



Gender Equality in Teaching and Education Management

A participatory qualitative research report by
PRO-FEMMES TWESE HAMWE and VSO Rwanda



PRO-FEMMES/TWESE HAMWE

Pro-femmes Twese Hamwe

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Acronyms and abbreviations

9YBE Nine Year Basic Education (six primary grades, and three secondary grades in one school)	KIST Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
12YBE 12 Year Basic Education (six primary grades, and six secondary grades in one school)	MDGs Millennium Development Goals
ACT Association of Committed Teachers	MIGEPROF Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
BNEP Bureau National de l'Enseignement Protestant (National Union of Protestant Teachers)	MINEDUC Ministry of Education
CoE College of Education	MoH Ministry of Health
DEO District Education Officer	NISR National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
EFA Education for All	NUT National Union of Teachers (UK)
FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists	PFTH Pro-femmes Twese Hamwe ('All Together')
FBO Faith Based Organisations	PTC Parent-Teacher Committee
GBP Currency code for United Kingdom Pound Sterling	SEO Sector Education Officer
GBV Gender-based violence	TSC Teacher Service Commission
GMO Gender Monitoring Office	TTC Teacher Training College
HEI Higher education institution	UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
JAFGE Joint Action Forum for Girls' Education	UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund (formerly the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)
KIE Kigali Institute of Education	USD Currency code for United States Dollar
	VSO Voluntary Service Overseas

Executive summary

“I hate being a girl. Why? Because a girl is the one who is asked to do all the work at home even if she is younger. Girls also get a monthly menstruation and when they get pregnant their families stress them. In classes we are the ones who do the mopping alone, we are disrespected. I heard that there is too much pain while giving birth, this makes me afraid” (female student, urban 12 Year Basic Education school).

“Sometimes people think that gender equality is having women refute the aggressive nature of the man. Rather than seeing it as mutual coexistence, they see it as a fight between the two sexes... The understanding of the concepts is yet to be grounded. If there could be that element of the gender component in the teaching profession, mainstreaming gender in teaching it will be wonderful” (national level civil society stakeholder).

The Rwandan government’s efforts on girls’ education have been widely praised as being among the most progressive on the continent. Girls’ access to both primary and secondary education is among the highest in Africa, with net enrolment rates in 2011 at 94.3% for boys and 97.5% for girls at primary level (Ministry of Education, 2012: 8), and at 24.2% for boys and 27.2% for girls at secondary level (Ministry of Education, 2012: 17). Perhaps some of the explanation for this increase in access to education for girls can be found in the bold and progressive measures that have been taken by the government. For example: all schools now have access to funding for the provision of sanitary pads to menstruating girls. The Head Teachers we talked to reported very positive progress since the introduction both of free sanitary pads and of a system of female counsellors called ‘Matrons’ who provide girls with menstruation-related support, including reductions in the number of times that girls have to return home during their menstruation periods. The government has also implemented ongoing high-profile campaigns against gender-based violence in schools and communities and backed that up with a free gender-based violence hotline. The hotline is managed by the Rwandan police who have also visited schools to train teachers and students in preventing and reporting gender-based violence (UNICEF, 2008).

Despite these efforts, the Ministry’s statistics show that girls still perform less well than boys in end of primary school exams, with 85% of boys passing these exams in 2010 compared to 80.7% of girls – a gap of 4.3% (Ministry of Education, 2012: 11). The gender gap in examination performance gets much larger by the end of lower secondary level exams, with 91.6% of boys passing Senior 3 exams

compared to 78.2% of girls – a gap of 13.4%. At upper secondary level, 90.6% of boys passed Senior 6 exams compared to 83.8% of girls – a still large gap of 6.8% (Ministry of Education, 2012: 20–2).

So what is causing these performance gaps? This research report attempts to answer that question by presenting the reasons students, teachers, Head Teachers and other district level education managers themselves gave us for girls’ underperformance. It also presents the solutions these frontline stakeholders proposed when we asked them what they think should be done to reduce gender inequality and improve girls’ performance. The objectives of the research were:

- To identify barriers to gender equality in the teaching and education management workforce and document successful policy initiatives which have contributed to the goal of gender equality in the teaching force and in education management at primary and secondary levels of education.
- To assess how well Rwanda’s 2008 Girls’ Education Policy, and accompanying 2009 Girls’ Education Strategic Plan, is being implemented; and the impact of the Affirmative Actions that are the pillars of the Strategic Plan.

By documenting the perspectives of a small but representative sample of teachers and education managers, students and parents, it is hoped that policy dialogue will become better informed by the realities faced by the frontline providers and consumers of Rwandan education.

Section 1 outlines the background to the study, its purpose and scope, along with the international and national context of the research – including a review of the policies and other measures that have been put in place in order to make progress towards gender equality in the Rwandan context.

Section 2 briefly describes the qualitative and participatory research methodology that was employed, the scope of the research – primary and secondary education level were selected – the sampling strategy that was used to select research participants and the data collection and analysis procedures. In total, 209¹ people participated in the research as participants in focus groups, interviews or workshops.

Section 3 presents the findings of the research itself. The section begins with participants’ responses about the nature of gender inequality in teaching and education management. Why are there fewer women teachers in secondary grades? How come there are so few female Head Teachers, and even fewer Sector and District Education Officers (SEOs and DEOs)?

What are the barriers that are preventing women from securing these positions? Female and male teachers involved in the research cited the following gender-related barriers:

Poverty-related barriers to women’s advancement in teaching and education management

- The inadequacy of teachers’ income limits their ability to pay tuition fees for further education for themselves nor can they pay the fees for their children’s education.
- Lingering household gender inequalities mean that even in teachers’ families, men retain control of the family’s finances. Female teachers told us that even where they are the main breadwinner, they do not have an equal say in the management of the household budget. So sometimes women who wish to study for a secondary teaching qualification are forbidden from using money from the household budget to pay for their studies.

Pregnancy- and childcare-related barriers to women’s advancement in teaching and education management

- After female teachers who become pregnant have given birth and completed their maternity leave, they are unable to afford to employ a housemaid or childminder to help with housework and childcare.
- Research participants observed that female teachers are getting pregnant at what they felt was an alarming rate, perhaps due to the lack of emphasis on family planning and contraception. This means that women are taking much more time off work than men, giving men an advantage in terms of career advancement.
- Pregnant or nursing mothers can also be subject to discrimination

in recruitment processes for new teaching posts or in the allocation of additional jobs such as supervision duties during the national exams.

- Since society considers it shameful for unmarried female teachers to become pregnant, unmarried teachers tend to leave their jobs and not return. They can also be refused work elsewhere because of the shame associated with childbirth out of wedlock.
- Unlike other African countries where it is common for grandparents to help with childcare and domestic chores, in Rwanda many families are unable to rely on grandparents, having lost them during the genocide.

Female teachers get fewer opportunities to participate in training

- Both female and male teachers told us that women do not get as many opportunities to participate in training and continuing professional development activities as their male counterparts. The problem is particularly acute for pregnant women and nursing mothers who feel unable to attend, or are unable to complete, training courses.
- Teachers who are pregnant or nursing mothers feel unable to attend training or continuing professional development opportunities, because of health problems associated with their pregnancy, because training providers don’t allow time for breastfeeding or because they aren’t able to afford childcare while they attend the course.
- In a significant number of cases, teachers told us that pregnant women and nursing mothers were simply not allowed to attend such courses – which they felt amounts to serious discrimination.
- Since studying to become a secondary

teacher means moving to the city, many women have to leave their family at home. Even with the distance education programme run by Kigali Institute of Education (KIE), the majority of rural primary teachers have no electricity in the home and can’t study at night.

Barriers related to the unequal share of domestic work that female teachers shoulder

- The gendered division of labour in the home means that female teachers and their daughters are responsible for the vast majority of cooking, cleaning, washing and other household chores, while their husbands and sons tend to escape such duties.
- This unequal share of household chores and childcare is perhaps the main underlying cause of the shortage of women in secondary teaching and education management roles.
- Male teachers have fewer domestic and agricultural duties than female teachers and therefore have more time for lesson planning. This can lead to the misconception that, in the school setting, men are more productive than women.
- Female teachers are sometimes too tired to be able to plan and deliver lessons effectively. Some of the VSO volunteers who participated in the research mentioned cases of female teachers falling asleep at school due to exhaustion from their domestic and agricultural responsibilities. Others noted instances of empty classrooms when female teachers were absent because of work they were expected to do at home or in the fields.
- The unequal division of domestic work acts as a powerful barrier to female teachers when considering whether to apply for management roles. One District Education Officer (DEO)

¹ Qualitative research is not based on statistically representative samples and is instead based on in-depth interviews or focus groups with a relatively small number of participants (unlike quantitative research which requires much greater numbers of participants to be representative, and is therefore unable to explore issues in much depth).

observed that women who have become Head Teachers had either been promoted before they had got married, and had no childcare responsibilities or they were older and unhindered by childcare responsibilities for that reason.

Section 3 continues with participants' responses about the main barriers to girls performing well in exams:

Attitudinal barriers to girls' performance in exams

- The division of labour between girls and boys at home impacts negatively on girls' performance, since their domestic responsibilities mean they have far less time after school for homework and revision than their brothers.
- Cultural attitudes towards gender roles dictate that girls should be passive, deferential and less confident and outspoken than boys. Teachers claimed that this difference in behaviour has a big impact on the girls' performance in class and exams.
- Parents in rural areas withhold their daughters from school to act as childminders for their younger siblings during harvesting periods. Boys on the other hand continue to attend school, keeping up with the curriculum, giving them an unfair advantage in exams.
- There is still a clear gender dimension to the allocation of scarce family resources: boys are still being given preference by their parents when it comes to 'informal fees' – transport costs and materials such as uniforms, notebooks and pens.
- In all but one of the schools we visited, teachers we asked reported that they hadn't received any training in how to respond to the different needs of girls and boys in the classroom and the wider school environment.

Menstruation-related barriers to girls' performance in exams

- Teachers and Head Teachers complained that the funding intended for the purchase of pads is both insufficient to meet the demand and often arrives late, preventing schools from keeping a constant supply in place.
- The shortage of adequate washing facilities prevents girls being able to stay in school during menstruation. Of the four basic education schools we visited, while all had gender-segregated toilets, none had showers or washing facilities available for girls to use.
- There is a shortage of funds to purchase painkillers to relieve period pains, soap for the girls to clean themselves with, spare underwear to change into, and mattresses to allow girls who are in pain to rest and recuperate at school, rather than having to return home and miss more lessons than is necessary.
- Girls told us that sometimes male teachers do not understand why girls need to leave the class, and refuse them permission to leave. Understandably this makes girls feel uncomfortable and less likely to want to come to school when their period is due.
- As a result of inadequate materials, facilities and support during menstruation, girls are missing many hours of teaching and learning compared to boys – up to six days a month. "It is like boys have more time than girls" (female teacher, remote 9YBE school).
- In addition the symptoms associated with menstruation – uterine cramps, fatigue, nausea, mood swings, etc – can affect girls' ability to concentrate on learning when they are able to attend lessons.

Pregnancy²-related barriers to girls' performance in exams

- It is common for parents to reject a pregnant daughter on discovery of her condition. Even if her parents don't expel her from home, they often decide to stop paying school fees for her. If they have other daughters, it may also weaken their willingness to pay their school fees too.
- Despite Head Teachers' claims that they welcome girls back to school after the child has been born, we were told of a number of cases in which both the girl and the boy involved were permanently expelled.
- If a girl falls pregnant she is condemned to miss at least six months of lessons while she gives birth and nurses her infant child. When this happens, girls are forced to repeat the entire year as there is no system in place for them to catch up on the lessons they have missed.
- While in theory and in policy, girls are welcome to return to school after childbirth, in practice it is very difficult – because their family is not able or willing to help with childcare or because of the attitude of the community which frowns upon unmarried mothers going to school.

Section 3 concludes with the research findings about school and district level management issues, and national level policies and processes.

Girls lack positive role models within schools. Research participants told us that the lack of gender balance in teaching staff at secondary schools and in secondary grades at 9YBE schools, and in management positions across primary and secondary levels means that girls have few female role models. Participants felt that traditional gender norms that dictate that leadership

² While research conducted in 2010 reported that there were over 600 unintended pregnancies among students from primary and secondary schools, it also reported that a single district in the Western Province had 300 teenage pregnancies (The Rwanda Focus, 2012). Given this the nationwide estimate of 600 is clearly a huge underestimate.

positions should be reserved for men are being continually reinforced by the absence of women occupying such roles.

In addition, the female students who participated in this research told us that they feel less able to talk to their male teachers about their problems, which becomes particularly problematic when girls are menstruating or pregnant. Research participants felt that female Head Teachers are more likely to take girls' issues seriously. There is a perception that they are more likely to take action to ensure girls are supported to remain in school during menstruation and pregnancy, more likely to encourage girls to study traditionally male subjects, and more likely to provide the materials and support they need to perform well in their studies. In fact the dominance of male Head Teachers, whose relationship with their female teaching staff is still constructed in line with the traditional pattern of male dominance and female submission, results in not only an absence of positive female role models, but in a powerful negative role model that serves to strengthen and sustain, rather than challenge gender norms.

There is also a gender imbalance in membership of parent-teacher committees (PTCs). In all but one of the schools we visited, men outnumbered women on PTCs, and all were chaired by men – who had the final say on any decisions taken by the committees. In all cases women were represented and Head Teachers claimed that they were striving for gender balance, but only one school had achieved equal representation of men and women.

While it is clear that the Tuseme (gender empowerment) club model³ works when it is implemented well, clubs exist in only 47 secondary schools, 54 UNICEF

Child Friendly Schools (9YBE schools) and the two Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Centres of Excellence. However, it seems that even in those few schools, implementation of Tuseme clubs has been patchy, with the success of the clubs depending largely on the enthusiasm and goodwill of the (usually) female teachers who are charged with organising the clubs.

Since none of the Head Teachers, Sector Education Officers (SEOs) or District Education Officers (DEOs) we interviewed had received any training in gender issues, it is hardly surprising that only slow progress is being made.

As some time had passed since the launch of the Girls' Education Strategic Plan⁴ we decided to test how well known the Plan's Affirmative Actions⁵ were among the Head Teachers, SEOs and DEOs that we visited, and asked what if anything they were doing to implement these actions. Overall while it seems there is some knowledge of the Affirmative Actions included in the Girls' Education Strategic Plan, it seems that not all the information has reached the education managers whose job it is to implement the Strategic Plan. It is unfortunate that three years after the Strategic Plan was launched, even the DEOs who are presumably charged with implementing it at the district level were not aware of all the Affirmative Actions that are the very pillars of the Plan.

The Girls' Education Task Force⁶ has clearly been the driving force behind some of the progressive steps that Rwanda has taken towards gender equality in schools. However, some civil society stakeholders felt that the Task Force is not transparent enough and feel information about proceedings at Task

Force meetings is not well disseminated. Others felt that the pace of change is too slow given the urgency of the situation that girls face in Rwandan schools and that guidance given to Head Teachers is sometimes not clear enough. Only one of the six districts we visited had an operational Joint Action Forum for Girls' Education (JAFGE). The one example we did find, however, should serve as an example of best practice that could be shared with the other districts as an example of what can be achieved when people work together.

³ See section 3.4.2 for an explanation and discussion of the Tuseme gender empowerment club model.

⁴ Published in 2009, the Girls' Education Strategic Plan details the Rwandan government's strategy for implementing the 2008 Girls' Education Policy.

⁵ The term Affirmative Actions is used to denote strategies that aim to reduce (in this instance) gender-related inequality and discrimination or, put differently, strategies that positively discriminate in favour of women and girls.

⁶ The Girls' Education Task Force is the name given to the network of mainly governmental organisations – the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Gender Promotion and Family Planning, FAWE, the Imbutu foundation, the National Youth Council, the National Women's Council and UNICEF. The Task Force was responsible for developing the Girls' Education Policy and Strategic Plan and continues to monitor the implementation of the Plan. It also administers the 'National School Campaign' which gives out annual awards to schools for the best proposals for tackling gender inequality in their school.

Summary of recommendations

The following summarised recommendations have been generated from our discussions with students, teachers, parents, Head Teachers, SEOs, DEOs and government, academic and civil society stakeholders. Detailed recommendations can be found in section 4.

Recommendations concerning teachers' poverty

1. Fulfil promises made to teachers to reintroduce seniority fees for teachers, to act as an incentive to encourage teachers to stay in the profession and to bring it in line with the medical profession.
2. Commit to promises to double primary teachers' pay over five years, in order to reduce teacher poverty.
3. Re-focus the Umwalimu saving and credit cooperative (SACCO) towards enabling teachers to build houses, or pay for further education, and away from income-generating projects.

Recommendations concerning teachers' problems related to pregnancy and childcare

4. Increase the length of paid maternity leave to 12 weeks to bring Rwandan policy in line with that of the more gender-friendly low and middle income countries (e.g. South Africa)⁷.
5. Increase paternity leave to two weeks, to help relieve the burden of childcare borne by female teachers.
6. Establish a system of supply teachers so that children's education doesn't suffer during maternity and paternity leave periods.
7. Consider adding childcare facilities to schools, issuing childcare vouchers or establishing some system of covering the costs of childcare, to allow teachers to have access to childcare.
8. Improve access to family planning information and access to information about women's right to contraception, through medical centres, Umuganda⁸ meetings or other channels.
9. Prevent discrimination against pregnant women and nursing mothers, married or unmarried, in recruitment procedures and in the allocation of additional duties such as supervision during national exams.

10. Ensure that Head Teachers understand the need for flexibility with the nursing mothers among their female teaching staff.

11. Include a requirement for recording numbers of teachers who are pregnant and nursing mothers in the new National Teacher Registration System, so that their numbers can be monitored.

Recommendations concerning gender responsiveness training for teachers

12. Civil society organisations that work on improving teaching methodology and on improving girls' education should work together with the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) to make gender training in pre-service training compulsory.
13. The TSC should take on a coordinating role to ensure that all in-service teacher training providers (both government-managed and non-governmental organisation (NGO)-managed providers) are delivering gender-responsive teaching methodology training to all serving teachers who attend their courses.

Recommendations concerning female teachers' opportunities to participate in training

14. The TSC and both government-managed and NGO-managed providers should take steps to end discrimination against pregnant and nursing teachers in access to in-service training opportunities.
15. Ensure that training venues have facilities for nursing mothers or for babysitters to come to the training. Funds for babysitters should be provided to ensure that nursing mothers can attend.
16. Consider offering maintenance grants to female primary teachers who wish to study for a secondary level teaching qualification.
17. KIE and the two Colleges of Education should provide childcare facilities to enable nursing mothers, and other mothers with young children to attend residential teacher training courses.

⁷ At the time of writing (April 2013), it appeared that Government plans to increase paid maternity leave to 12 weeks have unfortunately been shelved (The East African, 2013).

⁸ In Rwanda the last Saturday of each month is Umuganda, a national day of community service, during which most normal services close down during the morning. Umuganda activities are usually followed by community meetings at which community members are encouraged to share their concerns and devise solutions to common problems. It also offers a platform for communicating information about Government programmes.

Recommendations concerning female teachers' and girls' unequal share of domestic and agricultural work

18. Redouble gender equality and family planning awareness-raising efforts through Umuganda meetings, storylines in radio and TV soap operas, debates and discussions, or in articles in the print media. Participants at the research validation meeting felt that awareness-raising about gender roles in families should be made a national priority.

19. Use PTC meetings to impress upon parents the importance of sharing domestic and agricultural work equally between their daughters and sons, so that girls are not disadvantaged compared to boys (eg discourage the practice of withholding girls from school during harvest time).

Recommendations concerning girls' menstruation-related problems

20. Increase and improve the reliability of funding for the materials girls need during menstruation. Head Teachers need sufficient funds to ensure a more regular supply of sanitary pads, painkillers, soap and spare underwear; washing facilities and mattresses.

21. Design and implement a better system for monitoring whether the funds for menstruation-related problems are getting to the schools on time and are sufficient to meet the schools' requirements.

22. Ensure gender clubs are established in every school to teach girls about menstruation-related issues and whom to turn to for advice and counselling, and to sensitise boys and male teachers to girls' needs. This task should become part of the Head Teacher's responsibilities.

Recommendations concerning teenage pregnancy-related problems

23. Ensure each school has an effective sex and reproductive health education programme that informs girls about how to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy, and teaches both girls and boys about the consequences of sexual relationships.

24. Re-communicate to Head Teachers that the policy on re-entry for girls who become pregnant during their education (from the Girls' Education Policy) is mandatory not optional.

25. Provide counselling for girls who have become pregnant and for their parents to ensure they look after their daughters during and after their pregnancy and are supportive of their return to school.

26. Empower Head Teachers to intervene when it becomes clear that a family has rejected their daughter because of her pregnancy.

27. Encourage schools to use their resources to incentivise girls who have become pregnant to remain in school and return after they have given birth.

28. Promote peer support visits to girls who have given birth, to demonstrate that the girl has not been shunned by her classmates and to persuade her to return to her studies.

29. Consider establishing a hardship fund in each Sector to assist girls who have been rejected by their family, to pay for emergency accommodation and food until reconciliation can be negotiated.

30. Reinstate funding for remedial courses or catch-up programmes to encourage girls who drop out due to pregnancy to return to school and complete their education.

31. Take steps to ensure that boys who have fathered children through consensual sex are not stripped of their right to an education.

32. Healthcare professionals should be sensitised to refrain from stigmatising students who come to them for advice on contraception.

Recommendations concerning gender balance in teaching and education management staff

33. Implement the women's leadership programme, suggested in the Girls' Education Policy, to identify women with potential and fast-track them into leadership positions.

34. Establish a gender equality recruitment policy – a system of positive discrimination in favour of women in the teacher and management recruitment processes.

35. Provide training for staff responsible for recruiting teachers or education managers on gender equality in teacher recruitment, postings and promotion procedures.

36. Increase and sustain sensitisation of male and female teachers about the importance of family planning, to allow female primary teachers to study for secondary level teaching qualifications or apply for management positions.

37. Ensure that the new National Teacher Registration System records information about numbers of male and female Head Teachers, SEOs and DEOs so that progress towards gender balance in education management can be monitored.

38. Make it easier for female teachers and managers who need to move to a different school after marriage to secure a transfer. Civil society organisations working on gender equality in education should work together with the TSC to find the best solution to the problem of female teacher attrition caused by the difficulty they face securing transfers.

Recommendations concerning other gender-related school, district and national level management issues

39. Consider making it mandatory to reserve half the seats on parent–teacher committees for women, and establishing a rotating chair – alternating between male and female incumbents.

40. Provide gender training for education managers in, for example:

- ensuring PTCs are gender-balanced and that the women attending have an equal say
- using PTC events to sensitise parents and teachers to gender equality issues in the home
- establishing and sustaining gender clubs
- ensuring the school infrastructure is gender sensitive (eg with gender-segregated toilets and a private room with washing facilities)
- providing girls with a sufficient supply of sanitary materials, painkillers, soap and underwear
- encouraging girls to study science and technology subjects
- ensuring girls participate equally in school-organised sporting activities.

