 2022/23. Similarly, the Net Enrollment Rate (NER) increased from 45.6% in 2022 to 53.3% in 2023. There is no considerable difference between the GER and NER for boys and girls.

At the pre-primary level, the GER increased from 33.2% in 2022 to 53.1% in 2023, while the NER increased from 24.2% in 2022 to 39% in 2023. This data indicates the need to continue to expand access to pre-primary education. At the primary level, the GER slightly decreased from 141.5% in 2022 to 141.2% in 2023, while the NER increased from 87.3% in 2022 to 94.3% in 2023. At the secondary level, both the GER and the NER slightly increased. The GER increased from 42.4% in 2022 to 44.3% in 2023, while the NER slightly increased from 25.4% in 2022 to 26.4% in 2023. Data indicates that access to secondary education is still an area for improvement.

5.2.1. Promotion, Repetition and dropout rates



Source: NESA-LARS 2023

On promotion, repetition, and dropout rates, data indicates a decrease in the promotion rate from 77.0% to 75.7%. The repetition rate increased from 14.3% to 19.1%, while the dropout rate decreased from 8.5% to 6.8%. In primary education, the promotion rate increased from 68.3% to 69.1%. The repetition rate significantly increased from 24.6% to 30.2%, and the dropout rate decreased from 7.1% to 5.5%. At secondary education, the promotion rate decreased from 81.4% to 79%. The repetition increased from 9.4% to 13.5%, while the dropout decreased from 9.2% to 7.5%. The issue of a high repetition rate is a serious concern affecting the overall efficiency of the education system. The education sector should prioritize addressing the issue of repetition rates.

Missing foundational learning affects dropout and repetition rates which then leads to children not completing their education. This in turn leads to lower skill levels, a reduction in productivity and a reduction in earning capability. Repetition is widespread through the education system and results in classes having wide ranges of ages and often leads to children dropping out. Repetition also burdens the education system with additional children which are not predicted by the age-cohort calculations. This has implications for resource requirements and places additional pressure on the education system.

Transition rates from primary to lower secondary schools in Rwanda considerably improved from 66.8% to 82.9%, while the transition from lower secondary to upper secondary improved from 73.8% to 82.4%. The transition rate from secondary to higher learning institutions increased from 45.1% to 58.5%, with the transition rate being higher for male students than for female students.

During discussions with teachers and parents to identify the drivers of dropout and repetition, age was mentioned is a strong predictor of school dropout and repetition, and most of children who dropped out of school had repeated at least once because of lower performance. Older children (aged

13 to 18) enrolled in primary school are more likely to drop out compared to younger ones. School dropout is very rare for primary school age children (7 to 13 years of age).

Furthermore interviews conducted with parents, teachers, head teachers and learners revealed that learners who are over the age of primary are mostly absent from class, which influences their lower performance in reading. Absenteeism is among the barriers to learners' performance, as pointed out by the head teachers and teachers interviewed. The teachers indicated that the absenteeism of over-aged learners affects their reading fluency because they miss some lessons, which leads to the lack of continuity in their learning and affects their learning outcomes.

5.3. Outcome 3. Enhanced education sector capacity, coordination, leadership and financing

The outcome focuses on addressing the issues related to data and evidence; gender and disability responsive sector planning, policy, and monitoring; sector coordination; and volume, equity, and efficiency of domestic education financing.

The findings shows that various MINEDUC computerised systems are being used to gather data and evidence for both planning and reporting purposes. The systems are reported to be coherent and user-friendly to facilitate easy collection and interpretation of data for planning, monitoring, and reporting for decision-making. The capacities in data collection, analysis and use at all levels of the education system will has been enhanced.

Also, MINEDUC collobarates with NISR[7] for data collection. NISR data is used for the calculation of indicators based on total population, and for indicators which require data for two consecutive years (like transition, promotion, repetition, and dropout rates) To collect the missing data, MINEDUC submits a formal request to NISR to ensure specific questions are included in the next national survey

In relation to Education sector data footprint: it has been reported that MINEDUC tracks (collects, analyses and utilises) a large amount of data from multiple sources, notably the SDMS. In addition, a substantial amount of data is received in report format from affiliated agencies (and not as raw data) whereas some data is sourced from the MINEDUC by affiliated agencies upon request. The review shows that plans for data integration are currently underway to streamline processes and the integration of datasets will be beneficial to store and analyse data in one place to make better and more informed decisions.

