

BURUNDI: Building Skills for Coffee and other Priority Sectors

Moving Forward

Burundi is at a critical stage in its development. Over 13 years of conflict devastated much of the country's physical, social and human capital. Since the Arusha Peace Agreement (2000), Burundi has made progress in consolidating peace and security, establishing a relatively stable macroeconomic environment, rebuilding institutions, and improving sector outcomes, particularly in basic health and education.

Burundi's GDP per capita of US\$153 in 2012 compares with US\$982 for Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the country is making strides in improving the investment climate, one of the fundamentals of job creation. Burundi has jumped from its 2013 rank of 157, to 140 out of 185 countries in the World Bank 2014 Doing Business ranking. Regional integration within the East African Community (EAC) has enabled the country to access an important channel for growth and competitiveness thanks to connective infrastructure and sustained business environment improvement. As the government focuses on upgrading its growth sectors, it is simultaneously prioritizing the education and skills development of Burundi's workforce.

Educating a Young Population

With limited land, capital and a fast growing population, Burundi's main asset is its youthful population. About two-thirds of the population is under the age of 25 years, and about half under the age of 17 years. The population growth rate, 2.6 percent, is high, while the population density is one of the highest in Africa. With low levels of educational attainment and poor health status, the country's main challenge is to create good quality jobs for the growing youth population.

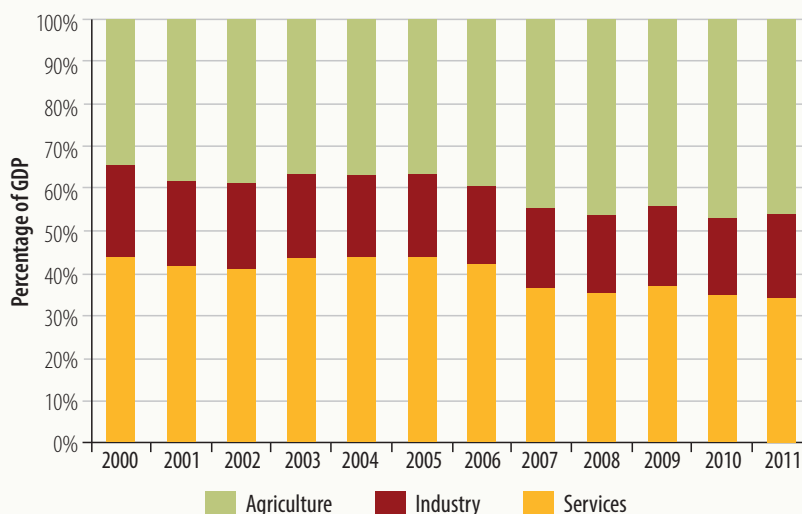
Key Messages

- After 13 years of conflict, Burundi has made progress in consolidating peace and security, and is now looking towards stimulating economic growth.
- Out of a total labor force of about 4.3 million, 3.8 million (88 percent) are employed in agriculture, 132,000 (3 percent) in trade and 112,000 (3 percent) in the public sector.
- Burundi's main asset is its youthful population; over the next ten years (2014-2024) 3.5 million young Burundians will leave the education system ready to enter the labor force with different levels of education attainment.
- Upgrading workforce skills is critical for Burundi to develop priority sectors such as coffee and agribusiness.
- A workforce development strategy for Burundi includes the following essential elements: Implement basic education reforms consistently to improve foundational skills across the board, restructure institutional frameworks, and align skills training with market demand.

Investing in skills is critical for the success of Burundi's growth strategy and the creation of productive employment opportunities for Burundi's youth. The Government of Burundi has developed strategic documents such as the *Burundi Vision 2025* and the second *Poverty*

Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-II) that lay out a development plan for the country. Education is at the heart of the government's development strategy. To begin with, the government abolished school fees—a move which caused gross primary school enrolment rate to increase

Figure 1: Sectoral contribution to GDP



Source: World Development Indicators

to 137 percent in 2010, up from 82 percent in 2005. The ratio of girls to boys in primary schools is almost 100 percent. However, Burundi remains off-track regarding the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of 100 percent completion of the primary cycle. Its completion rate stands at just 56 percent. Repetition rates remain high. School hours fall short of international norms, teacher distribution across the country is skewed, and overall learning levels are low.

To address these issues, the government launched the basic education reform in September 2012. If implemented consistently, this reform will have a significant impact on the education levels of young people. Instead of two cycles of primary and lower secondary, separated by a selection examination, young people will now receive nine years of universal basic education that could potentially equip them with the foundational skills for work or for continuation into secondary education. Other policy measures include: (i) reduction of repetition rate; (ii) increase in actual teaching hours; (iii) revision of school programs and curricula; (iv) strengthening the system of initial and continuing training of teachers; and (v) improvement of management and control.

