

# URUNANA rw'abarezi



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## Implementing CBC: Successes and Challenges



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## FOREWORD



### Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 6th issue of Urunana rw'abarezi, our peer learning magazine.

It is 2018, three years since the introduction of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) in Rwandan schools. We can be confident that in a few years the education outcomes will be different from today. Learners learning outcomes, motivation for learning, teaching methods and competencies, completion rates, learning environment and relevancy to labour market will positively change.

There will be a new generation of school leavers with the right skills, values, knowledge and attitudes to effectively deal with local, regional and global, social, cultural, economic and technological demands. Innovative curricula like the Competence Based Curriculum will be a source of new solutions, a drive to a better future and a new paradigm of teaching and learning.

Strong education systems, enhanced partnership with all partners and stakeholders focused and effective support programmes have a central role

in driving the desired changes. In this regard, VVOB Rwanda, in collaboration with REB and UR-CE, is implementing a multi-year programme entitled “Leading, Teaching and Learning Together (LT)” (2017-2021) to continue promoting the quality of basic education through enhancing school leadership and setting up an induction system for new teachers. The programme focuses on advancing the implementation of the Competence Based Curriculum while supporting the improvement of learning outcomes in Mathematics in a gender responsive environment.

“Urunana rw'abarezi” magazine serves as a platform for all programme stakeholders to share experiences, good practices, challenges, and model solutions to continue promoting quality basic education with the focus on advancing the implementation of the Competence Based Curriculum.

This sixth (6th) issue of the magazine, like the fifth issue, focuses on sharing experiences, best practices and challenges from teachers, school leaders, sector education officers and other education stakeholders around the implementation of the new Competence Based Curriculum in Rwandan schools.

It is my sincere wish that you enjoy reading this magazine, but more importantly that you contribute to enriching this platform by sharing your precious experiences and good practices. Let us keep sharing what we do in ways that arouse curiosity, awaken a love of learning, and enhance our children's ability to be global citizens.

  
**Dr. Irénée Ndayambaje**  
Director General  
Rwanda Education Board



# English Language In-service Teacher Training Programmes in Rwanda

**By Claudien Nzitabakuze**

*Teacher Development and Management & Career Guidance and Counselling Department/REB*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**After the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda embarked on strengthening the education sector as one of the institutions most affected by the genocide. French language was used across the education levels as the medium of instruction. English and Kinyarwanda were also taught but only as subjects. It was in 2008 that Rwanda decided to switch to English language as the medium of instruction across upper Primary, Secondary and University education levels.**

It was from this background that the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) embarked on a huge task of training teachers in English language to enable them to teach in English. To this end, MINEDUC/REB used a number of approaches to ensure teachers are trained effectively and are assisted to use English as a medium of instruction. Those approaches consist of face-to-face trainings, school based mentoring programmes, etc. as discussed below:

## 2. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

### 2.1 Rwanda English in Action Programme (REAP)

As MINEDUC's main planned intervention to facilitate the transition to English medium in basic education, the Rwanda English in Action Programme (REAP) was set out to address the English language learning needs of over 50,000 primary and secondary school teachers. Given the high costs of providing residential training to such large numbers, MINEDUC preferred to opt for a sector-based approach to training, supported by self-directed study and school-based mentoring. A standardized English language assessment tool for measuring teacher proficiency at various levels, made up the final element of REAP and would help ensure all teachers are eventually performing in English to the level required.

REAP concentrated on Rwandan primary and secondary school teachers, the majority of whom were recognised as having low levels of English. Key strategies used in REAP were:

- Motivating teachers to learn English,
- Increasing their exposure to the language,
- Maximising opportunities to practise English,
- Encouraging and supporting them to use English in the classroom.

### 2.2 Face to Face Trainings

The Ministry of Education conducted two large scale face-to-face English Language Trainings (ELT) for teachers in Primary and Secondary levels. The first face to face trainings were conducted in November - December 2009, January 2010, July-August 2010, November-December 2010 and August 2011. In all these training sessions, general English language was taught to teachers to introduce them to the English language and uplift their English language proficiency levels. Face to face trainings were successful in a sense and were followed by the School Based Mentoring Programme (SBMP). The aim of the SBMP was to enable continued learning of a language, as becoming proficient in a foreign language for academic or professional purposes is quite a big challenge and a long term endeavour.

### 2.3 School Based Mentoring Programme-SBMP (2012-2015)

The SBMP was launched in early 2012, as the Rwanda Education Board's key strategy for improving English language skills and instructional practices for a skilled and well-qualified teaching force. The SBM programme placed mentors directly in schools, to train and support teachers in English language skills and instructional practices. The initiative ultimately aimed to

improve teaching practices and student-learning outcomes.

Teachers' English levels did show improvement while the SBMP was in progress. However, in spite of seven local and regional recruitment efforts, REB was unable to place mentors in every school across Rwanda. Mentors were recruited from across East Africa based on their English fluency and teaching competence and placed directly in schools to train and support teachers. Due to recruiting constraints, mentors were assigned two schools to support with a Senior Mentor assigned to train and supervise an average of 16 School-Based Mentors at the district level. Senior Mentors convened bi-weekly Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions with SBMs in their district, visited schools to support SBM work, and shared training and materials received from REB with SBMs.

#### 2.4. Restructured SBMP (2015 –to date)

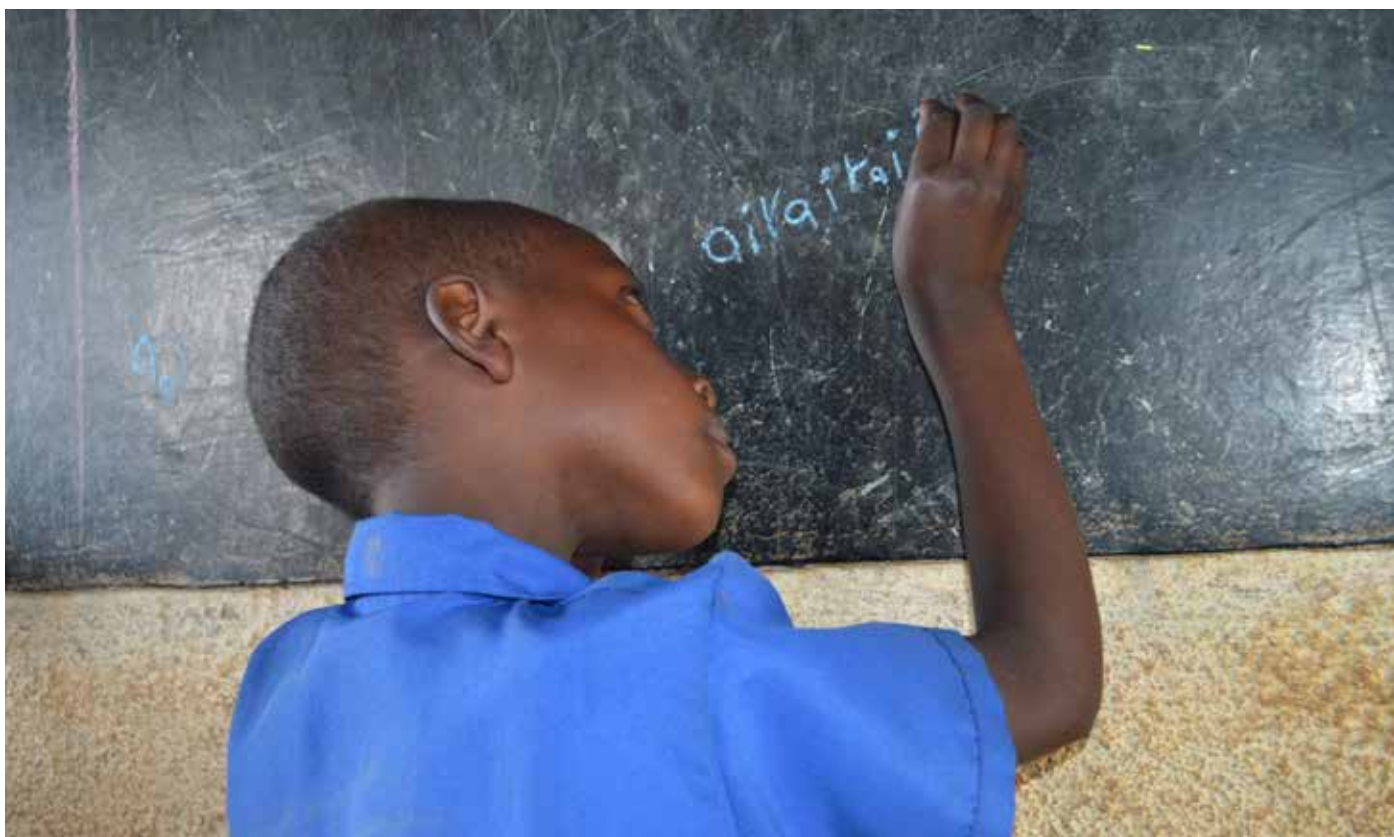
With the launch of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2015 by Rwanda Education Board (REB), new mechanisms were also needed for delivering effective CPD and promoting school-based collaborative trainings in all schools. Therefore it was necessary to restructure the SBM program to reflect new approaches and address challenges faced during the initial program.