41. Provide training for District Education Officers, Sector Education Officers and Head Teachers so that they become familiar with the Affirmative Actions and receive practical guidance on how to implement them. Such training could be organised by the Public Sector Capacity Building Secretariat or other relevant training provider after consultation with the TSC, MIGEPROF, Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), MINEDUC,

the Rwanda Education Board and members of the Girls' Education Task Force.

42. To implement the Affirmative Action regarding mentors for girls in secondary schools, DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers will need both:

- guidance on how to establish mentor schemes; and
- funding that is reserved explicitly for such schemes.

43. Ensure that a Joint Action Forum for Girls' Education is established in each district and is responsible for disseminating and monitoring the Affirmative Actions. District level Joint Action Fora could also be involved in ensuring DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers receive training about the Affirmative Actions.

44. Revitalise and strengthen the Girls' Education Task Force and charge it with ensuring Joint Action Fora for Girls' Education are established and active in each district. One way to do this could be to broaden the membership of the Task Force to enable civil society organisations to attend and hold government representatives to account.

45. National level participants who attended the validation meeting for this research noted that, as five years have passed since the launch of the Girls' Education Policy in 2008, the time has come for an impact assessment to be conducted to assess in more detail the impact of the Policy and accompanying Girls' Education Strategy.



1. Introduction

1.1 Study background

This research project, the working title for which was ‘Gender Equality in Teaching and Education Management’, was commissioned by VSO and the UNESCO-hosted International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All and made possible by funding from both commissioning organisations and from the UK’s National Union of Teachers who have long supported VSO’s Valuing Teachers research strand⁹. A similar study has been conducted in Cameroon. The studies were commissioned after VSO and other members of the Task Force realised that while there is ample evidence on girls’ access to and performance in education, there is a dearth of evidence about the effect of gender inequalities among the teaching and education management staff on low-income countries’ ability to achieve the Millennium Development and Education for All gender-related goals.

In Rwanda, Pro-femmes Twese Hamwe was approached by VSO Rwanda, and agreed to be an implementing partner and host an international volunteer to coordinate the research project. Once that volunteer Research Adviser was recruited and in post, Pro-femmes approached the Rwandan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to request permission to conduct the research. Approval was granted in January 2012 and a permit was issued. The Ministry requested that the permit number should be cited in the final report:

Permit Number: **0159/12.00/2012**
Issued by: **Dr Marie Christine Gasingirwa**
Director General Science, Technology and
Research
Ministry of Education
On: **27/01/2012**

1.2 Study purpose

The purpose of this study was:
To identify barriers to gender equality in the teaching and education management workforce and document successful policy initiatives which have contributed to the goal of gender equality in the teaching force and in education management at primary and secondary levels of education.

⁹ For more information about VSO’s Valuing Teachers research strand, including previously published research, please see inside page of the back cover of this report.

The intention of the research – which has been conducted in both Rwanda and Cameroon – is to provide credible evidence about gender equality in teaching and education management for informing both national level policy and practice, and international policy debates such as those organised by the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All. In Rwanda it was intended that the research would provide invaluable information about how well the 2008 Girls' Education Policy and accompanying 2009 Girls' Education Strategic Plan is being implemented and about the impact of the Affirmative Actions that are the pillars of the strategy. By documenting the perspectives of a small but representative sample of teachers and education managers in Rwanda, it is hoped that policy dialogue can now be informed by the realities faced by frontline teachers, Head Teachers and district education officials, who are all too rarely asked to voice their opinions. The rationale is that policy dialogue about education reforms can greatly benefit from the insights of stakeholders such as teachers themselves, since they are the very people charged with implementing reforms and can provide accurate information about the impact of the reforms at the chalkface. Similarly students and parents, as the consumers of Rwandan education services, have their own insights into how the reforms being implemented affect the quality of education they or their children receive.

1.3 International context

Education for All Goal 5: gender parity and equality in education¹⁰

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

“Gender parity in education is a fundamental human right, a foundation for equal opportunity and a source of economic growth, employment and innovation” (UNESCO, 2011: 73).

However, significant numbers of governments are moving too slowly to eliminate gender disparities. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, almost 12 million girls who are not attending school are expected never to enrol, while the number for boys is seven million (UNESCO, 2010: 3). It should be noted that gender

disparity in education is not always about low enrolment rates of girls. In a small number of low-income countries, for example in Mongolia, Lesotho and in Rwanda itself, girls' enrolment outstrips that of boys. In most low-income countries, however, girls are more disadvantaged than boys and as a result their performance suffers and they are more likely to drop out before completing a full basic education cycle. Transition rates for girls into secondary education tend to drop off in comparison to those of boys, because of the disadvantages and problems they face, and fewer still make it into higher education.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates a strong relationship between the presence of female teachers and the attendance and learning outcomes of girls, particularly in rural areas (UNESCO, 2011: 80). It has been demonstrated that the presence of female teachers in the early grades gives confidence to local communities that their girl children will be well looked after. Female teachers, Head Teachers, and women in other education management and leadership positions also provide positive role models to encourage girls to complete their education.

“One recent study in thirty developing countries found that female enrolment rates were positively associated with the proportion of female teachers... A study of five West African countries found that grade 5 test scores were higher for girls taught by a woman than for girls taught by a man” (UNESCO, 2011: 80).

Young boys, too, need role models (particularly if a male parent is absent); and all children benefit from experiencing both women and men in caring and supportive roles during their early years of schooling. Female and male teachers can both act as positive role models for both girls and boys – but are only likely to be successful role models for girls if they challenge gender stereotypes in society. Moreover, it is important for the sake of unity of status and pay in the profession that primary level does not become feminised to the extent that it is the sole preserve of women teachers.

The impact of gender training and orientation on male and female teachers has also been highlighted as being a vital complement to the achievement of gender balance in teacher recruitment:

¹⁰ This report uses the following widely used definitions of gender equality, parity and equity in education.

- **Gender equality** means that men and women are able to contribute equally to their country's economic and social, cultural and political development, and benefit equally from their participation in society.
- **Gender parity** in education is attained when the same proportion of male and female students – relative to their respective age groups – enter the education system and advance through the different grades at the same rate. Reaching parity in enrolment is necessary, but not sufficient, for achieving equality and should be considered a first step towards gender equality in education.
- **Gender equity** in education is the process of treating both genders fairly. It implies that different treatment may be required for male and female learners. In order to achieve equal outcomes, whether in education, health or other sectors, unequal inputs are clearly necessary. This does not amount to special treatment: it is legitimate support to enable disadvantaged groups to 'catch up' with the rest of the population and thereby to help a country reduce inequality.

Gender parity and equity are therefore the building blocks that are needed for the goal of gender equality (in education and, through the long-term impact of education, in wider society) to be achieved.

“Teachers inevitably carry social attitudes into the classroom, including prejudices about students’ abilities. Research in rural Kenya found that teachers not only gave boys more class time and advice, reflecting their lower expectations of girls, but also tolerated sexual harassment... The research found that girls suffered from negative attitudes and discriminatory behaviour at academically strong and weak schools alike. Such evidence underlines the importance of changing teacher attitudes as part of a wider strategy for gender equality and improved learning outcomes” (UNESCO, 2011: 80).

Indeed, gender equity in teacher training and professional development has to date received little attention. Omission of gender equity issues in pre-service training means that new teachers enter the classroom without realising how their behaviour towards girls and boys and the educational materials they use in class are inadvertently harming girls’ performance and aspirations. Lacking preparation in issues of gender equity, teachers may teach boys more effectively than girls, without meaning to and virtually always without realising it.

The past two decades of research and developmental work in gender equity record many solutions correcting inequities including ensuring that pre- and in-service teacher training provides teachers with an in-depth understanding of the nature of gender bias in the classroom and gives them practical strategies for addressing bias such as reviewing and correcting: curricula, classroom interactions, and assessment methods and materials. Affirmative action in teacher and teacher trainee recruitment, and the strong commitment and leadership of school level and other education managers and school management committees are also important.

As well as teacher management, other gender-related school management issues – such as segregated toilets and washrooms/private rooms for girls to use during menstruation, implemented gender-based violence and sexual harassment policies and the involvement of parents in the education of their daughters – need to be addressed to enable a conducive environment for progress towards gender equality.

Similarly gender equality cannot be achieved if schools are looked at in isolation and the reality of gendered socialisation (the attitudes of a particular society or community toward gender roles, and the effect of those attitudes on people’s behaviour towards girls and boys, women and men, their prejudices and resulting discriminatory practices) is ignored.

1.4 National context

The Rwandan government’s efforts on gender equality have been widely praised as being among the most progressive on the continent. Gender equality is enshrined in the National Constitution of Rwanda, and the 2004 National Gender Policy made gender mainstreaming in all programmes and projects of government and civil society organisations mandatory.

The National Constitution also stipulates that 30% of all positions at different levels of decision-making should be reserved for women. As a result, above 30% of Senators, 40% of Ministry Permanent Secretaries and Supreme Court Judges, 83.3% of all Vice Mayors of Social Affairs (NISR, GMO and UN Women, 2012: 11) and 56.3% of parliamentarians are women. Indeed, Rwanda has the highest proportion of women in Parliament in the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2012).

However, posts traditionally occupied by men are still male-dominated: 90% of District Mayors, 83.3% of Vice Mayors of Economic Affairs, 71.4% of Ministers and 84.3% of Directors General and Executive Secretaries of Public Institutions are men (NISR, GMO and UN Women, 2012: 11–12).

This pattern is repeated in the education sector, where more traditionally male-dominated leadership roles (Head Teachers, sector and district education officer roles) are dominated by men. Women represent only 29% of Heads of public primary schools, 16.7% of Heads of public secondary schools and only 5.9% of Rectors in public higher education institutions (NISR, GMO and UN Women, 2012: 24–32). In addition, women are outnumbered by men in secondary and higher education teaching roles, whereas women dominate in lower-skilled,

Table 1: Gender imbalances in teaching staff at pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels

	Number of female teachers	%	Number of male teachers	%
Pre-primary	2,354	80.0	537	20.0
Primary	20,786	51.6	19,513	48.4
Secondary	5,704	27.8	14,818	72.2
Tertiary	483	18.7	2,100	81.3

(Ministry of Education, 2012: 2–44)

lower-paid early childhood education roles and primary level teaching roles.

Girls' access to both primary and secondary education is reported to be no longer an issue, with net enrolment rates in 2011 at 94.3% for boys and 97.5% for girls at primary level (Ministry of Education, 2012: 8), and at 24.2% for boys and 27.2% for girls at secondary level (Ministry of Education, 2012: 17). However, the Ministry's statistics show that girls perform less well than boys in end of primary school exams, with 85% of boys passing these exams in 2010 compared to 80.7% of girls – a gap of 4.3% (Ministry of Education, 2012: 11). The gap increases by the end of lower secondary level exams, with 91.6% of boys passing Senior 3 exams compared to 78.2% of girls – a gap of 13.4%. At upper secondary level, 90.6% of boys passed Senior 6 exams compared to 83.8% of girls – a gap of 6.8% (Ministry of Education, 2012: 20–2).

The percentage of girls who were selected for upper secondary at the end of Senior 3, and the percentage of girls selected for public universities in 2010 also tells a tale. 46.7% of boys who sat for their exams at the end of the lower secondary level were selected for Senior 4 compared to 41.1% of girls; and 18.2% of boys who sat for their exams at the end of the upper secondary level were selected for public universities compared to 8.1% of girls (Ministry of Education, 2012: 20–2).

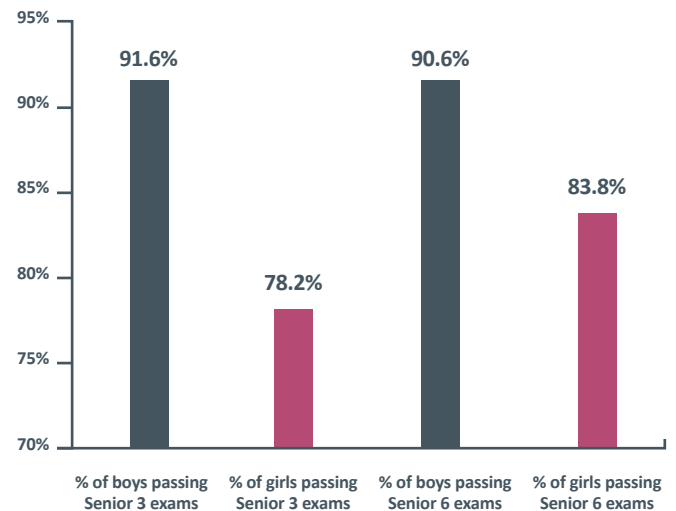
Much has been made of the fact that girls underperform in maths and science subjects compared to boys. However, the figures show that at lower secondary level the gap between girls and boys is in double figures in all subjects except Kinyarwanda, with the highest gender gap being in English.

In the literature review for this research project, the following themes relating to girls' underperformance in education, and the role of female teachers and managers, emerged from a reading of the national and international literature:

- female teachers as role models
- women in leadership positions
- teacher training and continuing professional development
- teacher management
- school management
- gendered socialisation.

These themes are used below to examine what measures have been put in place in order to make progress towards gender equality in these areas in the Rwandan context, according to literature published by government and non-government sources.

Secondary education performance by gender



Transition to upper secondary and public universities by gender

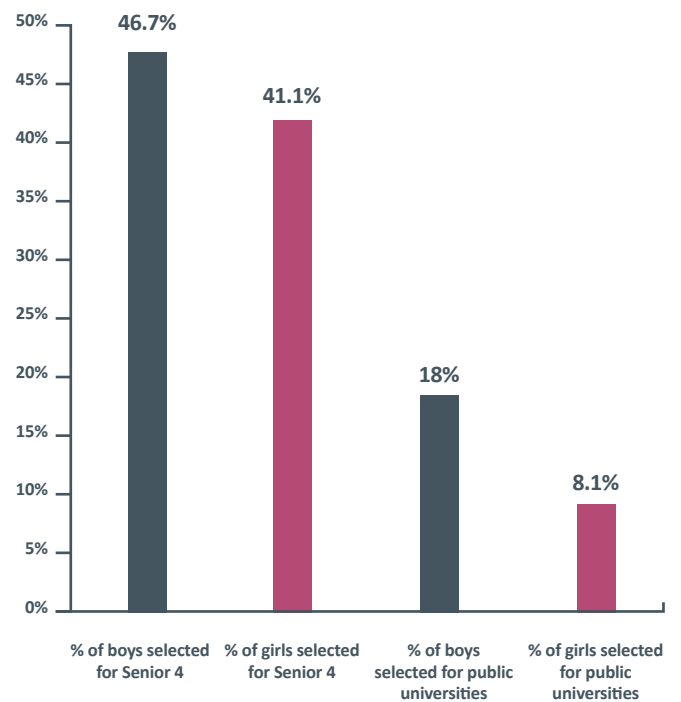


Table 2: Gender gaps by subject in lower secondary level exam performance

Subject	% of students who passed S3 exams, 2010		
	F	M	Gap
Mathematics	61.2%	72.5%	11.3%
Physics	69.7%	82.0%	12.3%
Chemistry	54.0%	70.6%	16.6%
Biology	55.1%	72.2%	17.1%
Geography	77.7%	93.4%	15.7%
History	75.5%	89.9%	14.4%
Kinyarwanda	91.0%	95.1%	4.1%
English	62.9%	80.3%	17.4%

(Ministry of Education, 2012: 21).

1.4.1 Female teachers as role models

While in primary education women represent 51.6% of teachers, in secondary and higher education the proportion of female teaching staff falls to only 27.8% and 18.7% respectively (Ministry of Education, 2012). As is usual, the national level statistics hide district level gender disparities in the numbers of male and female teachers. As table 3 shows, some districts (eg Nyabihu and Nyagatare) have far fewer female teachers than the national average, and other – mainly urban – districts (eg Huye, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhango, Kicukuru and Nyarugenge) have a teaching workforce that is significantly more feminised than the national average.

The government recognises that the gender disparities in its teaching staff need to be addressed and has made a clear policy commitment to give the issue attention. For example, the 2009 Girls’ Education Strategic Plan states that **“The number of female teachers qualified to teach at the secondary and higher education level also needs to be expanded to provide role models for girls”** (Ministry of Education, 2009: 20).

In the long term, the push to increase girls’ enrolment and completion in primary and secondary education will no doubt



result in more women with sufficient qualifications being able to apply for secondary teaching positions and management posts, where they are currently under-represented. And there are efforts underway in UNICEF-funded Child Friendly Schools to provide teachers with received gender-sensitive teaching methodology training, and encourage girls and boys to join empowerment clubs (FAWE's Tuseme clubs). Yet it should be remembered that Child Friendly Schools amount to only 2% of primary level schools – 54 out of 2,543 schools (Ministry of Education, 2012: 8).

It is unclear exactly what specific measures, if any, are being taken to increase the number of female role models occupying secondary teaching roles and leadership positions at all levels. For example, there is no quota system for women in teacher training colleges (a set proportion or percentage of places reserved for women), as has been successfully implemented in Ethiopia for example (CfBT and VSO, 2008: 46), nor any evidence of any additional support for women, eg scholarships/tuition fee exemption, additional leadership or assertiveness training specifically for women.

1.4.2 Women in leadership positions

Again, the government has committed itself in its policy documents to taking action to address this problem. The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2008–12 states that “...measures will be taken to increase the number of women occupying senior positions in the educational system” (Republic of Rwanda, 2007: 68). In addition, the 2009 Girls' Education Strategic Plan includes a number of what it calls 'Affirmative Actions' that are intended to address the need to expand the number of women in leadership positions. These include:

- **“Working towards 50:50 balances of appointments of females as Head Teachers and principals.**
- **Identifying and training women with potential at entry and middle management levels and fast tracking them into education management positions.**
- **To ensure that women are able to take postgraduate degrees by putting in place provision such as distance learning programmes that enable women to combine their domestic responsibilities with advanced higher education.**
- **Ensuring that 50 percent places in higher education are reserved for girls and women to ensure equal representation in the education sector.**
- **In tertiary education, introducing measures like the foundation year support program for women offered in**

2006 of KIST” [Kigali Institute of Science and Technology] (Ministry of Education, 2009: 51).

However, as we will learn later in this report, it seems that these policy commitments have not yet been effectively communicated to the people at District and Sector level who are in charge of recruitment and promotion relating to education management positions. There isn't yet, according to the DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers that we visited for this research, any positive discrimination in recruitment and promotion procedures, nor any programmes or mechanisms for identifying women with management potential. Similarly none of the teachers were aware of any distance learning programmes or management skills training specifically for women, nor were they aware of the policy to reserve 50% of higher education places for women. While distance learning and other training opportunities are ostensibly available equally to both men and women (JICA, 2012), the teachers and Head Teachers who participated in this research told us that because of the disadvantages faced by women – for example the burden of domestic work, pregnancy and childcare which they shoulder – such opportunities are far more easily taken up by men than by women.

1.4.3 Teacher training and continuing professional development

There was widespread agreement among the research participants – at school, district and national levels – that currently, neither pre-service teacher training nor in-service training and professional development equips teachers with the skills they need to effectively address the gender inequalities they encounter in the classroom, the schoolyard and the wider community. As a result, teachers, since they are themselves products of a society that – like all societies – has deeply ingrained attitudes to gender roles and behaviours, treat girls and boys differently, encouraging submissiveness and conformity in their female students and confidence and individuality in their male students. Teachers' lack of training in addressing gender inequality means they are not equipped to identify and address gender bias in classroom interactions, in curriculum content, in learning materials or in their own approach to behaviour management. While attempts have been made to improve the way girls and women are represented in nationally produced textbooks, there is still a 'hidden curriculum' – a collection of messages transmitted to children through informal interactions in classrooms about what it means to be female and male in society.

Table 3: Gender imbalances in teaching staff at primary level by district and region

District	Female	%	Male	%
Gisagara	604	57%	452	43%
Huye (urban)	726	63%	425	37%
Kamonyi	860	67%	413	33%
Muhanga (urban)	881	66%	452	34%
Nyamagabe	758	54%	645	46%
Nyanza	655	56%	510	44%
Nyaruguru	659	53%	589	47%
Ruhango	774	65%	420	35%
Southern	5,917	60%	3,906	40%
Karongi	837	53%	734	47%
Ngororero	692	48%	762	52%
Nyabihu	558	40%	834	60%
Nyamasheke	950	56%	745	44%
Rubavu	540	42%	751	58%
Rusizi	909	55%	737	45%
Rutsiro	618	44%	775	56%
Western	5,104	49%	5,338	51%
Bugesera	602	46%	706	54%
Gatsibo	738	46%	872	54%
Kayonza	582	48%	630	52%
Kirehe	486	42%	660	58%
Ngoma	572	51%	559	49%
Nyagatare	575	33%	1,164	67%
Rwamagana	633	56%	498	44%
Eastern	4,188	45%	5,089	55%
Burera	638	41%	928	59%
Gakenke	697	51%	663	49%
Gicumbi	808	47%	914	53%
Musanze (urban)	833	51%	790	49%
Rulindo	606	51%	579	49%
Northern	3,582	48%	3,874	52%
Gasabo (urban)	903	58%	647	42%
Kicukiro (urban)	569	60%	385	40%
Nyarugenge (urban)	523	66%	274	34%
Kigali City	1,995	60%	1,306	40%
Rwanda	20,786	52%	19,513	48%

(Ministry of Education, 2012: 16)

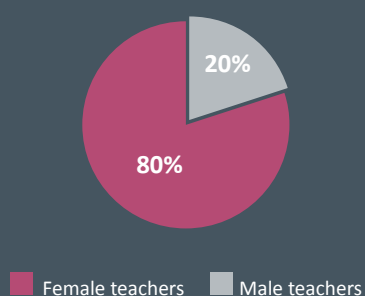
The feeling among research participants was that teacher training doesn't currently equip teachers with the skills they need to be gender-responsive in their teaching practice. This is surprising since there is a raft of well-documented government policies and planned activities (see table 4 below) which were aimed at addressing this issue, policies which have now been in place for a number of years:

Table 4: Government commitments to training teachers in gender-responsive pedagogy

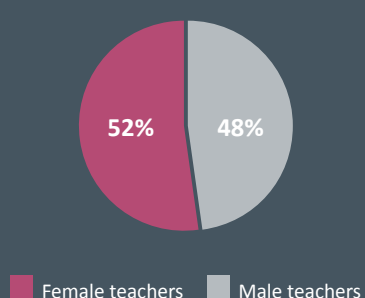
2006 Education Sector Strategic Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Train teachers/role models in gender issues in classrooms and homes & appropriate materials supplied • Improve teaching, learning and assessment methods, promote gender-sensitive teaching” (Ministry of Education, 2006: 34) • “Strengthen the methodology components in TTC/CoE (including gender & subject specific learner-centred approaches) • Finalise draft training manual for HIV/AIDS/life skills education, and gender materials for teacher training”
2008 Education Sector Strategic Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Increased consideration of gender issues in education through training programmes for all teachers is required if increased number of girls are to enter into maths, science and technology subject areas” (Ministry of Education, 2008a: 16)
2008 Girls' Education Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Review teaching methods in secondary schools and HEIs to ensure girls' participation is not inhibited” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 6) • “Include gender sensitive school management and administration in the teacher training curriculum • Train school heads and teachers in gender analysis and planning and make them accountable for implementing these skills” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 22)
2009 Girls' Education Strategic Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...expansion must be accompanied by significant initiatives to improve the teaching and learning environment (teacher skills and attitudes, the quality and availability of textbooks, etc.) so that gender disparities at the end of basic education (in performance, subject choice and completion) will disappear” (Ministry of Education, 2009: 20) • “[Teachers] will be provided with training and materials to ensure they have the capacity to provide education and support to girls” (Ministry of Education, 2009: 51)

Where gender responsiveness is being incorporated into teacher training, at present this appears to be restricted to the relatively small number of FAWE girls' schools (at the time of writing, there were only 2 FAWE 'Centres of Excellence' in the country) and the 54 UNICEF-funded 'Child Friendly Schools', which make up a mere 2% of schools with primary level grades.

