

INVISIBLE BARRIERS

Citizen Perceptions and Experiences of How Corruption in the Education Sector Undermines Access and Equity for Women, Girls, and other Groups at Risk of Discrimination

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1. BACKGROUND

Access to quality service in general and more particularly, in the education sector has been recognized as fundamental for considerable public resources and several development strategies around the world (WB, 2019). Service delivery outcomes are determined by the interplay of government providers and citizens. In particular, education outcomes are the result of the interaction between various factors involved in the multi-step service delivery systems and depend on the characteristics and behaviour of individuals and households (WB, 2010). According to World Bank, adequate financing, infrastructure, human resources, material and equipment have to be available, as well as proper institutions and governance structures which provide adequate incentives to the service providers. The availability of these essential elements and institutions is a function of the efficiency of the entire service delivery system.

However, service delivery is often poor or nonexistent in African countries and other developing countries; schools are not open when they are supposed to be; teachers are frequently absent and, when present, spend a significant amount of time not serving the intended beneficiaries; equipment, even when available, is not used and public funds are expropriated. Unfortunately, poor people suffer the most when the public sector does not deliver. Studies have also revealed that corruption exists in the education sector (Kirya, 2019). Corruption undermines the quality and quantity of public services, fuels inequalities in access to basic services and reduces the resources available for women and groups at risk of discrimination who are more reliant on public services (TI, 2010).

In Rwanda, the 2021 RBI reveals significant levels of incidence of bribes in the education sector, mainly in MINEDUC / REB and Secondary Schools, and especially among vulnerable individuals. In the same vein, according to research released by TI-Rwanda in 2021, the education system, particularly TVET, continues to confront challenges in delivering the expected services, including the lack of suitable facilities and equipment (TI-Rwanda, 2021). However, despite the issues facing the education system, there hasn't been enough research

undertaken, particularly on service delivery and corruption levels, to identify gaps for advocacy

Based on the above research gaps, and evidence indicating that the education sector is still prone to some corruption risks, TI-RW intends to bring its contribution in carrying out a study which analyses how corruption affects women, girls and other groups at risk of discrimination while seeking education services. A quantitative service delivery survey has been conducted to this end and has produced appropriate recommendations to address identified gaps.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.1. General Objective

The main objective of this survey is to assess the level of inclusiveness of education sector in Rwanda and analyze how corruption affects women, girls and other groups at risk of discrimination while seeking education services.

2.2. Specific objectives

Specifically, this study aims to:

- ✓ Analyze existing policy, institutional and legal frameworks promoting inclusive education in Rwanda.
- ✓ Examine to what extent the 12-year education program in Rwanda is inclusive.
- ✓ Assess how corruption affects women, girls and other groups at risk of discrimination while seeking education services.
- ✓ Examine the challenges that hinder inclusive education in Rwanda.
- ✓ Suggest strategies and recommendations aimed to mitigate identified challenges regarding inclusiveness and corruption among groups at risk of discrimination.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a way of explaining how a researcher intends to carry out the research. It is a logical, systematic plan to resolve a research problem. A methodology details a researcher's approach to ensure reliable, valid results that address their aims and objectives. It encompasses what data they are going to collect, from where and whom this data is collected, as well as how it is collected and analyzed.

3.1. Methods and Approaches

This survey combines quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data on inclusiveness and corruption in the 12-year basic education program in Rwanda. The choice of this design was suitable not only because the study aimed for countrywide coverage but also because it assessed several aspects of inclusiveness and corruption with a reference to a particular point in time (the year 2022). Moreover, this study relied on a descriptive design given that it yields quantitative data (average, percentage, counts) on selected aspects of inclusiveness and corruption in the 12-year basic education program in Rwanda. Regarding the relevance of a descriptive design, Marczyk et al., (2005) argue that *it is useful because it can provide important information regarding the average member of a group. Specifically, by gathering data on a large group of people, a researcher can describe the average member, or the average performance of a member, of the particular group being studied.*"

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data on different aspects of inclusive education and corruption. For inclusive education, the questionnaire captured issues of equal opportunities for students to access basic education, teaching materials and school equipment, as well as school infrastructure. With regard to corruption, the questionnaire apprehended forms of corruption perceived or experienced by students.

Qualitative research has been carried out to help interpret the quantitative findings and other information not able to be collected using quantitative techniques. In-depth interviews or key informant interviews, as well as focus group discussions, have been used in the qualitative research for this assignment. The two qualitative research techniques are viewed

as complementary rather than substitutes in this context. First, in-depth interviews or key informant interviews allowed for discussions with school leaders and key leaders overseeing education at the national level, as well as an understanding of the current state of the 12-year basic education program, issues, challenges, and solutions. Secondly, focus group discussions enabled researchers to gather information from a group of people who are chosen and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on the research issue based on personal experience.

The FGDs have been homogeneously formed, with separate groups for girls, teen mothers, PWDs, and parents from Ubudehe category one. This has been done to allow members of each group to freely express their experience insofar as inclusive education and corruption are concerned. The study has also used Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to collect information from school leaders, education officers at sector and district levels and officials from REB, NESAC and MINEDUC at the central level.

The desk review and observation techniques have been useful in determining the number of special facilities available to girls and other groups with special needs in 12-year basic education program schools sampled in this study. This technique consisted of reviewing existing literature on inclusive education and corruption, with a particular focus on Rwanda. The consulted literature consisted largely of inclusive education policy, laws and institutional framework. It also reviewed existing reports highlighting corruption in the education sector.

3.2. Sampling frame and sample size

The study sampling frame is drawn from the entire population in the five districts as the study population. Purposive samples have been stratified to select specific respondents in their respective occupations in order to estimate population parameters, especially in the context of selecting respondents with sufficient information for this survey. Eligible respondents or targeted population are school teachers and students benefiting from the 12-year basic education program in Rwanda.

The sample size was computed using the Raosoft sample size calculator which utilises the formula below.

$$n = (N(zs/e)^2)/(N-1+(zs/e)^2)$$

Where:

$z = 1.645$ for 90% level of confidence

$s = p(1-p)$ p = estimated proportion

e = desired margin of error

N = population size

In this estimation, the size of the study population is 461,572 students at both the primary and secondary general education level from the five districts covered in this survey. The confidence level is taken at 90% with a margin of error of 5%. The table below illustrates the sample distribution in each district. Therefore, the sample obtained for sampling errors of 5% (desired level of precision), at a confidence level of 90%, is 270 respondents in each district, that is 1350 respondents in total.

Table 1: Sample distribution per district

SN	Study population	Number of students per district (Study population Size(N))	Confidence level	Margin of error	Sample size(n)
1	RUBAVU	106,660	90%	5%	270
2	HUYE	72,335	90%	5%	270
3	KAMONYI	93,364	90%	5%	270
4	MUSANZE	90,967	90%	5%	270
5	KAYONZA	98,246	90%	5%	270
	Total	461,572			1350

Source: Computed based on MINEDUC, *Education Statistics Yearbook 2020-21*

As the yearbook does not separate students enrolled in 12YBE for ordinary and advanced level from all students registered in secondary general education, this study has only considered students enrolled in schools having a twelve years basic education program. The special consideration of 12YBE comes to meet the defined scope and groups as per study objectives.

The sample size for teachers was determined also using the above-mentioned formula and considering five per cent as the margin of error with a confidence level of 90%, thus giving the estimated sample size of 266 rounded off to 300 respondents as the total number of teachers to be interviewed in selected five districts. The number of teachers in each district was estimated by dividing the total sample size for teachers (300) by the number of selected districts (5), which is equal to 60. The table below displays the distribution of teachers per district and per education level.

Table 2: Number of Teachers per District and per education level

SN	District	Number of teachers Per District (Study population Size N)	Respondents per District	Respondents for primary level	Respondents for "O&A" Level
1	RUBAVU	3,424	60	30	30
2	HUYE	2,711	60	30	30
3	KAMONYI	3,087	60	30	30
4	MUSANZE	3,263	60	30	30
5	KAYONZA	3,178	60	30	30
	Total	15,663	300	150	150

Source: Computed based on MINEDUC, 2022, *Education Statistics Yearbook 2020-21*

Taking into consideration that it is possible for schools with the 12-year basic education program to have a teacher who serves at both ordinary and advanced level, as well as considering the fact that in most schools you may find a large number of teachers in upper

primary, the study has purposely considered 50% of teachers for both upper primary and secondary.

Similarly, the sample size for schools was determined also using the above-mentioned formula and considering five percent as the margin of error with a confidence level of 90%. This gave the estimated sample size of 207 rounded off to 210 schools as the total number of schools to be sampled in selected five districts. To find out the number of schools involved in this study, the probability of proportional to size (PPS) calculation was applied as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Distribution of Schools per district and education level

SN	District	Primary Schools	Schools with Secondary General education	Study population Size (N)	Number of Schools to be surveyed	Primary Level	Ordinary Level	Advanced Level
1	RUBAVU	112	57	169	30	9	12	9
2	HUYE	109	47	156	30	9	12	9
3	KAMONYI	130	70	200	55	16	22	17
4	MUSANZE	118	62	180	50	15	20	15
5	KAYONZA	114	51	165	45	13	18	14
	Total	583	287	870	210	62	84	64

3.3. Data collection process

Prior to collecting data from the various sources specified above, enumerators and team leaders have received one-day training to ensure that they fully understand the data collection tools. Before embarking on a field for data collection, a pilot survey was conducted in schools, which were not part of the scope of the study. The pre-testing served as an

opportunity for interviewers and supervisors to get used to the questionnaire before actual fieldwork. In order to ease the data collection and minimize errors in both data collection and data entry, we used tablets instead of paper-based questionnaires. Thanks to this software, on a daily basis, collected data were immediately uploaded to the server. Data has been collected face-to-face by trained and skilled enumerators in the respondents' preferred language, under the supervision of experienced team leaders in each district. The overall coordination of data collection in the 5 selected districts was performed by TI-RW researchers.

3.4. Data analysis

The study's mixed methods approach also informed the data analysis exercise. As regards the analysis of qualitative data, the thematic analysis method was used. According to Virginia and Clarke, (2012) thematic analysis refers to "a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set". These authors also maintain that "this method, then, is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities" (p.57). In the actual study, the main themes were first aligned with the study-specific objectives. However, under each main theme, there was a range of sub-themes depending on what was common or unique from participants' discussions. It is worth mentioning that qualitative data was found to be useful for cross-checking, validating/supporting or providing nuance to quantitative ones.

In order to come up with informative and useful results, the research has been conducted with a view towards the concepts of intersectionality and gender-based analysis in order to capture the multiple factors (gender, discrimination and corruption) that applied to the social identity of some groups (Global Citizen, 2022). The gender analysis has articulated on factors that induce distinct consideration for different groups of women, men, boys, girls and people of different gender identities. The above both concepts allow this study to uncover the

importance of gender in relation to access to particular services/resources in the 12-year basic education program.

3.5. Quality Assurance

Conducting such an assessment necessitates a set of measures to ensure the quality of data and information. The following activities and measures have contributed to the quality and integrity of the assurance process for this assessment. Data quality has been ensured throughout the data collection, analysis, and synthesis processes, which has been supported by triangulation and verification to minimize potential errors.

The quality assurance also included the following:

- Development of the tools and methodology in a participatory way;
- Validation of the methodology and tools by the TI-Rw' stakeholders;
- Triangulation: Use of several techniques to gather maximum information and to supplement the inherent weaknesses in each approach.

3.6. Ethical considerations

Our search for information does not violate ethical values, including the responsibility to avoid harming or embarrassing respondents and to respect their privacy. A series of procedures to comply with ethical guidelines have been followed by consultants and enumerators during the entire study process:

- Informed consent: after having received and understood all the research-related information.
- Respondent expresses his or her willingness to participate in this study voluntarily.
- The purpose of the research is to discover new information that would be helpful to society.