School Based Mentors were selected at each public/ government-aided school, one Mentor per school, with the goal to expand numbers to one SBM per school level (primary and secondary) as the programme stabilizes. Private and technical schools were encouraged to follow suite. Mentor Trainers (MTs) were appointed, two per

sector (832 total), and attend training as invited by REB to be cascaded directly to SBMs. SBMs and MTs are supported by means of two interrelated systems: administrative and technical support. Administrative support consists of supervision, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of SBM/MT work. Technical support consists of training and development, and provision of materials. All support is coordinated nationally by the Rwanda Education Board.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education/REB continues to opt for tremendous changes to ensure improved quality education as regards teacher trainings. These include making all trainings more objective outcome oriented, credit bearing and rewarding, technology based and well monitored. The SBMP won't be left out in this journey.■





# CBC Implementation: Students Can Now Challenge Their Teachers-Nyagatare DDE

**Batamuriza Edith is the Director of Education in Nyagatare District, Eastern Province since 2017. When you ask her anything about the implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), she recalls her experience about schools she visited in her district. The examples she shared indicate that they are on the right track, but more is still needed.**

The implementation of the CBC is generally good in our District. I visited different schools and was impressed to see how students were very active, engaged and could even challenge their teachers. When you see the students' sitting arrangement in a classroom, you can easily tell that they are set for group work and discussions...which is a good indicator that they are implementing the CBC," Mrs Batamuriza said.

## Students' Motivation

Mrs Batamuriza believes that the CBC is designed in a way that students feel excited about their schools. Teaching and learning are centred on the learners, meaning that students now participate actively in the learning process. "Students enjoy exchanging ideas in groups, interacting with their peers and doing their own research, discovering new things and feel happy about studying", Mrs Batamuriza said.



Mrs Batamuriza Edith in her office.

***"All teachers were trained but some resist to change. What they haven't known yet is that CBC is much easier than Knowledge based Curriculum..."***

According to Mrs Batamuriza, much attention should be put in lower primary, where children haven't yet well understood the importance of education. In addition, Mrs Batamuriza noticed that some head teachers tend to put more effort in P6, S3 and S6, simply because they want their schools to score

high in national examinations. However, she discourages such kind of thinking. "The early years of a child matter a lot, you better strengthen the bottom as the top cannot stand firm without a solid foundation. For instance, instilling a reading culture among young children (lower primary) improves children's learning and motivates them to think big, become creative and innovative as they grow up rather than expecting miracles from a shaky foundation. School leaders should not wait until children reach P6 and start overloading them", Mrs Batamuriza advised.

Regarding school dropout, Ms Batamuriza said they are aware of many factors that cause students to leave schools, including poverty of their parents and relocation among others. However, she realized

that where CBC is implemented effectively students feel motivated and enjoy the learning and teaching environment, which is more friendly compared to the old approach.

**CBC Challenges**

“All teachers were trained but some resist to change. What they haven’t known yet is that the CBC is much easier than Knowledge Based Curriculum. They are very familiar with the old methodology and some feel more comfortable about keeping the same teaching documents from the past years, instead of adapting them to the new methodology”, Mrs Batamuriza noted.

*“We will constantly assess School Leaders and address outstanding issues, while advocating about issues that are beyond our capacity as a district.”*

Additionally, Mrs Batamuriza indicated the insufficiency of learning and teaching materials about CBC in schools as another hindrance to the implementation of the new approach. Some of the available materials are still in electronic copies, making it not very practical for every user.

**Mitigation Measures**

Mrs Batamuriza plans to visit all schools along with Sector Education Officers to assess and address CBC implementation related issues in general.

“We will constantly assess school leaders and address outstanding issues, while advocating about issues that are beyond our capacity as a district”, Mrs Batamuriza said.■



Mrs Batamuriza believes that learning outcomes can improve if all students are encouraged to actively participate in class.

# Training Future Teachers on CBC

**Undoubtedly, Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) and Higher Learning Institutions play an important role in improving the quality of education. Regarding the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC), these institutions are expected to contribute a lot to its effective implementation by ensuring that future teachers are well versed in the new teaching methodology. You may wonder, “how are TTCs preparing future teachers in response to the new change in teaching approach?” Jean Damascène Habimana is a Tutor at Kabarore TTC, located in Gatsibo District, Eastern Province. He shared his experience in teacher training since the government adopted the CBC.**

## Training Trainers

Mr Habimana, along with another colleague from his school, attended a Training of Trainers on CBC organised by Rwanda Education Board (REB) in 2016, as representatives of their school. Later, they trained the rest of

tutors and school administration staff on the new teaching methodology. Mr Habimana finds this as the first key step for TTC Kabarore to prepare future teachers.

Mr Habimana explains the shift from the old methodology, the Knowledge Based Curriculum, to the new approach, came at the right time. “In the new approach the emphasis is put on linking what a child acquires in daily life. The old teaching system was teacher centred, where a teacher would spend all the teaching time in a classroom without allowing students to participate and no one would see this as a drawback”, he said.

According to Mr Habimana, when TTC tutors first understand CBC, transforming their students into able future teachers becomes easier. “We show them how child participation is key in CBC. We explain why there should be a lot of Group Work, Role Play, Think-Pair and Share exercises, Story Telling, Brainstorming, among other techniques to allow students to participate, open up their minds and

feel part of the learning and teaching process, not just like ‘objects’”, Mr Habimana explains adding that these techniques were existing but were not emphasized on.

## Educating the Whole Child

Mr Habimana went on to say that they train future teachers to focus on cross-cutting issues and generic competences that allow students to broaden their thinking and understanding. The cross cutting issues include Peace and Value Education, Genocide Studies, Gender Education, Comprehensive Sexuality, Financial Education, Environmental and Sustainability, Standardisation Culture and Inclusive Education. Generic competencies are Critical thinking, Creativity and innovation, Research and problem solving, Communication, Co-operation, interpersonal relations and life skills, and Life long learning.

“These cross-cutting issues and generic competences are very critical



Jean Damascène Habimana explains what they do in a Teacher Resource Centre (TRC) at TTC Kabarore.





**When CBC is implemented well, students love school and always want to come to school.**

to CBC implementation. For instance, when you teach peace and values, to a student, s/he grows up with a sense of respect and dignity to himself and to others. A colleague of mine was teaching and later realized that two of his students were quarrelling at the back. The teacher then told the students “to wait so that they could resume when he finishes teaching”. We cannot allow this in CBC. When students manifest such behaviour, you should pause a bit to advise and encourage good behaviour, this is what CBC recommends.”