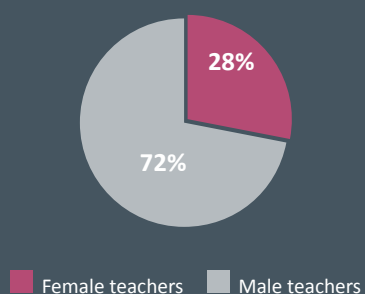
Early childhood education



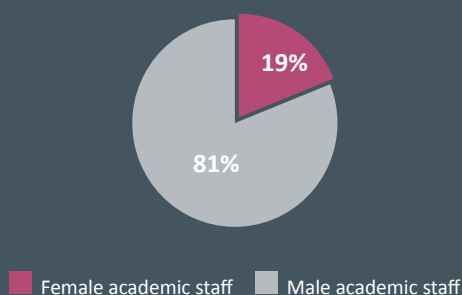
Primary education



Secondary education



Tertiary education



(Ministry of Education, 2012)

1.4.4 Teacher management issues

In the same way that teachers are ill-prepared for tackling gender inequality in the classroom and schoolyard, it is clear from the literature reviewed (Huggins and Randell, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2009) and from the stakeholders who participated in this research that education managers are similarly ill-equipped to address gender inequality in teacher management (ie in recruitment and promotion processes, and in pay and conditions or access to training).

This lack of attention to gender equality in teacher management has clearly contributed to the pattern – which reflects the trend in many other countries – which sees more women in early childhood education and in primary teaching positions, and more men in secondary and tertiary teaching positions. Since wage levels rise from early childhood education, through primary and secondary, with the highest wages at the tertiary level, this results in a gender pay gap in which the higher the percentage of female teachers, the lower the salary.

Again, government policies and planned activities (see table 5) exist that aim to address the issue of gender inequality in teacher management. However, beyond a very limited awareness of these policies among the education managers we interviewed, there is little to no evidence that any of these policies or activities have yet been effectively communicated, and they have yet to be implemented.

Plans do appear to be in place to address some of these issues. For example, UNICEF and UNESCO are supporting the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) to develop the following mechanisms:

- **“National Teacher Registration System (NTRS)** to be the cornerstone of teacher management at central and decentralised levels
- **National Teacher Licensing System (NTLS)** to provide motivation, quality assurance for teachers and create a teaching profession career pathway
- **Teacher Appraisal and Evaluation System (TAES)** to facilitate on-going assessment of teacher performance”

These new systems could be invaluable for identifying and addressing gender imbalances in teaching and management staff, and in recruitment and promotion procedures. However, it was unclear at the time of writing as to how far the development of these systems has progressed or whether they will be used to address or merely identify and monitor gender imbalances.

1.4.5 School management issues

The term ‘school management’ can refer to a wide range of issues. For the purposes of this report we are interested in the gender-related school management issues such as gender-segregated toilets, washroom and the provision of appropriate sanitary materials and privacy during menstruation; policy and practice relating to pregnancy and childcare, gender-based violence and sexual harassment; positive discrimination in national examinations; student discipline/behaviour management; and involving parents in school management issues. The policy response is perhaps most detailed in this area, and this is also the theme in which there have been most reports of success in terms of implementation of particular policies. Table 6 shows a small selection of the policies and strategies that were planned, primarily in the Girls’ Education Policy and implementing the Girls’ Education Strategic Plan.

Particularly striking progress, reported in previous studies and confirmed in this research, has been achieved in the implementation of policies ensuring girls have access to separate toilets and are provided with a supply of sanitary pads.

“Each of the four schools [visited by Randell and Asemota] had a girls’ room, one or two teachers in charge of supporting girls’ health and hygiene, sanitary pads, soap and toilet paper were provided, girls’ toilets were separate from the boys so girls had some privacy, and girls were encouraged to be in a good hygienic condition and in comfort during their menstruation cycle” (Randell and Asemota, 2011: 53).

This does not mean that nothing more remains to be done to support girls to remain in school during their menstruation periods. The students who participated in this research reported that problems associated with menstruation are still the number one issue for girls in Rwandan schools today.

A close second, in terms of gender-related school management problems reported by students and teachers alike, is the problem of girls’ attendance and studies being affected by pregnancy and childcare responsibilities. These issues will be explored in more depth in the research findings section.

1.4.6 Gendered socialisation

Arguably the most influential factor on girls’ performance in schools is the role socialisation plays in embedding ideas about gender-appropriate roles and tasks, attitudes towards girls, women, men and boys, and the gender-appropriate

Table 5: Government commitments to addressing gender inequality through teacher management

2007 Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy

- “...measures will be taken to increase the number of women occupying senior positions in the educational system” (Republic of Rwanda, 2007: 57).

2007 Rwanda Education Quality Standards

- “Ratio men:women (between 30% and 70% both for men and for women)” (Ministry of Education, 2007a: 16).

2007 Teacher Development and Management Policy

- “The need to ensure that there are no major gender disparities at each level of the teaching force will be taken into consideration in recruitment... Recruiting and selecting teacher trainees is a specialized task and capacity... will be built slowly” (Ministry of Education, 2007b: 16).
- “The Education Management Information System (EMIS) will become fully operational and data derived will be used to monitor teacher supply and demand” (Ministry of Education, 2007b: 15).

2008 Girls’ Education Policy

- “Work towards 50:50 balances of appointments of females and males as Head Teachers and Principals” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 15).
- “Review job descriptions, promotion criteria to ensure they reflect the necessity to address disparities of gender, income level, region, and social group as an integral part of job performance” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 19).

Table 6: Government commitments to addressing gender inequality through school management

2007 Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Programmes will be developed to sensitise teachers, parents and education managers to promote girls’ education” (Republic of Rwanda, 2007: 57). • “School infrastructure should be made more gender-sensitive by providing separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls” (Republic of Rwanda, 2007: 57).
2007 Rwanda Education Quality Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Well documented school population profile (gender, orphans, impaired, etc.) by the means of registers, learners’ individual files, etc” (Ministry of Education, 2007a: 16). • “Latrines that are sufficient, clean, covered and separated according to sex (at least 1 for 40 boys, 1 for 30 girls, 1 for female staff members and 1 for male staff members) • Provision of menstruation pads to girl learners (at least 2 packets of pads always available at school) and establishment of a collection system for those that are used before their incineration” (Ministry of Education, 2007a: 17). • “Absence of corporal chastisements, expiatory punishments, inhuman and degrading treatments • Dissuasive measures against sexual harassment and abuse” (Ministry of Education, 2007a: 18).
2008 Girls’ Education Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The participation of parents, teachers and users of educational facilities (learners, pupils and students) in their management shall be encouraged to achieve transparency, accountability, predictability and participation in an atmosphere of good governance, including efforts to reduce gender disparities. • Parents will be required to send and support all children (girls and boys) to primary school • Train school heads and teachers in gender analysis and planning and make them accountable for implementing these skills. • Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for communities on benefits of education and the role they can play in supporting their children’s education. • Identify and take action against households who fail to send their children to primary school” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 18). • “Make it obligatory and compulsory for girls and boys who drop out to re-enter including girls who drop out due to pregnancy” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 20). • “Strengthen sex education and family life education in the curriculum” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 21). • “Provision of [gender-segregated] playgrounds to ensure both boys and girls can freely participate in games and sports. Separate sanitation facilities including washrooms for girls • Gender-sensitive and gender responsive guidelines for school construction including sanitation • Avail emergency sanitary packs including sanitary towels in all schools and washrooms for girls. Provide facilities for disposal of sanitary towels” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 22–3).

behaviour learned at home, in the community, or at school, reinforced by images and attitudes disseminated in the national media and popular culture.

Deeply ingrained in the society's psyche is the view that cooking, cleaning, fetching water and childcare is women's and girls' work. In addition the responsibility for caring for children orphaned in the genocide falls disproportionately on the shoulders of women and girls. As a result there is a high demand from parents – especially those in rural areas – for girls' domestic as well as agricultural labour, which leads to girls' repeatedly being absent from school (Randell and Asemota, 2011).

Subject choice at school is heavily influenced by what the society has deemed to be appropriate roles for women

and men. Science, mathematics and technology subjects are, for example, seen as part of the male domain, so girls are socialised to see social sciences or arts as more appropriate subjects for them. They are encouraged to take up caring professions such as teaching, nursing and service sector jobs. The shortage of female teacher role models within science, maths and technology provides further discouragement to girls. Conversely boys are socialised to take up leadership roles since society expects them to be the breadwinners in their future families. In addition, traditionally, a man remains with his family after marriage, whereas a woman is expected to live with her husband's family. The economic return for parents from investing in a girl's education is, because of this tradition, perceived to be lower than the return on investment in a boy's education.



As a result, boys are favoured over girls for school fees when a family’s financial resources are scarce. Less is expected of girls (by teachers, by parents and by girls themselves) since society expects them to become wives and mothers and they are not expected to work outside the home. This leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy, where because less is expected of girls, girls expect less of themselves, which leads to a lack of confidence and self-esteem. Because male-dominated society expects women and girls to be submissive, shy, and subordinate and objects of male sexual pleasure, then that is the role that women and girls adopt (Chege, 2006).

One of the longer-term effects of this has been that women teachers are outnumbered by more than two to one at secondary school (where only 28% of teachers are female) (Ministry of Education, 2012: 17) and form only a very small minority of Head Teachers (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 10). This further reinforces society’s message that not much is expected of women or girls: the leadership roles are reserved for men, so there is no point in trying to perform well at school.

Another consequence of the social norm that dictates that women are expected to move in with their husbands after marriage is that female teachers who marry a man who lives in another location are forced to seek a transfer to a school near their new husband’s home. Participants at the validation meeting for this research reported that it is very difficult for

female teachers to secure transfers – and that as a result many are forced to quit their jobs in order to be able to move in with their husbands. It’s likely that the difficulty female teachers face in securing transfers and the attrition caused by those that leave the profession as a result is contributing to the lack of gender balance between male and female teachers in secondary teaching and leadership roles.

Attitudes are changing – not least because of the government’s high-profile efforts to promote gender equality in public and private life. Perhaps because gender inequalities are so deeply ingrained, so complex and so hard to change, the policy response to gendered socialisation – as evidenced in education sector policy documents at least – is less developed than in other areas.

While efforts to encourage girls to study sciences, and changes to curricula and teaching and learning materials may be necessary, they may not be enough. Since notions of what is gender-appropriate are so deeply ingrained and have such an adverse effect on girls’ education and on Rwanda’s efforts to achieve gender equality in wider society, a more wide-ranging approach might be required to achieve the level of change that is desired. This topic is discussed in more depth in the research findings section, and recommendations have been developed that are based on conversations we had with research participants during the course of this research project.

Table 7: Government commitments to addressing gendered socialisation

2007 Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy	2008 Girls’ Education Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...efforts will be made to encourage girls to study science and technology subjects” (Republic of Rwanda, 2007: 57). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ensure gender sensitive curricula focusing on life skills, leadership etc for girls to promote confidence and self esteem • Provide relevant and gender neutral textbooks that will encourage learning of both girls and boys in both subjects • Set up an independent mechanism and gender committee to screen materials for gender stereotyping” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 21).

2. Methodology

This research project used qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the social world of research participants through learning about their social and material circumstances, experiences, perspectives and histories (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Qualitative research is not based on statistically representative samples and so does not produce statistically significant findings. Participants are selected in a non-random way, according to the characteristics of most interest to the particular study. This is known as purposive sampling. The criteria used to select participants are more important than the number of people taking part. Indeed, qualitative research is almost always based on a small number of cases.

It was decided that the scope of the research would be limited to primary and secondary education since broadening the research project to include tertiary education would necessitate a much larger budget and timescale than was available.

2.1 Research participants

The research participants selected were students, parents, teachers, Head Teachers and sector and district level managers (Sector Education Officers and District Education Officers) as well as national level government and civil society stakeholders. The sampling strategy was determined by the participants in a Research Planning Workshop held in February 2012. Participants in the workshop (Pro-femmes regional staff and serving VSO education volunteers) felt that there should clearly be an appropriate gender balance in the list of research participants. Workshop participants drew up a long list of desirable criteria for choosing schools to participate in the research and concluded that from the six schools that we were able to visit (budget and time limitations prevented us from being able to visit more than this number of schools) there should be:

- 4 Nine Year Basic Education (9YBE) schools (these are schools that include all six primary grades and the three lower secondary grades) or Twelve Year Basic Education (12YBE) schools (these are schools that include all six primary grades and all six secondary grades)
- 2 secondary schools
- 1 Child Friendly School
- 1 primary level Teacher Training College (primary level Teacher Training Colleges in Rwanda follow the secondary school curriculum, as well as the teacher training curriculum – so in effect they are a combination of a secondary school and Teacher Training College)

- 1 private school
- 1 school with teachers with disabilities
- 2 urban schools
- 3 rural schools
- 1 remote school
- 3 schools with female Head Teachers
- 3 schools with male Head Teachers
- 3 schools with a high percentage of female teachers
- 3 schools with a low percentage of female teachers
- 4 schools with active gender clubs
- 2 schools with no gender club.

After two urban districts, three rural districts and one remote district – two from the Southern Province, one from the Western Province, one from the Northern Province, one from the Eastern Province and one from Kigali Province – were selected the VSO volunteers based in those districts gathered information about the schools in those districts, which allowed us to select six schools that met the desired criteria, as shown in table 8.

2.2 Data collection

Tailored focus group guides and interview questions were developed for each stakeholder type, based on the issues emerging from the literature review and after discussion at the Research Planning Workshop. Example focus group and interview guides can be found in Appendix 1.

In-depth focus group discussions were conducted with 36 female and 36 male students, 36 female and 36 male teachers and 36 parents in the six schools. We made sure to put male

Table 8: Schools selected for participation in the research according to selection criteria

Districts →	School 1 Urban district	School 2 Urban district	School 3 Rural district	School 4 Rural district	School 5 Rural district	School 6 Remote district
Criteria ↓						
Criteria						
4 9YBE or 12YBE schools						
2 secondary schools						
1 Child Friendly School						
1 primary level Teacher Training College						
1 private school						
1 school with teachers with disabilities						
3 schools with female head teachers						
3 schools with male head teachers						
3 schools with a high % of female teachers		80%	76%	61%		
3 schools with a low % of female teachers	9%				33%	33%
4 schools with active gender clubs						
2 schools with no gender club						

and female students and male and female teachers in different focus groups, in order to ensure that girls and women were able to speak freely. Interviews were also conducted with six Head Teachers, nine District and Sector Education Officers, and with 15 tertiary civil society organisations, government and development partner stakeholders.

In addition, 35 VSO volunteers were consulted for their ideas about solutions to the problems emerging in the research during their annual Education Sector Conference. In a separate workshop elected representatives from the participating schools, Head Teachers and District Education Officers brainstormed further solutions. In total, therefore, 209 people participated in the research as participants in focus groups, interviews or workshops.

All research participants were promised anonymity, to encourage them to speak freely. For that reason we cannot reveal which districts or which schools we visited, or which national level stakeholders we talked to. Where participants have been quoted in the findings section the quotes are therefore attributed anonymously (eg 'female teacher, rural primary school').

A total of 20 classroom observations were also conducted to determine whether there was any observable gender bias in classroom interactions. Exchanges between teachers and students were observed by VSO volunteers assisting with the research.



2.3 Data analysis

Recordings from the focus groups and interviews (most of which were conducted in Kinyarwanda) were transcribed and translated into English by the Research Assistants and by a team of transcribers/translators. The lead researcher then analysed the transcripts using NVivo software. The software allowed the researchers to sort the participants' responses recorded in the 70 focus group, interview and workshop documents into similar themes. This allowed the researchers to identify which issues came up most often in participants' responses to the research questions and determine what their collective priorities were. These priority issues are explored in the research findings section that follows.

3. Findings: gender equality in teaching and education management

In this section we will report back on research participants' responses to our questions about gender-related problems faced by teachers and students, about school and district level management issues and about national level processes including their awareness of the Girls' Education Strategy's Affirmative Actions and their impact. We began focus group discussions with a general discussion about attitudes to gender in Rwanda, and will begin this section with a brief report of participants' responses.

3.1 Attitudes to gender in Rwanda

The attitudes we recorded will come as no surprise to policy makers and other readers of this report, but should serve as a useful reminder that while attitudes towards gender roles may be changing among urban elites, those of the vast majority of the population – the rural poor of Rwanda – remain obstinately patriarchal.

3.1.1 Gendered roles, tasks and behaviour

The findings of this research indicate that there is still a clear gender division of the tasks performed by men and women, boys and girls in Rwanda today. The vast majority of research participants reported that women remain solely responsible for domestic work and childcare. Teachers, students and parents all told us similar stories:

“The specific roles for women are the following: caring for their families in terms of hygiene, taking care of children, cooking the daily meal, ensuring the education of children, receiving visitors, caring and respecting the husband” (female teacher, rural 9YBE school).

Research participants told us that there is a difference in the tasks performed by women who go out to work in the formal economy and women whose work is mainly domestic or agricultural. This is because women who have full-time salaried jobs will normally hire domestic staff to undertake domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning and childcare, while they are at work. In families where a woman doesn't have a salaried job, however, even if she is working full-time on subsistence farming, Rwandan culture dictates that it is her role to undertake the majority of domestic work.

As for tasks performed by men, focus group participants reported that it is the role of men to undertake tasks believed to require more physical strength, (eg building a house, building fences, chopping down trees for firewood) or tasks

of a more complex nature such as dealing with family finances (paying school fees, arranging medical insurance for family members). Indeed in Rwandan civil law, men are officially deemed heads of households. While some participants argued that attitudes about gender roles are shifting in urban areas, in rural areas these attitudes remain entrenched:

“In town it is another way round because a man can do tasks that women can do, but if you do so in village they will laugh a lot at you or say that you were poisoned by your wife” (parent, urban secondary school).

Respondents told us that the reason this division of labour between men and women, boys and girls continues to be replicated is that boys imitate what their fathers do at home and girls imitate what their mothers do. It's clear that this cycle of gender role replication is only just beginning to break down. Although there were indications from some research participants that when a girl is not available for a task traditionally assigned to females, boys can be asked to undertake that task, the social taboo attached to boys doing girls' tasks and vice versa is still very strong. The students we interviewed reported that they are not happy doing tasks that traditionally were not assigned to them, since they felt that community members would see such subversion of gender norms as shameful, as the examples below illustrate:

“When you tell a boy to put a baby on his back, he really doesn't enjoy such a task, whereas when you tell it to a girl she does it quickly being proud. So you notice that there is a big difference” (parent, rural secondary school).

“A boy cannot mop, or do house cleaning or sweeping when a girl is around and doing nothing, which is the opposite to when people pass by and see a boy doing the same. When a girl is doing nothing [and her brother is mopping] a boy can be roughed up and be called a nonsense person” (female student, urban secondary school).

“A teacher cannot tell a girl to lift a heavy thing when a boy is around, ie sometimes the head mistress asks boys to come and lift computers: you understand that she cannot ask girls when boys are there” (female student, rural secondary school).

And attitudes towards gender roles are not just restricted to encouraging a particular division of labour; they also act as powerful sanctions to enforce social conformity to culturally ascribed behaviour. Time and time again we heard that the mobility of girls is restricted compared to that of boys **“A girl is not advised to go out when it is night. If she does so she is called a prostitute, but a boy can go out whatever time he wants”** (female student, rural 9YBE school). Similarly women are rarely seen out in bars – a traditionally male domain in Rwanda.

The situation in school is similar to that in Rwandan homes. Respondents told us that in most cases boys and girls perform different tasks at school. While girls are generally responsible for activities related to cleaning such as sweeping and mopping, boys are responsible for cleaning blackboards, fetching water for mopping and other work like shifting desks or computers and other tasks that require physical strength.

Teachers told us that the division of labour between girls and boys at home impacts negatively on girls’ performance, since their domestic responsibilities mean they have far less time after school for homework and revision than their brothers.

“This division of tasks sometimes favours boys more than girls. A boy can do some small work after school and then go to play football, and then after he even gets time to revise his lessons, while the girls are in the kitchen and doing other stuff and do not get enough time to revise their lesson, and this has an impact on her performance in class” (male teacher, rural 9YBE school).

“It is not fair at all; a girl can be first in this term and be among the worst students in the following term simply because she is very busy with the tasks assigned to her by her parents” (female teacher, rural 9YBE school).

In addition, teachers told us that cultural attitudes towards gender roles and behaviour impact negatively on girls’ behaviour in class. Girls, we were told, tend to adopt the role ascribed to women in wider society: they are passive, deferential and less confident than boys. Boys, on the other hand, tend to participate more freely and be more responsive

to teachers’ questions in classroom discussions. Teachers claimed that this difference in behaviour has a big impact on girls’ performance in class.

“Girls are naturally timid and lack self-confidence; girls don’t express themselves even when they know that their answer is correct. On the other hand, boys are bold and answer a question even when they are not really sure of their answer. This has something to do with our culture... girls were taught to always have a submissive attitude because they were told that a bold girl could never get married. As the result, girls could lose their self-confidence” (female teacher, rural 9YBE school).

3.1.2 Parents’ attitudes to girls’ education

Research participants told us that some parents continue to support their sons’ education more than they support their daughters’ education. The reasons they gave for this attitude included parental ignorance or the limited financial resources a family may have, such that a choice must be made about which children to invest in by paying formal school fees and informal school fees (the cost of uniforms, notebooks, pens, transport costs, or lost income where a child would otherwise be working). As we have seen, cultural attitudes and expectations play a major role in replicating attitudes to the role of men and women in society, which heavily influence parental attitudes about where to invest their limited resources.

“I think expectations aren’t as high of women as they are of men, or of girls as they are of boys, and that’s a historical and cultural thing too. Girls in school aren’t necessarily encouraged by their parents as much as boys are because it is assumed that the boy is going to be the breadwinner so he has to work hard in some way. And so I don’t know that girls are encouraged to succeed as much as boys are” (national level civil society stakeholder).

In a society where inheritance patterns are patrilineal (any property and the family name is passed from father to son), where the man remains the main breadwinner in most families and where a girl tends to leave the family to join her husband’s family upon getting married, in terms of return on investment, there is little to be gained from financial investment in girls’ education.

“They feel that the boy will be more useful than the girl if they allow the boy to go to school. There’ll be a bigger economic return. There’ll be more earning power because according to the culture here the boy is supposed to get

married, and normally he remains close to the family. Which is different from the girl. After getting married, she goes to the home of the husband's family. She contributes to the husband's development, more than she can contribute to her family" (national level civil society stakeholder).