- The researcher is aware of a research subject's identity but has taken precautions to prevent that identity from being discovered by others and to ensure that the identity of individual respondents is not revealed.
- Respect for privacy, not to share respondents' details with someone else.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1. Policy, legal frameworks and institutional frameworks of Basic Education in Rwanda

The cluster of basic education in Rwanda is composed of Pre-primary, Primary, and Secondary education levels. In addition to these three levels, there is non-formal education, or adult basic education. Since 15 years ago, Rwanda observed an impressive growth in primary enrolment as a result of ongoing policy development and new strategies such as school construction, teacher recruitment, capitation grants, teaching and learning materials, promotion of girls' education, increased parent involvement and government encouragement towards private sector investment. Moreover, considerable progress was observed in terms of the increased number of schools, particularly as universal primary education is considered the foundation for further development of secondary education (MINEDUC , 2019).

The right to education means both the right to access and receive education of high quality (UNICEF-Rwanda , 2022). There are numerous meanings of quality education (Unterhalter, 2019) , but the World Bank defined quality of education in the Rwandan context as meaning that “every child accesses an equipped school with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values responsive to the Rwanda’s aspirations in socio-economic development as well as to personal further educational development” (World Bank, 2011).

The Ministry of Education in Rwanda has adopted quality standards for all primary, secondary and higher education institutions. Reforms in the education sector in Rwanda have specific institutional arrangements with the aim of promoting the quality of education in each education cluster. Under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Education, the basic education sub-sector (Pre-primary, Primary, and Secondary education) has been moved under the institutional regulation of the Rwanda Education Board (REB) and National

Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA). The Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) was separated from general education and moved under the Rwanda TVET Board. Where the education directorate at the district level, the higher learning institutions are coordinated and regulated by the Higher Learning Education Council (HEC) and Rwanda Polytechnic (RP), supports general education and TVET.

With the aim of attaining access to quality, equitable and effective education for all, at all levels of education, the Rwandan education sector has significantly invested in expanding access to basic education from nine to twelve years. Within the education policy in Rwanda, special consideration goes to enabling compulsory and free basic education for all. At the beginning of the implementation of the basic education program for all, the nine years education policy was developed by MINEDUC in 2003. In 2012, this program was expanded from nine years of basic education to 12 years of basic education as part of the changes to the education curriculum through MINEDUC (Anzeze, 2022)

Additionally, the implementation of education in short and long-term aspirations in Rwanda is being supported by the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) (2018/19–2023/24), the Girls Education Policy (2008), the Special Needs Education Policy (2008), the National Early Childhood Development Policy Strategic Plan of MIGEPROF (2016 to 2021), the Language Education Policy, the ICT in Education Policy (2014), the Quality Standards in Education (2008), the Nine-Year Basic Education Strategy (2008), the Strategic Plan for Technical Education (2008-2012) and the Science, Technology and Innovation policy (2020), among others.

Regarding the legal framework, education is a fundamental human right, compulsory and free in public schools as per Article 20 of the constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003, revised in 2015. Articles 50, 118, 119 and 120 in the law n° 010/2021 of 16/02/2021 determining the organization of education in Rwanda underline the willingness of the government to promote inclusive education and learning processes that are convenient for people with disabilities. Additionally, the law no 02/2011/OL of 27 July 2011 governs the organization of education in Rwanda, the law no 23/2012 of 15 June 2012 governs the

organization and functioning of the nurseries, primary and secondary education, and the regional commitments made as part of Rwanda’s membership of the East African Community (EAC). These all shed more light on the willingness and commitment of the government to promote access to quality education for all.

4.2. Overview of Inclusive Education in Rwanda

Inclusive Education is defined as the process of addressing all learners’ educational needs in a mainstream education setting. It is based on the principle that all learners are different and can learn and develop differently, and therefore, the education system is expected to be flexible to fit every child’s needs. In the Rwandan socio-cultural context, the concept is often interpreted as ‘Uburezi Budaheza’ or ‘non-exclusionary education (MINEDUC, 2018).

Education for students with disabilities, girls and those from poor families and socio-economically disadvantaged communities are particularly poorly represented. They continue to be encouraged and supported in the Rwandan education system as it is determined by the special needs & inclusive education strategic plan 2018/19-2023/24, which signposts the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to support needy people (MINEDUC, 2018).

The strong determination and commitment of the Government of Rwanda to promote women and girls is appearing in almost all education-related instruments. Researchers in science, technology and information have also pleaded to encourage innovation in inclusive products and services such as Female Technology (Femtech), focusing on women’s health in areas like fertility and reproductive system healthcare (NCST, 2020). Such determination and commitment is a necessary response to the historical and social marginalization faced women and girls.

Curriculum development and delivery for Rwandan schools is controlled and monitored by the Rwanda Education Board (REB) for quality assurance and program evaluation. However, reports from the Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Resources Department indicate that

special needs (SN) and inclusive education (IE) related curricula are mainstreamed within its activities and support services for Special and Inclusive Schools.

In addition to the developed inclusive curriculum, the Government of Rwanda is progressively showing commitment to avail of inclusive teaching materials and services to all levels of education. However, students with hearing impairments are not able to freely choose any communication mode for teaching and learning because the standard sign language for schools is not yet in place. Students with learning difficulties and intellectual challenges continue to request standard curricula and appropriate programs to cater for their special educational needs, despite the existence of a competence-based curriculum which has been implemented in basic education in Rwanda since 2015.

Despite the support of inclusive education from available legal and policy as well as guidelines provisions, recent reports revealed that there are still gaps in adequate infrastructure, equipment and materials for students with disabilities who require easier access to schools (UNICEF-Rwanda , 2022). The same report uncovers that only 70% of children with disabilities in Rwanda are enrolled in primary school.

A range of specialized materials, equipment and services still need to be developed, procured and supplied to schools. Currently, these are either inadequate, inappropriate or unknown. Evidence from special schools for learners with Visual impairment confirms that REB has continuously procured educational materials for unimpaired students to the school, even with repeated claims for appropriate alternatives that could include Braille and other tactile materials. In all cases, however, the situation of children included in mainstream schools becomes even more challenging to both their educators, who are required to adhere to the ordinary education standards, and to the students with SEN, who are often not provided with appropriate instructional resources, services and approaches.

There has not yet been any specific policy to address training needs to achieve the minimum teacher-to-pupil ratio in the domain of Special needs & inclusive education. Whereas the UR-College of Education (CE) has included within its teacher training programs modules related

to special needs and inclusive education, specific programs for training educators with different Special needs and inclusive education specializations are still demanded.

It is equally observed that the classrooms are inadequately resourced and, therefore, serve only a limited number of students, mainly because of budgetary constraints of the schools and the parent community. Besides, limited services are offered by the existing resource rooms because specialized educators and other experts skilled in related services are not available to the schools.

4.3. Evidence of corruption in the education sector in Rwanda

In Rwanda, the level of corruption in the education system is was measured in 2013 as comparatively low, as shown by the Global Corruption Report: Education (TI, 2013). According to this report, about 3 % of the people paid bribes in education in Rwanda. Compared to, for example, Ghana (38 %) or the global average (15 %), this figure is rather low. However, as the report further shows, especially disbursement of the funds allocated by the Rwandan Government and compliance with the guidelines on how the money should be spent are critical issues.

Additionally, the report of the Auditor General of state finances in Rwanda for the fiscal year 2020-21 revealed that an amount of FRW 8,369,875 was fraudulently lost from the education sector (OAG, 2021).

Also, the 2017 Rwanda Bribery Index, published by Transparency International Rwanda, shows that bribes are being paid in the education sector, especially at universities and for vocational training, to get better grades from teachers. In Rwanda, the long period of school closure was not envisaged, and school systems everywhere were therefore converting to virtual learning during these prolonged periods. Many Rwandan head teachers and teachers continued to provide teaching and learning to students throughout the school closures, using a variety of remote learning methods. From the perspective of teachers interviewed in the Rwanda Bribery Index (RBI) 2021, an annual study by TI-RW, it was revealed that some of

them were asked to pay bribes to secure a job in these teaching opportunities. The study also highlighted that parents who were interviewed testified that they were forced to indulge in corrupt practices in a bid to get a favourable placements for their children who were initially transferred to a remote school. In addition, RBI reported that the overall rate of prevalence of bribes in the education sector was 4.08%, implying a slight increase in the rate of bribery from 2013 (3%).

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

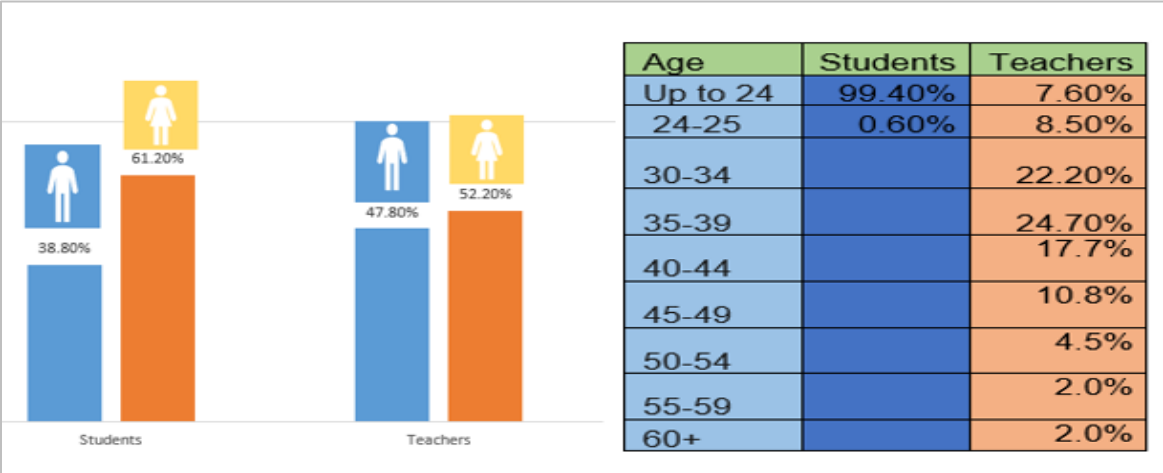
This chapter presents findings related to the perception and experiences of respondents on inclusive education and corruption in service delivery in the Rwandan 12-year basic education program. It also discusses the level of respondents' satisfaction, divided into different groups at risk of discrimination as identified with regards to the concept of intersectionality.

5.1. Demographics

This section describes respondents' demographic characteristics. These include sex, age group and level of education. The distribution of respondents by their respective categories is given.

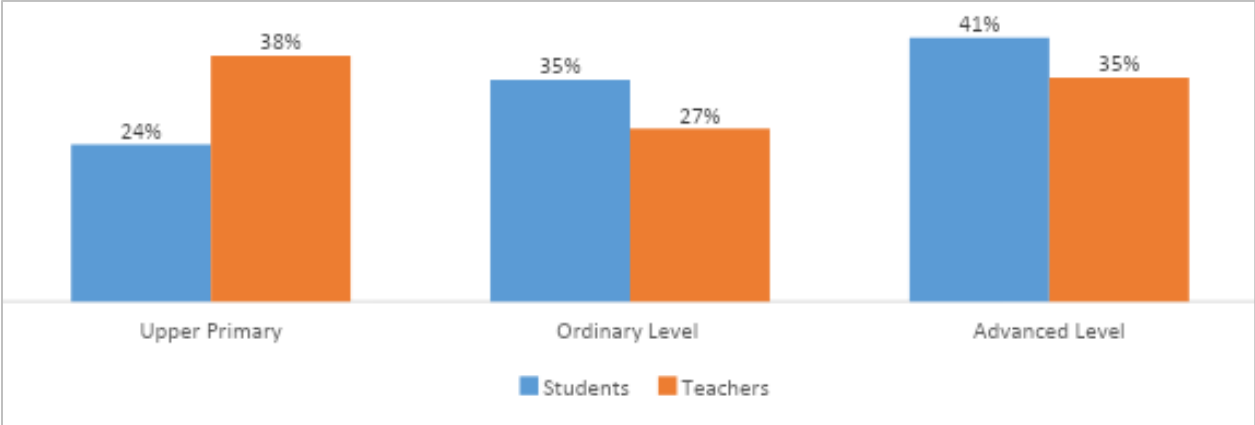
Respondents involved in this assessment are largely female students (61.20%) and teachers (52.20%). Additionally, the majority of respondents are young, as 99.40% of students are under 24 years old, while 80.7% of teachers are under 44 years old, as per Figure 5. This study has considered gender aspects while accessing the 12-year basic education in Rwanda.