***...perceptions will eventually change with time, given constant efforts we put in training fellow tutors and TTC students on CBC.”***

**Children’s Love of the School**

“We also show our future teachers that when these techniques are well applied, children feel enthusiastic and committed about studying. If children know that the teacher is there to guide, facilitate and listen to them, how can they hate school? When children interact with their classmates, do group work together where each child participates, they feel considered, hence do not see the school as boring. A child who

learns in a conducive environment always wants to come to school, the good memories of the previous school day motivates him/her. In the Knowledge Based Curriculum students would cram subjects without necessarily understanding a link/ relevance to daily life. This approach wouldn’t allow you to know a child’s capacity and competence...that is why we always ask our teachers-to-be to consider this when they start teaching”, Mr Habimana said.

**CBC Setbacks in TTC Kabarore**

One of the challenges that TTC Kabarore faces about training future teachers on CBC includes insufficiency of teaching and learning materials. However, Mr Habimana recognizes that this is a general issue that all TTCs and other schools are also facing and hopes that REB is working hard to provide more CBC teaching and learning materials. Mr Habimana has also noticed a mindset issue among in-service teachers as another hindrance. He observes this when the school sends students out for practice. “We’ve seen that some primary school teachers have not yet understood the CBC approach, they are still using the old methodology. This is a big challenge because students get confused when they realize that our interns are teaching differently. We believe that such perceptions will eventually change with time, considering constant effort we put in explaining and training fellow tutors and TTC students on the CBC”.■

# Teaching and Learning Aids E



Mr Komezusenge believes that every school can make teaching and learning aids from locally available materials for effective implementation of the CBC.

**Dieudonné Komezusenge has been a tutor at TTC Mururu for five years. He believes that teaching aids are very crucial and will help a lot in the execution of the CBC if well used and made from locally available materials.**

The school is located in Rusizi District, Western Province. It started in 1962 in Mibilizi parish under the Initiative of the Roman Catholic Church by Marist Brothers and subsidized by the government. It started as Ecole Normale primaire-ENP Mibilizi teacher training and later shifted to Mururu in 1968 and changed the name to Groupe Scolaire Mururu. Later on in 1998, it changed back to TTC status and became ENP/TTC Mururu up to now.

TTC Mururu has four Combinations: Early childhood Education,

Teaching Social Studies, Teaching Modern Languages and Teaching Sciences and Mathematics. It has a total number of 633 Students.

### Why Teaching Aids Are Important In CBC

“The interest in developing and using teaching aids started when I was doing my internship in 2013. I was trained by Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) on making teaching resources. Upon graduation I was employed and became the Teacher Resource Centre (TRC) manager at this TTC” Mr Komezusenge said. He went on to describe his role as TRC manager:

- Train pre- primary, primary teachers and TTC tutors on how to make and use teaching aids. The teaching aids are made from locally available materials. When I train teachers, I show them how to make and use them in classrooms.

The teaching aids are designed in a way that facilitates children to easily learn the lessons.

- For pre-service teachers, they created a club for making resources after classes, when they become many, we share them with surrounding primary schools. Now teachers and children in surrounding primary schools are able to make their own resources. “Subjects that were taught in theory are now taught practically, the teaching aids help teachers to demonstrate lessons which makes it easier for learners to follow and understand”, Mr Komezusenge noted.

### Inspiring Surrounding Schools

Demonstration schools close to TTC Mururu have also established small teacher resource centres. The TRCs in demonstration schools (where TTC students conduct their internship) inspire teachers to develop more materials relevant to the CBC. Development and use of teaching aids motivate both teachers and learners. Those teachers also realized that the learning and teaching materials that they make enable students to understand lessons better.

### Challenges

Mr Komezusenge highlighted the following issues regarding teaching and learning materials:

- Limited time to develop teaching aids
- Making Teaching and learning materials is being done in few schools in the District
- Lack of some materials in the surrounding environment
- Some cost needed to make the resources

# Enhance CBC Implementation

- It is done on a voluntary basis and therefore not all teachers are involved in making the teaching aids
- Few textbooks that will inform/guide the development of the aids

Mr Komezusenge said that the main challenge they face in the implementation of the new

curriculum is lack of materials especially textbooks. “The Government launched the new curriculum but didn’t give us the required materials to implement it effectively. We receive few textbooks and they are not provided on time”, Mr Komezusenge complained. Mr Komezusenge added that

MINEDUC should focus on distributing enough training equipment to all schools before launching new curricula or subjects. The use of teaching aids has great benefits for both teachers and students. First, it offers teachers an opportunity to make more tangible contributions to the learning process for students. As students are more engaged in the learning process, teachers have more time to think about ways of improving the lessons and making them more interesting for the students. ■



*At TTC Mururu, students also learn how to make teaching and learning aids. They reuse old materials such as rice bags to make low-cost resources. Photo: from top, a finished drawing on a used rice bag about awareness on environment conservation; TTC Mururu students developing teaching and learning aids.*



# SEOs Committed to Boost CBC Implementation

Sector Education Officers (SEO) supervise and support schools in education related issues. Currently, part of their role is to follow up the implementation of the CBC in their respective sectors. Godefroid Musoni is the Education Officer in Kirehe Sector, Kirehe District in Eastern Province. He explains how working with school leaders looks like as far as CBC implementation is concerned. On the other hand, Innocent Niyonzima is an officer in charge of education in Bigogwe Sector of Nyabihu District. He has more than eight years of experience as an SEO. Mr Niyonzima also shared his extensive experience in school supervision and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers towards promoting effective implementation of the CBC.

## Kirehe Sector-Kirehe District



Godefroid Musoni explaining about CBC teaching and learning materials.

the new methodology, and not all in-service teachers are properly using CBC techniques”, he explained.

However, Mr Musoni said that they are aware of all these challenges and have been handling them in different ways. “First, every school organizes a teacher training session on CBC for one hour every Friday to ensure continuous improvement in CBC implementation.”

The training is facilitated by School Based Mentors and School Based Trainers whom REB trained for this purpose.

Secondly, they hold Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings to discuss various education related issues in Kirehe Sector. Part of what they discuss during those meetings is to identify schools to visit together with head teachers. “The visits revealed that some head teachers were not making regular follow up on CBC implementation but we agreed they will improve. For teachers who are not very eager to implement CBC, we

### CBC on The Right Track

According to Mr Musoni, teachers in Kirehe Sector have not yet fully understood the CBC, making its implementation not as smooth as expected. But why is it that teachers still use the former teaching and learning methodology while CBC was introduced in 2015?

