***ICT policy in Education***

Rwanda Vision 2020 aims at moving Rwanda from “an agriculture based economy to a knowledge-based society “and middle-income country 2020. Education is a key sector to this social and economic transformation, tapping into the limitless potential of an empowered population. At the same time, the Vision 2020 places ICTs at the heart of the transformation across all sectors. The use of ICT in education is seen as a strategic lever for achieving this transformation. This policy complements the overall “SMART RWANDA” Strategy, it implements the SMART EDUCATION policy.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) calls for 3 strategic goals to be addressed

1. To expand access to education for all
2. To improve the quality of education and training
3. To strengthen the relevance of education and training to the labor market including the insertion of 21st century skills.

These goals are being achieved by using technology in education.

Even though great number of the enrolment of students is being achieved the are still the problem of quality of education due to low number of trained teachers. For this technology is used to support Open and Distance learning(ODeL), also it can be used to provide teaching and learning materials through the use of digital learning resources. ICTs can help students to be updated with the current technology based economy and help the teacher to develop their ability.

The vision for ICT in Education is:

“To harness the innovative and cost-effective potential of world-class educational technology tools and resources, for knowledge creation and deepening, to push out the boundaries of education: improve quality, increase access, enhance diversity of learning methods and materials, include new categories of learners, foster both communication and collaboration skills, and build capacity of all those involved in providing education”. This will contribute to achieving the Ministry of Education mission. “to transform the Rwandan citizen into skilled human capital for the socio-economic development of the country by ensuring equitable access to quality education focusing on combating illiteracy, promotion of science and technology, critical thinking, and positive values” (ESSP, 2013)

There is a strategic goals: The overall goal of this ICT in Education policy is to further access, equity, quality and relevance, as the key principles underpinning Rwanda’s ICT and education policies. Promoting ICT to provide access to education for all and quality education that is relevant with regard to the labour market is the foundation of this Policy and Strategic Plan at the core of ESSP and ICT in Education Policy. This policy's strategic goal is to encourage programs and projects that will maximize on the benefits of ICT in providing universal access and quality education for all. Proposed solutions are aligned with the strategic objectives in the following section.

There are four strategic objectives in achieving successful education transformation:

Strategic Objective 1: Develop a competent & relevant ICT professional base to meet industry needs

Strategic Objective 2: Increase ICT penetration and usage at all educational levels

Strategic Objective 3: Develop Education leadership and teachers’ capacity and capability in and through ICT

Strategic Objective 4: Enhance teaching, learning & research through ICT integration in HLIs

Prior to developing this Policy an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC) concerning the ICT in Education environment was carried out at different planning and validation workshops with key stakeholders. The major challenges identified included: inadequate infrastructure; high power costs; equipment; and connectivity costs. New opportunities to expand infrastructure, integration of ICT for core / elective / subject learning, develop partnerships with the public and private sectors, and create new links with regional and international initiatives will be identified. Methodologies include: strong partnership with private sector and access to knowledge experts. Among the information gaps, revealed by a mapping exercise, included: insufficient monitoring and evaluation of ICT in Education projects at school level; a lack of analysis of the outcomes of partnerships; and unclear standards in the sector. This policy will structure, catalyse, regulate and monitor initiatives on ICT in Education, in response to national development requirements, challenges and opportunities.

Analysis revealed the many challenges to be overcome in order to disseminate the use of ICT throughout the nation generally and in education specifically. With a poor infrastructure.

The policy has eleven main policy statements as follows:

1. **ICT in Formal Education** Improve preparation of the current generation of students for a workplace where ICT tools such as computers, Internet and other related technologies, are becoming ever more present.
2. **ICT in Non-Formal Education** ICT provides opportunities for self-learning and distance-learning independently of time or place.
3. **Access and Equity** This policy recognizes ICTs to be a cross-cutting area aimed at equality and equity to all Rwandan citizens.
4. **Infrastructure**

Efforts will be made, to provide the needed infrastructure to the remote and underserved areas using technological solutions that are suited to local needs and conditions.

1. **Curriculum design, delivery and assessment** For successfully integrating ICTs in education, curriculum revisions must be continually conducted, along with training on ICTs and ICT-enabled teaching and learning taught as both a subject and pedagogy using learner-centered and interactive methods
2. **Training and Capacity Building**

ICT-enabled training methods will be fully explored, including distance education, e-learning, and blended learning. Pre-service and in-service training will be offered on a continuous basis to enable staff and other stakeholders to keep up to date with technological and pedagogical developments.

1. **Management, Support, and Sustainability**

Necessary actions will be taken to plan and budget for ICT in Education projects, including innovative means to secure and optimizing requirements through public private partnerships. Additionally, income generating activities will be explored and conducted in order to minimize the Government expenditure on ICT in education initiatives.

1. **Open Distance and e-Learning**

The main purpose of ODeL is to increase the provision of educational opportunities, at all levels of education and training to improve access to, quality and effectiveness of the education system, and improve the efficiency of the educational sub-sector.

1. **Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships**

Recognizing the value of multi-stakeholder partnerships, and valuing the opportunity that lies from the possible support from global corporations and development partners, the Government of Rwanda will engage in various modes of collaboration and partnerships.

1. **Research and Development**

Recognizing experiences and lessons learned from educators and learners, the Government of Rwanda will facilitate participatory involvement of stakeholders at all levels and develop means of disseminating and analysing the feedback to improve learning outcomes.

1. **Monitoring and evaluation** will be used to research and develop ICT integration, to learn from past experiences, to improve implementation and service delivery, to assess and allocate resources, and to assess result

In brief ICT in education is targeted to achieve the following:

* Increase access to basic education for all, for both formal and non-formal education, using ICT as one of the major tools for learning, teaching, searching and information sharing.
* Improve the quality of basic education and promote independent and lifelong learning, especially from primary to tertiary education.
* Contribute to the development of a workforce equipped with the ICT skills needed for employment and use in a knowledge-based economy.
* Ensure that Rwanda has in place an ICT-driven process that supports evidence-based decision making with respect to resource allocation, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation of the educational policy implementation.

***My spirit to implement this policy at national level can be summarized as:***

The government has put an effort in implementation of this policy by providing the budget.

Providing different trainings for teachers in ICT.

Promoting the use ICT tools in Rwandan schools by sharing the skills, I have with other teachers.

Promoting the use of Open Distance E-Learning.

Promoting the use of ICT tools in all subjects.

Raising awareness among students, teachers, and parents of the value of ICTs.

Putting smart classrooms on different schools.

Providing necessary infrastructures.

***My spirit to implement this policy in my classroom:***

As we have smart classroom, will initiate my students the use of the opportunities’ they have got and try to exploit it.

I will teach my student how to access different resources on the internet.

Through typical examples I will make my students love ICT such as E-commerce, Mobile money, E-Learning and so on.

In my class, I will use always ICT tools during teaching activities.

I have to put ICT Resources in my class.