The tradition in rural areas of Rwanda has been that older girls stay at home to look after younger children while mothers and fathers work in the fields. Sending girls to school, when there are younger children in need of care, means that the family has to find extra resources to pay for a childminder. The poorest families simply can't afford to pay for a childminder, and in the absence of affordable childcare facilities and with only very nascent nurseries/early childhood care and education centres, their only recourse is to withhold their daughter from school. It was not surprising therefore that we recorded numerous reports of parents in rural areas withholding their daughters from school – particularly during harvesting periods. Boys on the other hand continue to attend school, keeping up with the curriculum: which is perhaps part of the explanation as to why boys still outperform girls in exams.

Clearly there have been great strides in girls' access to education, due to government efforts to encourage parents to send their daughters to school. As one parent told us:

"The government started sensitising the population that all children are equal. Parents had a mentality that boys are first in everything while the girls were supposed to stay at home caring for young children, cleaning or cooking in that time boys could be cultivating. There was that gap and until now the gender balance equilibrium has not yet been achieved. But the government does put much effort in gender equality and I think that it will be achieved soon" (parent, rural 9YBE school).

Yet clearly there is still a long way to go before girls' performance equals that of boys. It's not enough for girls to be in school. Gender equality will not be achieved while girls are shouldering an unequal share of domestic work and childcare duties, restricting the time available to them for homework and revision compared to their brothers. Or while parents faced with hard choices about which children to invest their limited financial resources in continue to choose their sons over their daughters. Research participants told us that more needs to be done to tackle those still deeply entrenched attitudes that, despite appearances in the national level statistics, mean that some parents in some of the poorest areas are still not sending their daughters to school:

"Other parents who were not reached by those teachings still do it. Especially for illiterate parents, they can say: 'My daughter: in my house, I order that you are staying home to cook food. And you my son are going to school'. This is why we cannot say that gender equality has been achieved a hundred per cent, since such people exist in society" (parent, rural 9YBE school).

Perhaps PTC meetings could be used more effectively to impress upon parents the importance of sharing domestic and agricultural work equally between their daughters and sons, so that girls are not disadvantaged compared to boys. For example, parents should be discouraged from the practice of withholding girls from school during harvest time. Efforts to raise awareness about gender equality could also be redoubled through Umuganda meetings, storylines in radio and TV soap operas, debates and discussions, or in articles in the print media.

3.1.3 Girls' participation in science and technology subjects

Attitudes toward gender roles of course extend to include norms about what subjects are suitable for boys and what subjects are suitable for girls. A majority of the students, teachers and parents who participated in focus group discussions reported their view that girls are better in subjects like geography, history and biology, subjects that require much memorisation. They felt that boys are better in subjects like mathematics, physics and chemistry, which they perceived to be more complicated subjects:

"Boys are better in mathematics, physics, and other subjects that contain mathematics, while girls are better in biology, languages, history because they are simple subjects. But boys do better in hard subjects" (male student, 12YBE school).

While these views may be the result of traditional attitudes regarding gender roles, one respondent suggested that the method of teaching employed in these subjects may also be contributing to girls' under-performance in these subjects:

"What I find is that the chalk and talk method of teaching, for girls, particularly in maths and science: it's not really geared towards female learning patterns. We know that some girls do learn that way but generally the structure and methodology of teaching isn't helping our girls. I've found myself saying to my teachers 'Do you realise your girls are not taking anything in?' So the whole methodology of the education that's being provided isn't really geared to girls"

(national level civil society stakeholder).

The promising finding is that the female students we spoke to displayed boundless confidence in themselves. They believe that they can study as well as boys can and that they can even perform better than boys. For example, one girl told us that:

“There is no difference, since girls can do whatever boys do. Let’s take an example; if you go to a vocational school you find girls doing carpentry and building, we have equal ability. In our times here, girls are even performing better than boys” (female student, rural 9BYE school).

As the statistics we cited in section 1.4 showed, however, despite perceptions to the contrary, girls are not underperforming in science and technology subjects any more than they are underperforming in other subjects. They are in fact underperforming across all subjects – with a performance gap of more than 10% in all subjects cited in the Rwanda National Education Statistics, except for Kinyarwanda. So while it is of course important to improve teaching methodology in science and technology subjects to suit girls’ learning styles, and encourage girls to study these subjects, this is just as true in non-science subjects.

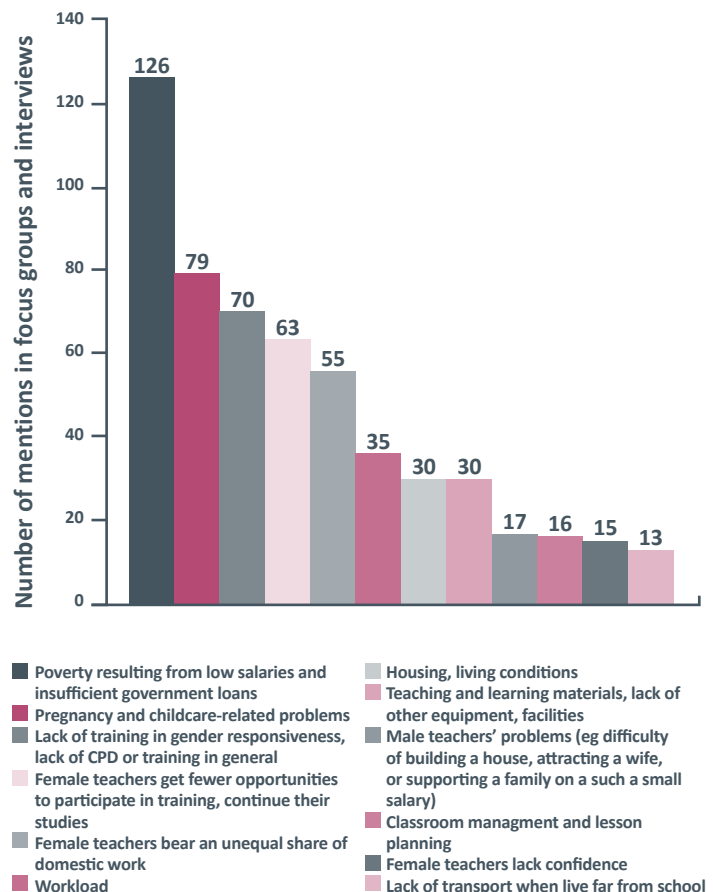
3.2 Teachers’ problems

By far the biggest problem reported by teachers, male and female alike, was that of poverty and the conflicts in teachers’ families caused by the low salary teachers receive, the late payment of that salary or problems related to the government loans scheme. Although this is not, strictly speaking, a gender-related issue, as it affects male and female teachers alike, we will report back on the teachers’ responses and their proposed solutions to their financial problems, since it is such an important issue for them.

The other gender-related teachers’ problems we will analyse are the four problems that were mentioned most often by research participants (and therefore constitute their collective priorities):

- problems related to pregnancy and childcare
- lack of training in gender responsiveness or lack of training or continuing professional development in general
- the perception that female teachers get fewer opportunities to participate in training or continue their studies
- the fact that female teachers bear an unequal share of domestic work.

Problems faced by teachers



There is not enough space in this report to analyse the remaining issues in depth (workload; housing/living conditions; teaching and learning materials, shortage of other equipment or facilities; classroom management and lesson planning; male teachers’ problems; female teachers’ lack of confidence; and the lack of transport ‘when we live far from school’). Many of these issues – especially the non-gender-related issues – have been reported on in previous general research on teachers in Rwanda (VSO Rwanda, 2004; Bennell and Ntagaramba, 2008). It is worth noting that these are still a problem for teachers, and policy makers may wish to refer back to the previous research for solutions to these ongoing problems.

3.2.1 Poverty resulting from low salaries and insufficient government loans

The problem that was most often reported by teachers, both male and female, was that of the low salary they receive. At the time the research was being conducted, primary teachers told us that they were receiving 40,000 Rwandan francs per month (around USD65 or GBP41). Secondary teachers told us they were receiving around 120,000 Rwandan francs per month (around USD195 or GBP125). This compares with a wage of 230,000 Rwandan francs per month for nurses and midwives (around USD375 or GBP239) and 402,000 Rwandan francs per month for doctors (around USD655 or GBP417).¹¹

“Imagine a salary of 40,000 Rwandan francs while one bunch of onions costs 800 Rwandan francs here in the countryside and it costs 1,000 francs in town – the teacher’s salary is equivalent to 40 bunches of onions!” (male teacher, rural 9YBE school)

The inadequacy of teachers’ income has detrimental effects on their personal lives and on their ability to perform well in their jobs. The effect that was repeated most often by teachers is that the low salary leads teachers to look elsewhere for part-time work to supplement their incomes. However, teachers told us, this means that they don’t have time for preparing lessons and marking the homework of their students and this can sometimes result in teacher absenteeism. Many teachers go into teaching not because they see it as a vocation but because there is no other work available to them. And because of the low salary the teachers told us that they have no choice but to keep on looking for other opportunities and that once they find them they often abandon teaching altogether.

Teachers reported that the salary as it stands does not allow them to build their own houses and they’re not able to get mortgages since their salary is not enough for banks to trust them. Male teachers especially complained that as a result of their low salary and inability to provide a home they find it very difficult to find someone who is willing to marry them.

“Learning from our history, we can see that teachers in 1994 were paid a half of mayor’s salary, they were able to build their own brick houses. Nowadays, the salary of the mayor is too high, and with only 40 thousands paid to primary teachers, they can’t build even a small house, they can’t organise a wedding for themselves until they get very old” (male teacher, rural secondary school).

The low salary means teachers cannot afford to pay tuition fees for further education for themselves nor can they pay the fees for their children’s education. Many teachers complained that the low salary prevents them from even meeting their own and their family’s basic needs.

“Teachers in primary schools don’t take their lunch because they don’t have enough money to use in restaurants and this really affects them and in the afternoon they are most of the time weak and don’t teach well” (female teacher, rural secondary school).

Another effect of the inadequacy of teachers’ salaries is the resulting lack of respect that they receive from community members and even from their students.

“Teachers are not respected as it could be... Students disrespect teachers because they are poor and there are some students who are even rich compared to teachers” (female student, urban 9YBE school).

Another bone of contention for some was the government’s decision to suspend seniority fees. Seniority fees were in the past awarded to teachers according to their length of service, a practice that continues among medical professionals. At the time the research was being conducted, one Head Teacher complained that despite promises from the government to reintroduce these seniority fees, no action had at that point been taken.

We should also mention the lingering household gender inequalities. Even in teachers’ families, where you might expect more equal gender relations as a result of teachers being more educated than the average family, men still tend to demand control of the household finances. Some female teachers told us that although they are the main breadwinner in their family, they do not have an equal say in the management of the household budget.

“Some female teachers are not on good terms with their husbands. Sometimes it is the husband who manages her salary and leaves almost nothing to his wife. The woman toils away at school and the man abuses her salary” (Head Teacher, remote 9YBE school).

The government recognises that teacher salaries are too low, and plans are in place to increase them:

¹¹ Health worker wage rates sourced from personal communication with Rwandan midwife, February 2013

“There are plans to increase – I think to double over five years – the teachers’ salary, which is also good because I think it needs to be a bit more in line with the secondary teachers’ salary which is not huge by any stretch of the imagination, but is at least a liveable amount” (national level civil society stakeholder).

The effects of low salaries reported by the teachers we interviewed for this research highlight the pressing need to ensure this increase happens, and that seniority fees are reinstated as has been promised.

Another response from government is the creation of a teacher saving and credit cooperative called ‘Umwalimu SACCO’. Launched in 2008, the stated aim of the cooperative is to grant low-interest loans to teachers to help them to set up income-generating projects to supplement their salaries. The government is proud of this scheme and reported to our research team that:

“1,175 additional teachers got loans to improve their welfare, and 416 teachers were trained in job creation and management of cooperatives to encourage them to create their own cooperatives” (national level government stakeholder).

However, many teachers were critical of the scheme, some complaining that they had not been able to access loans as promised, others that the amount of credit available to them was too small to be of much use:

“The saving and credit cooperative the government created is good but the size of credit given to teachers is small. The credit we receive is equal to eight times our salary. With this amount it is difficult to set up a significant income-generating activity. It is needed to increase the credit size” (male teacher, rural 9YBE school).

Others questioned the rationale behind encouraging teachers to set up income-generating projects that take them away from their teaching preparation and might have an adverse effect on their teaching. So while the intention may have been a good one – to help teachers supplement their meagre incomes – an unintended consequence might have been that the loan scheme is affecting the quality of education that teachers are able to deliver:

“The guidance that was given was: start your own business and that’ll help you support your livelihood. The problem with that was that either the teacher was spending all their time managing the staff member that they’d employed to manage their business for them, or they left teaching because their own business was more profitable than teaching. To me it makes a lot more sense to say to teachers – why don’t you use a loan to build your own house, rather than starting a business which might take you away from teaching?” (national level civil society stakeholder)

This would seem a sensible way to refocus the loan scheme: to allow teachers to use the loans to build the houses that they say their salaries don’t currently allow them to build, or to pay for the further education they wish to pursue to enable them to earn higher salaries in the future. Continuing to encourage teachers to set up income-generating projects seems counterproductive since it so clearly distracts teachers from being able to do their jobs. The government should therefore consider re-examining the purpose of loans in light of this new information.

Another scheme started by the government through which teachers who perform well are awarded cows deserves a mention, if only so we can invent the term ‘performance-related cows’! The Ministry of Education reported to us that over 500 cows were distributed to teachers in the previous year. This may or may not have a motivational effect on teachers; we are unable to judge since only one research participant mentioned the scheme. This is perhaps unsurprising since 500 teachers amounts to only 0.8% of the 60,821-strong teaching force (Ministry of Education, 2012: 8–17). Experience from other countries is that performance-related pay of any kind is often unpopular with teachers’ unions since it is open to abuse, ie nepotism or cronyism in the way the awards are made. This is because the criteria used to measure performance are often complex, and therefore not easily understood or well communicated. And in the absence of standardised performance appraisal systems that match performance objectives to the reward system, it is difficult for awards administrators to be transparent or impartial (de Silva, 1998: 16).

3.2.2 Problems related to pregnancy and childcare

The issue mentioned most frequently by female and male teachers alike, after salaries and loans, is that of childcare. Because of the inadequacy of teachers’ salary, female teachers who have given birth and completed their maternity leave are unable to afford to employ a housemaid or childminder to help with housework and childcare:



“A female teacher faces a problem when her maternity leave expires and when it is time to return to work. She does not have enough money to hire a babysitter. In addition it is uncomfortable to take her baby to the workplace. And in case her baby gets sick things become worse... sometimes she is overloaded” (male teacher, rural 9YBE school).

Nursery schools are beginning to be established, but coverage is by no means nationwide. However, most nurseries don't cater for very young children so are of little use to a teacher with a newborn baby. If a teacher has an extended family living near her school she can perhaps rely on relatives to help with childcare, but if a teacher has been posted away from her home town or village then the issue of childcare becomes a serious problem.

“On a teacher's salary, there's no way they can adequately care for their children if they haven't got that kind of family support structure” (national academic stakeholder).

Maternity leave in Rwanda lasts three months and there are three additional months during which the mother has a right to one hour per day out of work time for breastfeeding. However, many teachers and parents complained that the maternity leave period is too short.

“Another problem which is particular to women is about the three months' maternity leave: this leave is short in

a way that because the child is still very young, the mother does not cease to think about her baby that she left at home” (parent, remote 9YBE school).

And while the time given for breastfeeding was welcomed, some teachers felt that the time of day at which they are required to take their breastfeeding hour is not appropriate to their needs:

“Teachers are required to be at school at seven o'clock in the morning after preparing what to feed that baby... Government-employed mothers whose children are still babies are given an hour from the actual start of their jobs during a year duration so as to provide the necessary for their babies before going to work. Here, that hour is given to mothers at 11am instead of being first thing in the morning” (female teacher, remote 9YBE school).

As for paternity leave, all new fathers in Rwanda are entitled to only four days' leave – which compares unfavourably with paternity leave entitlement in some other countries in Africa. For example, in Kenya new fathers are entitled to two weeks' paternity leave and in Cameroon new fathers are entitled to ten days' paid leave (ILO, 2010: 46). Despite the perception by some research participants that Rwandan men very rarely take time off to raise children, male teachers were – perhaps unsurprisingly – keen to have more time off work to help look after their wives and their newborn babies.

“They are off for four days. Two days pre-delivery and two days post-delivery. There is violence on behalf of men! Why don’t men get enough time to take care of their women after giving birth? Four days are very few” (male teacher, rural secondary school).

The VSO volunteers we consulted observed that female teachers were getting pregnant at an alarmingly frequent rate, which is most likely a reflection of fertility rate in the wider population. Despite the falling fertility rate – women in Rwanda had an average of 4.6 children in 2010, down from 6.1 in 2005 (Ministry of Health, 2012) – family sizes are still high. Volunteers felt that this may be the result of a lack of emphasis on family planning and lack of access to contraception or information about contraception. Other researchers have also noted that “An urgent need exists in Rwanda to address unmet need for contraception, to strengthen family planning services” (Basinga et al, 2012:20), a fact that is recognised by the government who estimate that “25–35% of married women... most of whom are the poorest people in our communities, still have unmet need for family planning” (Habumuremyi¹² and Zenawi, 2012: 78).

Some research participants noted that pregnant women or nursing mothers can also be subject to discrimination in recruitment processes for new teaching posts or in the allocation of additional jobs such as supervision duties during the national exams, for which teachers are paid extra:

“No pregnant teacher or a teacher with an infant can supervise the national examination for which you could get money to cater for your needs” (female teacher, rural 9YBE school).

“Schools don’t give a job to female teacher when she is pregnant even though she is having qualifications” (female teacher, urban 12YBE school).

Although it is unclear how widespread such discrimination is, the fact that it was reported means it deserves attention, since there may well be more unreported discrimination. Discrimination against unmarried mothers appears to be widespread, however, given the number of research participants who told us that it is shameful in Rwandan culture for unmarried women to become pregnant. If a female teacher who has no husband becomes pregnant, we were told that pressure from society is such that she will leave her job and not return to the school after the child is born. Some even reported that unmarried mothers can be

refused work because of the shame associated with childbirth out of wedlock:

“If you are a woman and give birth when you are not married, they can refuse to give you a job, saying that you may teach those bad behaviours to the students you are teaching. Or the teacher may be given a transfer” (female teacher, urban 12YBE school).

To address some of these problems relating to pregnancy and childcare, outlined above, the government could consider the following measures:

Increase the length of maternity leave to 4 months to bring Rwandan policy in line with that of South Africa and some of the more gender-friendly low and middle income countries (Brazil, 120 days; Mongolia, 120 days; Vietnam, 4 to 6 months; Venezuela, 18 weeks) (ILO, 2010: 95–101). Paternity leave could also be increased to 2 weeks, to go some small way towards relieving the burden of childcare borne by women.

So that children’s education doesn’t suffer during maternity and paternity leave periods, a system of supply teachers – teachers who work short periods in different schools, when needed to cover the teaching duties of teachers on maternity, paternity or sick leave – could be established.

As part of the new moves by the Ministry of Education to set up nurseries/early childhood education centres, teachers should not be forgotten. One research participant suggested that it would be relatively simple to add a crèche or childcare facility of some kind to schools themselves to allow female teachers to have access to childcare.

“Schools do not provide facilities for a crèche where they can keep their children during the working hours. That is a personal responsibility, it is not the school’s responsibility and that is unfair. So if schools could build those facilities so that even within the school compound... the school should take care of teachers’ children” (national level academic stakeholder). Even if this is not possible, then childcare vouchers or some system of subsidising or covering the costs of childcare for teachers could be considered to enable female teachers to focus on the task of delivering the quality education they are expected to deliver.

More too could be done through medical centres, Umuganda or other community education and communication channels

¹² Pierre Damien Habumuremyi has served as the Prime Minister of Rwanda since October 2011.

and by educating girls and boys in schools to encourage smaller families. This could be done, for example, by improving access to family planning information and access to information about women’s right to contraception.

To reduce the discrimination teachers who are pregnant or breastfeeding experience, the government should ensure that legal provisions are in place that ban discrimination against pregnant women and nursing mothers, married or unmarried, in recruitment procedures and in allocation of additional duties such as supervision during national exams. These laws should also be well communicated to DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers and properly enforced, with clear and simple procedures for redress if a teacher feels she has been a victim of discrimination.

Finally, teachers at a rural school we visited requested that they be allowed to take their hour for breastfeeding, or expressing milk for their babies, before coming to work rather than at 11am. It is likely that different schools have different procedures, so our recommendation here would be to ensure that Head Teachers consult their female teaching staff about when they would prefer the hour for expressing milk or breastfeeding to be scheduled.

3.2.3 Training in gender responsiveness

Of the 12 focus groups that we conducted, only two groups of teachers – male and female teachers from the same school – reported that they had received any training in gender responsiveness:

“Actually we have had some training about gender, even if they are not so many but we have some. There are also some conferences and discussions about gender on the district level so we sometimes do attend those discussions... The training was about supporting the girls in their education, encouraging teachers to consider girls as people who can do something and also inspire them to be self-confident and if possible give them extra hours so that they could understand better” (male teacher, rural secondary school).

Even in that school there were other teachers who claimed what they had received wasn’t really comprehensive training as such and that more training was required. In all the other schools we visited, none of the teachers we asked reported that they had received any training in how to respond to the different needs of girls and boys in the classroom and the wider school environment. The government, academic, civil society and VSO education volunteer stakeholders we consulted, all reported that they knew of no such training

for teachers either in pre-service training in Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), in the universities that conduct teacher training or in-service training for teachers delivered by government or civil society organisations, except in a very small percentage of schools.

“Teachers are very ignorant about gender issues. I remember I talked about it once in the Southern Province and they said ‘But we’ve got toilets for boys and girls! And we have the garbage, the dustbin where the girls can put their sanitary pads. And we have a matron and a patron’ and that’s it. But there is no training!” (national level civil society stakeholder)

“In terms of gender, at [Kigali Institute of Education (KIE)] which is training teachers, you look at the curriculum: very little gender in the curriculum. Most of the textbooks are old, most of the textbooks are written by men. There’s this myth that there’s huge gender equality and gender awareness: but it is a myth!” (national level academic stakeholder)

“Lip service is given to gender – no one thinks they need training in this” (VSO education volunteer).

This is despite the existence of good models for gender-responsive teacher training in Rwanda. FAWE has been delivering its ‘Gender Responsive Pedagogy’ teacher training model in its two ‘Centres of Excellence’ (single-sex, girls’ schools) for some years, and has delivered one-off training for teachers in the 54 Child Friendly schools (which account for only 2% of Rwandan schools with primary level grades). FAWE told us that the training shows teachers how to:

- develop a gender-responsive lesson plan
- produce gender-disaggregated statistics for their class
- arrange the classroom so that it is gender-responsive
- examine teaching and learning material and translate gender-biased materials to ensure examples used are gender-balanced
- respond to sexual harassment and gender-based violence in and around the school, including teachers’ responsibilities to respect the teachers’ code of conduct
- respond to difficulties girls face related to menstruation and pregnancy.