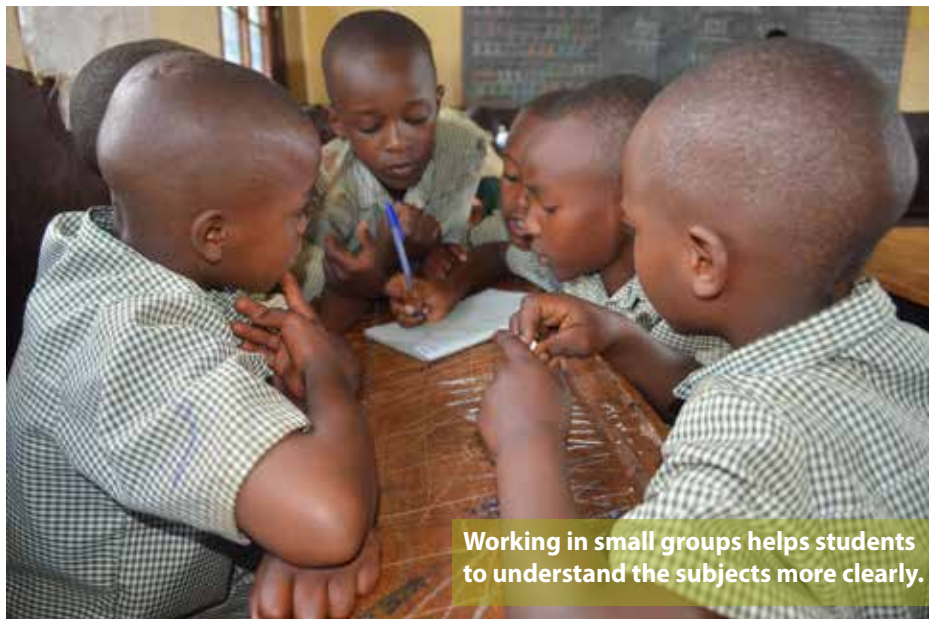
“We don’t have enough teaching and learning materials in all classes yet. In addition, new teachers are not yet familiar with

*“Since we started implementing CBC, we have witnessed change in students learning: the passing rate has generally increased which means that students understand subjects more.”*

encouraged them to learn from their colleagues. Sharing best practices, successes and lessons learnt between teachers and head teachers about CBC, is a practical way to deal with issues around the implementation of the new methodology. Thanks to VVOB for initiating the PLCs in partnership with REB”, Mr Musoni said.

### Managing Big Classes

Mr Musoni is worried about the big number of students in a classroom. Some classes have more than 65 children and this affects CBC implementation according to him. “A teacher should be a facilitator, giving room to students to participate through group work, role play, and this doesn’t work well in big classes,” Mr Musoni noted. The big number of students in a classroom is generally beyond the school capacity and seems to be a common problem throughout the country. Musoni acknowledges the fact that many other schools may be facing the same issue. Then, what does his sector do about this problem? “We have already started visiting schools and encourage them to distribute student’s books to every child in a class, or at least one book per three children where possible, so that everyone is able to follow. We also encourage schools to involve parents in different ways for effective CBC implementation. Mr Musoni is happy that some schools are doing well in terms of discussing with parents about problems that affect learning and teaching. He gives an example of G.S Nyakarambi in his sector where parents accepted to contribute money for buying new



Working in small groups helps students to understand the subjects more clearly.

***“We work as a team composed of head teachers in the sector and we conduct learning visits from school to school. This helps head teachers to apply lessons learnt from other schools.”***

desks to replace the old ones. “This is a good example and we encourage other schools to do the same,” he said.

### CBC Fruits and Promises

“In the schools where teachers use CBC techniques, students have become ‘friends of the school’. When you compare attendance in classes where CBC is well applied with those that have not yet started, you see a big difference. At the end of the year the number of school dropouts may be higher where the old teaching and learning methodology is still predominant. Additionally, since we started implementing CBC, we have witnessed change in students learning: the passing rate has generally increased which means that students understand subjects more”, Mr Musoni observed.

Mr Musoni believes that continuous collaboration with head teachers on the follow up of training teachers on CBC, and facilitation of peer learning sessions through PLC, will help to overcome challenges while boosting the implementation of the new curriculum.■

# SEOs Committed to Boost CBC Implementation

## Bigogwe Sector-Nyabihu District

### From page 13

As an SEO in Bigogwe Sector, Nyabihu District, Mr Niyonzima oversees monitoring of school leadership in general, supervision and inspection of schools, and professional development of headteachers and teachers in the sector. Mr Niyonzima conducts regular school supervision and organizes CPD of teachers towards promoting effective implementation of CBC.

According to Mr Niyonzima, school supervision is a key to the success of the CBC implementation. “We work as a team of headteachers in the sector and we conduct learning visits from school to school. This helps my headteachers to apply lessons learned from other schools. It also helps to discuss about challenges in the schools administration together”, he said.

On top of supervising schools as a team, Mr Niyonzima organizes additional individual visits with intention to support headteachers whose schools have some particularities in their management. Mr Niyonzima illustrated this with a success story from one of the schools in Bigogwe sector. “G.S Rega Catholique is a big school with more than 4,000 students and 85 teachers. The management of these teachers and students requires additional managerial skills. In the last few years, this school was not performing well, and the headteacher did not know how to improve its performance. I helped him to set up different departments across the school and each head of department

supports the management of the school. By now, the performance at this school has improved”, Mr Niyonzima explained.

### CPD for Teachers

The implementation of CBC requires continuous and improved competences, skills and knowledge among teachers. To achieve this, Bigogwe sector, with support from REB has established and trained a pool of trainers who support all teachers to acquire the necessary competences for CBC implementation.

Mr Niyonzima explained how it works. “The sector organizes trainings in collaboration with Sector Based Trainers (SBTs). The team of SBTs is composed of 11 staff including myself, in charge of nursery schools, three primary school teachers, four secondary school teachers and two Directors of Studies in schools. These staff are trained by the REB and in turn these staff organize trainings of teachers on the implementation of CBC in our schools”, Mr Niyonzima explained.

### Challenges Related to Schools Supervision and CPD for Teachers

Mr Niyonzima has experienced many challenges in supervising schools and supporting CPD for teachers in Bigogwe sector. The challenges include:

### Geographic Location of Schools

Some schools in Bigogwe Sector are located in remote areas. Mr Niyonzima has not managed to visit all schools due to long distances

and sometimes difficult access (feeder roads in critical condition). “As per performance contract, the SEO should visit all schools in the sector in one week. In Bigogwe sector, some schools are in remote areas and are not easy to be reached especially during rainy seasons. In addition, the sector does not provide adequate budget for school visits. SEOs have to hire motorbikes during school inspection”, Mr Niyonzima said.

### Many Responsibilities for SEOs

Bigogwe Sector staff work as a team. As such, the SEO is involved in other activities rather than those specified in their roles and responsibilities for education. “There are times I must attend some other urgent programmes of the sector on top of regular supervision of the schools. This has also affected the number of school visits per week. For example, last week I was involved in the district programme related to agriculture”, Mr Niyonzima revealed.

### Teachers Lack Motivation to Attend CPD Training During Holidays

Most trainings are organized in holidays when teachers have a right to their holidays. Given that no incentive is given for attending these workshops, some teachers feel demotivated and refuse to attend. To address this challenge, we have adopted a strategy to organize these trainings during school days. This will help to maximize teachers' attendance in these training. ■

# Training of Trainers for Maths Based on CBC

**From 28 April to 4 May, Ms Annick Biesmans and Mr Bram Verdoodt, lecturers from the Erasmus University College (EHB) in Brussels, visited Rwanda to explore the education system in general, and mathematics teaching in particular. The visit also aimed at sharing experiences on capacity development of teachers in primary mathematics, among other things.**

The lecturers visited a Murama primary school and Bicumbi Teacher Training College (TTC) in Rwamagana District, Eastern Rwanda where they observed maths teaching and interacted with school leaders, teachers and students.

After visiting the schools, Ms Biesmans and Mr Verdoodt facilitated a training of trainers for maths in Kigali for two days. The training participants included seven lecturers from the University of Rwanda and 12 maths tutors from six TTCs who will also train maths teachers in different schools.

Mr Theophile Ngizwenimana is a tutor at TTC Matimba in Nyagatare District, Eastern Province and has been a tutor since 2014. He said the two-day training improved his skills and knowledge, especially about how to handle students and teaching maths. "The training reminded me that we should always give equal opportunities to all learners. For instance, we teach students from poor families, from middle class, children with disabilities, and children who do not face the



Mr Bram Verdoodt talking to TTC tutors and UR-CE teachers during the workshop

*"Many students perform poorly in maths because it was taught in an abstract way, teachers do not connect maths to real life clearly, hence students loose interest in the subject."*

same learning challenges. Considering students' backgrounds informs the learning and teaching process and enables teachers to deal with individual education needs", Mr Ngizwenimana said.