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by gender, age group and level of education



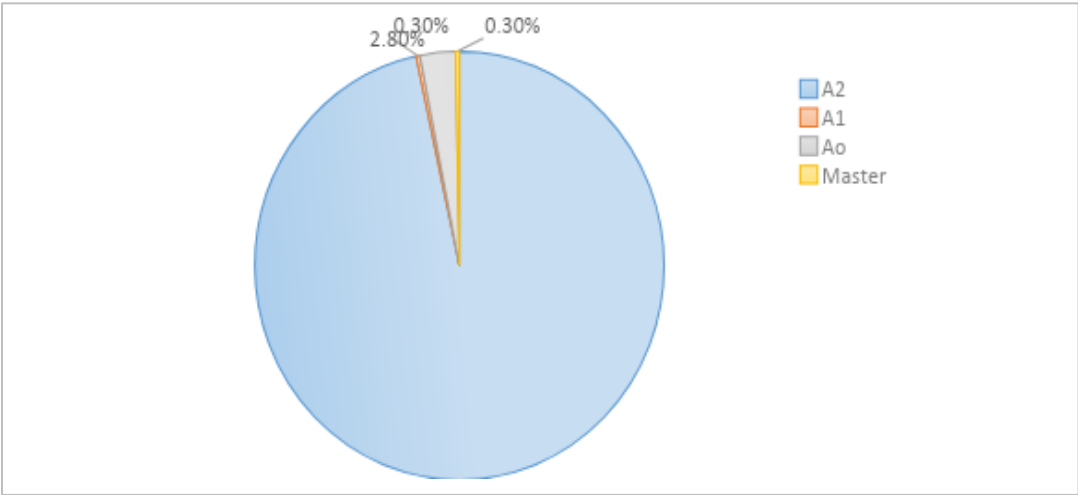
For the level of education of students and the number of teachers who teach them, 24% of students is 38% of total teachers who participated in this assessment are in upper primary. 35% of the students are at the ordinary level (35%) with 27% of teachers. 41% of students are at the advanced level with 35% of teachers who teach them, as per Figure 2.

Figure 2: Education of students and the corresponding number of teachers



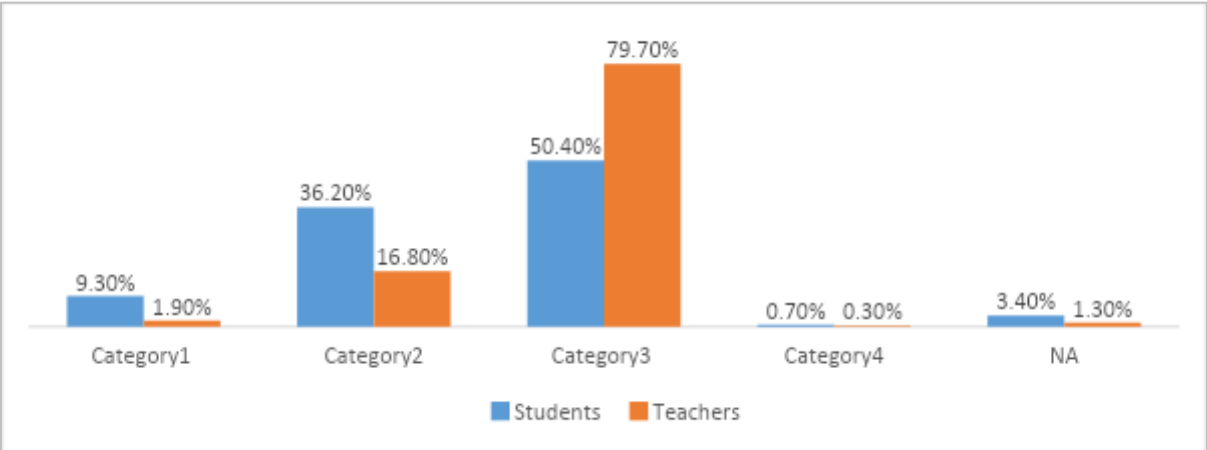
Additionally, Figure 3 illustrates that a large majority of teachers have completed only secondary school, 2.80% have bachelor's degrees while 0.30% of respondents have master's and 0.30% have diplomas.

Figure 3: Level of education of teachers



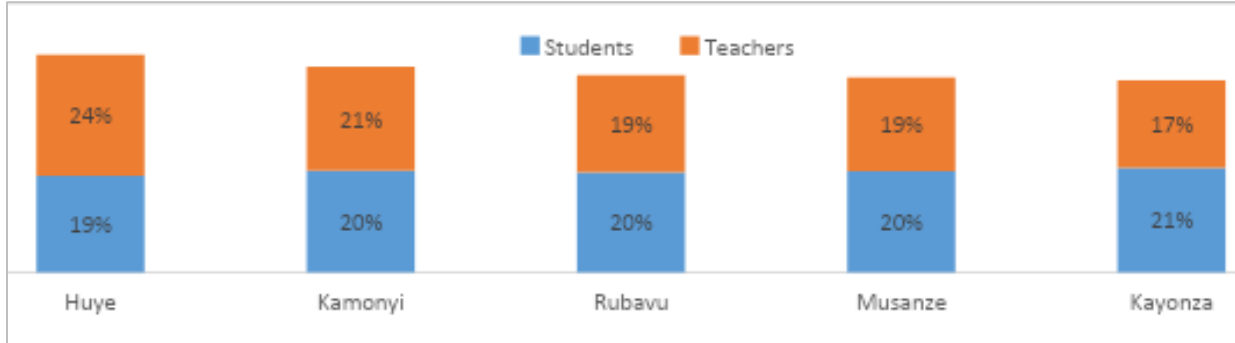
This study has also analyzed the socio-economic status of respondents as this study aims to assess the access to basic education of groups at risk of discrimination. Results revealed that both students and teachers are concentrated in categories 2 and 3, as is presented in Figure 4. Another important finding to consider is the threat to the access to education of students (45.5%) whose households are in categories 1 and 2, which explains that they have very few means. This variable helped to assess the extent to which households with low-income access education services.

Figure 4: Ubudehe Category of Respondents



Considering the geographic location, this study has collected information from 5 districts, including Huye and Kamonyi in the southern province, Rubavu in the Western province, Musanze in the Northern province, and Kayonza in the Eastern province. More respondents for both students and teachers come from Huye and Kamonyi due to the large number of schools they have over other districts.

Figure 5: Distribution of Respondents (Students and Teachers) per District



Following this assessment's nature of analyzing different factors that affect students and teachers while seeking education services, this assessment reveals that 4% of total students who participated in this study identify as persons with disabilities. For teachers, the share who have disabilities is 1.90%, as per Figure 6. This variable enables analysis of the extent to which PWDs access education services.

Figure 6: Respondents with Disabilities

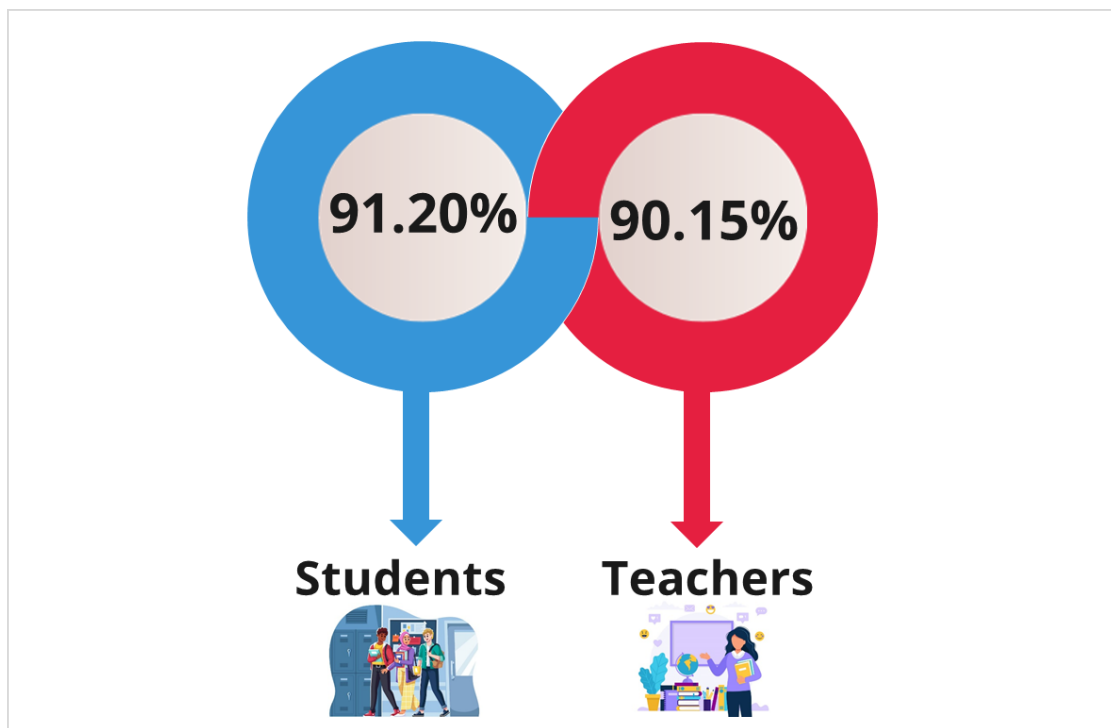


Teachers (1.90%) and students (4%) that identified as persons reported hearing impairment and speech/language impairment for students, while teachers only acknowledged living with a hearing impairment. This study has considered this variable in order to assess whether students with disabilities are appropriately accessing education services as opposed to their classmates with no disabilities.

5.2. Analysis of the status of inclusive basic education in Rwanda

This assessment intends to analyze the status of inclusiveness in the 12 years of the basic education program in Rwanda. It explores existing secondary data on the aspect under study and captures respondents' perception and experience on inclusive service delivery in enrollment, availability and access to teaching materials and school infrastructure.