Both the Bureau National de l’Enseignement Protestant (BNEP – The National Union of Protestant Teachers) and the Association of Committed Teachers (ACT) told us that the training they deliver for their members also covers gender issues, not only in the classroom but in the home life of both teachers and students:

“We talk about that issue and even about their responsibilities in the household. We discuss about how tasks are shared in a household where both the husband and his wife are teachers. We say that women should not carry out all tasks while her husband is relaxing in bar only to come for eating. We exchange ideas about gender and the role of a woman, the role of a girl, or a boy in development or leadership” (national level civil society stakeholder).

In addition, FAWE told us that they have plans to roll out their Gender Responsive Pedagogy model through in-service teacher training for a number of teachers in Bugasera district and Gatsibo, with the support of Plan International. These efforts of civil society organisations such as FAWE, BNEP and ACT can only ever reach a small proportion of teachers. For gender responsiveness to really take root, it is recommended that gender-responsive teaching methodology (whether it is based on FAWE’s model or another model) be introduced as a compulsory element of the training at TTCs and at universities (such as the Kigali Institute of Education) that have teacher training courses. FAWE reported to us that they had plans to work on this issue, by opening discussions with the TSC.

“We look forward to working with the Teacher Service Commission and see how this can be taken to the level of the TTCs, other than through in-service teacher training – that can also be done because we saw it having really wonderful results within our teachers at the FAWE schools” (national level civil society stakeholder).

We would argue that this issue is of such importance that other civil society organisations working on improving teaching methodology and on improving girls’ education should not only examine their own programmes to determine how gender-sensitive their training is, but also work together with the TSC to make sure that compulsory gender training in pre-service training in Rwanda can actually become a reality.

“Unless gender is seen as central – it’s going to remain a challenge. I would like to see a policy decision that says every student has to do a unit of gender in the same way that every student has to do one unit of entrepreneurship” (national level academic stakeholder).

As well as FAWE, BNEP, ACT and Plan International, other organisations such as VSO – who have capacity-building volunteers based at nearly all of Rwanda’s TTCs – Concern

and Wellspring could all work together, perhaps under the auspices of the Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform (RENCP), to advocate for this to be implemented.

Pre-service training alone will not be enough since this will only reach teacher trainees. The majority of teachers who are already in post will not benefit from that training, so it is vital that gender training is also provided for existing teachers. While some in-service training on gender-responsive teaching methodology exists – such as that being delivered by FAWE, BNEP and ACT – it is clear that more comprehensive coverage of all the schools in Rwanda will be required if teaching in all schools is to become gender-responsive. In-service training could be provided by government-employed teacher trainers or by civil society training providers. However it is delivered, the TSC is probably best placed to take on a coordinating role to ensure that all teachers receive ongoing gender-responsive teaching methodology training and support. A one-day, one-off training workshop will not achieve the desired change. As one academic stakeholder put it:

“Change is a difficult thing... So if a teacher has been teaching for over 30 years and you are telling him ‘You have to change your teaching in order to help this young boy or young girl’, it is difficult. So that is why they need continuous training to sensitise those teachers, both male and female teachers, so that they will be able to be sensitive to the issue of gender” (national level academic stakeholder).

3.2.4 Female teachers get fewer opportunities to participate in training

While the District and Sector Education Officers we visited insisted that women get just as many opportunities to participate in training and continuing professional development activities as their male counterparts, both female and male teachers told us a different story. Most teachers told us that the problem is particularly acute for pregnant women and nursing mothers who feel unable to attend or are unable to complete training courses:

“If there is an opportunity to increase their career, pregnant women are not given a chance like those who are not pregnant because they think that women cannot finish the course because of the problems associated with pregnancy. It’s true that they are given that opportunity to attend seminars after giving birth, but again she is not given time to breastfeed her baby” (female teacher, urban 12YBE school).

The majority of teachers we talked to reported that in most cases the problem was not that pregnant women and nursing mothers were not allowed to attend in-service training courses (organised by the school, district or NGOs). It was more to do with the barriers women face, for example:

- women who are pregnant may have health problems associated with their pregnancy
- training providers may not make sufficient allowances for mothers to breastfeed
- mothers may not be able to afford to pay for childcare while they attend the course.

It may appear to education managers that pregnant women and nursing mothers are choosing not to attend, but unless reasonable efforts to accommodate them in any training courses or seminars are made, then they are in effect being excluded.

“If someone comes with a baby, she comes with a caretaker, and I think when they have babies they don’t go for the training. They are too busy breastfeeding, maybe that is one of the reasons” (national level civil society stakeholder).

More worryingly, in a significant number of cases however, teachers told us that pregnant and nursing mothers were simply not allowed to attend such courses. It is clear that where pregnant or nursing mothers are being told that they are not allowed to attend in-service training courses, this amounts to serious discrimination.

As well as courses provided locally it seems that far fewer women enrol for university pre-service teacher training courses. While teacher training courses at Kigali Institute of Education (which provides most of the pre-service teacher training for lower and upper secondary education) are open to both men and women, the Rwanda Education Statistics January 2012 show that of the 8,527 students enrolled, only 34% were women (Ministry of Education, 2012: 32). As the stakeholders we interviewed told us, there are a number of reasons for this, for example parents’ preference for boys when family finances only allow them to pay university tuition fees for one of their children:

“If there is enough money to put one child through university it will be the boy. So then the girls go into teacher training while their brothers go on to do a university degree” (national level civil society stakeholder).

Another reason, we were told, is the gendered division of labour that dictates that the women are burdened with the majority of domestic work and childcare responsibilities after marriage:

“They are so busy having children, feeding the children, fetching the water, cooking, cleaning and working in the field sometimes as well as teaching full-time... particularly in the rural schools. To try to study on top of that is almost impossible” (national level civil society stakeholder).

Since studying to become a secondary teacher would mean moving to the city it also means leaving the family at home, which acts as another barrier to women’s access. While in theory the distance education programme run by KIE should make it easier for women to study without having to leave home, in practice the majority of rural primary teachers have no electricity in the home, which means they can’t study at night.

All of this helps to explain why there are fewer women teachers in secondary grades and why there are so few women in education management positions (eg Head Teachers, other school level management roles, District and Sector Education Officers). In addition, since education for girls has only become common in the past couple of decades, there is only a small pool of women who have the qualifications required for management roles. This pool will increase over time, but discrimination against pregnant women and nursing mothers in terms of their access to training and continuing professional development will only prolong this gender imbalance.

During the course of our research we came across isolated examples of good practice, which it might be useful to share with DEOs, SEOs and any other education managers or NGOs responsible for providing in-service training¹³:

As well as sharing examples of good practice, the Ministry of Education should take steps to ensure that discrimination against pregnant women and nursing mothers ends so that access to in-service training opportunities is no longer impeded. This will require communication to all education managers responsible for commissioning or organising in-service training, and communication with government and NGO training providers to ensure that they are aware of pregnant and nursing teachers’ rights to equal access to training.

¹³ For more information about these examples of best practice please contact the DEO of Gisagara district, BNEP and Wellspring, who provided the examples given.

As the examples above illustrate, ensuring nursing mothers can attend may mean making reasonable adjustments to training schedules and ensuring that training venues have adequate facilities for mothers who need to breastfeed or organise childcare while they attend the training. And since we have established that most primary level female teachers cannot afford to hire their own babysitters, training budgets should also include funds for childcare to ensure that nursing mothers can attend.

“These women need advocacy and to be given equal opportunities as others because getting pregnant, with this family planning issue, has become like a crime. We rarely get those training opportunities so missing the few is bad” (female teacher, rural 9YBE school).

The same principle applies to primary level female teachers wishing to train to become secondary teachers by applying to one of the courses at KIE or one of the Colleges of Education.

“If we’re saying the barriers to women getting management positions are inability to study because (a) they don’t have the finance and (b) they don’t have the time, then obviously the solutions are give them the finance, give them the time. So childcare could be provided in institutions that offer degrees... [I]f you want to or need to go and study 50 miles away, which is quite likely if you’re living in a village, how likely is it that a mother is going to be able to be away from her children for long periods of time?” (national level civil society stakeholder)

To address the gender imbalance at KIE and the two Colleges of Education that provide secondary teaching qualifications (known as A1 and A0), it may be worth considering offering scholarships to female primary teachers who wish to study for a secondary teaching qualification. For example, currently, while tuition fees for the KIE distance learning programme are financed by the government, maintenance costs (transportation, accommodation, food expenses, etc) are borne by the teachers themselves (JICA, 2012: 37). As a temporary measure, in the same way that there is a temporary lower pass mark for girls in the national exams, maintenance grants could be offered to female primary teachers wishing to study for their secondary teaching qualification. While this might be unpopular with male teachers, in much the same way as the lower pass mark is unpopular with boys, it would be worthwhile if it begins to address the gender imbalance in the secondary teaching staff and in education management roles.

Best practice in gender-sensitive in-service teacher training

“They might participate in the CPD [continuing professional development] and training but it is not very easy for them. Before starting any sort of seminar or training, we provide their mentors with information to facilitate them or inform the one in charge from MINEDUC... it is our duty and responsibility to inform the trainer before in order to let them breastfeed their kid” (District Education Officer, rural district).

“We even had a case of a woman who gave birth while she was in our training here in Kigali. It is obvious that she knew she was about to give birth and she knew also that there is no problem for us. For us breastfeeding, giving birth and even having children should not be a barrier for a female teacher to not attending training. But as trainers we have to do our best to facilitate them, that is our commitment” (national level civil society stakeholder).

“We have mothers’ rooms at our training... where they can put their baby and feed them—they usually bring someone with them and then we will pay for the food and the transport. But the mothers’ room is in the training hall so if they need to feed the baby they can still hear the training, so it gives them the flexibility” (national level civil society stakeholder).



As well as financial assistance, KIE and the two Colleges of Education should provide childcare facilities – a crèche or nursery with childcare staff employed by the training institutions – to enable nursing mothers and those with young children to attend their teacher training courses. As the stakeholder quoted above suggests, without the finance and the time (which childcare facilities would give them) female primary teachers are likely to continue to be dissuaded from attending secondary teacher training courses, and the gender imbalance at secondary schools will persist. If the Ministry is serious about tackling the gender imbalance in secondary teaching and education management roles, maintenance grants to encourage female applicants and childcare facilities at training institutions could go a long way towards the achievement of this goal.

3.2.5 Female teachers bear an unequal share of domestic work

The fact that Rwandan women shoulder an unequal share of household chores and childcare responsibilities is perhaps an important underlying cause of the shortage of women in secondary teaching and education management roles. Female teachers told us that they are exhausted by the combination of their domestic responsibilities and the demands of working full time. As we established in section 3.2.2, the salary is so low female teachers can't afford the housekeepers that many working women in Rwanda rely on, and the gendered division of labour in the home means that female teachers and their daughters are responsible for the vast majority of cooking, cleaning, washing and other household chores:

“We are in charge of our children when they are sick for example more than our husbands do, arriving at school late because of many responsibilities. For example we can be absent from school not because we want to but because we take our children to hospitals. We have more responsibilities in terms of family chores than men” (female teacher, rural 9YBE school).

In addition to domestic and professional responsibilities, female teachers in rural areas often have to get involved in farming activities on top of their other responsibilities. Male teachers in comparison have few domestic and agricultural duties and therefore have far more time for lesson planning: which can lead to the perception that, in the school setting, men are more productive than women.

“We should not forget that women have many responsibilities. Male teachers will teach for the required time and add some extra time, but women rush back home after work because she left the baby at home, or she wants to go and cook the evening meal. Many home activities are considered to be done only by women in Rwandan society and this makes their productivity in other sectors become low compared to that of men” (parent, remote 9YBE school).

The VSO volunteers we consulted reported that many of the female teachers they work with are too tired to be able to plan and deliver lessons effectively. They reported cases of female teachers falling asleep at school because they are so exhausted, and numerous instances of empty classrooms when female teachers are absent because of their domestic and childcare responsibilities. As a result, female teachers are often criticised for their perceived poor performance:

“Female teachers have no time to rest because of many tasks at home; therefore making lesson plans is not always simple. Little salary leads to poor addressing of home needs and this in turn affects to performance of students” (parent, urban private secondary school).

As discussed in the previous section, another effect of the unequal division of domestic work and childcare is that access to higher education courses leading to secondary teaching qualifications is more difficult for female primary teachers with family responsibilities. It also acts as a powerful barrier to female teachers when considering whether to apply for management roles:

“I think that the worry of leaving the family in trouble has an impact on women to the extent of stopping them from applying in management positions, for example she can think about how her family could manage family chores while she is on duty and decide to not apply” (female teacher, rural secondary school).

One DEO observed that the women who have become Head Teachers in his district had either been promoted before they had got married, and therefore had no childcare responsibilities, or they were older women whose children had grown up and so they were once more unhindered by childcare responsibilities. This demonstrates how much of a barrier their reproductive role is to women’s career advancement.

When we asked research participants what they thought is the cause of this unequal division of domestic and childcare responsibilities, they cited the attitudes to gender roles (discussed in section 3.1) but also noted that unlike other African countries where it is common for grandparents to help with childcare and domestic chores, enabling women to go out to work more easily, in Rwanda families are unable to rely on grandparents if they lost them during the genocide.

Clearly attitudes towards gender roles and the division of labour between husbands and wives in the home are changing fast, especially in urban areas. And in the few cases where gender training is being provided, the issue of the domestic division of labour is being discussed:

“In our trainings we also try to teach men that the household is for a wife and her husband. If a woman gets pregnant as this is their nature, the man should do some work for her, and be near her to help and understand her. We really brief men on this subject in our trainings” (national level civil society stakeholder).

But it is also clear that there is still a long way to go before the men and boys of Rwanda take on their fair share of domestic and childcare duties. Female teachers we spoke to called for training or awareness-raising on gender equality and family planning, not just for teachers but for all members of Rwandan society. Such training or awareness-raising discussions about what would be a more equal division of domestic labour between men and women could perhaps be delivered through the monthly Umuganda gatherings, although it would have to be on an ongoing basis. In addition, attitudes to gender roles could be targeted through inclusion of challenging storylines in popular radio and TV soap operas, debates and discussions, or in articles in the print media.

“Men should understand that they can be in charge of taking care of their families when their wives are home or on duty” (female teacher, rural secondary school).

As well as targeting adults through Umuganda and the national print and broadcast media, attitudes of school students also need to be targeted. The changes to the curriculum and to textbooks that have made examples and images used in lessons more gender-sensitive are a good start. But perhaps the most effective method of raising awareness about gender

equality among students that we came across during the course of our research was the Tuseme ('Speak Out') gender clubs established by FAWE. See section 3.4.2 for a discussion of gender clubs.

We asked teachers who attended the national level meeting of research participants what the benefits of changing attitudes towards gender roles would be. They told us that, for female teachers specifically, a more equal division of domestic work and childcare between men and women would mean that:

- Female teachers' productivity is likely to increase, because they will be less tired and have more time for lesson planning.
- They will be able to work more effectively and efficiently and therefore be able to deliver a better quality of education.
- Students will be the ultimate beneficiaries as their performance will improve as the quality of education they receive improves.
- Female teachers will be able to apply for management roles more easily and will therefore act as more effective role models for girls.
- Female teachers will have more time to get involved with extracurricular government programmes (eg helping with health promotion activities, anti-GBV campaigns, elections, etc).

3.3 Students' problems

The top two problems reported by students, male and female alike, were the problems associated with menstruation, and with pregnancy and childcare. We will devote this section to analysing these two issues, since they were the most commonly reported problems by a wide margin.

There is not enough space in this report to analyse the remaining issues in depth (poverty-related problems; problems faced by students with disabilities; the lower pass mark for girls; gender-based violence, sexual harassment or sex for marks; the unequal division of domestic work; girls' lack of confidence; the effect of smoking, drugs, alcohol, gangs or 'vagabondism' on boys' attendance and performance; the effect of agricultural or other work on boys' attendance and performance; girls spending too much time with sugar daddies or boyfriends; and parents' illiteracy or shortage of time which means they can't help with homework or they don't

value education). That's not to say that these issues aren't important, but since not all issues can be tackled at once we can at least start with those issues that were prioritised by the students themselves. It's interesting to note the issues that got so few mentions that they didn't even make it onto the chart. Issues that, before we began the research process, we thought might come up – like early or forced marriage, gender bias of teachers, inappropriate school discipline (beating or caning students) – were mentioned much less than expected. This should be celebrated if early or forced marriage is really becoming less of an issue, although it could be that students and teachers talked less about this because it is a taboo subject. The fact that students didn't complain of gender bias from teachers tallies with the results of our own classroom observations and so we can be confident in celebrating that advance, along with the indication that teachers are finding more humane ways of disciplining students than with canes and belts.

3.3.1 Menstruation-related problems that affect girls' attendance and performance

"What I hate about being a girl is my period pains, I feel bad when I am on bed and start wishing if I were a boy it could not be the same " (female student, rural 9YBE school).

Rwanda has made great strides in recent years in its efforts to reduce the effect girls' menstruation periods have on their school attendance and exam performance. Civil society leaders to whom we talked claimed that the turning point came in 2010 after a year-long campaign called 'Breaking Silence on Menstruation to Keep Girls in Schools'¹⁴ which involved public marches and discussions about the issue (The Rwanda Focus, 2010).

"I would say it really had a big boom. We were talking about it on the radio, on the television, in the newspaper, everything. We were saying girls should take pride in having their menstruation. Boys should not believe the myth that if there is blood that means the girl has had sex. Boys should support the girls. After the campaign, for the first time we saw the Ministry of Education provide a budget for sanitary pads" (national level civil society stakeholder).

As a result, all schools now have access to funding for the provision of sanitary pads to menstruating girls. Indeed all six schools that we visited reported that they had a supply of sanitary pads available. Issues remain about the sufficiency

¹⁴ The campaign was organised by the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Rwanda, Sustainable Health Enterprises (SHE), the Rwandan National Youth Council, the Rwandan National Women Council, New Dawn Associates, the Rwanda Association of University Women, and Young Women in Entrepreneurship and Leadership and supported by Plan International and CARE International.

of the funds to meet the demand for sanitary and other materials girls need to reduce menstruation-related absenteeism, but it must be celebrated that this progressive first step has been taken.

Some of the schools we visited reported very positive progress since the introduction of free sanitary pads, including reductions in the number of times that female students had to return home during their menstruation periods. One school also supplied a clean change of underwear for girls that needed it, a measure which reportedly reduced the need for girls to go home during lesson time.

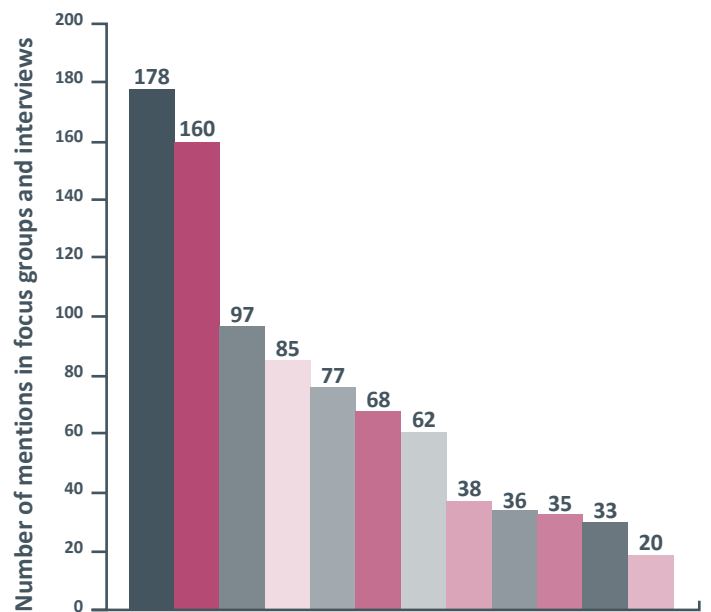
In most of the schools we visited, female teachers had taken on the role of being the counsellors for girls (sometimes referred to as ‘Matrons’, with ‘Patrons’ also assigned to deal with boys’ problems). Their role is to look after girls during their menstruation periods: providing them with counselling, sanitary pads and advice on how to use them. We were told by the civil society stakeholders we interviewed that in addition Matrons often get involved in advocating for the school to build private rooms with beds and showers, etc.

In addition, the government has been encouraging PTCs to build private rooms with showers or washing facilities to enable girls to clean themselves after unexpected menstruation, or rest without having to return home and miss as many lessons. Civil society stakeholders we talked to reported that this has had some success, for example:

“Concern has done a lot of work in Huye, supporting PTCs. They have worked with very poor schools in very rural areas and they have showers... and that hasn’t been paid for by Concern, that’s been paid for by the parents. The parents have even bought the land in one school to build the shower block on and then built it” (national level civil society stakeholder).

Despite these impressive advances, there is no room for complacency: the system has not yet been perfected and, as a result, girls’ attendance and performance is still being seriously affected for a number of reasons. The reason most often quoted by the female students we spoke to was the unreliability of the supply of sanitary pads. We recorded many complaints similar to this one by a female student, from students, teachers, Head Teachers and parents alike:

Problems faced by students



- Menstruation-related problems which affect girls’ attendance and performance
- Pregnancy and childcare-related problems which affect girls’ attendance and performance
- Poverty-related problems (students go hungry, can’t afford fees, uniforms scholastic materials, etc)
- Problems faced by students with disabilities
- The lower pass mark for girls
- Gender-based violence, sexual harassment or sex for marks
- Unequal division of domestic work affects girls’ attendance and performance
- Girls lack confidence
- Boys’ attendance and performance affected by smoking, drugs, alcohol, gangs or “vagabondism”
- Boys’ attendance and studies affected by agricultural and other work
- Girls’ spending too much time with sugar daddies and boyfriends
- Parents’ alternancy or lack of time mean they can’t help with homework or they don’t value education



“When you run out of sanitary pads during your period here at school, you get that dirtiness on you! This time we do not have sanitary pads, but they used to bring them here at school but now they do not have money” (female student, rural 9YBE school).

The cause that was reported to us repeatedly in the schools we visited is that the funding intended for the purchase of sanitary materials is both insufficient to meet the demand and often arrives late, preventing schools from keeping a constant supply in place. The shortage can lead to thefts of sanitary pads which are already in short supply, or favouritism on the part of teachers responsible for distributing the pads to girls in need:

“They should buy us sanitary pads again. Sometimes students could steal them while the store was open; other times teachers could give either sanitary pads or underwear to students they are their friends with and probably this is the reason why the leader stopped buying them” (female student, rural 9YBE school).

One Head Teacher explained that since parents can rarely afford to purchase sanitary pads for their daughters, the only supply available to them is that provided by the school. In addition to the unreliable supply of sanitary pads, the lack of adequate washing facilities is another barrier to girls being able to stay in school during their menstruation periods.