In relation to Matching data sources to indicators, the review shows that variety of data sources are used to measure ESSP indicators, Importantly, SDMS (as the country's EMIS) is the primary data

[7] The NISR is an independent data collection and analysis institution in Rwanda that is the country's primary data processor

source to measure/populate ESSP indicators, and it generates live data; however, it still experiences teething pains. The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has not been able to track individual/cohort data/outcomes (e.g. how people progress through the school system) and the ministry (MINEDUC) continue to face data analysis capacity constraints (currently supported by Cenfri/MCF interns on a temporary basis).

According to the MINEDUC's latest (2022/23) Education statistical yearbook, data for the yearbook is collected via questionnaires through an annual school census. The questionnaires are completed by headteachers and submitted to Sector Education Officers (SEOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs). The MINEDUC's ICT office is responsible for importing the questionnaires from every district to MINEDUC servers. According to our data fellows at the MINEDUC, however, the relevance of the school census is likely to decline as the SDMS becomes more reliable/comprehensive.

The findings shows that SDMS remains important in addressing the issue of delays in disbursement of government financial support to schools as funds received by schools is proportional to number of students and therefore slow verification of number of students means slow disbursement of funds. In addition, SDMS has improved and facilitated education planning and management- strategic decision-making, policy formulation and budgeting based on accurate data; advance public finance and routine management in schools.

This has been achieved because SDMS covers a range of topics, including: infrastructure, pupils, staff information, training and capacity building, ICT, science and technology, environment, school health and, school feeding programme. Specifically, SDMS collects data from three categories: (i) Students: pass rate, repletion rate, dropout rate. (ii) Staff: number of staff, student-staff ratio, qualified teachers, gender parity. (iii) School assets: sports facilities, number of classrooms, new classrooms.The findings shows that SDMS data collection, analysis and dissemination process has challenges.

Through the SDMS, data is collected on students, staff and school assets on an ongoing basis and the scope of the SDMS includes data from nursery to upper secondary and TVET-level schooling. Once data si collected, (head) teachers submit it. The Head teachers have primary responsibility for inputting data to the SDMS and they do so on a live basis, straight into an online portal. At a district level, the MINEDUC has deployed a team of 30 interns for each district to help MINEDUC increase teachers' data collection capacity and once this data is imported/recorded, the MINEDUC can share it with schools, districts and nationally. The MINEDUC has a department of 13 staff members working on monitoring SDMS processes and the software used by the MINEDUC has multiple report generation features, which can be used to calculate education indicators once data entry is complete. However, there is only one data analyst in the MINEDUC's SDMS department (who is currently supported by two Cenfri/MCF data analyst interns).

In order to make the SDMS fully integrated, it needs to include the pre-nursery and HEC levels of schooling, too. There are also issues with the quality of the data in the SDMS; only 40 variables can be reliably tracked and 2022 is the first 'fully operational' SDMS year.

6. Inclusive and Gender responsive education.

While improvements in access to education have been made, there are still many inequalities between girls and boys, including learners with disabilities in schools, children from the most poor and rich familiess, which challenge the advancing of inclusive and gender responsive education in Rwanda. Combined with other issues such as gender norms (social and/or cultural practices that guide what men and women or girls and boys ought to do in a given community/society), poverty, location, and disability, girls are more likely than boys to face challenges to accessing and staying in education.
The following challenges were identified.

6.1. Challenges faced by learners with disabilities.

1) There is no formal system of identifying children with disabilities. The main source of data informing in the education system is collected through the school census as part of Education Management Information System (EMIS). There are other sources of information such as LARS, RPHC, but data vary across all sources, reflecting the lack of clarity regarding the identification of children with disabilities and the methodology used to collect the data.
2) Although the general policy is for children with disabilities and special educational needs to be educated in regular inclusive schools wherever possible, many respondents acknowledged that mainstream schools find difficulties to enrol children with disabilities. Schoolteachers reported difficulties in ensuring the participation of children with disabilities as they have large classes, and many felt more teacher training on inclusive education is required.
3) Respondents mentioned difficulties for children with disabilities in getting to school. Most children have to walk to school, which can involve long distances for those with disabilities who do not attend their nearest school. Despite the National Policy on Inclusive and Special Education of 2015 which also provides the basis for placement, there is currently no standardised system in place. It is up to the parents to decide where to enrol their child.
4) New courses and programmes have been implemented to address teacher training for special needs and inclusion, but respondents identified further commitment to the specialist (pre-service and in-service) training of teaching staff as a priority for the future. There is a shortage of qualified learners and specialist to support children with disabilities in schools.
5) Attitudes are embedded in the culture, and stakeholders at all levels mentioned that it remains culturally difficult for a parent to admit they have a child with disabilities. Amny respondents mentioned that there is no incentive for schools to accept children with disabilities, or any penalty if they do not.
6) The lack of awareness in schools and classrooms about the barriers to learning that children face means that learning difficulties tend not to be recognised. Even in inclusive schools, it was apparent that teachers had little understanding of applying differentiation in teaching or learning outcomes. In addition, little support is provided to help teachers to be inclusive despite the CPD programme.