Figure 7: Perception of students and teachers on the extent to which basic education is inclusive in Rwanda

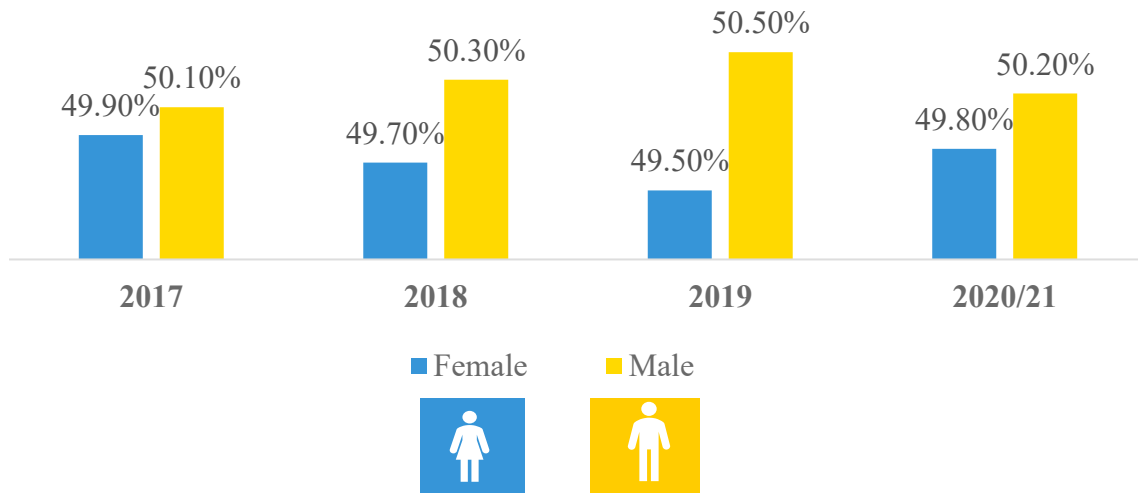


According to the data in the above figure, students and teachers perceived the level of inclusiveness in basic education in Rwanda as very high (around 90%). This is perceived by both students (91.20%) and teachers (90.15%) who were interviewed as per Figure 7. The study has also examined the inclusiveness of education in enrollment rates between boys and girl's students as presented in Figure 8.

5.2.1. Inclusiveness in school enrollment and dropouts in Primary and Secondary level

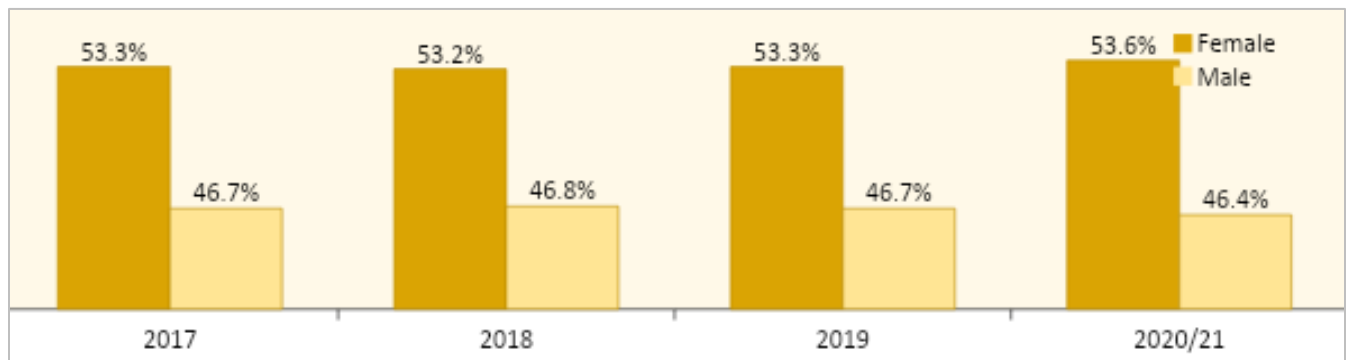
Student enrollment in Rwanda is inclusive for both male and female students, as shown in Figure 8. However, there is a small difference in enrollment rates between male and female students in secondary schools (see Figure 9), where the enrollment rate of female students in secondary was higher than that of male students for the last four years.

Figure 8: Enrolment in Primary Schools



Source: Computed based on Ministry of Education, statistical yearbook 2020/21

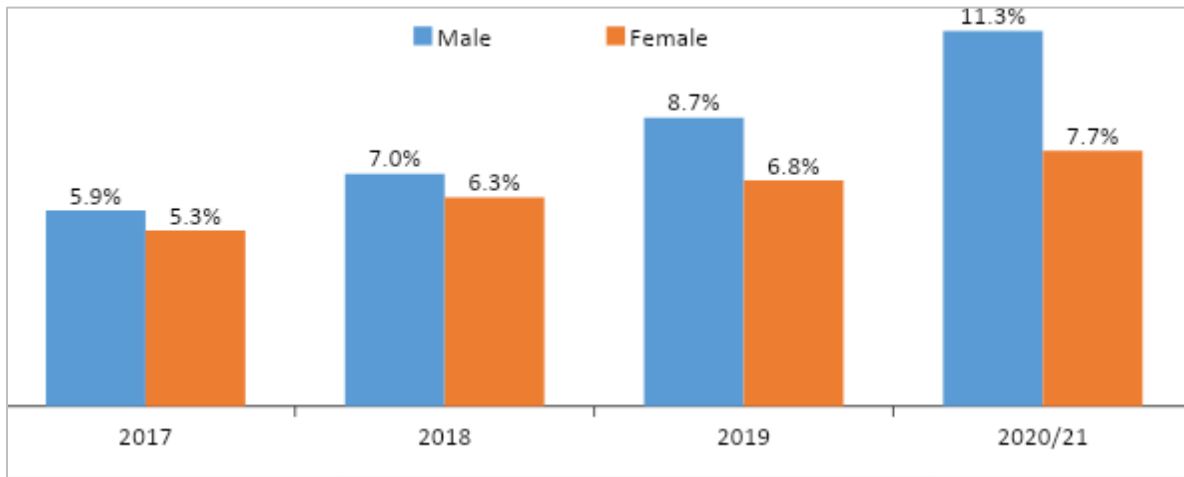
Figure 9: Enrolment in Secondary Schools



Source: Computed based on Ministry of Education, statistical yearbook 2020/21

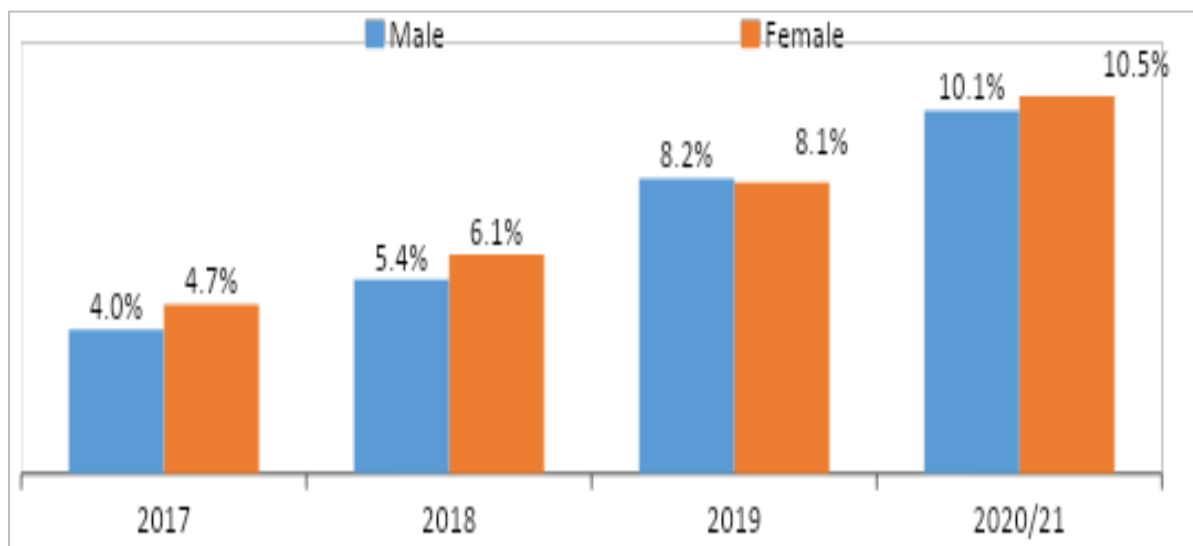
While the enrollment rate in secondary schools has remained higher for female students than male counterparts over the past four years as per Figure 9 above, data in Figures 10 and 11 also sheds light on the difference of drop rate between female and male students during the transition from primary six to the lower secondary schools.

Figure 10: Dropout in Primary Schools



Source: School census, Ministry of Education

Figure 11: Dropout in Secondary Schools



Source: School census, Ministry of Education

It emerged from the data in Figures 10 and 11 that male students registered more dropouts than females in primary schools while female students experienced more dropouts in secondary schools. Studies have shown that age is a strong predictor of dropout, where older children (aged 13 to 18) enrolled in primary school are more likely to drop out compared to younger children. In 2017, this happened for 3.9% of primary six students, most of them being boys (Laterite, 2019). Studies conducted on causes of dropout in primary schools in Rwanda revealed that child labour and poverty stay at the top of the list of drivers influencing the dropout of male students in primary schools in Rutsiro district (Cyprien, 2022).

Gender is another factor in dropout, especially girls in secondary school who are likely to leave their studies due to early pregnancies (Nkurunziza & Hooimeije, 2012) or marriage (Laterite, 2019). The dropout of female students in secondary schools due to early pregnancy was testified by FGDs of single mother participated in this study.

“A teen in Gicumbi District testified “I got pregnant when I was in the first year of secondary school. My parents excommunicated me and, due to other family conflicts, they also separated and they left me with my younger siblings, which led me to drop out of school. Some years later, after giving birth, I got a sponsor who was willing to take me back to school but the head teacher, who is also a catholic priest, denied saying he cannot admit a mother in his school”.

5.2.2. Students/teachers’ satisfaction with the available materials/Infrastructure that respond to their Needs

Special Educational Needs (SEN) are non-ordinary needs a learner may have in schooling as a result of intrinsic or extrinsic limitations/barriers. The learner with SEN will need extra attention/assistance from the teacher and/or the use of different educational approaches and/or tools. This is an education that aims at providing education services to all children who may, for any reason, have temporary or permanent needs for adjusted education (MINEDUC, SEN, 2018). Table 4 displays the level of satisfaction (likelihood) between male

and female students with regard to available hygiene and sanitation school facilities as a need for girls' students.

Table 4: Students' satisfaction with the available Hygiene and Sanitation facilities that respond to students' needs

Hygiene and Sanitation Facility	Likelihood	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf. Interval]
Males	0.851134	0.029074 5	29.27	0.000	0.794149 0.908119
Females	0.8074438	0.031867 8	25.34	0.000	0.744984 0.869904

The data in Table 4 shows that female students are less likely to be satisfied than their male counterparts with regard to the availability of hygiene and sanitation facilities at school. Despite the high satisfaction of female students, there are serious consequences to a significant proportion (20%) of those who are not satisfied with available hygiene and sanitation facilities. A lack of these facilities at school can prevent girls from continuing their education once they reach puberty. This was illustrated during an interview held with a girl student of 13 years old in primary six in one of the schools in Musanze District who testified:

“At my age, I have reached menstrual period. Before the introduction of the girls’ rooms in 2020, we used the dining room next to our classrooms to get sanitary pads and girls would get nervous since it was an open place. In the dining room, there were sanitary pads but without water for cleaning. Other students, especially boys, would immediately know what girls were doing. Thanks to the introduction of girls’ rooms, a girl in her menstrual period has this private room, she receives water, and they teach you how to clean yourself when it’s your first time. Thereafter, they provide sanitary pads and underwear with lotion, and if you feel a headache, they let you rest for a moment before returning to class. Before, we had a number of school dropouts, but since we have girls’ rooms, we no longer have this issue”.

On the other hand, you may find that sanitation facilities for girls are available in some schools. During the interview with a teachers' representative at one 12 Year Basic Education Program School in Rubavu District, he stated:

"In the rooms dedicated to students who are in their menstrual period, we make sure there is hygiene and those girls get pads, soaps and other hygienic tools. It also has toilets and bathrooms. Teachers and students have also elected a teacher called "Shangazi" (translated as aunt) who gets reports from that girls' room and is the one who makes sure all needed infrastructures are available and hygienic tools are not used up".

As part of the special needs, safety facilities are one of the indicators that were used to examine the level of inclusive education aimed to promote access to quality education that is accommodative of the various educationally disadvantaged groups of students. Table 5 illustrates the level of satisfaction (likelihood) of students with regard to the safety of school facilities that respond to their needs.