We were told by the civil society stakeholders we spoke to that progress in the construction of private rooms with showers or washing facilities has been patchy since it is dependent on the enthusiasm and commitment of the Head Teacher and PTC members to raise the funds themselves. These reports were supported by our own research, in which of the four 9 or 12 year basic education schools we visited, while all had gender-segregated toilets, none had showers or washing facilities available for girls to use. The only two schools we visited that did have showers were both secondary level boarding schools (a rural government primary teacher training college, and an urban private secondary school) which had showers in the student dormitories that female students could use following unexpected menstruation. Some of the schools we visited did have plans to construct such facilities:

“We are doing our best to build a private room for girls. The former we had is no more comfortable and is badly equipped because of lack of financial means. We intend to build a room equipped with showers and any other material they need. In the past year we provided them with knickers, toilet soap... so that if they face a problem of menstruation period they can get a private room, somewhere they feel at ease” (male Head Teacher, remote 9YBE school).

Other significant barriers to girls being able to stay in school during menstruation are the shortage of painkillers to relieve period pains, and mattresses to allow girls who are in pain to rest and recuperate.

“Another problem is how the private room for girls is supplied with materials, although we receive that money, the supplies to buy are precisely listed like basins, scissors, sanitary pads, mirrors; knickers... showers are needed, so a girl can wash herself, underwear, a mattress and bed, and painkillers are needed too, but there are no funds” (female Head Teacher, rural 9YBE school).

In the absence of washing facilities at the school, teachers have no option but to send the girls home. And one Head Teacher told us that, because they don't have a supply of painkillers at the school, when a girl is in pain they have to send her to the local health centre to get a pill and then come back to class, wasting even more hours of learning time.

Finally, girls in one school said that their school hadn't yet introduced a system of Matrons and Patrons for girls and boys to go to with their problems. They told us that the absence of female counsellors discourages them from coming to school during their menstruation periods. They called for their school to introduce female counsellors for them to turn to:

“School counsellors should be women; when they are males you cannot feel free to tell them everything, besides with a sweater around your waist, females can detect the problem from distance and immediately tell you what to do” (female student, rural 9YBE school).

The female students we spoke to told us that they are embarrassed to ask a male teacher for permission to leave the class if they menstruate unexpectedly. They told us that sometimes male teachers do not understand why girls are asking to leave the class and so force them to stay until the end of the class. Understandably this makes girls feel

uncomfortable, and less likely to want to come to school when they know that their period is due.

With all these barriers stacked up against them – insufficient supply of sanitary pads, inadequate washing facilities, absence of painkillers and mattresses and no female counsellors to turn to and/or insensitive male teachers – it's not surprising that girls absent themselves from school during their menstruation periods. As a result, they miss many hours of teaching and learning compared to their brothers – up to six days a month:

“We are not present in class all the days of a month. The shortest menstrual period takes between three and four days and there are some with a longer one who have painful period that can last a whole week without attending class. This can result in getting less marks than the girl should get because the teachers explained many things when she was absent” (female student, rural secondary school).

“Particularly in Rwanda's knowledge-based system, where examinations are knowledge-focused, and lessons are about memorising and regurgitating facts and figures, this puts girls at a distinct disadvantage. Since they are missing so much of the curriculum, there are huge chunks of knowledge that they are simply missing out on – which goes a long way towards explaining why girls' examination performance is so much lower than that of boys. As one teacher put it: ‘It is like boys have more time than girls’ “ (female teacher, remote 9YBE school).

As well as missing days or even a whole week's worth of lessons per month, the symptoms associated with menstruation – uterine cramps, fatigue, nausea, mood swings, etc – can affect girls' ability to concentrate on learning when they are able to attend lessons. As one teacher put it:

“When girls get their monthly period, they become shy and are just uncomfortable to express themselves easily as they used to (asking questions, answering them, participating in class, etc.), the whole period here affects them both in behaviour and in capacity: it is very difficult for them to follow in class when they do not feel well contrary to boys who are always in a good mood” (female teacher, rural secondary school).

While some studies from other countries have disputed the relationship between the provision of sanitary pads and girls'

absenteeism and performance (Oster and Thornton, 2011), the literature is far from conclusive. Other studies claim a direct causal link between the provision of sanitary pads and reduced absenteeism and improved performance (Crofts and Fisher, 2012; Montgomery et al, 2012; Wilson et al, 2012).

So what more needs to be done to enable girls to attend school more easily during their menstruation periods and to improve their ability to concentrate on learning while in class? By far the most often repeated demand from research participants when we asked them this question was the demand for increases and more reliable funding for buying the materials girls need. Head Teachers need to be given enough funds to be able to purchase:

- a supply of sanitary pads sufficient to meet demand
- washing facilities – whether they be showers or merely running water available in a private room
- a mattress to enable girls to rest and recuperate at school without having to miss the entire day's lessons
- a constant supply of painkillers to enable girls to return to class more quickly and be able to concentrate on learning when they are there
- a supply of soap and spare underwear to enable girls to clean themselves and change without having to return home.

The supply of underwear was particularly important to the female students:

“I want to add that when it is possible they should buy us pairs of underwear so as to clean one, hang it up in our room and put on another while going back in class” (female student, rural 9YBE school).

While the construction of private rooms with showers or washing facilities might require the largest financial outlay, it is vital that schools are provided with funding to enable them to complete this construction. Leaving this task to PTCs and their ability to fundraise will inevitably mean that schools in the poorest areas may not be able to raise the funds required. And as one teacher pointed out, with the increasing numbers of girls enrolled in 9YBE and secondary schools alike, it may be that one private room with washing facilities may not be enough:

“I see that the number of girl students increases. This would require increasing the number of private rooms to ensure

that girls do not find a reason to suspend class, saying that the only private room is busy” (male teacher, rural 9YBE school).

Participants also stressed the importance of gender clubs as places where girls can be taught about menstruation. Similarly boys and male teachers should be included in such gender clubs so that they become more sensitive to girls' needs and realise that menstruation is a normal part of girls' and women's lives.

Civil society stakeholders stressed that providing funds through capitation grants to Head Teachers is not enough on its own: a better system for monitoring whether the funds are getting to the schools on time, are sufficient to meet the schools' requirements and are being spent on the right things needs to be established. Given the recent introduction of School Inspectors at Sector level (New Times, 2011a) it is possible that this task could become part of their responsibility. Currently the effectiveness of funding appears to be monitored by the national level Girls' Education Task Force and by the Joint Action Forum for Girls' Education (JAFGE) at district level. However, since in many districts the JAFGE appears not to be functioning well, perhaps it is more appropriate to make this into an Inspectorate responsibility.

3.3.2 Pregnancy-related problems that affect girls' attendance and performance

“I have just given birth; I must give up my studies why should I go back to school? School is over for me” (female student, remote 9YBE school).

“What I hate most about being a girl in our times; is the shame of undesired pregnancy. It is a shame and we are responsible for that! Girls misbehave nowadays; premarital sex results in undesired pregnancy everywhere in our country while still living with parents. For me it is alarming!” (female student, rural 9YBE school)

It is unclear how many teenage pregnancies there are. One newspaper report cited research conducted in 2010 which showed that there were over 600 unintended pregnancies among students from primary and secondary schools¹⁵. However, the same article reported that a single district in the Western Province had a count of 300 teenage pregnancies (The Rwanda Focus, 2012). Given that there

¹⁵ In 2010 there were 1,166,770 female primary school students and 215,661 female secondary school students.

were 300 teenage pregnancies in one district, we can surely conclude that the nationwide estimate of 600 vastly understates the problem. If we extrapolate, a scenario in which there were 300 unintended student pregnancies in each of the 30 districts of Rwanda would result in a national figure closer to 9,000 unintended student pregnancies.

A national level government stakeholder told us that the policy in Rwanda is that a girl who conceives is supposed to study until she is no longer able to. However, students themselves, in the six schools we visited, paint a very different picture. On becoming aware of her pregnancy, one of three things can happen: (1) The girl absents herself from school because of the disgrace and shame associated with childbirth out of wedlock in Rwandan culture. (2) If the school finds out that she is pregnant, in the vast majority of cases she is instantly dismissed. Or (3) if her parents find out, she is likely to be withdrawn from school by them, and is often expelled from the family home – such is the level of shame attached to childbirth before marriage.

“It is not easy because in Rwandan culture, when a girl gets pregnant it is not only a big shame on her but also on the whole family. She can fear to return to school thinking that people will continue to laugh at her” (male student, rural 9YBE school).

The Head Teachers, teachers and parents we interviewed all told us that on discovering that a female student is pregnant the default response from the school is to advise or instruct her to leave school and live with her family until after her child is born, in order to avoid the humiliation and shame that she would be subjected to if she were to stay in school. One school told us that girls who become pregnant do have the right to study until they give birth – but only if they study at home. One explanation we were given for this is that Head Teachers generally don't want to accept girls back into their school because they think it will encourage other girls to get pregnant.

“When a young girl is pregnant immediately she drops out of the school, it is known that no school allows any student to study being pregnant” (male teacher, remote 9YBE school).

While official policy may states that girls are allowed to study at school while pregnant, it seems that that message hasn't reached teachers and Head Teachers yet. All the Head

Teachers and teachers we talked to claimed that they do make efforts to ensure that her parents understand the situation and are willing to accommodate her until after the child is born. However, we were told that it is common for parents to reject their daughter on discovery of her condition:

“Recently there was a girl who was expelled from school and we went to the Dad and the Dad expelled her. He said ‘I’ve paid my money for you to go to school to study; I didn’t pay for you to go and conceive!’ And the girl went to the Auntie” (national level civil society stakeholder).

Even if her parents don't expel her from the family home, we heard a number of reports that parents decide to stop paying school fees for their daughter. If they have other daughters, it was suggested, it may also weaken their willingness to pay their school fees too: “there is no use to pay for girls who study today and get pregnant tomorrow!” (female student, rural 9YBE school). In such a scenario, teenage pregnancy can lead to not only one but all girls in a family being prevented from completing their education. It could be that the prevalence of teenage pregnancy is actually reinforcing the traditional preference to fund boys' education when family finances are limited. And the fear of rejection by the family and the community can lead girls to shockingly desperate measures:

“Those female students who get pregnant are often caught when they have already aborted their child and even killed them by throwing the newborn in toilets and elsewhere, because they are afraid of being rejected by their families or by school authorities. This fear they feel leads them to kill their infants and risk also their life when they abort in inappropriate conditions” (male student, rural secondary school).

All Head Teachers also claimed that they welcome girls back to school after the child has been born. However, we did hear of a number of cases in which both the girl and the boy involved were expelled:

“There happened a case in this school in which a male student made a female student pregnant from their home area. When the girl asked the boy about it, the boy asked her to keep it secret and promised to marry her after his studies. The school administration decided to expel them from school in order to give a lesson for anyone who would dare do so” (male teacher, rural secondary school).

Teachers expressed their frustration about the difficulties they faced determining who had fathered the children of the pregnant girls they had dealt with. Often the school intervenes by taking the girl to the police and the hospital in an attempt to learn the identity of the father:

“When such a problem happens within the school we do our best to take her to the police who do interviews in order to investigate and find who did it. The girl who is pregnant is often taken to the hospital for examination, if doctor finds that it is a mature man who impregnated the girl, he can be sent to the court. And when the doctor finds that it is a boy child in the same age as the girl, the boy child may be sent to one of the centres where the government keeps difficult children for some months” (male teacher, remote 9YBE school).

We were told that often the boy who has been identified will deny that he is the father, but, if he admits it and the sex is determined to be consensual, the girls’ parents will negotiate with his parents and arrange for them to be married. In other cases boys are expelled from their homes, from the school or if the sex was not consensual they are sent to government detention centres. But this is only if the boy can be identified: in the vast majority of cases, we were told, he never is:

“Think about the boy. The boy will continue school. And the girl can’t. She will not continue in the same school, and go to another school, maybe it is far from her. There is a big problem there I think” (national level civil society stakeholder).

So in addition to the time a girl has missed from lessons because of menstruation-related problems, if a girl becomes pregnant she will miss at least six months of lessons while she gives birth to and nurses her infant child. Teachers told us that when this happens girls who do manage to return to school after childbirth are forced to repeat the entire year as there is no system in place for them to catch up on the lessons they have missed.

“At this time the boy who impregnated me will be almost done with studies while I will be catching up with delays” (female student, rural secondary school).

The official line from the Girls’ Education Policy, in one of the ‘Affirmative Actions’, is that schools are advised to “place special emphasis for re-entry for girls who become pregnant during their education” (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 15).

Teachers, Head Teachers, SEOs and DEOs had all heard of this new policy, since all assured us that girls are indeed welcome to re-enter their schools after they have given birth and found someone to look after their child when they are at school. The story we heard from girls themselves, however, is that in practice it is difficult for them to return to school. This may be because they are unable to afford childcare, because their family is not able or not willing to help with childcare or because of the cultural attitudes of the community in which they live which dictates that unmarried mothers should not go to school. Some of the schools we visited reported that they did allow girls time out from lessons to breastfeed their child – but no school would allow a girl to bring her child into lessons. In practice, if girls do return to school, because of the shame attached to unmarried motherhood they are more likely to enrol in a different school, such as a vocational school.

“Because they feel ashamed and they isolate themselves from groups of girls in which they used to belong... It is obvious that any girl from our school who gets pregnant, would never accept to come back but if she is willing she can go to a vocational school or to any other school that receives girls who gave birth” (female student, rural 9YBE school).

The more likely outcome, however, is that the girl will drop out of school entirely. The Head Teachers at the six schools we visited were all very aware of the problem that teenage pregnancy posed, and had established various strategies in an attempt to prevent girls from dropping out after becoming pregnant. These strategies ranged from inviting the girl’s parents into the school to discuss the matter, providing counselling to the girl about her options for returning to school after the child is born or ensuring her health needs are met.

“Normally, when a girl gets pregnant we give her some pieces of advice and we inform the community health workers for a follow-up, and we also teach her parents how they should take care of her and help her until she gives birth. We also encourage her to come back to school after giving birth” (male teacher, rural 9YBE school).

One of the schools we visited also reported that they also took measures to prevent teenage pregnancies by educating girls about reproductive and sexual health in gender clubs, efforts that seemed to be resulting in a reduction in teenage pregnancy rates:



“We sensitise them a lot and we show them examples of their elders who gave birth to unpredicted children and who live a precarious life. So, girls now take precautions. Last year we had one case of a girl who got pregnant, no case yet for this year has been announced” (female Head Teacher, remote 9YBE school).

However, it was clear that at other schools, unwanted student pregnancy remains a significant problem and that there is a need for similar strategies. Parents at all the schools we visited called for more education on sex and reproductive health. Given that discussion of sex and sexuality is taboo in Rwandan families, unless the school takes on this role, girls will remain ignorant of how to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy. Girls themselves echoed their parents’ calls for better education about reproductive health, sex and relationships in schools as a preventative measure:

“They can help by explaining us about changes that occur on the behavioural level; they should come and say ‘students this situation or that endangers your lives and this is how you should cope with it’” (female student, 9YBE school).

Parents also called for a more aggressive response from schools when it becomes clear that a family has rejected their daughter because of her pregnancy. They called for Head Teachers to insist that parents respect the rights of their daughter to an education even after becoming pregnant. One Head Teacher agreed:

“Parents should bear in their mind that it is not these girls’ choice to have undesired pregnancy. I say this because when you examine girls with that problem, they are not the immoral ones; accidents happen. They still have a right to an education!” (female Head Teacher, rural 9YBE school).

Another idea generated by parents was for the school to use its resources to incentivise girls who have given birth to return to school. They suggested that if the school has cows (as some schools do) it could offer her a litre of cow’s milk per day to help her to feed the child. Male students in one school had a similar idea to help girls who become pregnant while at school avoid health problems by improving their diet:

“What happens here is that the pregnant girl is first of all ashamed and she does not feel herself with the world in the midst of her mates. And when she gets in dining hall, she can hardly eat. I think if school authorities notice that

such a female student is pregnant, why not put her on the list of the students who have the right to a special diet?” (male students, rural secondary school).

Students, male and female, also called for:

- Peer support visits to girls who have given birth, to demonstrate to the young mother that she has not been shunned by her classmates and to persuade her to return to her studies as soon as she is able. This fits neatly with the Rwandan tradition of visiting new mothers and their newborn babies for naming ceremonies:

“Where I studied before coming here there was a female student who gave birth to a child; and with school help, we classmates paid her a visit and encouraged her to resume school. She came back. I think this is a good example to follow” (male student, rural secondary school).

- Counselling for pregnant girls and their parents to ensure they look after their daughter during and after her pregnancy and are supportive of her right to return to school.

“There should be a continuous follow up upon her to avoid other problems that can come after frustration and isolation. The mother of the girl loses her dignity, so parents should know that when a girl gets pregnant it is not the end of her life. Still, she is important and society owes her respect like other girls. She shouldn’t be rejected by the community” (female student, urban 9YBE school).

- Referring to cases where girls who become pregnant are rejected by their families on discovery of their condition, students called for funding for accommodation for girls who have been made homeless by their families:

“Please ask the ministry – because this situation can happen – to put aside a small budget for those girls, just a small fund because they are not many who face this problem. They must be cared for to prevent them from feeling hopeless and keep them out of a second risk” (male student, rural secondary school).

- Sensitisation of other students – through gender clubs, school assemblies, sex and reproductive health lessons, etc – about the rights of girls who have become pregnant, and the lessons they can share with their fellow students:

“Other girls should learn from her with zero violence or intimidation on the pregnant girl. She should be invited to advise other young girls instead of pouring blame on her” (female student, rural 9YBE school).

Despite calls by some for greater sanctions on boys who father children while still in school, one focus group of male teachers called for the respect of boys’ right to an education too. They argued that the knee-jerk reaction – to expel the boy or send him to a detention centre for difficult children – should be the last resort only.

“If the boy did not rape the girl, that girl is sent back home and given a chance to return to school after giving birth, my suggestion is that this also would be done for the boy in order to promote equality and justice... of course we cannot allow both of them to return to the same school” (male teacher, rural secondary school).

Instead they argued that the boy – not the girl – should be transferred to another school, so as to administer a sanction, while still respecting the boy’s right to an education.

An additional recommendation arose from the workshop we conducted with VSO education volunteers. They suggested that healthcare professionals should be sensitised to avoid stigmatising students who come to them for advice on contraception. It should be noted that condoms are not available in Rwandan secondary schools – despite a campaign to introduce them in 2011, the proposal was rejected by the Ministry of Health. A campaign led by HIV organisations had called for condom distribution in secondary schools, but churches had argued that it would encourage promiscuity and repeated their call for abstinence (New Times, 2011b).

3.4 School and district level management issues

By far the biggest issue that research participants reported to us, in terms of school and district level management issues, was the lack of gender balance in teaching and administrative staff both in schools and in Sector and District level Education Offices. We will therefore focus on the issue of gender balance in this section, touching briefly on other gender-related school and district level management issues raised by research participants.

School and district level management issues

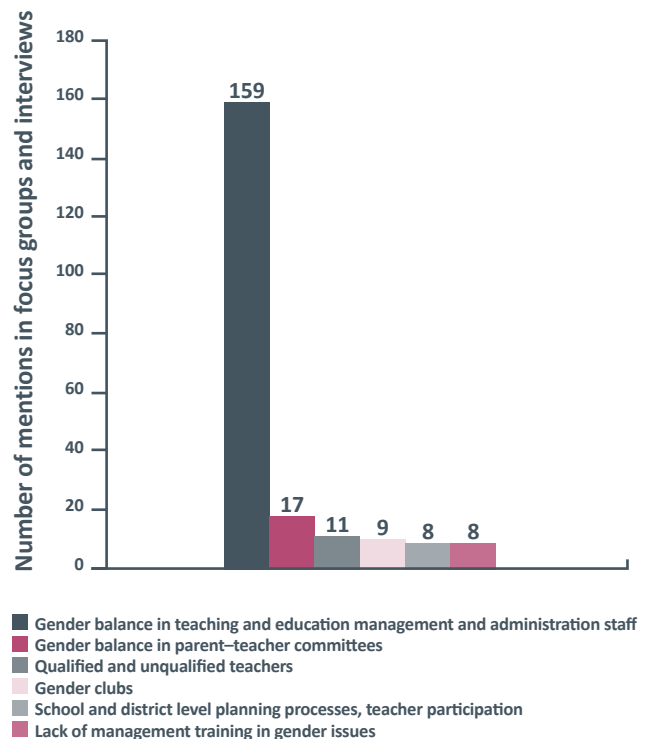


Table 9: Primary teachers gender composition

Primary teachers	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total number of teachers	31,037	35,672	35,664	36,352	40,299
Male teachers	14,449	16,711	16,770	16,838	19,513
% of male teachers	46.6%	46.8%	47.0%	46.3%	48.4%
Female teachers	16,588	18,961	18,894	19,514	20,786
% of female teachers	53.4%	53.2%	53.0%	53.7%	51.6%

(Ministry of Education, 2012: 8)

Table 10: Secondary teachers gender composition

Secondary teachers	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total number of teachers	12,103	10,187	14,426	14,477	20,522
Male teachers	9,016	7,691	10,324	10,600	14,818
Female teachers	3,087	2,496	4,102	3,877	5,704
% of male teachers	74.5%	75.5%	71.6%	73.2%	72.2%
% of female teachers	25.5%	24.5%	28.4%	26.8%	27.8%

(Ministry of Education, 2012: 8)

3.4.1 Gender balance in teaching and education management and administration staff

From what research participants told us, and from looking at the statistics, gender balance in teaching and education management (at the primary and secondary levels of the Rwandan education system) appears to have three dimensions. First, that there seems to be gender balance at the primary level (as indicated in table 9) although some participants reported that women tended to be concentrated in the lower, less well-paid grades.

Second, they reported that there are far fewer women teaching in secondary grades (as indicated in table 10), although the proportion of women is growing slowly.

Third, they reported that women who hold management positions (eg Head Teacher, Sector or District Education Officer posts) are greatly outnumbered by their male counterparts. The Ministry of Education's published statistics don't record the number of male and female Head Teachers, Sector or District Education Officers, but the 2008 Girls' Education Policy stated that 'only a small minority of head-teachers are female' (Ministry of Education, 2008b: 10). National level research participants (both government and civil society) confirmed that this remains the case, and that there were also very few female SEOs and DEOs, from their experience.

The effects of this lack of gender balance became clear when we asked students about the issue. It was clear that when

there was a shortage of female teachers, as there is in many secondary schools and in secondary grades at 9YBE schools, female students feel less able to talk to their male teachers about their problems, which becomes particularly problematic when girls are menstruating, and may be one of the causal factors behind girls' absenteeism during their menstruation periods:

“When you bleed on your skirt during your menstrual period, there is no male teacher who can tell you anything, only females tell you how to cope with that situation. Even when you go to answer a question on the blackboard before students, male teachers do not notice your problem” (female student, rural 9YBE school).

Other students reported that the presence of female teachers makes parents feel more comfortable about sending their daughters to school, believing that they will be safer in the care of female teachers, an understandable position given the high-profile, if rare, cases of male teachers sexually harassing female students or trading ‘sex for marks’.

Students and other stakeholders we interviewed felt that, in general, female Head Teachers are more likely to take girls' issues seriously, are more likely to take action to ensure girls are supported to remain in school during menstruation and pregnancy, and encourage girls to study traditionally male subjects and perform well in their studies. However, it is by no means a given that female Head Teachers will be gender-responsive and that male Head Teachers will not, and we did come across isolated examples of male Head Teachers who had made significant progress in making their schools gender-responsive.