## Students Will no Longer Fear Maths

Regarding maths teaching, Ngizwenimana said that students used to fear math due to the way it was taught. "Many students perform poorly in maths because it was taught in an abstract way, teachers do not connect math to real life clearly, hence students loose interest in the subject. The facilitators reminded us that we should teach maths in ways that students can easily see its relevance to their everyday life. When you teach fractions for instance, you should show students how parents can use it in distributing

items or properties to their children", he said.

According to Theophile Nsengimana, a lecturer at University of Rwanda - College of Education (UR-CE) who also attended the training, maths is a key to the social economic development of a nation. It enables learners to think critically to solve the problems. He added that math is essential for learners expected to pursue applied sciences.

Regarding the training, Nsengimana pointed out his take-home message. "In teaching maths, we should apply three techniques: base it on students' pre-requisite knowledge, teach it in a concrete way (connect it to real life), but also teach it in an abstract way with challenging questions so that students develop mathematical thinking." He added that ideally these techniques should be combined for effective math teaching but observed that many teachers were focusing on a single approach (the abstract one) which may make students hate the subject. "I believe this will change when we start training math teachers", he noted.

Ms Biesmans and Mr Verdoodt were excited that participants are interested in what they shared. "When you teach you also learn, you see challenges... it gives you new energy. We are here to share ideas. We've realised that there is a lot of knowledge in Rwanda. You have the right people, qualified people who can help teachers deal with existing challenges to improve quality education", Ms Biesmans said. ■



# SBMs Support New Teachers and Colleagues on Effective CBC Implementation

Every new teacher comes out of teacher training college or higher learning institution and starts teaching but has limited experience in this career. This is why new teachers as well as other school personnel need in-service training to improve teaching, learning and the school well-being in general. School Based Mentors (SBM) help both new teachers and other teachers in issues related to learning and teaching including familiarization to CBC.

## G.S Shyanda-Kayonza District

**M**ukiza Omar Atlantic has been a School Based Mentor at G.S Shyanda since 2015. The school is located in Murama Sector of Kayonza District in Eastern Province. He describes his experience in mentoring and coaching his fellow teachers.

### Supporting His Colleagues

Mr Mukiza assists his fellow teachers through three major ways.

First, together with the school management, they organize a two-hour training session twice a week. "We have training materials such as books on coaching and mentoring which we use to help our colleagues improve teaching with focus on the Competency Based Curriculum", he said.

Secondly, Mr Mukiza supports other teachers through Community of Practice (CoP) where they identify and discuss issues related to the school wellbeing.

Third, School Based In-service (SBI) is another strategy whereby teachers of same or related subjects meet and share experiences, lessons learnt and discuss teaching and learning challenges.

According to Mr Mukiza, all these strategies enable teachers to develop new professional competences regarding improving the quality of education in general and CBC



Mr Mukiza recommends regular coaching and follow up on how teachers perceive and implement CBC.

*"Having CBC teaching and learning materials on time is key in ensuring its effective implementation. Therefore, we ask REB to provide all necessary materials to all schools so that we can progress well together".*

implementation in particular.

### More Efforts Needed

Mr Mukiza appreciates the level of understanding of CBC among teachers and the extent to which it is implemented. However, he thinks more needs to be done.

"The newest teacher at my school has spent at least three years now, this means that every teacher has had enough time to get familiar with the new teaching and learning methodology. Unfortunately, there is still some resistance in embracing the CBC", he noticed.

Regarding teachers' perceptions and resistance to change, Mr Mukiza doesn't understand why. For him, CBC is easier and more practical than Knowledge Based Curriculum.





According to Mr Mukiza, lack of ICT facilities such as computers connected to internet affects SMBs' coaching and mentoring activities.

“In CBC, you only need to throw the ball to the ground and let players do their job”, Mr Mukiza gave this analogy to mean that teachers need to introduce a lesson and let the students participate, discuss while the teacher plays a role of a coach or facilitator.

Teachers' perceptions are not the only challenges at G.S Shyanda as Mr Mukiza explained.

“Teaching and learning materials are not enough. For instance, we have teacher's and pupils' books for P1, P4 and S1 only”, he said. He went on to say that their school also lacks ICT facilities needed for mentoring and coaching activities. “Sometimes I need to use a projector in coaching other teachers. I also need internet to get updates and materials (documents) about certain subjects but we don't have those facilities”, he added.

### Way Forward

Mr Mukiza noticed that there is need for constant and consistent

training and evaluation about CBC implementation to change the teachers' perceptions. He plans to do this with the school Head Teacher. Regarding the insufficiency of teaching and learning materials, Mr Mukiza requests REB to make a regular follow up on CBC implementation and identify existing gaps and address them accordingly. “Having CBC teaching and learning materials on time is key to ensure its effective implementation. Therefore, we ask REB to help us provide all necessary materials to all schools so that we can progress together”, Mr Mukiza suggested.

Mr Mukiza has another concern about national examinations on CBC. Given the nature of the methodology, Mr Mukiza fails to understand how the national examinations would look like.

“This methodology is all about learners' competences, and this can be measured in many ways including close follow up of a learner, evaluating his/her attitudes and values, basing on the way you

(teacher) know a learner...”, he said. He thinks that REB needs to give it enough time and start with some pre-tests to make sure all schools are on the same page as far as CBC implementation is concerned.

### Best Practices

Some of the approaches that G.S Shyanda uses to improve learners' understanding of certain subjects include making pedagogical materials from locally available materials such as used basins, jerrycans, plastic water bottles, rice bags etc. They can make maps, animals and other teaching materials from those old items. They also use plants and trees in the school surrounding when they are teaching Biology (botanicals).

Mr Mukiza believes that every teacher should be competent, innovative and creative for a learner to attain expected knowledge and skills, attitudes and values.■



# Mentoring and Coaching Teachers Improves Teaching and Learning

## G.S Vuga-Nyabihu District

**Alex Sebahutu is an experienced School Based Mentor (SBM) and a teacher of English language, Kinyarwanda language and Literature at G.S Vuga in Nyabihu District, Western Province. He has more than seven years of experience teaching in primary school. His teaching career started with the Knowledge Based Curriculum which later changed to the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). Mr Sebahutu shared his extensive experience in supporting new teachers and other teachers who are not trained on CBC.**

*We observe the model lesson together and at the end we have a discussion to share what went well and ways to align with the CBC.*

**M**r Sebahutu considers new teachers as those who have joined G.S Vuga in the last three years or those who started their teaching career at G.S Vuga in the last three years. Mr Sebahutu facilitates the orientation, supervision of new teachers joining the school and organizes model lessons.

“I introduce new teacher to other teachers and students, I show them different departments at this school and give them some materials including the CBC syllabus”, he said.

### Orientation of New Teachers

While teaching in the context of CBC requires mutual collaboration among teachers, Mr Sebahutu realized that some new teachers

lack knowledge and skills of teaching and do not know where to ask or get useful information about teaching. In this regard, Mr Sebahutu organizes an orientation session where new teachers are provided with information about teaching and learning at G.S Vuga. Mr Sebahutu added that during the orientation session, new teachers are supported to develop their goals and objectives as they start their first year of teaching at GS Vuga.

“I help new teachers to plan at least one lesson and help them to develop and evaluate a lesson in the context of CBC”, he added.

### Supervision of New Teachers

When new teachers have started their teaching at G.S Vuga, it is the SBM's responsibility to follow up on their improvement in teaching. “I organize regular supervision each month aiming at checking on whether new teachers use teaching techniques as recommended in the CBC. This is done through regular visits in class after which I discuss with them on further ways for improvement”, Mr Sebahutu said.