Table 5: Students' satisfaction with the safety of school facilities

Safety of school facilities	Likelihood	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Males	0.434251	0.040015	10.85	0.000	0.355824	0.512679
Females	0.350036	0.036909	9.48	0.000	0.277697	0.422375

The above table indicates that females are less likely to be satisfied with the safety of the existing school facilities, where only 35% of female students compared to 43.4% of male counterparts are satisfied. It is worth saying that gender-sensitive facilities are indispensable to increasing the time girls spend in school. In an inclusive school, all students are welcome, feel they belong, realize their potential and contribute to daily school life. Inclusive schools ensure that all students, regardless of background, ability or identity, are engaged and achieving by being present, participating and learning. However, many schools fall short, including in terms of gender inclusion, for reasons ranging from poor infrastructure to

unsafe learning environments. According to UNESCO, globally, 78% of primary schools had single-sex basic sanitation facilities. The absence of safe facilities in the school environment is unsafe for students and can have a negative effect on school attendance, especially for female students (UNESCO, 2022).

In the section below, the study analyses the extent to which basic education in Rwanda is inclusive to PWDs in terms of adapted teaching materials such as braille, large prints, audio-visual or standard signs and symbol systems, a range of assistive devices, and other approaches (see Table 6).

Table 6: Teachers' satisfaction with teaching materials that respond to students with(out) disabilities or special needs

Teaching materials	Likelihood	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Students with disabilities	0.571913	0.226713	2.52	0.012	0.127564	1.016263
Students with no disabilities	0.737371	0.024999	29.5	0.000	0.688373	0.786368

Teaching materials that respond to PWD's special needs are still limited in the Rwandan Basic education program as only 57.1% of teachers are satisfied with the materials. Students with hearing impairments are particularly challenged because sign language is not used as a medium of instruction for schools, is not fully recognized by the Ministry of Education and is not integrated into teacher training programs. Gaps have continued to exist in schools due to the inadequacy of provision for sign language interpretation services, braille and tactile material transcription services, and supply of other assistive devices (Including adapted software) for communication and related services. These shortages seriously negatively impact equal access to education services by learners with SEN in Rwandan schools (MINEDUC, 2018).

It is worth noting that teaching materials that respond to students' special needs should also be mainstreamed in the School Curriculum. Access to the curriculum by all students is core to the mission of the education sector. There is a need to ensure that all the learning materials are friendly and adapted to individual learners with SEN. However, according to MINEDUC (2018), some Rwandan schools for students with hearing impairments choose freely any communication mode for teaching and learning because there is no standard for sign language in schools. Centres and schools for learners with learning difficulties and intellectual challenges continue to request a standardized curriculum and appropriate programs to cater for the special educational needs of their learners. This challenge was also echoed by participants in FGDs with head teachers and teachers in selected schools under this study. They said:

"Though we have a teacher and a student who have blindness disability, we always decry that the curriculum that we have is not inclusive at all. For instance, among all books we have, none of them can be read by refreshable braille display. Because the curriculum is poor, the teacher himself finds alternative solutions, and he is the one who brought that refreshable braille display which benefited that student. In addition, because we have seven students with disabilities, it becomes problematic when it's time for sports. The curriculum does not have a part for people with disabilities. So, the school and teachers are the ones to ponder over how to do so." ~ Headteacher at a 12-Year Basic Education Program School in Rubavu District

"Most of the schools do not have adequate infrastructures for people with disabilities, and it becomes worse when it comes to those with autism, mental, and intellectual disabilities. This is because the schools have a large population (of students), and a teacher cannot get a special time to care about those people with disability when they need special care. Moreover, schools do not have trained teachers with specialization and expertise to teach people with disabilities. Over and above, the curriculum itself is not inclusive. For example, in sports subject, when the curriculum directs students not to do sports that overuse students' brains, it does not anticipate the kind of sports in which people with mental or

intellectual disabilities would take part. Due to a lack of infrastructure and the fact that the curriculum does not make it easy for teachers to take care of people with disabilities, we have some head teachers who do not allow admission of people with disability in their schools, especially those with autism, mental or intellectual disability.” ~ Teacher in a 12-Year Basic Education School in the Musanze District

“Among 1,066 students that we have in primary and secondary, none of them has a disability. Though we have none yet, we expect that we may admit them at any time. That is why we are endeavouring to have some inclusive and accessible infrastructures for all. However, we always wonder how we will teach students with disabilities because the curriculum does not direct us on what to do when students with disabilities are mixed with others. This is why we recommend sending students with some kinds of disabilities to special schools dedicated to admitting students with disabilities.” Head teacher in a 12-Year Basic Education School in the Gicumbi District

There are other common types of special education programs that are used to promote inclusive education. For example, inclusive classrooms where students with special needs learn with other kids in a regular classroom and get help from special education teachers and other experts; Separate resource rooms where students with special needs get extra help for part of the day while still going to regular classes; Self-contained classrooms which are separate rooms where students with special needs learn from a special education teacher all day; Specialized programs made for specific disabilities or learning differences, like autism or dyslexia as per getgaoally.com, accessed in 2023. The data in Table 7 indicates the level of teachers' satisfaction with classrooms that respond to the special needs of students with disabilities.

Table 7: Teachers' satisfaction with classrooms that respond to special needs of students with(out) disability

Classrooms	Likelihood	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Students with disabilities	0.537289	0.231848	2.32	0.020	0.082874	0.991703
Students with no disabilities	0.851136	0.020152	42.24	0.000	0.811638	0.890634

It has emerged from the study findings that students with disabilities remain less likely satisfied with classrooms that respond to their special needs compared to those with no disabilities as shown in Table 7. As a matter of fact, there is a huge gap in terms of the level of satisfaction between students with disabilities and those without any disability with regard to teaching materials (around 17% of difference) and classrooms (31.4% of difference) that respond to their special needs. As far as the education of people with disabilities is concerned and the tangible commitment of the Government of Rwanda to promote inclusive education through adapting infrastructure and materials to allow PWDs to access education, there is still a long journey to go, as per Tables 6 and 7. To reach the extent where children with disabilities can start and stay in schools with their peers without disabilities requires continuous joint efforts.

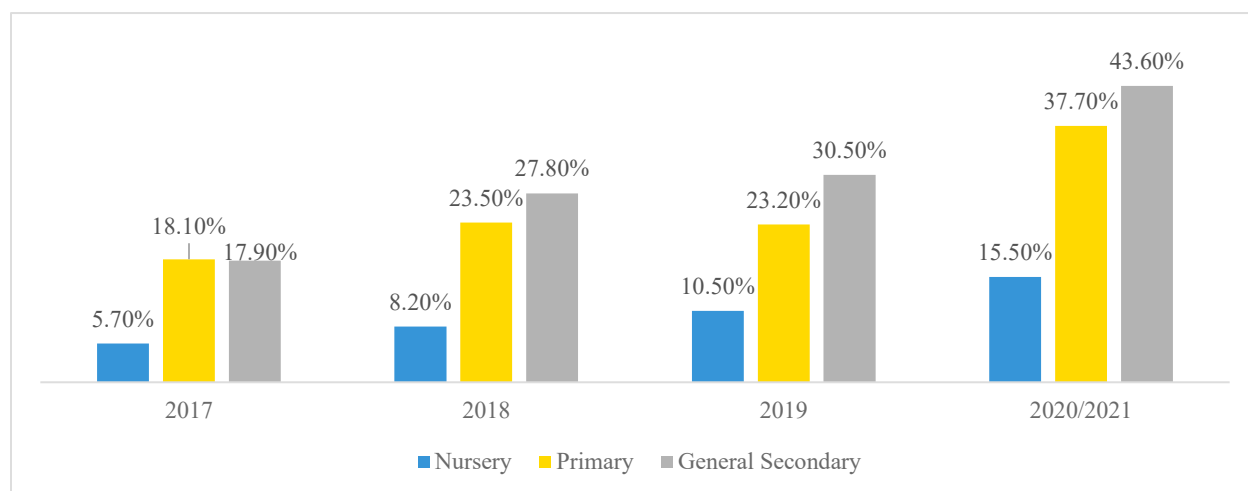
The issue of insufficient school materials and infrastructure was highlighted by the USAID report. This argued that available adapted infrastructure for PWDs was found in only a few schools, which also do not have sufficient procedures, facilities and qualified staff to help students and their families who are most of the time lacking knowledge and skills to deal with PWDs (USAID, 2019). Similarly, the education statistical yearbook of 2020/2021 shows that from 2017 up to 2021, the schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for PWDs are still few, especially in nurseries and primary schools. It is concerning, therefore, to notice a low rate of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for PWDs in secondary schools in Rwanda, ranging from 17.9% to 43.6% between 2017 and 2021 (see Table 8) which

would lead to the majority of PWDs being limited to access and participate in learning activities. This is evidenced by the following testimony from a teacher with a disability in the Kamonyi district.

“Due to the lack of adequate infrastructure for people with disabilities in schools, most schools do not accept to admit students with disability. Even when a student is admitted, school administration and teachers themselves try in all ways possible to discourage him/her and drop out. Fortunately, near the school where I teach, there is another school that has minimal infrastructure and admits so many students with disability. So, most of them go there”.

Adapted school infrastructure such as standard ramps, toilets adapted with standardized supportive rails and space, landmarks and clear walkways, among others, are necessary for an inclusive teaching/learning environment. Students with SEN still face obstacles on their way to and from school that includes long distances to and from school, non-adapted transport systems, rugged terrain, and others. Figure 12 displays the proportion of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for PWDs as per the Ministry of Education’s statistical yearbook 2020/21.

Figure 12: Schools with adapted schools’ infrastructure and materials for PWDs



Source: Ministry of Education, statistical yearbook 2020/21

As it is revealed in Figure 12, in Rwanda, the Ministry of Education has made more investments to equip schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities in the past four years. The 2021 education statistical yearbook reveals that there is an increase across all levels of education. At the nursery level, the percentage of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for LWDs increased from 10.5% in 2019 to 15.5% in 2020/21, though the increase still falls short of the ESSP target of 27.3%. The same report indicated that in Primary Education, the percentage of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for learners with disabilities increased from 23.2% in 2019 to 37.7% in 2020, which means that the ESSP target of 31.8% has been met. At the Secondary level, the percentage of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for learners with disabilities increased from 30.5% in 2019 to 43.6% in 2020/21.