National level stakeholders whom we asked, however, felt that the lack of gender balance in management positions leads to a shortage of positive role models for girls, and the traditional gender norms that dictated that leadership positions should be reserved for men are continually reinforced by the absence of women occupying such roles. One stakeholder observed that gender relations between male Head Teachers and their female teaching staff are still constructed in line with the traditional pattern of male dominance and female submission. This results in not only an absence of positive female role models, but in a powerful negative role model that serves to strengthen and sustain, rather than challenge, gender norms:

“There are an awful lot of young male Head Teachers... generally I see that they don't link well to the female teachers, particularly the older ones. Creating a working relationship seems to be quite challenging. The head in effect acts as a negative role model. So girls are seeing men in positions of power, women as subservient to them and young men get those positions of power and women are just kind of passed over” (national level civil society stakeholder).

The most commonly cited reason for the gender imbalance was the traditional preference for educating boys, which persists to this day, resulting in far more male students completing tertiary education than female students. Consequently the pool of female candidates qualified for management positions is much smaller than the pool of appointable men. Others cited attitudes regarding appropriate gender roles of both male recruiters and potential female applicants:

“The problem is due to the recruiting staff in the past. Their mentality was that no female manager can exist; a manager must be a man. But there is also inferiority complex among women. A woman says that she cannot dare managing a large number of men” (male Head Teacher, remote 9YBE school).

And while Head Teachers might be aware of the gender imbalance in their teaching staff, they don't control recruitment, since teachers are recruited and allocated to schools by the district education office. In addition, since there is a shortage of teachers, the priority has been to recruit sufficient numbers of teachers to fill the vacant posts, so trying to balance male and female teachers has been a much lower priority.

As well as lack of attention to gender balance on the side of recruiters, potential female applicants may be dissuaded from continuing their studies in order to gain a secondary teaching post, or from applying for management positions for a number of reasons. They may feel that they would not be able to manage their domestic and childcare responsibilities at home in addition to the extra demands of a management role:

“There are many factors that are behind the fact that women are not self confident to apply for these positions. Most of men in these positions when they hold a meeting they go back home at 11 pm or 1 am, so imagine a woman who is having a baby to breastfeed coming home to those hours of the night?” (male teacher, rural secondary school).



Alternatively they may lack the confidence required to apply for further study or a management position – because they have been socialised to believe that leadership positions are reserved for men, or because they fear their husbands will not allow them to apply for such roles. Some research participants observed that women may be further dissuaded from studying or applying for management positions as this may mean relocating – something that women with husbands and families may not be in a position to do. Furthermore, the new role may be in a rural setting where living conditions may be less favourable or where accommodation may be unavailable – even if she were able to persuade her husband and family to relocate:

“A big issue that’s come up recently is this whole teacher accommodation thing, that teachers are reluctant to go to rural areas because of the lack of accommodation, now I suspect women are even more reluctant to go, and are even

less mobile if there isn’t proper accommodation available” (national level, development partner).

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to women’s professional development and career advancement, however, is affordability. The income of a primary level female teacher is too low to allow them to study for a secondary teaching qualification – she simply doesn’t have enough money to pay for her studies, as one stakeholder explained:

“KIE has just introduced an evening programme last year. But few can afford it because the semester is 220,000, a teacher at primary gets 40,000 a month – you can’t even save a year to get that! You find those that are there upgrading in KIE, they are in good private schools, those who are earning 100,000 per month as take home pay” (national level civil society stakeholder).

While teachers from one school reported that the school is trying to respect the 30% rule in management appointments, and one of the DEOs we interviewed claimed to be practising positive discrimination when recruiting new Head Teachers, SEOs or other managers in order to achieve 30% female representation, most said they employ people based on their qualifications and capacity to do the job only and don't practise positive discrimination. And while one teachers' focus groups told us that there had been a training course on boosting women's self-confidence, and encouraging women to apply for management positions, this was the exception rather than the norm.

Many research participants suggested that increased and ongoing sensitisation was needed to encourage women to study for secondary teaching qualifications or apply for management positions. Others suggested the introduction of a women's leadership programme to identify women with potential and fast-track them into leadership positions – the kind of programme already proposed in the Girls' Education Strategic Plan.

Despite the mixed response to the lower pass mark for girls in national exams, many teachers, parents and Head Teachers supported some kind of positive discrimination in favour of women in teacher and management recruitment processes. One parent, for example, suggested that:

“The lower pass mark for girls should be maintained and the same system should be applied in vacancies in the frame of having many women in leadership positions. The job examination should be set in a way that women would be admitted at a lower mark, it would help women in getting leadership positions” (parent, remote 9YBE school).

Another suggestion was to reserve certain positions for women – until gender balance has been achieved in a school or a Sector or District Education Office. Whatever form the positive discrimination takes, it's clear that a more aggressive approach needs to be taken if gender balance is to be achieved, since the current recruitment practice is not accomplishing the desired goal. One civil society stakeholder suggested that the TSC might be the most appropriate organisation to take this forward:

“There needs to be a gender equality recruitment policy. Perhaps this should come from the Teacher Service Commission, because it's the overall agency taking

care of teachers. They should be asking how many female Head Teachers there are how many male Head Teachers there are. And then they must take action” (national level civil society stakeholder).

If it is not already planned, it would be helpful if the new National Teacher Registration System could also record information about numbers of male and female head teachers, SEOs and DEOs so that progress towards gender balance in education management can be more easily monitored.

It is worth repeating here the calls made in section 3.3.4 for financial assistance and childcare for female teachers wishing to upgrade their qualifications. Without these Affirmative Actions, secondary teaching qualifications will remain unaffordable for female teachers, and women with young children will remain disadvantaged. In that case, gender balance in secondary schools and in education management positions will never be achieved.

Other suggestions from focus group, interview and workshop participants included:

- Increase and sustain sensitisation for women and men about the importance of family planning, in order to delay childbirth and/or restrict family size in order to allow women to study for secondary teaching qualifications or apply for management positions.
- Provide training for Head Teachers, Sector and District Education Officers or any other staff responsible for recruiting teachers or education managers on gender equality in teacher recruitment, postings and promotion procedures.
- Ensure male teachers are involved in any gender training, gender clubs or working groups:
- **“There need to be male role models to demonstrate how to do healthy gender relationships, both for boys to see it and for other colleagues to see it”** (national level civil society stakeholder).

3.4.2 Other gender-related school and district level management issues

Parent–teacher committees

We asked all teachers, parents and Head Teachers about the gender balance on their PTCs. In all but one of the schools men outnumbered women on PTCs, and in all the schools we visited the PTC was chaired by a man. All respondents reported that it was the chair of the

committee who made the decisions. In all cases women were represented and Head Teachers claimed that they were striving for gender balance, but only one school had achieved equal representation of men and women. Perhaps a better way of achieving gender balance in PTCs would be to make it mandatory to reserve half the seats on PTCs for women. Similarly the chair could rotate between male and female incumbents. Term limits may also need to be imposed to prevent men from holding on to the position indefinitely.

As well as gender balance in PTCs, some parents and teachers reported that their PTCs have been active in raising the awareness of families and local communities about the importance of girls completing their education. This area of PTCs' work is discussed briefly in section 3.5.

Gender clubs

“Tuseme clubs are clubs which allow boys and girls to speak out about their problems. First of all they identify problems that are hindering their academic performance, and social development, and then they look for solutions, and propose them to the possible stakeholders that can do something to address them. They use drama to speak out to show the problems to the public” (national civil society stakeholder).

“Why? Because of the culture of silence, there is no other way of speaking out, other than through poems, other than through songs. Even in building up self-confidence... Some of the pioneer Tuseme students are now radio presenters” (national civil society stakeholder).

It is clear that the Tuseme club model works when it is managed well, but at the time of conducting the research the clubs existed in only 54 UNICEF Child Friendly Schools out of a total of 2,543 primary schools (Ministry of Education, 2012: 8), 47 secondary schools out of a total of 1,362 secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2012: 17) and in the two FAWE Centres of Excellence (figures taken from personal interview with FAWE). And it seems that even in those schools, implementation of Tuseme clubs has been patchy, with the success of the clubs depending largely on the enthusiasm and goodwill of the (usually) female teachers who are charged with organising the clubs. However, the Tuseme programme has been reviewed (FAWE and UNICEF, 2010; Arlesten and Leijon, 2011) and the lessons and good practice examples are available. For example, the baseline study identified a need for: teaching and learning materials to give teachers greater

guidance on the kind of activities they can organise through the clubs; greater involvement of parents; reproductive health and sex education to be an integral aspect of the Tuseme clubs' activities; and training of children, teachers and parents on sexual harassment and gender-based violence through the Tuseme club meetings (FAWE and UNICEF, 2010).

Political will is now needed to scale up the programme so that all schools in Rwanda can organise and sustain their own gender clubs. FAWE reported that they are receiving support from Plan International to scale up the programme to all schools in Bugasera district – a good start. However, this is only one of 30 districts, and the civil society stakeholders we asked felt that the programme needs to be adopted and implemented by DEOs and SEOs in all districts if it is to reach all schools.

Management training in gender issues

None of the Head Teachers, SEOs or DEOs interviewed had received any training in gender issues. As mentioned in the previous section there is a need for managers to be trained in gender-responsive recruitment, posting and promotion procedures, and in identifying women with potential and encouraging them to upgrade their qualifications or apply for management positions in order to improve the gender balance in teaching staff at secondary level and in management roles. But there is also a need for broader gender training for managers, covering, for example:

- how to ensure PTCs are gender-balanced and that the women attending have an equal say
- how to establish and sustain gender clubs to promote confidence in female students
- how to support boys to challenge gender norms at home and take up a greater share of domestic work
- ensuring the school infrastructure is gender-sensitive, with gender-segregated toilets, showers and private rooms to enable girls to wash and rest during their menstruation periods
- providing girls with a sufficient supply of sanitary materials and painkillers to allow them to continue their studies and not absent themselves from lessons
- ensuring girls participate equally in school-organised sporting activities
- using PTC events to sensitise parents and teachers to gender equality issues in the home so that men and women, boys and girls can share domestic and childcare responsibilities more equally.

National level participants who attended the validation meeting for this research suggested that such training could be organised by the Public Sector Capacity Building Secretariat. Whoever delivers the training, it is clear that any such national training effort will need to be well coordinated and involve the relevant stakeholders – including the TSC, MIGEPROF, MINEDUC and the Rwanda Education Board as well as members of the Girls' Education Task Force.

3.5 National level initiatives

“There is a lot of effort going on through the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) and of course through the Girls' Education Policy... but it has got to be implemented – you can have these beautiful policies, but they've got to be implemented! I think Rwanda's doing a whole lot better than most other countries that I know about but there's still a long way to go” (national level academic stakeholder).

3.5.1 Affirmative Actions

As explained in section 1.4, the Girls' Education Strategic Plan includes a number of 'Affirmative Actions' aimed at achieving gender equality in teaching and learning in Rwandan schools. Given that three years had passed since the launch of the Girls' Education Strategic Plan, we tested how well known these Affirmative Actions were among the Head Teachers, SEOs and DEOs interviewed. This section therefore records whether the education managers who participated in this research had heard of the following Affirmative Actions and what if anything they were doing to implement these actions:

Affirmative Action 1: Working towards 50–50 balances of appointments of females as Head Teachers and principals

While half of the DEOs and SEOs had heard of this Affirmative Action it is unclear whether the DEOs and SEOs understood it since some seemed to be referring to the 30% rule for elected political positions, not to the 50:50 gender balance for Head Teacher and principal posts:

“When there is a job advert, we encourage women to compete with others, when need be giving priority to women who managed to get same marks with men, to make sure the 30% principle is respected” (Sector Education Officer, remote district).

Other than the one SEO who claimed to be encouraging women to apply for Head Teacher and principal positions, and practising positive discrimination in his recruitment process, none of the other DEOs or SEOs interviewed reported that they were trying to implement this Action. In fact, when we asked what measures they had been taking in their sector or district to ensure there is a 50:50 balance of females and males in the teaching, management and administration staff, almost all the respondents told us that their recruitment processes involved open competition, with no positive discrimination in favour of female candidates, and no specific encouragement of female applicants.

Affirmative Action 2: Identifying and training women with potential at entry and middle management levels and fast-tracking them into education management positions

All DEOs and SEOs interviewed claimed to have heard of this Affirmative Action. Female teachers at one rural secondary school reported that they had been on training courses that encouraged women to apply for management positions. However, this seems to be the exception since all DEOs and SEOs who participated in the research told us that they had not done anything to implement this Action.

Affirmative Action 3: Remedial courses for girls seen as 'at risk' of failing or dropping out, and procedures for re-entry for girls who become pregnant during their education

All the DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers whom we asked said they had heard about the re-entry policy and claimed that their schools take action to encourage girls who became pregnant to return to school after giving birth. However, only around half of those had heard of the part of the Affirmative Action that recommends remedial courses for girls, and only two of the six schools we visited said they were running such courses (sometimes referred to as 'catch-up' programmes):

“Different schools have initiated coaching for girls which is not the case for boys but despite those efforts boys succeed more than girls do. This emphasises that there is a need for special care in teaching girls so as to enable them to make equilibrium” (parent, remote 9YBE school).

One civil society stakeholder suggested that funding for catch-up programmes has been cut back in recent years. This may explain why most of the schools we visited were not running such courses. Given the statistics about girls'

Question

list 5 needs in our sector

What is the important of food?



underperformance at secondary level (see section 1.4) there is clearly a need for such programmes to be reinstated.

Affirmative Action 4: Review of teaching methods and assessment of learning achievement to ensure girl participation is not inhibited

Again about half of DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers we asked claimed to have heard of this Affirmative Action, but none were implementing it. Most reported that they had had no review of teaching and assessment methods, or that their review had not been conducted with the purpose of identifying whether girls' participation is being hindered. Civil society stakeholders felt that a review of whether current teaching methodologies and assessment procedure advantage or disadvantage girls and a review of learning from other countries are necessary. In particular it was suggested that there is evidence that girls respond better to coursework and continuous assessment than to examinations.

"I think there is a lot of evidence to say that girls do better at that than they do in exams. So it would be good for gender, but it would be good in general, because it would be more likely to be an effective way of testing learning rather than testing memorisation" (national level civil society stakeholder).

Affirmative Action 5: Sensitising families and local communities through PTCs about importance of girls completing formal education

The majority of education managers, teachers and parents we asked about this Affirmative Action said they had heard about it. Whether they had actually heard of the Action as a result of dissemination of the Girls' Education Strategic Plan is unclear. It is more likely that they were doing this anyway as a result of an emphasis – from government and civil society messaging in the media and through other channels – that predates the Girls' Education Strategic Plan and the Policy. Around half said that their PTC was active on gender. For example, some PTCs said they were working with Jeannette Kagame's Imbutu Foundation to reward female students who achieved the highest mark at their school in the national exams. Others reported that they had participated in the construction of gender-segregated toilets. One SEO described the effect of the monitoring function the PTC had adopted:

"The first role of the committee is to sensitise families, local communities and people in general on the importance

of girls' completion of formal education. This is being done and we can see people reporting to us cases of children who dropped out of school and seeking from us assistance. The mentality has moved to some level" (Sector Education Officer, remote district).

National level stakeholders told us that they felt that PTC involvement in raising awareness about girls completing education is inconsistent and depends largely on the leadership of the Head Teacher or the enthusiasm of the PTC members. Better dissemination of the Strategic Plan and the Affirmative Actions may help to encourage more Head Teachers to make better use of their PTCs for this purpose. Certainly where PTCs are active they can have a powerful effect as this example demonstrates:

"I know a school where the school did not have even a single female teacher by the way! All of them were male. And then the parents were like 'Please! How do you handle our girls? If they are going for menstruation: who talks to them? Why don't you have female teachers here?' And at some point they had to recruit female teachers, they had to recruit a Matron. And I thought if all PTCs were working like that, then things could change" (national level government stakeholder).

Affirmative Action 6: Providing mentors to girls in secondary and higher education, especially for girls in the area of science and technology

All the respondents we asked about this Affirmative Action had heard about it, although only two of the six schools we visited had a mentoring scheme up and running. In addition, national level stakeholders told us of the mentoring schemes run by FAWE at their two Centres of Excellence, and of the mentor schemes run by Plan International in the district where they operate:

"We have that mentoring programme for girls, which is aiming at providing mentors for girls. There are some university students, we give them a team of students that they have to mentor, at least they visit their schools and discuss about their gender problems, HIV & AIDS, pregnancy problems. They provide them with some advice, guidance" (national level civil society stakeholder).

Other civil society respondents reported that mentor schemes are rare outside of FAWE schools, and our research suggests

that mentor schemes are indeed only established in a minority of schools. If the Ministry of Education wants mentor schemes operating in all schools, then DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers will need guidance on how to establish such schemes, and funding that is reserved explicitly for mentoring schemes for girls.

Overall while it seems there is some knowledge of the Affirmative Actions included in the Girls' Education Strategic Plan, it seems that information has not reached the education managers whose job it is to implement the Strategic Plan. It is unfortunate that even the DEOs who are presumably charged with implementing it at the district level are not aware of all the Affirmative Actions which are the very pillars of the Plan.

“I know we have a girls' education policy. But some people do not know it is there, so that they look at it and get inspired while they are preparing their syllabuses. They should be inspired on that policy. One thing MIGEPROF could do is tell MINEDUC to disseminate that policy. I know FAWE has been doing it, they've started doing it, but still it is not sufficiently disseminated across the country. So they are not known. And if they are not known, then it doesn't make any impact” (national level government stakeholder).

There have been efforts to disseminate the Policy and the Strategic Plan. FAWE told us that the Policy has been distributed to all secondary schools. Perhaps what would be useful is comprehensive training for DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers so that they become more familiar with the Affirmative Actions, receive some practical guidance on how to implement them, and are aware of examples of best practice – using examples from the work of FAWE, Plan, PTCs, etc.

3.5.2 The Girls' Education Task Force

The Girls' Education Task Force is made up of mainly governmental organisations – MINEDUC (which chairs the Task Force), MIGEPROF, FAWE, the Imbutu foundation, the National Youth Council, the National Women's Council, UNICEF – and meets on a bi-monthly basis and at an annual meeting where progress is reviewed. It was the Girls' Education Task Force that was responsible for developing the Girls' Education Policy and Strategic Plan. It also determined the budget for districts that has enabled schools to supply sanitary pads, soap, and construct gender-segregated toilets. The Task Force is also responsible for the successful and widely praised 'National

School Campaign' which gives out annual awards to schools for the best proposals for tackling gender inequality:

“I think the concept itself is a very good concept – instead of an award that says 'Wow you've done well!' Instead its 'Now think about what it is you are going to do that is promoting gender in your school, and then write a proposal about it and then submit it... It's a good opportunity to get the schools to think through whatever it is that they are doing... it's part of the school calendar now at this stage. Pretty much every school in the country is aware of it and each sector is participating” (national level development partner).

The Task Force has been the driving force behind some of the very progressive steps towards gender equality in schools in Rwanda. But some civil society stakeholders felt that the Task Force is not transparent enough and that information from Task Force meetings is not well disseminated. Others felt that the pace of change is too slow and that guidance given to Head Teachers is sometimes not clear enough:

“I think the Girls' Education Task Force... they kind of grind to a halt sometimes. I know everything does take a while but when it comes to actually actioning clear practical policies... for instance there was a big campaign on sanitary pads... but actually what is each Head Teacher supposed to be doing – you know: some support and systems. It's not there: so it's down in the individual Head Teacher's initiative” (national level civil society stakeholder).

The 2009 Girls' Education Strategic Plan set out the Ministry's intention to establish a Joint Action Forum for Girls' Education (JAFGE) in each district. Only one of the six districts we visited had an operational Joint Action Forum. The one example we did find should serve as an example of best practice that could be shared with the other districts of what can be achieved when people work together to take action on girls' education at the district level.

Given the results that can be achieved, efforts should be made to ensure that a JAFGE is established and sustained in each district, not only to implement the National School Campaign, monitor and discourage teenage pregnancies as in the above example, but as a forum responsible for implementing and

monitoring the Affirmative Actions set out in the Strategic Plan. It would seem logical that the national level Girls' Education Task Force should be the driving force behind the establishment of Joint Action Fora in the districts and that there should be some system of stimulating and monitoring JAFGE activities that would also logically fall within the remit of the national level Girls' Education Task Force. However, national level participants at the validation meeting for this research felt that a first step should be to revitalise and strengthen the Girls' Education Task Force so that it is more able to take on this role. One way to do this could be to broaden the membership of the Task Force to enable civil society organisations to attend and hold government representatives to account.

Best practice in district level coordination on girls' education

“In a Joint Action Forum for Girls' Education (JAFGE), here at the district level we have a forum and the chair of the forum is the Vice Mayor in charge of social affairs and the Education officer is a member. Six people are in the forum. We organise meetings at the district level and choose girls who performed well at the district level and give them gifts or certificates as awards.

We select female students who perform well, we handle problems and we hold a meeting to see how many girls are pregnant and how to handle that problem and how to sensitise female students. We organise meetings with Head Teachers, we visit some schools and sensitise students; for example this year we went to some secondary schools and sensitised students.

Last year, we had 19 pregnant female students, but this year we have only one pregnant student. In a period of four months, only one student in primary school is pregnant but last year there were 17 of them. Through our sensitisation I think we can decrease the number of students who become pregnant” (District Education Officer, rural district).



Where...? answer includes a place
Who...? a person
What...? a thing
Why...? a reason
When...? a time or date
How many...? a number

PRIME NUMBERS < 100

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
100								

RELATIONS

For each...

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been generated from our discussions with students, teachers, parents, Head Teachers, SEOs, DEOs and government, academic and civil society stakeholders. These recommendations represent the collective priorities of the research participants, rather than the analysis or opinions of the research team. We have not directed recommendations at particular Ministries (although it is clear the vast majority of the recommendations would be helpful to the relevant departments in the Ministry of Education and the Rwanda Education Board).

The next steps for this research will be for Pro-femmes Twese Hamwe and VSO Rwanda to work together to identify which recommendations they want to use in their lobbying and advocacy work. Once they have identified their priorities it will be possible to identify which government agencies to approach depending on where responsibility lies for implementing each of the chosen recommendations.

Recommendations concerning teachers' poverty

1. Fulfil promises made to teachers to reintroduce seniority fees for teachers to act as an incentive to encourage teachers to stay in the profession and to bring it in line with the medical profession which is already receiving seniority fees.
2. Commit to promises to double primary teachers' pay over five years, in order to reduce teacher poverty.
3. Re-focus the Umwalimu saving and credit cooperative (SACCO) towards enabling teachers to use the loans to build houses, or pay for further education. Discourage or discontinue loans for setting up income-generating projects which diminish teachers' ability to do their jobs.

Recommendations concerning problems related to teachers' pregnancy and childcare

4. Increase the length of maternity leave to four months to bring Rwandan policy in line with that of South Africa and some of the more gender-friendly low and middle income countries (Brazil, 120 days; Mongolia, 120 days; Vietnam, 4 to 6 months; Venezuela, 18 weeks).
5. Increase paternity leave to two weeks, to help relieve the burden of childcare borne by female teachers.

