

# Entry and Mobility in Technical and Vocational Education in Burundi

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## Abstract

Burundi is bound to the 4<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal which insists on the quality of education that guides development. This article aims to analyze the way Burundi implements this goal in the area of technical and vocational education with a strong eye to continuity of education. We used the documentary to inquire about different programs' curricula. Results are that the technical and vocational education in Burundi is set in seven phases that are: 1) On-the-job training, 2) Handicraft training, 3) Vocational training, 4) Vocational education, 5) Professional internship, 6) Level I technical and vocational training, and 7) Level II technical and vocational training.

## Keywords

Burundi, Right to Education, Pedagogical Methods, and Methodology, Technical Education, Vocational Education, Professional Training

## 1. Introduction

The United Nations General Assembly adopted in 2015 a 2030 Agenda consisting of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 4<sup>th</sup> of these SDGs enshrines the vision of ensuring equal access to quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning opportunities. The third of the seven targets of the fourth SDGs states that by 2030, the Member States of the United Nations will ensure that all women and men have equal access to affordable quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university education.

The Member States of the United Nations which are parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child undertake that education shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (*Convention on the Rights of the Child*, art. 29 §1 lit. a).

The General Conference of UNESCO adopted the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education in Paris on November 10, 1989. According to Article 1 of this Convention, technical and vocational education refers to all forms and levels of education in which, in addition to the acquisition of general knowledge, the study of techniques and related sciences is involved, as well as the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes and elements of understanding related to occupations that may be practiced in the various sectors of economic and social life (UNESCO, art. 1er).

In the same idea, since 2005, the presidential decree opened the gate for the implementation of free basic education for every child as guaranteed by the international instruments to which Burundi is a party. UNICEF-Burundi reports that in the 2021-2022 Burundian State budget, the amount allocated to education represents 20.6% of the total budget witnessing considerable made by the government to prioritize education and exceed international commitments set at 20% of the total budget (UNICEF Burundi, 2021). However, UNICEF-Burundi confirms that the investment budget allocated to education is low, representing only 8.4% of the education budget. The same report tells that school enrolment is marked by massive access to the first cycle (grades 1 and 2), but the level of completion of the first three cycles is falling, 55.8% in 2019-2020 compared with 57.3% in 2018-2019. This situation indicates low retention in the school system.

The Burundian policymakers targeted to fulfill the international duties in the zone of technical and vocational education and made the reform in the education system. This reform of the Burundian education system implies five levels of education (the pre-fundamental education known as nursery school, the fundamental education, professional education, post-fundamental education, and higher education applying scientific research) implying the completion of the child's educational development. This is why the African Children's Charter denotes education that is directly oriented to the promotion and development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential ensuring equal access to education for all sections of the community (*African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child*, art. 11 §2 (a) and §3 (e)).

Locally, Burundi made up the law no. 1/19 of September 10, 2013, on basic and secondary education. For Article 109, this law defines vocational education as the acquisition of vocational competencies using technological means. Shedding more light on the matter, the presidential decree no. 100/09 of January 12, 2015, on the organization of the technical and vocational is the required instrument. Article 3 defines technical and vocational education as a set of processes carried out to acquire the necessary skills to facilitate access to salaried employment or self-employment with professional qualification, to improve and strengthen the professional capacities of active workers, or to facilitate their professional reconversion and to develop new skills concerning the technical and technological evolution of the socio-economic environments allowing new income generating

activities.

As the target of vocational education tends to perform the child's knowledge all along his/her life, this article targets to analyze the way, in the technical and professional education, Burundi is following the Sustainable development goals.

## 2. Methods and Methodology

To report on the current state of technical and vocational education in the formal way of the Burundian education system, we used the documentary technique to proceed to the comparison of administrative and legislative policy. This was to analyze the content of curricula set by Burundi in the area of technical and vocational education.

Results were analyzed using logical analysis while Zotero helped with referencing.

## 3. Results

Results about technical or vocational education in Burundi are summarized in the table and the chart below.

**Table 1.** Qualification and certification in technical and vocational education in Burundi.

Qualification and certification scale	Education levels	Entrance profile	Exit profile	Typical qualification at each level
<b>Informal system</b>				
0		Whether or not they attend school	Simple maneuver	Certificate of Compliance
I		Stage 0	Ordinary maneuver	Certificate of Compliance
II		Stage I	Heavy-duty maneuver	Certificate of Compliance
<b>Formal system</b>				
III	Handicraft training (Centre de formation artisanal, CFA)	Cycles 3 and 4 of fundamental schools (7th and 8th)	Workman	Certificate of Compliance
IV	Training for the professions (Centre d'enseignement des métiers, CEM)	9th year of fundamental school completed	Skilled worker	Certificate of Apprenticeship in Trades (Certificat d'apprentissage aux métiers, CAM)
V	Vocational training center (Centre de formation professionnelle, CFP)	9th successful competition and/or skilled worker	Specialized worker	Specialized certificate
	Professional internship in a company	CFP Award Winner	Professional Workman	Professional Certificate

**Continued**

	Post-Fundamental Technical Education	Fundamental School graduate	A2 engineer	A2 diploma
<b>VI</b>	Level I technical and vocational training	Professional Certificate and Post-Fundamental Laureate	Mid-level senior technician	Brevet of Superior Technician (BTS)
		BTS	Senior technician	Diploma of superior vocational technician
<b>VII</b>	Level II technical and vocational training	DTSP + Bachelor's degree	Senior specialist technician	Specialized Higher Vocational Diploma (DSPS)

## 4. Discussion

To help the youth to attend technical and vocational education, the Burundian system set studies from those who did not attend schools and/or who did it as developed in the following studying standards set by Burundian technical and vocational programs (see [Table 1](#)).