According to (UNICEF-Rwanda, 2022), only 70% of children with disabilities in Rwanda are enrolled in primary school. The Lack of appropriate infrastructure facilities in many schools for children with disabilities and the lack of appropriate classroom materials to cater for children with disabilities are major challenges that explain why 30% of children with disabilities do not attend schools. This was also highlighted during the FGDs with PWDs in the Kayonza district. A participant in the FGDs with PWDs testified:

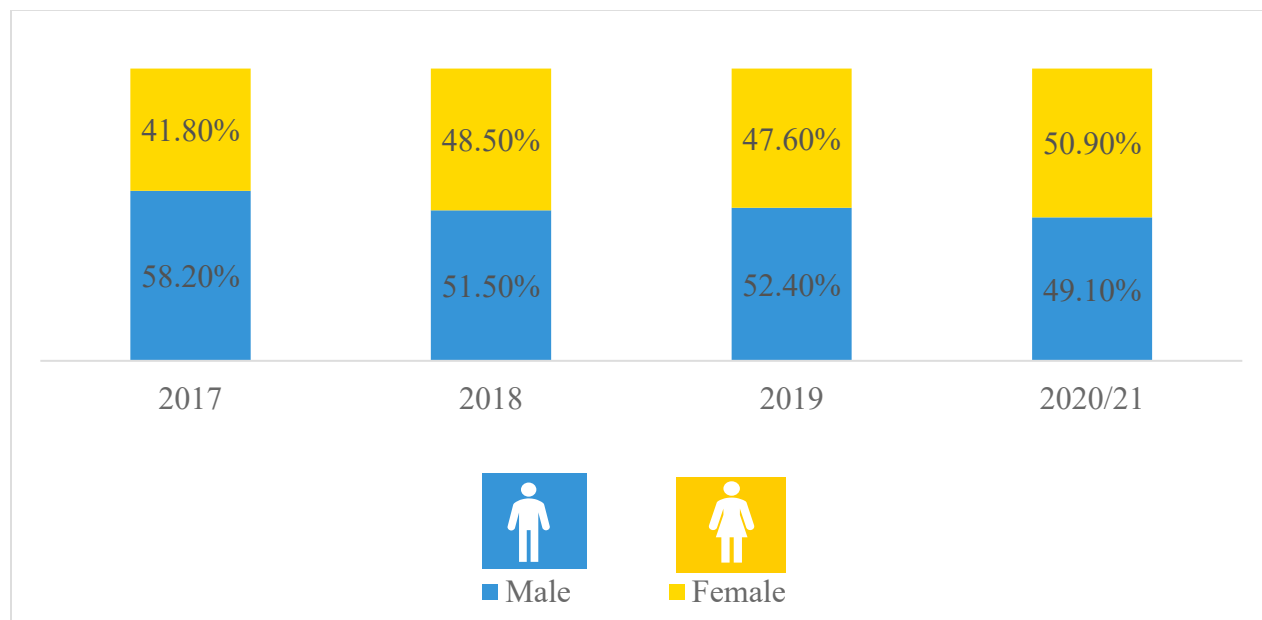
“As a parent who has a child with disability, I can testify that teachers in many schools do not care about those with disability due to lack of adequate materials that would respond to their special needs. Due to speech/language impairments affecting my child, most of his classmates try to imitate him and he becomes furious because of that harassment. Apart from that, I know my child is normally quiet and calm. Instead of correcting those students, teachers always call me at school and tell me that my child disturbs others. Finally, I was tired of such harassment and decided to take my child back home and dropped his school”.

Another participant has also testified about the challenge faced by PWDs in accessing basic education due to limited infrastructure that responds to their special needs. He said:

“Sincerely speaking, we still have a long journey to ensure that the existing infrastructure in schools is inclusive. For example, most schools do not have special toilets for people with disabilities. I know some students who have dropped out the school while others do not have lunch to avoid the necessity of the going to toilets while at school”.

Gender-responsive training of teachers and other school staff is of paramount importance in promoting inclusive education. For instance, the National Gender Responsive Teacher Training Package developed by MINEDUC in 2018 is one of the government’s achievements to guide both teachers and school leaders in facilitating teaching in a school environment that is gender-responsive. The package enables teachers and learners to apply techniques and share activities that can be used in classroom settings. This study shows to what extent schools’ staff have been trained in special needs and inclusive education for the last four years (see Figure 13).

Figure 13: Staff trained in special needs and inclusive education



Source: Ministry of Education, statistical yearbook 2020/21

The above findings reveal that female staff in the education sector received less training in special needs and inclusive education than male staff, except recently in 2021. Apart from gender imbalance in this kind of training, the data shows that training of school staff in

special needs and inclusive education is still lagging behind (only around 50%). Notably, teachers play a key role in helping children acquire knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for the 21st century. In the Rwandan context, the turn towards gender-responsive pedagogy is an aspect of the education policy. Moreover, gender is one of the cross-cutting issues identified in the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) for primary and secondary education, and it needs to be addressed in the teaching and learning process for appropriate life skills development. Therefore, it is essential to equip teachers with the means to integrate gender-responsive pedagogy into the learning process, which includes: lesson planning, teaching, managing classroom activities and performance evaluation.

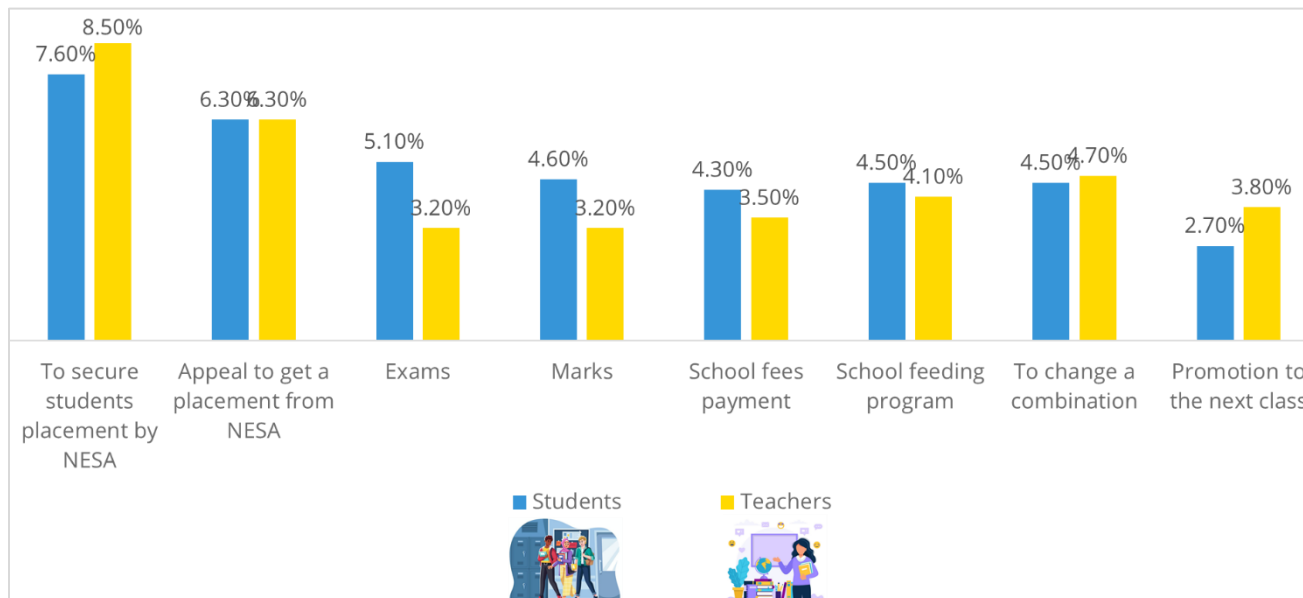
5.3. Assessment of Corruption in Service Delivery in 12-Year Basic Education Program in Rwanda

5.3.1. Perception of corruption in the 12YBE program in Rwanda

Corruption is a societal problem which adversely affects nations' efforts to improve the lives of their citizens. As corruption hinders the performance of other sectors, it does the same in the education sector as well. Corruption in education is a pervasive element that exacerbates developing countries' efforts to educate their citizens. Educational corruption may be elusive in developing settings due to the acceptability and prevalence of the phenomenon (Sabir-El-Rayess & Heyneman, 2020).

This assessment analyses to which extent service delivery is inhibited by corruption in 12YBE in Rwanda. Both teachers and students have shared their perceptions of the existence of corruption in the 12YBE program. The following elements of the learning process were reported with the most corruption: placement of students who complete primary 6 and senior 3, examination and procedure making, change a combination of courses, and school feeding. These elements are reported in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Perception of Corruption in 12-Year Basic Education Programme in Rwanda



It is shown in the figure above by students and teachers who participated in this study that in Rwanda, the perceived level of corruption in the basic education system is comparatively low in critical learning areas. These include the security of student placement (around 8%), getting marks or improved grades (around 5%), school feeding (nearly 5%) and change a combination (nearly 5%). This figure corroborates other studies that recognized the low level of corruption in the education sector in Rwanda, such as the 2013 Global Corruption Report: Education, and the Rwanda Bribery Index.

Qualitative data have also shown that the above-mentioned areas of the 12 YBE in Rwanda are affected by corruption i. The following are some testimonies collected from students, parents, teachers and head teachers on this malpractice.

Corruption in students’ placement was revealed during the interview held with a head teacher in Kayonza District as follows:

“Since students’ placement authority was endowed to National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESAs) and Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), the loopholes of corruption have decreased. However, the number of claimants has increased because

there are many students placed in schools far away from their homes. After passing national examinations, imagine there are some students in Kayonza District (Eastern Province) who are sent to Rubavu District (Western Province) to study! When those students or their parents claim to NESA, for some occasions, the latter sends inspectors to districts to meet claimants. At this juncture, some parents pay bribes to NESA staff or use other corrupt ways to help their children get schools they want".

Below is another testimony from a teen/young mother in Gicumbi districts who shared her experience on the existence of corruption in students' placement:

"I got impregnated when I was in the third year of secondary school (the year in which she was supposed to sit for an ordinary level national examination). After giving birth, my family took me back to school but a headmaster denied saying that he does not admit grownup mothers. I moved to another nearby school the headmaster instructed me to first have sexual intercourse with him for me to be admitted. I accepted because there was no other option. I graduated last year, thanks to Caritas Rwanda for supporting me to get school fees and other basic needs".

In the same vein, according to some of the teachers interviewed in this study, corrupt practices exist while students seek to **change a combination** of their choice. This was confirmed by a teacher at a Nine-Year Basic Education Program School in Gicumbi District who stated:

"As a teacher, I can testify that there are so many cases where students or their parents are demanded to pay bribes to get admissions in certain schools or get combinations of courses they wish to study in advanced level. For example, the fact that we have so few Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) while the government has provided school fees subsidies for students enrolled in TTC, students are demanded to pay bribes to get admitted. Only students who do not pay bribes are those selected by REB/NESA after the national exam. But of course, headmasters unofficially do remain with some places to bring in other students who engaged in corrupt practices prior to admission".

Exams and associated procedures were revealed among other learning areas that were prone to corrupt practices. This is evidenced in a testimony shared by a female parent who participated in FGDs in Kamonyi District. She testified:

“I know a young orphan lady who is very intelligent in class but one of her teachers made her repeat a year after denying to have sexual intercourse with her. The cases of gender-based corruption are increasing in schools. Because I knew that case where the lady repeated, when my daughter reported to me that one of her teachers wanted to induce her into sex in exchange for marks. I decided to take her to another school in Musanze where I have to pay RWF 155,000 per term while I used to pay only 89,000 at the previous school in Nyanza. I did this because my daughter told me that the teacher had already started asking her to give sexual favours in exchange for marks”.

Corruption was also reported to happen in the evenings or weekends through **student coaching**, as per the testimony of a high school graduate from Kamonyi District below:

“There are corruption issues pertaining to coaching in schools. Some teachers get additional payment from parents and provide evening or weekend coaching to their students. However, there are some instances where the payment becomes like a bribe. This is because those teachers award their coached students with undeservedly high marks in a bid to convince them that coaching is important”

Another area perceived to be affected by corruption, as per Figure 14, is the **School feeding program**. School feeding programs have been defined by the World Bank as “targeted social safety nets that provide both educational and health benefits to the most vulnerable children, thereby increasing enrollment rates, reducing absenteeism, and improving food security at the household level” (World Bank, 2012) . The school feeding program requires that parents pay a contribution to the lunch meal for children. This applies to students in the 9- and 12-year basic education programs and is supplemented by government subsidies. In this study, both perception and personal experience-based data revealed that corruption exists in this program and, in most cases, occurs due to winning a tender or speeding up

payment to a contractor. This was attested by a supplier of foodstuff in one of the 12YBE schools interviewed in the Rubavu district who testified:

“Most of the times, after supplying foodstuff or other materials to schools, we (suppliers) are demanded to pay bribes to school administrators so that they can speed up payment. We give them what they need because in some cases we need money back to pay loans in banks. When you refuse to pay bribes and report to the sector level, schools make sure you never win a tender. It happened to me and I never win tenders in seven schools that I reported. After paying me, my dossiers are automatically eliminated when I dare to compete for tenders in those schools. There are also other schools that do not pay me but instead pay other suppliers who came later and no explanations why they do not pay me”.