### Organizing Model Lessons

Even though new teachers are normally trained on special teaching methods in primary schools, they have limited skills in teaching. “I organized model lesson sessions. These sessions are attended by new teachers and experienced teachers. We observe the model lesson together and at the end we have a discussion to share what went well and ways to align with the CBC. New teachers refer to the model lesson to improve their teaching techniques”, he said.

### Challenges In Supporting Teachers

While the mentoring and coaching programme is a promising approach to enhance professional development of new teachers at G.S Vuga, this programme faces many challenges that have affected its implementation. Mr Sebahutu shared the following categories of challenges:



Part of the responsibilities of Head Teachers (HTs) is to follow up on coaching and mentoring activities in their schools. On this photo, HTs are undergoing a CPD Diploma course on Effective School Leadership which includes leading teaching and learning. The course is facilitated by VVOB through Leading, Teaching and Learning Together (LTLT) programme.

## 1. Lack of Quality Time for Mentoring Programme

At G.S Vuga, a SBM performs the role of mentoring and coaching on top of teaching for 48 hours a week. “I don’t have quality time for mentoring new teachers and other teachers because these activities are not planned on my teaching timetable. I am given the same number of teaching hours per week as other teachers without this specific responsibility”, he said. Therefore, the implementation of CBC is affected by the lack of SBM’s quality time for mentoring activities.

## 2. Language Barrier

Whereas teaching in English language requires a high level of English proficiency, most of the new teachers and some experienced teachers struggle with teaching in English. Mr Sebahutu observed that teachers at G.S Vuga face

challenges in using English in their lesson preparations and teaching. “This challenge can also affect students’ competences”, he noted.

## 3. Resistance to Change

While the CBC recommends a shift from the traditional way of teaching, some teachers and new teachers have demonstrated resistance to change towards the implementation of CBC. Mr Sebahutu noted: “a few teachers who refuse to change their way of teaching think that CBC can’t work in the context of Rwanda. This gives us a headache when trying to support them with new teaching approaches”.

Even though the implementation of CBC registered some challenges, Mr Sebahutu learned a lot in this process. He shared a success story that encourages him. “A teacher at my schools was facing difficulties in teaching. His class was not performing well in his subject.

He lacked confidence and could not even ask me as mentor. Learners informed me about his weaknesses in the way he was teaching. Later on I approached him to discuss his teaching methodology. In a mentoring session with him, I realized that lack of confidence was the major challenge. Since then, I planned regular follow up and we used to discuss different teaching techniques among which he selected the most appropriate for his teaching. My intervention was successful that even students could tell me that the teacher is among the best”, Mr Sebahutu shared.

Mr Sebahutu expressed his confidence and pleasure to be an SBM at G.S Vuga. However, he suggested that more trainings are needed and that the Rwanda education system should recognize the role of SBMs in effective implementation of CBC by financially motivating them for mentoring activities. ■



Parents understood the need for more desks and accepted to contribute money for buying the new ones. In this photo, Mr Ntare proudly shows the new desks in one of the classrooms.

## HTs Lead Teaching and Learning for Effective CBC Implementation

**Jean Claude Ntare has been a head teacher for the last nine years. He is currently leading G.S Nyakarambi in Kirehe Sector, Kirehe District, Eastern Province, a school that comprises close to 3000 students. Having experienced both Knowledge-based Curriculum and the current Competency Based Curriculum, he has a lot to tell about these two methodologies. In this article Mr Ntare explores more about the implementation of CBC at his school.**

“We had children who could not express themselves in class, a teacher could know a little about what a child is able to do during the exam. Today, teachers play a facilitation role so that students can participate throughout the learning and teaching trajectory,” this is how Mr Ntare briefly describes the differences between the two teaching and learning methodologies.

### Involving Everyone

Mr Ntare believes that effective implementation of CBC can only be successful when everyone concerned is involved: teachers, students, parents and the school community. He believes that conducive environment that allows teachers to freely give ideas on different issues makes the work very easy for everyone, and help to achieve objectives even beyond expectation. He gives an example of one of his teachers who requested to visit another school to learn more about CBC implementation.

“I allowed him to go and he shared new experiences with other teachers when he came back. This taught me that motivation comes from the way you handle people, being open to them, listening to them, and how they feel about you matters more than what you can give them. A school leader who is not cooperative is always feared and is considered as policeman. The school cannot progress in such situation,” Mr Ntare added.

### Making Parents Friends of the School

“Sometimes we blame parents for not being cooperative, but how about us, head teachers and teachers? Do we involve them, invite them to discuss issues, or encourage feedback? Probably not, or maybe this is done for the sake of doing it,” Mr Ntare answered himself.

Mr Ntare said that his school has tried to make parents friends of the school. They encourage them to visit the school and talk to teachers about their children’s learning and it has become a habit to some parents, a practice which he says attracts more parents to visit the school.

“We always make them aware that the school is there for their children and therefore for them, that they have a responsibility of knowing how their children are treated. We hold at least two meetings with them every quarter to discuss issues pertaining to the school life”, Mr Ntare said.

Given the issue of insufficiency of desks in classrooms that G.S Nyakarambi was facing, the school

PTA committee decided to invite parents for a meeting to discuss it. “Between four to five students would sit on one desk. We asked parents to visit the classrooms so that they could witness the issue. We also had to explain to them how the problem was a setback for CBC implementation,” Mr Ntare said.

Having witnessed the problem and the extent to which it was affecting their children, parents suggested a contribution of 500 francs each, to buy at least 40 new desks urgently. They also agreed to contribute more money for more chairs as the problem was not fully resolved.

Mr Ntare plans to maintain good relationships with teachers, parents and students because it leads to improved learning outcomes and the school well-being.

**Students no Longer Fear Teachers**

Mr Ntare reflected on his own experience when he was growing up. “For so many years even during the time I went to school, we, students

*“Now that we’ve started implementing the new curriculum, every student has countless occasions to familiarize with the subjects: through group discussion, role play, storytelling among other techniques.”*

were fearful about our teachers. We grew up in a situation where a student would not feel very confident to ask a question to a teacher. We were supposed to listen to a teacher and memorise lessons, sometimes without even knowing what it was all about. Now that we’ve started implementing the new curriculum, every student has countless occasions to familiarize with

subjects: through group discussion, role play, storytelling among other techniques”, Mr Ntare said.

**Challenges**

As other schools, G.S Nyakarambi faces the insufficiency of CBC teaching and learning materials, especially for P6 and S6 that have not yet been provided.

In addition, some teachers have not yet clearly understood the new approach as the head teacher indicated. To address this issue, the school continues to train all teachers on CBC implementation.

Mr Ntare also observed that students concentrate on group works, role play and other types of exercise and somehow loose interest of taking notes. “This is a challenge because children also need to take notes as note taking complements their studies. I encourage teachers to explain the importance of taking notes and encourage every student to do it”.



Mr Ntare noticed that students enjoy CBC teaching and learning techniques and tend to forget about taking notes. He encourages teachers to follow up on this.

# Effectiveness of CBC in a Classroom

**An impact story from Sylvère Mazimpaka, a teacher at G.S Gihundwe B, Kamembe Sector, Rusizi District, Western Province.**

The school started in 1963 by Swedish Missionaries as a primary school and later changed to Groupe Scolaire Gihundwe B.

Today it has a total number of 1,475 students. It has been ten years since Mr Mazimpaka dedicated his strength and time to educating children especially in Mathematics and English. His experience thrilled him to share with Urunana rw'Abarezi magazine his vision and experience on the impact of Competence-Based Curriculum

implementation in relation to classroom management and how it will help to foster quality education.

## Good Practices

First of all, Competence Based Curriculum has played an important role of changing the way classrooms are managed and the way students learn.

According to Mr Mazimpaka, Competence-Based Curriculum help students to follow the lessons well as they participate in the teaching and learning process.