6. Establish a system of supply teachers – teachers who work short periods in different schools, when needed to cover the teaching duties of teachers on maternity, paternity or sick leave – so that children's education doesn't suffer during maternity and paternity leave periods.

7. Consider adding a crèche or childcare facility to schools to allow teachers to have access to childcare. If this is not possible, childcare vouchers or some system of covering the costs of childcare for teachers could be considered, to enable female teachers to focus on their task of delivering quality education.

8. Improve access to family planning information and access to information about women's right to contraception, through medical centres, Umuganda meetings or other community education and communication channels and by educating girls and boys in schools, to encourage smaller families.

9. Ensure that legal provisions are in place that prevent discrimination against pregnant women and nursing mothers, married or unmarried, in recruitment procedures and in allocation of additional duties such as supervision during national exams. These provisions should be well communicated to DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers and properly enforced, with clear and simple procedures for redress if a teacher feels she has been a victim of discrimination.

10. Ensure that Head Teachers understand the need for flexibility with the nursing mothers among their female teaching staff. For example they could consult nursing female teaching staff about when they would prefer the hour for expressing milk or breastfeeding to be scheduled.

11. Include a requirement for recording numbers of teachers who are pregnant and nursing mothers in the new National Teacher Registration System, so that their numbers can be monitored.

Recommendations concerning gender responsiveness training for teachers

12. Civil society organisations working on improving teaching methodology and on improving girls' education should work together with the TSC to make gender training in pre-service training compulsory.

13. The TSC should take on a coordinating role to ensure that all in-service teacher training providers (both government-managed and NGO-managed providers) are delivering gender-responsive teaching methodology training to all serving teachers who attend their courses.

Recommendations concerning female teachers' opportunities to participate in training

14. The TSC and both government-managed and NGO-managed providers should take steps to end discrimination against pregnant and nursing teachers in access to in-service training opportunities. This will require communication to all education managers responsible for commissioning in-service training, and with training providers to ensure that they are aware of pregnant and nursing teachers' rights to equal access to training.

15. Ensure that training venues have adequate facilities for nursing mothers or for babysitters to come to the training. Funds for babysitters should be provided to ensure that nursing mothers can attend.

16. Consider offering maintenance grants to female primary teachers who wish to study for a secondary teaching qualification, in order to begin addressing the gender imbalance in the secondary teaching staff and education management roles. While tuition fees for the KIE distance learning programme are financed by the government, maintenance costs (transportation, accommodation, food expenses, etc) are borne by the teachers themselves.

17. KIE and the two Colleges of Education should be compelled to provide childcare facilities – a crèche or nursery with childcare staff employed by the training institutions – to enable nursing mothers and other mothers with young children to attend their teacher training courses.

Recommendations concerning female teachers' and girls' unequal share of domestic and agricultural work

18. Redouble gender equality and family planning awareness-raising efforts through Umuganda meetings, storylines in radio and TV soap operas, debates and discussions, or in articles in the print media. Participants at the research validation meeting felt that awareness-raising about gender roles in families should be made a national priority.

19. Use PTC meetings to impress upon parents the importance of sharing domestic and agricultural work equally between their daughters and sons, so that girls are not disadvantaged compared to boys (eg discourage the practice of withholding girls from school during harvest time).

Recommendations concerning girls' menstruation-related problems

20. Increase and improve the reliability of funding for the materials girls need during menstruation. Head Teachers need to be given enough funds to be able to purchase:

- a supply of sanitary pads sufficient to meet demand
- washing facilities – whether they be showers or merely running water available in a private room
- a mattress to enable girls to rest and recuperate at school without having to miss the entire day's lessons
- a supply of painkillers to enable girls to return to class more quickly and be able to concentrate on learning when they are there
- a supply of soap and spare underwear to enable girls to clean themselves and change without having to return home.

21. Design and implement a better system for monitoring whether the funds intended for alleviating menstruation-related problems are getting to the schools on time, are sufficient to meet the schools' requirements and are being spent on the right things. It is possible that this task could become the responsibility of School Inspectors at Sector level.

22. Establish gender clubs in every school through which:

- girls can be taught about menstruation, how to use sanitary pads, whom to get pads and painkillers from and whom to turn to for advice and counselling
- boys and male teachers can become more sensitive to girls' needs.

It's vital that this task is not left to FAWE who do not have capacity to establish and monitor gender clubs in every school in Rwanda, although they do have learning about best practice that should be utilised. Establishing gender clubs should be part of Head Teachers' responsibilities, and their effectiveness monitored by Sector-level School Inspectors.

Recommendations concerning teenage pregnancy related problems

- 23.** Ensure each school has an effective sex and reproductive health education programme that informs girls how to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy, and teaches both girls and boys about the consequences of sexual relationships. The programme could be incorporated into gender club activities, and/or into school assemblies and regular lessons.
- 24.** Re-communicate to Head Teachers that the policy on re-entry for girls who become pregnant during their education (from the Girls' Education Policy) is mandatory not optional. Students who participated in this research recommended that instead of being expelled, girls who have given birth should be invited to share their experiences with their peers, to demonstrate the risks involved in sexual relationships.
- 25.** Provide counselling for girls who have become pregnant and for their parents to ensure they look after their daughter during and after her pregnancy and are supportive of her right to return to school.
- 26.** Empower Head Teachers to intervene when it becomes clear that a family has rejected their daughter because of her pregnancy. Head Teachers should insist that parents respect the right of their daughters to an education even after becoming pregnant.
- 27.** Encourage schools to use their resources to incentivise girls who have become pregnant to remain in school and return after they have given birth (eg offer dietary supplements to girls who become pregnant – for example if the school has cows it could offer her milk to improve her diet while pregnant or when nursing her child).
- 28.** Promote peer support visits to girls who have given birth, to demonstrate that the girl has not been shunned by her classmates and to persuade her to return to her studies when she is able.

29. Consider establishing a hardship fund in each Sector to assist girls who have been rejected by their family, to pay for emergency accommodation and food until reconciliation can be negotiated.

30. Reinstate funding for remedial courses or catch-up programmes to encourage girls who drop out due to pregnancy to return to school and complete their education.

31. Take steps to ensure that boys who have fathered children through consensual sex are not stripped of their right to an education. Boys could be transferred to a neighbouring school rather than being expelled or sent to a detention centre.

32. Healthcare professionals should be sensitised to refrain from stigmatising students who come to them for advice on contraception.

Recommendations concerning gender balance in teaching and education management staff

33. Implement the women's leadership programme, suggested in the Girls' Education Policy, to identify women with potential and fast-track them into leadership positions.

34. Establish a gender equality recruitment policy – a system of positive discrimination in favour of women in teacher and management recruitment processes. The principle behind the lower pass mark for girls in national exams should be applied to recruitment exams to increase the number of women in leadership positions. Alternatively certain positions could be reserved for women, inviting applications from women only, until gender balance has been achieved.

35. Provide training for Head Teachers, Sector and District Education Officers or any other staff responsible for recruiting teachers or education managers on gender equality in teacher recruitment, postings and promotion procedures. Such training should include

36. Increase and sustain sensitisation of male and female teachers about the importance of family planning, to allow female primary teachers to study for secondary level teaching qualifications or apply for management positions.

37. Ensure that the new National Teacher Registration System records information about numbers of male and female head teachers, SEOs and DEOs so that progress towards gender balance in education management can be monitored.

38. Make it easier for female teachers and managers who need to move to a different school after marriage to secure a transfer. Civil society organisations working on gender equality in education should work together with the TSC to find the best solution to the problem of female teacher attrition caused by the difficulty they face securing transfers.

Recommendations concerning other gender-related school and district level management issues

39. Consider making it mandatory to reserve half the seats on PTCs for women, and establishing a rotating chair – alternating between male and female incumbents. Term limits may also need to be imposed to prevent men from holding on to the position indefinitely.

40. Provide gender training for education managers in, for example:

- ensuring PTCs are gender-balanced and that the women attending have an equal say
- using PTC events to sensitise parents and teachers to gender equality issues in the home so that all share domestic and childcare responsibilities more equally
- establishing and sustaining gender clubs to promote confidence in female students, and provide advice on menstruation, avoiding unwanted pregnancies
- ensuring the school infrastructure is gender-sensitive, with gender-segregated toilets, showers or washing facilities in private rooms to enable girls to wash and rest during their menstruation periods
- providing girls with a sufficient supply of sanitary materials and painkillers to allow them to continue their studies and not absent themselves from lessons
- encouraging girls to study science and technology subjects
- ensuring girls participate equally in school-organised sporting activities.

- 41.** Provide training for DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers so that they become familiar with the Affirmative Actions and receive practical guidance on how to implement them. Such training could be organised by the Public Sector Capacity Building Secretariat or other relevant training provider after consultation with the TSC, MIGEPROF, GMO, MINEDUC, the Rwanda Education Board and members of the Girls' Education Task Force.
- 42.** To implement the Affirmative Action regarding mentors for girls in secondary schools, DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers will need both:
- guidance on how to establish mentor schemes; and
 - funding that is reserved explicitly for such schemes.
- 43.** Ensure that a Joint Action Forum for Girls' Education is established in each district and is responsible for disseminating and monitoring the Affirmative Actions. District level Joint Action Fora could also be involved in ensuring DEOs, SEOs and Head Teachers receive training about the Affirmative Actions.
- 44.** Revitalise and strengthen the Girls' Education Task Force and charge it with ensuring Joint Action Fora for Girls' Education are established and active in each district. One way to do this could be to broaden the membership of the Task Force to enable civil society organisations to attend and hold government representatives to account.
- 45.** National level participants who attended the validation meeting for this research noted that, as five years have passed since the launch of the Girls' Education Policy in 2008, the time has come for an impact assessment to be conducted to assess in more detail the impact of the Policy and accompanying Girls' Education Strategy.



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Appendix 1

Example of focus group questions

In addition to focus group questions tailored for teachers, questions were similarly tailored for use in focus groups with students and parents.

Focus group questions for teachers

Gendered Socialisation

1. Do you think are any differences in behaviour or ability between girls and boys?

- If so, please describe what those differences are...
- Which gender gets better marks/performance?
- Which gender has better attendance and completion rates?

2. What are the specific gender roles in the community surrounding the school? Make a list of the tasks performed by men, by women, by boys and by girls.

- At school?
- At home?
- Is this a fair division of the tasks?
- What impact do these have on the education of the girls and boys?

3. Are there tasks (at school or at home) that boys and girls can both do?

4a. Can you give us any examples of behaviour that may discourage girls or boys from coming to school, or from getting good results at school?

- It could be behaviour of students themselves, or the behaviour of people outside the school
- Do you think girls or boys are more likely to be involved in this kind of behaviour?

4b. What happens when a girl or boy is bullied, harassed or abused?

- Reporting mechanism
- Action taken by the school
- Anti-bullying policy or gender-based violence policy or codes of conduct (for students and teachers)
- How many cases of sexual harassment/GBV have there been in the last year?
- Has the number of cases reduced or increased compared to previous years?
- In either case, what are the reasons for the change?

4c. Is there anything else that the school or community should do to address gender-based violence or sexual harassment?

5. What happens in your school/college when girls misbehave? What happens in your school/college when boys misbehave? eg:

- Deduction of points (if the school uses a points system for discipline and motivation)?
- Allocation of unpleasant tasks (cleaning, digging in the school garden etc)?
- Beating (caning, beating with a belt or other form of physical punishment)?
- Suspension?
- Expulsion?

School Management

6. What problems do girls and boys face at this school?

Reasons might include

- Paying school fees or for uniforms or scholastic materials
- Parents not supporting girls with their homework
- Missing school or arriving late

7a. What specific problems do girls face?

- Being kept from school to cook, clean, fetch water, help on the farm
- Sexual maturation – menstruation, sexual awakening
- Pregnancy, difficulty of returning to school after pregnancy
- Early/forced marriage
- Gender-based violence – sugar daddies, sex for marks

7b. What is being done about these problems that girls face? What more needs to be done? Who needs to do it?

8a. What problems do boys face at this school?

- Boys are beaten/punished by teachers more often than girls
- Boys are involved in gangs, alcohol and drug abuse more often than girls
- Being kept from school to tend cows, fetch water
- Early/forced marriage

Sexual maturation – voices breaking, sexual awakening

- Gender-based violence – sugar mummies, sex for marks

8b. What is being done about these problems that boys face? What more needs to be done? Who needs to do it?

9a. What happens when a girl gets pregnant at your school? (Please give real examples if known).

- What happens to the boy/man involved?
- Have pregnant girls been allowed and able to return to school after giving birth?
- What did the school or family do to make this possible?

9b. Is there anything else that the school or the family should do to enable girls who have given birth to return to school?

10a. What happens when a girl gets her period at your school?

- Is there privacy/separate toilets/washrooms for girls?
- Are there showers? Private room?
- Are sanitary towels always available? (+ Incinerators/bins?)
- How do you respond when girls miss classes during their menstrual cycle?

10b. Is there anything more that the school should be doing to enable girls to stay at school during their menstruation periods?

11. How does the school deal with cases of early or forced marriages?

12a. Are there any students or teachers with disabilities in the school?

- What extra problems do girls and women with disabilities face?
- Have any girls or boys with disabilities been prevented from attending or dropped out of school?

12b. Are there other things that should be done by the school or the government to enable children with disabilities to complete their education?

12c. Is there anything that can be done to encourage teachers with disabilities to teach?

Teacher Management**13a. What problems do teachers face?****13b. What is being done to address these problems? Can you think of any solutions to these problems?****14a. What specific problems do female teachers face?****14b. What specific problems do male teachers face?****14c. What is being done to address these problems? Can you think of any solutions to these problems?****15a. What happens when a teacher becomes pregnant at your school?**

- How much maternity leave do they get?
- Do male teachers get paternity leave? If so how much?
- Do women teachers attend training and professional development opportunities whilst pregnant or nursing/breast-feeding?

Teacher Training**15b. What needs to be done to ensure female teachers can attend training and professional development opportunities whilst pregnant or nursing/breast-feeding?****16a. Have you been supported to address gender inequality in the school?**

- Have you attended any gender awareness/gender-responsive teaching methodology training?
- How many times have you discussed gender in staff meetings or in training workshops?
- Who delivered the training? (Government, an NGO?)
- Have all teachers at your school received this training?

16b (If they have not had any gender training) Do you think you need training in gender-responsive teaching methodology? If so, what kind of training do you think you need?**17. Have you attended any training or continuing professional development in the last year?**

- If nothing in the last year, in the last 5 years?
- What was the training/continuing professional development you attended?
- What was the gender balance (how many men, how many women attended)?
- Are pregnant teachers able to/ do they attend such training or continuing professional development?

18a. Do you treat girls any differently from boys? Do other teachers treat girls any differently?

- Do you give girls and boys the same tasks/punishments?

18b. Is there still a lower pass mark for girls in final exams? Does this discourage girls and/or boys from studying?**19. During your lesson planning, how do you take into account gender issues?****20. How is your classroom arranged? Does the arrangement of the furniture allow equal participation of both boys and girls?****21. How gender-responsive are the textbooks you use? Do you think there need to be any changes to the textbooks to make them more gender-responsive?****Lack Of Role Models/Women In Leadership Positions****22a. Why do you think it is that there are so few women in management positions?**

- (If the HT is a man) What difference would it make if the Head Teacher was a woman?
- (Or if the Head Teacher is a woman) What difference does it make having a female Head Teacher?

22b. What is being done – if anything – to encourage more women to apply for management positions?**22c. What more needs to be done to encourage women to apply for management positions?****23. What kind of role models does the****school expect from its teachers?**

- Are there any differences in what is expected of female and male teachers?

24a. (if there are more female teachers) What difference does it make to have more female teachers than male teachers?**24b. (if there are more male teachers) What difference does it make to have more male teachers than female teachers?**

Appendix 2

Questions for national level stakeholders

SECTION A: I want to start by asking general questions about the problems teachers face in their efforts to deliver quality education. The second part of the interview will be about the policies in place to tackle these problems and how well they are working/what more needs to be done.

1. What problems do you think teachers face?

- What specific problems do female teachers face?
- What specific problems do male teachers face?
- What is being done to address these problems?
- Can you think of any solutions to these problems?

2. What, in your view, are the barriers at the family or society level that prevent women's academic and career advancement? E.g.

- Maternity and childcare responsibilities
- Double (or triple) burden of domestic, agricultural and professional work
- Patriarchal culture
- Early/enforced marriage

3. What happens when a teacher becomes pregnant in Rwanda?

- How much maternity leave do they get?
- Do women teachers attend training and continuing professional development opportunities whilst pregnant?
- Do women teachers attend training and continuing professional development opportunities whilst nursing/breast-feeding?
- What happens if a teacher who is unmarried, or a widow, gets pregnant?
- What is being done/what more needs to be done to ensure female teachers can attend training and continuing professional development opportunities whilst pregnant or nursing/breast-feeding?

4. How is gender addressed in teacher training and professional development?

- At government Teacher Training Institutions/pre-service training
- During in-service training or other professional development
- By NGOs/FBOs

5. To what extent do education managers address gender inequalities in teacher management? eg

- Appraisals, and promotion procedures
- Access to in-service training and professional development opportunities – are women more likely to be unqualified than men?
- Teacher terms and conditions – pay, allowances, maternity/paternity leave – is there a gender pay gap?
- **What support do education managers need to address gender that they aren't currently getting?**

6. In what ways do education managers address gender inequalities in school management? eg

- Gender-based violence, sexual harassment – of students
- Student behaviour management
- School planning (ie re: separate toilets, return-to-school policies for pregnant girls etc)
- Community involvement (ie Parent Teacher Committees – involved in addressing gender issues? male-dominated?)
- **What support do education managers need to address gender that they aren't currently getting?**

SECTION B. Coming to the policies outlined in the Girls' Education Policy and Strategic Plan:

7. One of the 'Affirmative Actions' in the Strategic Plan is "Working towards 50:50 balances of appointments of females as Head Teachers and principals". Yet it is clear that there are very few female Head Teachers/other education managers (SEOs, DEOs, deputy heads etc).

- What do you think is stopping women from applying for management positions?

- What is being done – if anything – to encourage more women to apply for management positions?
- What more needs to be done to encourage women to apply for management positions?

8. Similarly the EDPRS and Girls' Education Policy both emphasise the need to expand the number of women teaching in secondary schools (and those primary schools where male teachers dominate).

- What is being done to address gender balance in the teaching staff in Rwanda?
- If there are some measures, are they working? Please provide example if so.

9. Another Affirmative Action is "Identifying and training women with potential at entry and middle management levels and fast-tracking them into education management positions".

- What measures, are being taken to identify and train women (teachers or other staff) with management potential?
- Have any women been successfully recruited to management positions as a result of these measures?

10. Another Affirmative Action is "... review of teaching methods and assessment of learning achievement... to ensure girl participation is not inhibited". I know the curriculum has been revised and gender was mainstreamed through that. What about teaching and assessment methods, what has been done/or what is being planned in terms of revising those?

11. Another Affirmative Action is "... remedial courses for girls seen as 'at risk' of failing or dropping out... and [procedures for] re-entry for girls who become pregnant during their education". What is being done to implement this? What more needs to be done?

12. To what extent have Parent Teacher Committees been used “to sensitise families and local communities about importance of girls completing formal education” (another Affirmative Action)? What more could they be doing?

13. What do you think of the policy that treats girls any differently from boys in national exams (eg there is a lower pass mark for girls in exams)?

- Does this discourage girls from studying (because they know they do not have to perform as well as boys to pass)?
- What is the impact of this policy on girls?/on boys?
- Is this policy permanent or temporary (until gender equality has been achieved)?

14. What about the Affirmative Action aimed at “Providing mentors to girls in secondary and higher education especially for girls in the area of science and technology”. What has been done to implement this Action? What remains to be done?

15. In your opinion – how well is the Girls’ Education Task Force working?

- How often does it meet?
- Who attends? Are these the right people to attend? If not who else should attend?
- What activities has it undertaken in the past year (or previous years)?
- What results has it achieved in the past year (or previous years)?

Appendix 3

Map of Rwanda



Research permit by the Ministry of Education

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

Kigali, 24/01/2012

N°0.459./12.00/2012



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
P.O.BOX 622 KIGALI

Dusenge Angelique, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe
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RE: Approval to conduct research in Rwanda under the project title "Status of Gender Equality in Primary and Secondary Schools in Rwanda"

Following your letter requesting for research permission to carry out research in Rwanda, I am pleased to attach a copy of research clearance which has been granted to you to conduct research on the above project title.

I wish to remind you that the research permit number should be cited in your final research report, the research should be carried out under the affiliation of the Ministry of Education under the supervision of Dr. Erasme Rwanamiza, Director General, Education & Planning, Ministry of Education. Also a copy of the final research report is to be given to the Ministry of Education of Rwanda.

I wish you success in your research study.

GASINGIRWA Marie-Christine, PhD
Yours sincerely,
Director General of Science,
Technology & Research

Dr. Marie Christine Gasingirwa
Director General Science, Technology and Research
Ministry of Education

cc.

- Minister of Education
- Minister of State in Charge of Primary and Secondary Education
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
- Advisor, Science and Technology, Ministry of Education
- Dr. Erasme Rwanamiza, Director General Education & Planning



PRO FEMMES / TWESE-HAMWE	
INDICATE LE.	27/1/2012
LE NO.	054
DIRECTEUR.	Marie Christine Gasingirwa
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VSO is an active member of the Global Campaign for Education, an international coalition of charities, civil society organisations and education unions that mobilises public pressure on governments to provide the free education for all children they promised to deliver in 2000.

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In addition to this publication, the following research may also be of interest, available from the VSO International website:

www.vsointernational.org/valuingteachers

- Action and Interaction: Gender equality in teaching and education management in Cameroon (2013)
- Gender Equality and Education (2011)
- How Much is a Good Teacher Worth? A report of the motivation and morale of teachers in Ethiopia (2009)
- Leading Learning: A report on effective school leadership and quality education in Zanzibar
- Learning from Listening: A policy report on Maldivian teachers' attitudes to their own profession (2005)
- Lessons from the Classroom: Teachers' motivation and perceptions in Nepal (2005)
- Listening to Teachers: The motivation and morale of education workers in Mozambique (2008)
- Making Teachers Count: A policy research report on Guyanese teachers' attitudes to their own profession (2004)
- Managing Teachers: The centrality of teacher management to quality education. Lessons from developing countries (2008)
- Qualifying for Quality: Unqualified teachers and qualified teacher shortages in The Gambia (2011)
- Seen But Not Heard: Teachers' voice in Rwanda (2004)
- Teachers for All: What governments and donors should do (2006)
- Teachers Speak Out: A policy research report on teachers' motivation in The Gambia (2007)
- Teachers Talking: Primary teachers' contributions to the quality of education in Mozambique (2011)
- Teachers' Voice: A policy research report on teachers' motivation and perceptions of their profession in Nigeria (2007)
- Teaching Matters: A policy report on the motivation and morale of teachers in Cambodia (2008)
- Valuing School Leaders: An investigation into the constraints facing school leaders in The Maldives (2009)



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