Furthermore, a female teacher in Musanze District revealed the following:

“There is corruption in all steps of procurement in schools, especially in school feeding programs and procurement of schools’ materials and consumables. Sometimes head teachers or members of the procurement committee reveal crucial tender information to some bidders and oblige them to surrender at least 25% of their profit to those who help them win tenders. There are also many cases where real costs of materials are increased in a bid to have a remainder collected from suppliers. As a signatory, I was once obliged to sign that a ball cost Frw 50,000 while I knew the supplier only had to receive half of it and he had to provide an invoice of Frw 50,000”.

Apart from the above-described areas of corruption in the basic education system in Rwanda affecting students, this study examined other forms of corruption that affect teachers in primary and secondary schools, as shown in the following quotes.

“Gender-based corruption is very prevalent in schools and I am one of the victims. Our school’s head teacher instructed me to kiss him every morning before starting work. Every morning, he used to call me in his office and he told my colleagues that I had a task to help him accomplish. When I reported the case of harassment to my colleagues, he told me to make a cross prayer in his eyes every time before entering his office. I decided to request my

colleague (not a teacher but a supporting staff) to always follow me and tell the head teacher that he needed something like a book. When all the head teachers' efforts failed to have me induced into sex, he appointed me as one of the school's signatories and I had to authorize different transactions and documents. One weekend, he informed me that I had to sign a document. When I turned up, I dismayingly saw that the day was very special. He had amazingly decorated a room used by girls who are in their menstruation period at school. He proposed me to have sex but I refused. He continued to harass me but a few months later he was transferred to another school. Though I refused there are many other colleagues who accepted to have sex with him." ~ A female teacher in the Musanze District

"I know a school where a head teacher slept with so many female teachers and the school's secretary. He was reported and imprisoned, but later on, he was released and I think he paid bribes. However, when he was still a head teacher, this kind of corruption had negatively eroded the school and negatively affected the performance of those female teachers who always had absences or delays in work. I also know another case in Nyabihu District, where a female head teacher trapped a male teacher and had sex because she had power over him" ~ A teacher at a Nine Year Basic Education Program School in the Gicumbi District.

Teachers in the 12 YBE programme experience other forms of corruption, such as bribes, while requesting placements and transfers. This is proved in the testimony from a teacher interviewed in the Gicumbi district. He said:

"The level of **corruption in the placement of teachers** is very high and this really affects the quality of education because almost all teachers are fearful that they may be transferred to other schools without request. Recently, NESAs sent a teacher to our school but after two weeks the district informed him that he had to go to another school far from the city. Sincerely speaking, here in our district, only wives of rich people, high officials or those who paid bribes are the ones who are sent to teach in schools located in the city. Others are sent far into the countryside. In addition, there is corruption in **requesting transfers**. Teachers who request to go to a school located in the city are charged around RWF 400,000. Nowadays, transfers are normally authorized through an online platform

introduced by NESAs. However, the district and headmasters dodge the system and hide that they have teacher's posts that needed to be filled. At the end of the day, after closing the system due to the transfer deadline, they explain they have pending posts which allow doing this out of the system." ~ A teacher at a Nine Year Basic Education Program School in Gicumbi District.

The findings on corruption in the 12 YBE program, as indicated above, provide insight on how this malpractice contributes to adverse effects on the quality of the education system and on students' futures. Obviously, if students learn in an institution where corrupt practices are a regular occurrence, they grow up accepting them. Students who regularly bribe a teacher to get good grades or parents who bribe head teachers to admit their children bring about a future generation with no regard for positive values. In a system where students can bribe teachers for good grades, there is no motivation for hard work. Instead, bribes reduce the value of education since rich students can buy their grades all the way to graduation.

Conversely, poor students are unable to gain equal access to education since they cannot afford to pay bribes. For the education system to succeed and fill the workforce with qualified people, it is imperative to eliminate corruption and for perpetrators to be dealt with. Everyone (students, parents, teachers and school managers) has a role to play in the fight against corruption in this sector to ensure equal access to basic education for all.

It is equally worth noting that corruption-involving teachers contributes to poor quality of education in schools. Janik and Rathmann, (2015) argue "to deliver quality education, well-functioning teachers are needed" in every education system. While proper and effective management of the recruitment and retention systems of teachers should be a critical priority to create and maintain a vibrant teaching environment (Samuel, 2016), denial of teachers' rights due to corruption may lead to decreased morale, increased disappointment, discouragement, demotivation and lack of commitment to teachers' profession.

5.3.2. Assessment of how corruption affects women, girls and other groups at risk of discrimination while seeking education services: Intersectional analysis

This section analyses the extent to which corruption affects different students as per their gender and their social characteristics. It is from this perspective that this study uses intersectional analysis in the educational context to uncover the breakdown of concurrent interactions among different characteristics pertaining to people targeted in this study. According to Waitoller and Kozleski, (2013) intersectionality helps explain how certain students (e.g., a female student with disability) encounter varying levels of exclusion in schools because of the ways in which schools address or fail to address the intersection of their identities and, instead, respond to only one aspect of students' needs. The intersectionality will analyze, for example, what happens to a child who is a refugee and has a disability. Table 10 shows the likelihood of encountering bribes while seeking placement by students with different characteristics such as gender, income, disabilities and stigmatized illness.

Table 10: The likelihood of encountering a bribe while seeking for student's placement

Expression	Corruption- Placement during			N= 1363					
	complaints (NESA)	handling	process	Margin	Std. Err.	z	P>z	95% Conf.	Interval
Female students									
Yes	0.0789001	0.015608	5.06	0.000	0.048308	0.109492			
No	0.260826	0.17624	1.48	0.139	-0.0846	0.606251			
Student with very low economic capacity									
Yes	0.0864266	0.017918	4.82	0.000	0.051309	0.121545			
No	0.0778254	0.043208	1.8	0.072	-0.00686	0.162512			

Students with Disabilities						
Yes	0.092436	0.018589	4.97	0.000	0.056003	0.128869
No	0.0762869	0.070511	1.08	0.279	-0.06191	0.214486
Intellectual disability						
Yes	.4614222	.2525141	1.83	0.068	-.0334963	.9563407
No	.0765532	.0071141	10.76	0.000	.0626099	.0904966
Students with stigmatized illness						
Yes	0.1022067	0.023926	4.27	0.000	0.055312	0.149102
No	0.0267973	0.026909	1	0.319	-0.02594	0.079538

Despite more efforts, NESAs have invested to automate services related to the placement for students who completed primary six and senior three of ordinary level continues to be affected by risk of corruption at the phase of complaints handling. Respondents said that they have experienced corruption when they were looking for reorientation. As shown in the above table, females (7.8%), low-income HH members (8.6%), PWDs (9.2%), students with an intellectual disability (46.1%) and students with stigmatized illness (10.2%) are most likely to pay a bribe in a bid to secure a placement by NESAs than males, high-income HH members, students with no (intellectual) disabilities and those with no stigmatized illness. Additionally, respondents said that they have also experienced issues of discrimination when trying to get admission to other levels of 12 years basic education program.

This study used an intersectional analysis through the following quotes from FGDs to highlight how corruption has affected women, girls and other groups at risk of discrimination while seeking education services in 12 years basic education program.

"I got pregnant at the age of 16. I dropped out the school, and all people stopped talking to me. Very unluckily, I gave birth to a child who had a physical disability. I suffered from depression to the extent that I planned to kill my own child, but I did not. Now, because of the fact that my child has a physical disability, the nursery school refused to admit her. They only said she is still young and that they cannot take care of her. I tried to report a man who defiled me, but a cell administrator (local leader) demanded I pay him Rwf 5000 as a bribe to help me. Because I did not get that amount of money when he came back, he refused to help me, and my child did not get the chance to go nursery school." ~ A teen and young mother in the Gicumbi District.

"Ever since I was born, my dad left my mother complaining that they never had albinos in their family. Since then, our family lived in harsh conditions. Due to harassment in schools, I was not able to continue studying in Rwanda, and I dropped out. After some time, I got a sponsor who sent me to study in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) but the harassment continued. My mother decided to offer bribes to our teacher, and he started supporting me in class. However, my classmates' beatings continued, and the teacher could not help me unless my mother paid him. I came back to Rwanda and my mother continued to bribe teachers to help me and prevent me from suffering harassment. All my mother's properties disappeared because she was taking care of me and had to feed all four other siblings. After completing primary school, I met catholic sisters who helped me to go back to study secondary in the DRC. I fortunately met a good Deputy Head teacher in charge of Studies who helped me and gave me my own desk near the blackboard and I completed high school. Meanwhile, I used to eat and live alone because all students feared and harassed me, calling me a demon. There are circumstances in which Congolese hunted albinos, and I was supposed to study in DRC but live in Rwanda.

After completing my studies, further struggles in life started. In almost all jobs I applied for, I was requested to pay bribes. I recall that I paid many bribes, but corrupt people denied me jobs even after receiving my bribes. Recently, I passed a written exam, but when I was about to go to an interview, I was eliminated and interviewers said I could not do

some hard tasks because I am albino. When I approached one of the interviewers for clarifications, he demanded that I pay him FRW 50,000 as a bribe so that he could help me get that job. I offered him FRW 20,000, but I did not even appear on the shortlist of candidates.

Until this day, in schools, students with an albinism disability still face challenges and issues of corruption. I heard about a mother who was obliged to pay FRW 15,000 per month to a teacher to help her child in class. As a representative of people with disabilities, I intervened, and the student got a transfer to a good school that does not have discrimination.” ~ A representative of people with disabilities in Rubavu District, who himself has albinism .

“I got pregnant when I was still a teenager, and I was in Year three of high school. After giving birth, I quit school. Many years later, the same scenario repeated itself to my daughter, who was impregnated while in secondary school. However, she gave birth to a dead baby. I have no house, and I have been requesting government support for many years ago, but I did not get any. In 2018, I was on the list of people who had to get a house, but I did not get it just because I had given nothing (a bribe) to local leaders. Now in 2023, I am going to get a house. This is because I have been taking care of the children of our Head of the Village, who later convinced other local leaders that I deserved a house dedicated to vulnerable families.” ~ A single mother in the Rubavu District.

“I got pregnant at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic when all schools were closed. After giving birth, I went back to school though my parents were hesitant. My father is still regretful, saying he is schooling a mother with no dignity. At school, I face so many cases of discrimination by students and sexual harassment by teachers. One of my teachers always harasses me because I refused to have sexual intercourse with him. He tells me: “You are a mature mother, aren’t you nostalgic about having sex?” There are other cases where school officials harass me. For instance, when I am delayed in turning up at school on time (due to motherhood responsibility), one of the officials tells me: “You, grown

woman, can't you come to school on time?" ~ A student and teen mother in the Kamonyi District.

"I know a young orphan lady who is very intelligent in class, but one of her teachers made her repeat a year after denying having sexual intercourse with her. The cases of gender-based corruption are increasing in schools. I knew that these cases were repeated when my daughter reported to me that one of her teachers wanted to induce her into sex in exchange for marks. I decided to take her to another school in Musanze where I have to pay RWF 155,000 per trimester, while I used to pay only 89,000 in the old school in Nyanza. I still did this because my daughter told me that the teacher had already started harassing her" ~ A parent in Kamonyi District.