Mr Mazimpaka further explains that this new teaching approach motivates learners very much and the enjoy learning. It is

easy to engage all learners by putting them in groups, giving them tasks that stimulate thinking hence students become confident as they engage with peers. Working in groups makes class management easy because the group tasks keep the students busy.

Working together helps children to learn from one another, supporting each other and progressing together. Those who understand the lessons fast support others as they discuss in groups. It is amazing to see how some children can lead group works so well such that every group member feels valued.

The CBC requires teachers to read books to get more



information on different subjects/lessons so as to teach the most updated lessons.

Mr Mazimpaka appreciates the fact that the new CBC promotes cultural values and love for the country among the learners.

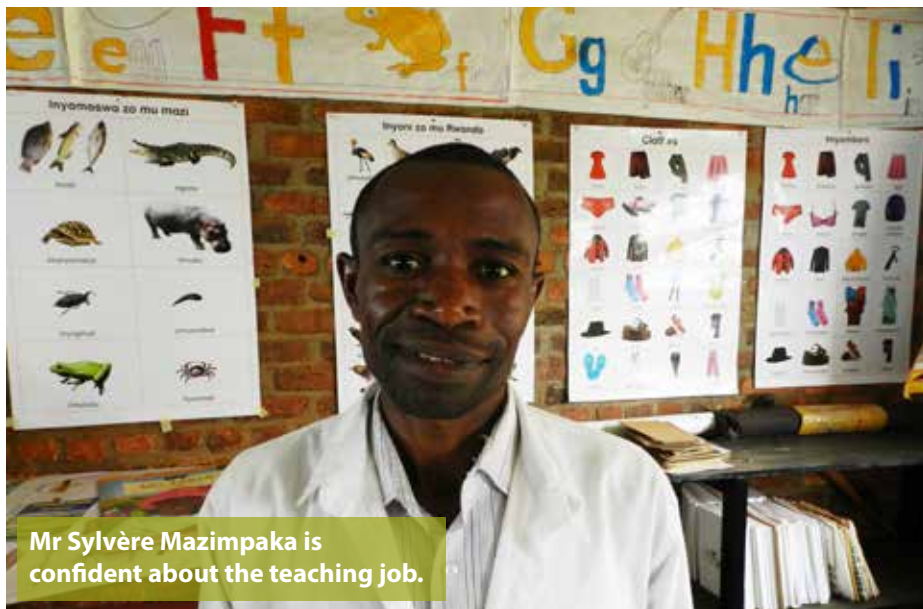
“Some teachers often struggle with how to encourage and maintain positive students’ behaviours. Yet one of the most effective ways to be successful in that is to teach them values and integrate those values in the every aspect of the learning process. When we show our children how what they learn will help to develop their communities and their nation, that’s already a great starting point in collaborating with students to emulate value-based behaviours and principle-based attitudes,” Mr Mazimpaka said.

As an experienced teacher who has served for ten years, Mr Mazimpaka noted that the use of group work method in the new Competence Based Curriculum facilitates learners to share their ideas and has created also a good relation and collaboration between the learners and teachers which has generally improved the quality of education.

Mr Mazimpaka believes that if the CBC is well implemented, it will be a powerful tool to open learner’s minds and improve their learning outcomes and objectives.

### Challenges in CBC Implementation

Mr Mazimpaka noticed that English language is a challenge which becomes more challenging if you have big



Mr Sylvère Mazimpaka is confident about the teaching job.

**“We encourage all parents to be proactive in supporting the education of their children”.**

classes. It takes time to finish the lessons because when the learners don’t understand, you need to keep repeating which takes more time. Another challenge is educated families who don’t support their children in their learning.

Additionally, insufficiency of teaching materials has been identified as a challenge in relation to the implementation of the CBC.

Despite all the challenges in the implementation of the CBC Mr Mazimpaka Sylvère remains optimistic about the future outcomes of the CBC.

“What more valuable inheritance one can give to a child than quality education? This is why we should value and support children’s education. We encourage all parents to be proactive in supporting the education of their children”, Mr Mazimpaka said.

On the other hand, with the new Competence-Based Curriculum, teachers should be encouraged to use their creativity to meet the curriculum expectations. One thing teachers need to be reminded of, is that CBC eases their work. Unlike the old system where they were expected to do everything. Classroom management is also easier when learner centred methods are used. ■

# Parental and Community Involvement in the Implementation of CBC

**Augustin Niyonzima is an experienced Headteacher (HT). He has more than seven years of experience as a headteacher at G.S Vuga, in Bigogwe sector of Nyabihu district. His career as a headteacher started with the Knowledge Based Curriculum which later changed to the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). Mr Niyonzima shared his experience in parental and community involvement in the implementation of CBC at G.S Vuga.**

## Best practices

**G**.S Vuga creates many opportunities to work with parents where school related information is shared with parents. “Among many ways of involving parents in school leadership we organize regular visits and meetings with them. During these meetings, we share the school vision and mission, the progress on teaching and learning process

and school projects planned to enhance learning outcomes”.

### Meetings With Parents

Parents and other education stakeholders are key actors in the process of teaching and learning. For example, parental and community involvement in the learning process can improve students' behaviour and participation in classrooms. Mr Niyonzima said that they

organize regular meetings at school. “We invite parents and other people around the school to discuss matters related to the process of teaching and learning. We ensure that the school is held accountable by parents and that parents know about their roles in supporting school activities”.

G.S Vuga organizes meetings between teachers and parents to discuss matters related to





students' outcomes.

"We welcome parents, when they come, we explain everything about the school life including teaching and learning process. For example, parents are informed about changes in the programme, need for school materials such as notebooks they need to buy for their children".

### Visits to Parents

School-parent partnership is important to increase learning outcomes. As a headteacher of G.S Vuga, Mr Niyonzima organizes visits to some parents whose children have issues in attending classes. Mr Niyonzima shared the following story about a child who had dropped out but the school brought him back after collaborating with his parents.

"Last year one of the teachers told me that one student had stopped coming to school. I took initiative to visit the parents of the learner. I learnt that the girl (learner) had stopped attending class because she didn't have a school uniform. Our school supported the student by providing the uniform as her parents are poor. She is now regularly attending class and performing well and she is always among the top five best performing students in her class" Mr Niyonzima said.

### Challenges

G.S Vuga experienced some challenges that can affect the CBC implementation. Some parents are still careless towards their children's education. In addition, poverty in some

***Some parents do not provide scholastic materials to their children We try to sensitise them about following up their children's education by coming to school and talking to teachers.***

families affects children's education. Insufficiency of teaching and learning materials also remains one of the challenges G.S Vuga faces as far as CBC implementation is concerned.

### Parents' Involvement

Some parents are busy with other survival needs and don't have time to follow up their children's education. In his view, Mr Niyonzima suggested that "parents should know their children's whereabouts especially whether they are at school or not. Some parents do not provide scholastic materials to their children. We try to sensitise parents to follow up on their children's education by coming to school and talking to teachers when they have time but only very few parents do it".

### Poverty

Whereas all Rwandans are enjoying a free education in 12 years basic education, parents still need to participate in their children's education by providing scholastic materials. "Learners from poor families tend to dropout from school because they lack school materials such as notebooks, school uniform.... The school and other education stakeholders try to support learners from poor families where we still have cases of students dropping out".

### Insufficiency of Teaching and Learning Materials

G.S Vuga does not have enough books for teachers and students for effective CBC implementation.