### 4.1. On-the-Job Training

With the target of helping youth to attend technical and vocational studies, the Burundian system accustoms everyone. This was to answer in the same way as it has been realized that entrepreneurship education should start in school in the rationale that schools produce salaried workers rather than job makers, not trying to equip students with the knowledge necessary for them to develop the economy ([Ibrahim et al., 2015: p. 141](#)). The fact that the Burundian system receives even illiterate is based on the idea that they also need to develop themselves in the domain where only a certificate of compliance is required. Such a vision of vocational education does not take into account the context of total schooling that denotes the inflation of the school appetite of the working classes, which are sensitive to the aggravating consequences of school failure or early school leaving ([Garneau, 2017: p. 62](#)). By tackling the phenomenon of children not attending school or dropping out earlier, non-formal education complements efforts to generalize education and education and quench the wellspring of illiteracy through the following general objectives:

- to provide education for all to contribute to the gradual eradication of illiteracy, by offering a second chance to out-of-school children;
- reintegrate young people aged 9 to 15 into formal education and vocational training or prepare them for a more suitable integration into working life;
- involve and mobilize governmental and non-governmental organizations and civil society in general around the goal of Education for All ([Oujour, 2019: p. 2](#)).

### 4.2. Handicraft Training

The professional education politics in Burundi tends to help children that do not

go on with their studies beyond the three first degrees of the fundamental school or finish the 4<sup>th</sup> degree and opens the handicraft training education. Burundi is not alone in the governance of public policies in favor of the craft industry for even in Algeria, it is mostly expanded (Adel & Guendouz, 2015). As it has been remarked that there is a gap between artisanal or handicraft practices and pedagogical engineering in four points:

- ⇒ In all likelihood, the practice of pedagogical engineering as an entity has not really and sustainably entered into teachers' practices as a performance.
- ⇒ The practice of pedagogical engineering and craft teaching share the same project (enabling a learner to learn) without having the same object.
- ⇒ In their respective practice architectures, pedagogical engineering and teaching proceed from different actions that mobilize resources in their way.
- ⇒ The practice of artisanal teaching precedes that of pedagogical engineering in the educational tradition and the memory of the individual (Felder, 2020: para. 8).

In opposite to what is in China where the study of traditional Handicraft learning literature is a key to pedagogical and didactical components guiding the development of Augmented-reality-based teaching domains (Ji & Tan, 2018: p. 141), in Burundi, no academic writing exists. However, a sales outlet for products from Burundian training centers and craftsmen was officially opened on Monday, August 27, 2018, which gave more results of a project implemented by the Belgian Development Agency (Enabel) with funding from the Kingdom of Belgium ("*Enabel : Les Artisans et les Centres de formation burundais à l'honneur - IWACU*", 2018). Furniture made from wood, metal, bamboo, rattan, etc., 100% leather products, clothes in a variety of styles, decorative products, artistic paintings... "made in Burundi" at the Kigobe commercial site, opposite the Mutoyi cooperative. These 100% local products are the work of Burundian craftsmen from the Chamber of Sectorial of Arts and handicraft (Chambre Sectorielle d'Art et Artisanat, CHASAA) and graduates from training centers grouped under the "Coopérative Lumières des centres de formation, artisans et artistes du Burundi (COLUCAAB)".

### 4.3. Vocational Training

Burundi adopted the system that receives pupils who fail the national school competition of the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the fundamental school, vocational program responding to the secondary level. Burundi combines different systems applied in European countries such as Belgium, Finland, and the Netherlands where vocational education implements school-based programs at one hand and the Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland systems where they apply school and work-based vocational programs that emphasize apprenticeships (Hanushek et al., 2017: p. 8). The situation in Burundi is not the same as in Australia where has been analyzed and confirmed the impact of re-employment programs for recently released prisoners that benefited from vocational education and training during

their incarceration (Newton et al., 2018: p. 190). Burundi has adopted the utilization of vocational education and training as a means of socio-econometric way to achieve self-employment in the industrial era towards which Burundi is targeting it as the imperative (Avis, 2018: p. 352). Burundi continues in the way that vocational training and education are an engine of economic growth and a mechanism to equalize individual opportunity (Dougherty & Lombardi, 2016: p. 327). After vocational training, Burundi technical and vocational education built up the ongoing system that allows the laureate of the vocational training competes to go for a professional internship or also go to the professional and employment market. Burundi had not achieved online vocational education and training yet as has already been the case in Indonesia (Syauqi et al., 2020: p. 88). After successful results, the door to the Center of vocational education is opened.