"The level of corruption is high when it comes to finding students' sponsors (NGOs) that support students from vulnerable families to get school fees. I know a young woman from a very poor family (the family is headed by a single mother) who performed well in the national examination, but she was not selected. Instead, they admitted students from rich families who had paid bribes to local leaders who were responsible for the selection at cell level. I am informed that some parents accept to pay bribes of up to FRW 500,000, and their children get sponsors who pay school fees until they complete high school. Now, all children from that poor family headed by a single mother are studying in a 12 Years Basic Education Program School while they had marks allowing them to go to boarding schools."
~ A mother of a student with a disability in the Kamonyi District

"It was not easy for me to get school fees because my parents refused to pay for me, saying it's because I am a lady. Finally, I got a sponsor and I got a high school diploma. Ever since I graduated, I do not have a job because I am requested to have sexual relations with managers and bosses wherever I apply. Recently, a man promised to help me and gave me a computer, and I applied to be a digital ambassador of the Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA). Unfortunately, I failed the online exam due to the internet issues I faced. When I reported to that man that I had failed, he said it was none of his business and said I had to sleep with him, if he had given me his laptop. I started to tremble because

we were two alone and he could rape me, but I managed to escape.” ~ A high school graduate from Kamonyi District

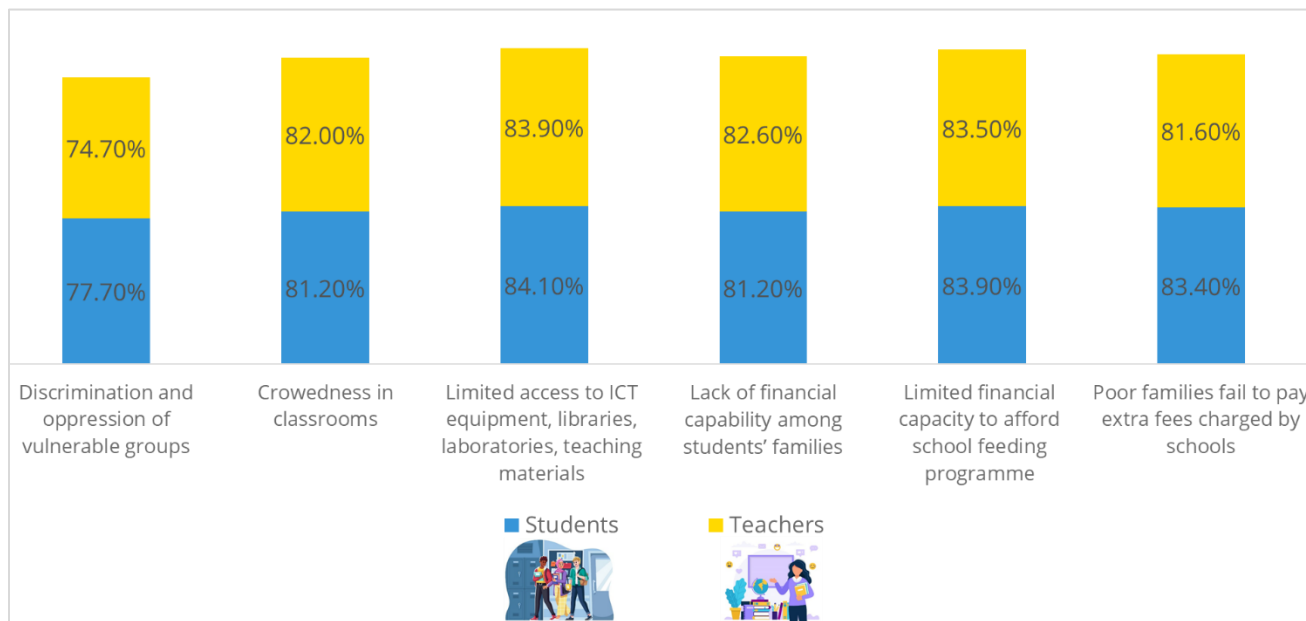
“Due to the fact that I am infected with (HIV/AIDS), my child at school is discriminated against and harassed by colleagues. On the other side, because she was the only one to take care of me (in the hospital), she failed some courses and she was made to repeat a year and she was fine with that. However, when she turned up in the school, the head teacher dismissed her, saying she misses so many classes and that she is older than her colleagues are. After being dismissed from that school, I tried to find a TVET school to enroll her in, but all my efforts failed because local leaders refused to put her on the list of vulnerable (poor) people who deserve support to get school fees. There is also another counterpart (with HIV/AIDS) whom they denied support because we could not get money to bribe them” ~ A single mother with HIV/AIDS in Gicumbi District

In this study, the concept of intersectionality has been used to put an emphasis on the fact that students who are marginalized or discriminated against often experience multiple forms of marginalization and discrimination not only as individual, but also as member of the school community and their own family. Intersectional analysis helped to identify various forms of discrimination and exclusion among students with disabilities, women, girls and other vulnerable categories. It is worth noting that social differences are not pre-existing and natural, but are produced and reproduced in the interactions and social fields of institutions. It is therefore important to recall that these social differences should not be seen as the cause of issues within the education system.

5.4. Challenges hindering the performance of 12-Year Basic Education in Rwanda

The assessment of major challenges that affect the effectiveness of service delivery in the 12-YBE program was part of the scope of this analysis as it helps to provide facts-based recommendations to stakeholders. The figure 15 illustrates key challenges hindering the performance of 12YBE in Rwanda collected from both teachers and students who took part in this survey.

Figure 15: Key Challenges hindering the performance of the 12-Year Basic Education Programme in Rwanda



Students and teachers who participated in this assessment revealed that around 80% of students from poor families are not able to pay extra fees charged by the school and they are not even able to pay their share for school feeding programme that is not covered by the government. They added that crowdedness in classrooms, lack of enough and specialized teachers as well as teaching materials for students with special needs affect the access to education by students with special needs.

Additionally, students and teachers said that there are still discrimination and oppression cases leading to limitations for some students with special needs to access the 12-year basic education programme. This is despite the presence of inclusive policies and laws granting inclusive education in Rwanda.

Different reports corroborate the above-mentioned challenges towards effective implementation of the basic education programs in Rwanda. These include:

- The challenges of reaching the poorest children remain, as poor households cannot afford to pay their cost-share in the school feeding programme while the government pays its contribution (IGC, 2019). The inability of poor families to pay their

contribution to the school feeding programmes may lead to the dropout of students from poorer households if the government and other stakeholders in the basic education sub-sector do not provide special consideration to them.

- For low-income families, education is often among their biggest expenses and a significant source of ongoing stress. Even in countries where primary school is free, there are many costs, such as books, uniforms and exam fees, which add up to a significant burden for low-income families. The situation becomes even more difficult when students move on to secondary school, which is not free in many countries, and the high tuition rates make it beyond the reach of many families. When faced with constrained budgets, parents may be forced to choose which of their children can attend school. In such cases, boys are often chosen over girls, exacerbating the significant gender gap in education (Braniff, 2018).
- Crowdedness in classrooms in primary schools is a major challenge, with an average of 62 students for every qualified teacher (SURF, 2020). When a class is very congested, this poses more challenges to the management of students with special needs, since it will be hard for the teacher to attend to these needs.
- According to UNICEF-Rwanda, only 70% of children with disabilities in Rwanda are enrolled in primary schools, which means that 30% of children with disabilities are not going to school. The portion that is not enrolled might be associated with the fact that many schools are not physically accessible for children with disabilities. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate classroom materials to cater to children with disabilities, teachers' lack of understanding of differentiating learning plans for students' various learning needs, and the absence of penalties for refusing to accept children with disabilities are also excluding their access to education.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With a review of available literature, this study has described the efforts of the Rwandan Government and Legal system, which have created a wide range of policies, laws, and institutions to advance access to quality education for all Rwandans. This has achieved laudable results, and much progress is being made with the 12-Year Basic Education Programme. Here, there is also a willingness and commitment to the inclusivity of girls, women, people from poor households, and people with disabilities. However, existing studies and reports also highlighted a remaining lack of specialized materials, equipment and services for vulnerable groups of students, as well as persistent cases of corruption in schools. This study has corroborated these issues in the existing literature and given a much-needed in-depth perspective on service delivery and corruption levels, which was not provided by previous studies.

To provide this perspective, this study adopted a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, carrying out semi-structured survey research supported by focus interviews with key actors and focus group discussions. This approach proved valuable since these methods provided contrasting, although complementary, findings surrounding people's perspectives of inclusivity and corruption.

Quantitative data revealed that general perceptions of many policy areas are largely positive. Large majorities of teachers and students alike view the Rwandan education system as generally inclusive, and only a small minority has experience with corruption. However, regarding inclusivity, it becomes clear that issues remain in more specific policy areas. There were very mixed or negative perceptions regarding students' satisfaction with the safety of school facilities as well as teachers' satisfaction with classrooms and materials adapted to students with special needs. The latter point makes it evident that the remaining issues are most prevalent for vulnerable groups. This is further confirmed by female students having a

more negative perception of safety, as well as the availability of hygiene and sanitation facilities. Moreover, female respondents, people with (intellectual) disabilities, people with low economic capacity, and students with stigmatized illnesses were more likely to encounter bribes.

In the focus group discussions and key actor interviews, these issues are clarified. Teachers and parents describe how students with disabilities struggle with an unadapted curriculum, a lack of adapted facilities and materials, insufficient training of teachers, and bullying or ostracization by other students and school staff. Female students also describe how essential special hygiene facilities are for their perception of safety, and how teenage pregnancy can often lead to an inability to continue education due to a lack of support or ostracization.

Furthermore, although general perceptions of corruption are low, respondents gave worrying accounts of persistent instances where power is abused by actors in the education system. Respondents gave detailed accounts of malpractice in the following areas of the 12-Year Basic Education System: placement of students in schools, changes in students' combination of courses, exams and associated procedures, the school feeding programme, and teachers' placement and transfers. Here, it was again evident that vulnerable groups were most affected by corrupt actors. Female respondents often described abuses of power in the form of sexual harassment, students from low-income households were disadvantaged by being unable to pay bribes, and people with disabilities were targeted by corrupt actors.

This analysis has shown that although general perceptions of inclusivity and transparency in the education sector are largely positive among the Rwandan population, there remain a number of serious challenges and concerns, especially for vulnerable groups. Based on these findings, we recommend that the commitment of the Government of Rwanda to 'non-exclusionary education' should be continued and strengthened. With the Ministry of Education's special needs & inclusive education strategic plan lasting until 2023/24, a new

policy paradigm should be developed to continue advancing access to education for all in the coming years. Here, the following policy areas should be central:

1. Recourses should continue to be invested in school infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities. There has already been laudable progress with the 2020/2021 levels of 15.5%, 37.7%, and 43.6% for the nursery, primary, and secondary levels, respectively. However, it is crucial that this development is continued to target a strong majority of schools to accommodate the remaining 30% of students with disabilities not attending school.
2. Special attention should be given to developing a comprehensive and accessible curriculum for students with different disabilities.
3. More teachers should receive special training to help students with special needs, or should be encouraged and supported to specialize in this topic. The current level of around 50% of teachers should be improved.
4. All schools should be inspected and supported in creating special facilities for the sanitary needs of female students. Schools should have an allocated room with available menstrual products.
5. Support of low-income families should be continued and reinforced. Here, the delivery of school feedings programmes should be closely monitored to ensure all students in need are recipients. Furthermore, special attention should be paid to the position of girls for low-income households, to ensure they are not disproportionately pulled out of school by their parents.
6. Establish independent and well-resourced anti-corruption units in schools

7. Set up anonymous reporting channels in schools (e.g., secure suggestion boxes, SMS tip lines).
8. Train school administrators and inspectors on gender-sensitive approaches to tackling corruption.
9. Form and empower School parents committees with participation from women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
10. Encourage student-led integrity clubs to promote a culture of accountability.
11. Internal accountability mechanisms within education should be strengthened. With cases of corruption still present in the education sector, efforts should be put into the identification and accountability of malignant actors.

Following these policy elements, not only the government, but relevant actors in Rwandan civil society should contribute to change. Education is a backbone for growth, where inclusivity is paramount. Following the accounts in this analysis, it is clear that it is necessary for able actors to support vulnerable people, fight corruption, and promote inclusivity where possible.

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