### Lesson Learned

"Since we started the implementation of CBC at G.S Vuga, Mr Niyonzima has learnt that the CBC requires teachers' collaboration. Teachers teach in groups, they help each other to provide teaching and learning aids, they support each other to teach certain topics. In addition, the idea of improving students' competences has attracted many parents in the process of teaching and learning", Mr Niyonzima said. ■



# CBC, a Catalyst for Performance in Schools



**District Directors of Education supervise and support schools in education related issues in the district. Currently, part of their role is to follow up the effective implementation of CBC. Jean de Dieu Hagenimana is the Director of Education in Rusizi District in Western Province. He explains the CBC implementation and how it is transforming the teaching and learning process.**

## **Implementation on Track**

Since the new curriculum came into effect, study books and other teaching materials have been prepared. Some of them are delivered to schools and others are scheduled to be delivered to schools in the near future. Teachers have been trained and equipped with basic skills to shift from the old curriculum and apply the new curriculum as they use previous

***“In the new curriculum a student is the centre of interest and this will promote learners ‘performance. Students are expected to do most of the work, the teacher’s role is to guide students through the learning process.”***

teaching aids in the meantime.

According to Mr Hagenimana who has been in this position since last year, teachers received training on a cascade model whereby national teacher trainers and district master trainers were trained to train teachers in all districts. On top of that, all subject school leaders for new subjects, were introduced in the new curriculum.

## **Commitment and Dedication is Required for Successful CBC**

The competence based approach has been successful in many countries and the same success is expected in Rwanda. However, Mr Hagenimana cautions that it requires a lot of commitment and dedication for it to yield the expected results. He emphasized that there is a need for engaging all stakeholders, including parents and learners

themselves to get involved and support it.

Teachers are required to change their mindset for effective implementation of CBC. At the District level, great synergy will be fostered between the district and the schools to ensure that the curriculum is executed smoothly and every challenge is addressed effectively.

### Shifting From Teacher Centred to Learner Centred

Mr Hagenimana said that he has evidence that learners are enjoying learning in the new competence based curriculum. He further noted that this new system supports the interests of the learners and promotes competences rather than knowledge. More to that, he clarified that the new CBC empowers the children to solve their own problems in their daily life. "Time has come where teachers do not have to work alone, as the CBC is now a channel for children transformation by promoting critical thinking" Mr Hagenimana said.

Competency based curriculum is a good break off from the old teacher centred curriculum. Mr Hagenimana is excited about it and he says: "In the old curriculum, teachers practically used to do everything and the students had very little participation in the teacher-learner process. However, in the new curriculum, the student is the centre of interest and this will promote learners' performance in the district. Students are expected to do most of the work and in this way they benefit more. The teacher takes up the role of a guide as students go through the learning process".

Second, teachers' work is made easier since they do not have to teach everything to the students. Although teachers are required to cover the syllabus, students are expected to work hard to master the subjects' content while the teachers guide them.



**In CBC students are given opportunity to participate and no longer learn in abstract.**

***"Time has come where teachers do not have to work alone, as the CBC is now a channel for children transformation by promoting critical thinking."***

Similarly for students who wish to pursue their studies within the East African region or abroad where the competence based curriculum is in place, they will enjoy a smooth transition in their studies.

Mr Hagenimana urges teachers to embrace the new curriculum with an open mind as it will yield great results and benefits for both teachers and students. In addition, the fact that it is aligned to national development goals, its implementation will give birth to a generation of Rwandans whose mind-set is geared towards being job creators as opposed to job seekers.

### Challenges

Despite the relevance of CBC to our context and the efforts made to support its implementation, there are challenges that implementers still struggle with. Hagenimana highlighted the following as setbacks to CBC implementation:

- Highly consuming in terms of time and resources
- Insufficient real didactic materials
- Lack of space for big classes
- Lack of internet/Electricity
- Not enough qualified teachers to implement the new CBC
- Old school structures.■



## Teaching Mathematics in the context of CBC

**Théogène Mbaraga is an experienced teacher of mathematics in primary school. He has 15 years of teaching experience across all grades of primary education. Currently, he is the School Subject Leader (SSL) and teacher of mathematics in grades 5 and 6 at Groupe Scolaire Kora Catholique in Nyabihu District. His teaching profession started with the Knowledge Based Curriculum and later changed to the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). Mr Mbaraga shared his extensive experience in teaching mathematics and in the context of CBC.**

**M**r Mbaraga introduced our conversation mentioning that at the start of CBC implementation, there was a significant gap between what the society wanted and what learners were learning in schools. The CBC came up with new teaching techniques that would increase learners' competences. However, the process of adoption and exploration of new teaching techniques appropriate to CBC is slow. Some teachers still cling to old teaching techniques of

mathematics.

As an SSL of mathematics at GS Kora Catholique, Mr Mbaraga's main role is to encourage his colleagues and teachers of mathematics to adopt and explore new teaching techniques that fit in the context of CBC. "The teaching techniques recommended in the CBC attract the attention of students which is the most important aspect of teaching" Mr Mbaraga said. He believes that changing

students sitting arrangement in classroom, using small groups and teaching linking to real life experience are strategies that can make the difference for an effective teaching and learning of mathematics.

### Students' Sitting Arrangement

Whereas in the old curriculum teachers used to stand in front of students, in the CBC teachers stand at the centre of students. With this regard, Mr Mbaraga

adopted the 'semi-circle sitting arrangement' where students face each other while the teacher can move around. The semi-circle sitting arrangement, helps Mr Mbaraga to be seen by all students, and increases control over all students and avoids students' distraction. Since he started using the semi-circle sitting arrangement, Mr Mbaraga assured that sitting on a semi-circle in classroom increased students participation and reduced students disruptive behaviour which are among factors of a successful learning and teaching process.

### Using Collaborative Learning groups

Inspired by the CBC, Mr Mbaraga uses small collaborative learning groups of learners. This strategy helps to enhance students' overall learning experience. In small groups, there is a mutual support among learners to address gaps in knowledge. Learners are encouraged towards self-directed and independent learning. It is also an opportunity for students to receive feedback from their peers. Since he started using small groups, Mbaraga confirmed that "learning in small groups helps students develop competences in critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and lifelong learning skills, which are all highly recommended in the CBC".

### Linking the Teaching of Mathematics to Real life

To discourage the abstractness found in the subject of mathematics, Mr Mbaraga adopted the strategy of linking mathematics to the real lives of students. "When I am teaching

*"When I am teaching about simple rate of interest, I move beyond the concept and inform students that they can use the acquired knowledge to help their parents calculate the real cost of a bank loan".*

about simple rate of interest, I move beyond the concept and inform students that they can use the acquired knowledge to help their parents calculate the real cost of a bank loan".

"Ever since I started using this strategy in the teaching of mathematics, students' motivation has increased and it improved students outcomes", Mbaraga said.

### Challenges in mathematics in the context of CBC

Even though the implementation of CBC has registered success for an effective teaching and learning of mathematics in primary schools, some challenges persist. After more than two years of implementing the CBC, Mr Mbaraga faces challenges related to classroom management, evaluation of learning outcomes and mathematics texts books.

### 1. Struggling with Classrooms

Whereas the CBC encourages the individual learning, there is a lack of intimacy with students because of teaching big classes. In crowded classes, it is a challenge to actively engage all learners in the process of teaching and learning. In addition, teaching in big classes reduces teachers' motivation.

### 2. Failure to Evaluate Learners as Individuals

Whereas the implementation of CBC encourages learning through small groups, Mr Mbaraga confirmed that evaluation of learning outcomes is done for groups not for learners as individual. Therefore, teachers fail to evaluate learners as individuals with different needs.

### 3. Lack of Mathematics Textbooks

While the implementation of CBC requires that learners learn individually through reading text books and other materials, Mr Mbaraga said that the school does not avail enough textbooks to satisfy the number of students.

"The implementation of CBC addresses societal problems and makes learners more competent at the end of primary education", Mr Mbaraga noted. He also suggested that education stakeholders should provide schools with enough textbooks of mathematics and provide enough teacher trainings on innovative teaching methods and big classroom management.■







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