



Rwanda

Dr. Daphrosa Gahakwa
Minister of Education



Dr. Daphrosa GAHAKWA holds a M.Sc. in Plant breeding (1996) as well as a Ph.D. in Genetic Engineering (2001) from University of East Anglia, U.K. She began her career in 1979 at Bushenyi district, Uganda. She was Agricultural Officer in charge of young farmers' programme on district level. She continued as farmer manager at Kasese as responsible for testing the irrigation scheme farmers' crops in charge of variety trials in liaison with the National Agriculture Research Institutes. In 2001, she was a Senior Agricultural Inspector responsible for testing of vegetative propagated plant materials and coordinator of banana germplasm improvement, through conventional breeding and biotechnology, in charge of the National biotechnology Centre (2001-2004). In 2004, Dr GAHAKWA is nominated Minister of State in charge of agriculture in Ministry of agriculture and animal resources, Rwanda. From 2008 she is Minister of Education, Republic of Rwanda.

Transition from policy to implementation of inclusion in Rwandan education

The education of children with special educational needs in Rwanda has, in the past, been centered in special schools run by charitable organizations with the government providing limited support in terms of resources and teacher salary. However, in line with the Millennium Development Goals, to attain education for all by 2015, the Government of Rwanda recognized that special needs education is now a priority and is therefore focusing on strengthening education for pupils with special needs. This political commitment is also apparent within in the National constitution. Its article 40 testifies that "Everyone person has the right to education and the State has the duty to take special measures to facilitate the education of disabled people" It is reinforced by the law No 20/2007 of May 2007 which commits the Ministry of education to support the education of children with special education needs.

The Ministry of education has thus completed the Special Needs Education (SNE) policy and is embarking on the elaboration of the Strategic Plan that will help to determine Operation Plans of all sub-sectors. The policy orientation is basically a twin tracked transformational process:

- One that moves from the segregationist system of education which tolerated few privileged learners with special educational needs are taught in distant special schools run by charitable organizations to the neighbourhood ordinary government- supported schools.
- Another approach which is developed in collaboration with UNICEF and Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) is referred to as "Child Friendly School initiative" (CFS), currently in its pilot phase, but will involve the majority of schools. Under this plan, the traditional education settings are transformed to open their doors to students with special educational needs, and retain those at the risk of exclusion, rendering the schools more inclusive and accommodative to all learners without any form of discrimination.

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The Ministry of education commissioned a Taskforce for the Development of Inclusive Education in Rwanda in May 2007 and has helped Institutions of Higher learning to include learners with disabilities for the first time in the history of the country.

The plan projects responding to the Ministry’s key priorities challenges enshrined within the national Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006-2010.

It is strongly emphasized that the orientation of education in the post-genocide Rwanda will be strongly based on the ideology of inclusive education, valuing all children as equals, with equal access to education opportunities, to make the most of their skills and abilities irrespective of their background and abilities.