7) Many respondents stressed a general lack of materials and assistive devices, which was also observed in school visits. Teachers also highlighted a lack of adapted textbooks for students with visual impairments, especially with descriptions of diagrams and pictures.

6.2. Challenges associated with gender responsive education.

Gender equality or parity in education does not simply mean equal numbers of girls and boys or treating everyone the same. It involves understanding where differences and inequalities exist. It means knowing what each individual student's needs and rights are. It requires the ability to see and challenge any practice that prevents students from reaching their full potential as responsible and empowered individuals. It includes making sure that the education stakeholders and practitioners address these in a meaningful way.

The following existing challenges have been identified as key in limiting equal and quality access to education between girls and boys.

a) Dropout due to age stigma: Both girls and boys tend to dropout of school due to bullying from fellow learners. Dropouts at younger ages tends to be temporary while those at older ages more often are terminal, dropout impacts boys and girls differently. Dropout for younger boys tends to disrupt their education and contributes to over-aging, whereas dropout for girls more often represents an end point in their educationinterviews with parents and teachers revealed that the main reason for boy's dropout (especially in rural areas) was the pursuit of opportunities to earn money for their families. Findings highlight that girls drop out of school after the age of 16 not because of performance in school, but because of their social and family environment, which pressures them to discontinue their education. Existing social norms and gender stereotypes, social expectations, and the value that families appear to place on the education of boys compared to girls seem to discourage girls from continuing their education. Teen mothers face increased vulnerability due to several factors: forced dropout from school when their parents refuse to pay school fees, forced marriage to avoid bringing shame on their family, harassment by neighbors, estrangement from or rejection by their families, and lack of support networks.
b) Gender bias in the classroom; Interviews with parents and teachers identified gender bias in the classroom and lack of gender-sensitive training as challenges to gender equitable education. It was revealed that teachers at the primary level lack the capacity to address gender-unequal sociocultural norms. Examples teachers shared that there was a lack of hands-on training on how to use gender-responsive pedagogy in the classroom.
c) Lack of gender friendly infrastructures such as girls room at school level.
d) GBV in school also is identified as a barrier to girls' schooling. Apart from sugar daddies who often abuse and impregnate girls, girls experience violence at the hands of their classmates, teachers, and men they meet on their way to and from school.

7. Recommendations.

The evidence incorporated in this report suggests for a comprehensive and multidimensional approach which acknowledges the multiple barriers to the education of children with disabilities, girls and those from the most vulnerable families as well as the multiple bridges that can help overcome these barriers.

7.1. Recommendations to ensure inclusive education.

1) Expedite the implementation of the strategic plan for the revised Policy for Inclusive and Special Needs Education and establish a budget line/sub-program on inclusive and special needs education under the ministry of education national budget.
2) Ensure the accessibility building code is applied to all new school construction, and allocate resources for modifications to be made to existing buildings on a needs basis.
3) Ensure all children can access lessons, national exams, and provide clear guidelines regarding entitlements to support (readers, sign interpreters, Braille translation, computers, etc.) and any additional time allowances.
4) In addition to remedia support, develop a simple toolkit for all teachers to provide an interim measure of support and guidance on how to make their classrooms more inclusive and child friendly, together with a checklist for assessment or simple strategies to identify children experiencing difficulties in learning, and practical initiatives that can be applied in the classroom to overcome these.

7.2. Recommendations to ensure gender responsive education.

a) REFAC recommends that MINEDUC should emphasize more hands on gender-sensitive pedagogy in classrooms to better address teachers' gender bias. Programs should transcend integrating a gender lens into teaching materials to include targeted trainings that promote gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching environments and methodology.
b) REAFC should work hand in hand with the ministry of education to promote school-based clubs that support gender equality that reinforce classroom messaging.
c) The government should increase investment in teacher training to implement fully new curricula introduced by the special needs and inclusive education policy and engage with communities to increase awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities (short term). Teacher training will be a necessary frontline solution to improving capacity to respond to children with disabilities and to implement fully the new curriculum.
d) REFAC should prioritize holding awareness and mobilizations campaigns for children with disabilities, teen mothers and other vulnerable children to engage better with parents, local educational institutions, and local leaders to reduce stigma and discrimination against
e) REFAC should conduct gender analysis as part of the ongoing studies studies on gender inequalities in education and intersections with other dimensions of marginalization (for example, poverty, disability, rurality). These studies would investigate how particular economic, social and cultural structures work to reproduce inequalities and exclusion where gender intersects with injustices of poverty, disability and violence.