#### **4.4. Center of Vocational Education/2 Years**

After finishing the vocational training, the successful trainees are accustomed to the two years at the Center of vocational education. The same doors are opened to the pupils who succeed in the competition after the 9<sup>th</sup> year of fundamental studies. They do not need to go through handicraft training but pass a test associated with the modulated formation that allows them to access the two years at the Center of vocational education. The starting point is to facilitate the transformation of practices based on the object, processes, and organizational elements of vocational training centers, in the theoretical as well as practical interests of the learner (Coulombe et al., 2020: pp. 4-9). Burundi's national policy on vocational training centers must therefore take into account the ethical issues linked to the paradigmatic orientations of curricula (Parent et al., 2018: pp. 129-131). This implies the competency-based approach is defined here as having five main characteristics, namely:

- ✚ Pre-determined competencies defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and behaviors to be demonstrated by the student;
- ✚ The establishment of assessment criteria determining the expected levels of mastery of said competencies, as well as the conditions under which this mastery must be demonstrated by students;
- ✚ Performance as the main source of assessment, without excluding consideration of the knowledge mobilized by the student at the time of achieving this performance;
- ✚ Students' progress through the program should be based on the demonstration of expected competencies, rather than on the number of hours completed;
- ✚ The implementation of pedagogical practices aimed at the development and ongoing formative assessment of student progress concerning said competencies (Viau-Guay & Hamel, 2017: pp. 127-128).

Astonishment has also revealed itself as a didactic vector in vocational train-

ing, each time, the student can move beyond his or her initial astonishment and move forward in a professional development logic, in the dual register of the construction of skills based on a real-life activity and acculturation, moving from an initially silent and unresolved astonishment to a problem-solving logic (Thievenaz & Piot, 2017: p. 37).

#### 4.5. Professional Internship

The internship phase consists of helping mostly with the practices of the theoretical knowledge acquired by the student. Internship in companies is a way to sharpen the vocational training centers' laureates' work readiness to adapt it to the conceptual framework of consumer or employers (Kapareliotis et al., 2019: p. 4). Burundi programmed internships in different companies as a response to an effort to create job-ready graduates in the sense that the vocational education system exposes students to internship experiences as a part of their undergraduate program requirements to address employability skills and increase students' marketability (Griffin & Coelho, 2018: p. 4). Burundi follows the example of Portugal where the internship is considered to be a way of enhancing the professional insertion of graduates in the labor market, being generally acknowledged as an institutional mechanism that facilitates students' transition from higher education to work (Silva et al., 2018: pp. 3-4). The Government of Burundi and its technical and financial partners (the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) joined forces to organize a High-Level Forum aimed at raising awareness among public and private companies of the need to grant first job placements to young graduates in Burundi. The main obstacles to employment for young Burundians are job insecurity, the mismatch between training and employment, and difficult access to first jobs for young graduates. PANEJ points out that the participation of young people aged 15 - 24 in the labor market has been steadily declining over the past thirty years (International Organization for Migration, 2022). The Government and its partners recognize that increased support for entrepreneurship, the creation of a favorable environment for access to employment and the creation of quality jobs for young people are essential to promote economic growth. One of the ways to solve this issue is by helping young students in the internship where they practice their theoretical knowledge.

#### 4.6. Post-Fundamental Technical Education

In the Burundian technical and vocational education system, this category of studies is not a place booked for the children who fail the national completion of the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the fundamentals school. It also accustoms pupils who succeed and after doing such studies, they earn an A2 diploma as A2 engineers. As in the case of an internship, "group brainstorming at meetings, being made to feel as an equal to the supervisor, 'honored', 'respected' and 'recognized' greatly contributed to a feeling of satisfaction during the internship" (Desai & Seaholme,

2018: p. 83) while they perform supervisor's feedback.

#### 4.7. Level I and II Technical and Vocational Training

As equivalent to the Bachelor's and Master's degrees in literacy education, the Burundian technical and vocational education system set programs of Level I (considered as Baccalaureate) and Level II (Master's degree) technical and vocational pieces of training. These are mainly reserved for students who do not succeed in the state exam done at the end of post-fundamental schools. As a consequence, they consider themselves not as doing technical and vocational studies but as going on in literacy education. Burundi faces the same issues as what has been remarked in Nigeria. Learning practical skills started the erosion of technical education because it was practiced in the traditional education setting through the apprenticeship system that developed less quickly than literacy education, which was pioneered by voluntary agencies. This was partly because it is much more expensive in terms of staff and equipment, and because the Christian missions were more interested in a native's ability to read the Bible than in his ability to turn screws and prime water pumps (Akanbi, 2017: p. 1).

### 5. Conclusion

Burundi is setting forward technical and professional as a way to concord with its international duty fulfilling its population's rights to education and development. This article targeted to analyze the way education in technical and vocational domain is organized. The conclusion is that there is no exclusive condition. People who did not attend school are allowed, and those who fail different schooling competitions are allowed. Another point to make known through this research is that away from literacy education which is mainly theoretical, technical and vocational education is mainly practical.

### Conflicts of Interest

We declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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