The government also intends to increase and update the offer of technical and vocational education in order to provide opportunities for youth to acquire practical and trade related skills with the objective that at least 20 percent of graduates of the traditional educational system will become self-employed. The basic education reform is likely to have a more significant impact on the working age population 20, 30 and 40 years down the road. The first complete cohort with a total of 9 years of schooling will graduate in 2021. Overall educational attainment of the stock of labor will improve gradually, beyond 2025, when new entrants with higher educational attainment will begin to replace the existing stock of the working age population.

Alongside the implementation of basic education reform, post-basic education and

training require attention. In 2011, only around 20,000 students enrolled in all types of TVET courses, representing less than 5 percent of enrolment at the secondary level. Most TVET institutions require upgrading as they lack the quality and skills appropriateness demanded by the private sector. Also, the agriculture sector, which employs 7.9 million Burundians, has just one professional/vocational school; the energy sector, which employs about 1,120 workers, has 19 vocational and professional programs. TVET provision needs upgrading and alignment with growth sector skill needs. Tertiary education also requires strengthening; this should focus on: (i) strengthening of the regulatory framework, quality assurance mechanisms and accreditation systems (priority could be given to the fields of agronomy and business and management); (ii) improving the quality of higher education courses and adapting the methodology of delivery to the practical requirements of each field; and (iii) more appropriate targeting of scholarships focusing on the skills needs of growth sectors.

Skills Development for Priority Sectors

The Government of Burundi has prioritized upgrading of several important sectors, including coffee which employs about 1.6 million (although there is a great overlap with agriculture), and agribusiness. An analysis of these two sectors was done using the Global Value Chain (GVC) methodology. The GVC framework is a sector-specific approach that evaluates a full range of activities that need to be carried out to bring a product from conception to its end use. The GVC methodology proceeds through the following steps: (i) map all the segments of the value chain and corresponding production activities; (ii) locate the country's position in the value chain by examining the activities that it performs; (iii) identify possible trajectories for upgrading along the value chain so that the actors in the country can capture more of the value; (iv) analyze the human capital and job profiles

involved in each segment of the value chain and identify the skills needs in each sector; and (v) provide guidance for formulating workforce development (WfD) strategies that need to accompany selected upgrading strategies. One of the strengths of the sector-specific approach is that it shows the human capital needs of upgrading strategies, a factor that is often overlooked.

The examples of Costa Rica, Chile, Rwanda, and Ethiopia show that countries have been most successful when they have included specific workforce development interventions in their upgrading strategies. For instance, Rwanda's strategy to position itself as producer of specialty coffee included skills development in risk management in the financial sector, plantation management, and implementation of traceability and personnel management at washing stations. In fact, all these skills were transferable to the agribusiness sector.

Burundi's basic education reform, if implemented successfully, will enable hundreds of thousands of young people to enter the labor market with better knowledge and skills over the next decade. This will provide a pool of labor which will serve as a strong foundation for any upgrading strategy, as the majority of jobs will continue to require relatively low education and skills levels, but will require workers to be adaptable and be able to learn new technologies, standards and processes. However, in addition, upgrading along the value chain will also create additional new jobs especially at the middle technician and highly skilled level. For example, in both the coffee and agribusiness sectors, quality controllers will be required at the production level, managers and technicians will be required at the processing level, warehouse/operation managers, cold unit managers, packers, and operators/technicians will be required for packing and processing. Financial and marketing personnel will also be required at the highest level of the chain.

A critical component of successful upgrading will require a coherent strategy and active involvement of key stakeholders. The Ministry of

Figure 2: New Job Profiles along the Agribusiness Sector Global Value Chain



Majority of new job profiles identified required technical skills development combined with practical training. These can be carried out by formal technical institutions or as certified programs with private sector providers.

■ New Jobs

Agriculture, the Sector Working Group, and the Ministries of Education and Labor need to lead in defining a workforce strategy to ensure there is no skills-labor market gap. Industry associations need to be strengthened and engaged to work with education and training providers on curricula and skills. Stronger links between industry and education bodies, whether through active engagement on boards, or through on-the-job training programs are central to a demand-driven workforce development and a sustainable and relevant skills delivery system. The private sector should participate in the design of courses, offer internships to trainees, and eventually subsidize or finance some courses to cover constraints preventing participation such as transportation costs, fees, and cost of equipment.

Skills training must include generic employability skills (such as communication and work ethics). A specific issue in Burundi is imparting functional English language training to improve employability. Burundi is part of the EAC, which is predominantly English-speaking; providing functional language skills

will increase job opportunities for Burundi's young population.

Training needs must also target the existing stock of labor or they will continue to lack the necessary skills required for the adopted upgrading trajectories. Parallel interventions to the basic education reform are necessary to enhance the skills of those leaving the school system in the next couple of years and for those already working in the sectors.

Elements of a Workforce Development Strategy

There are three specific challenges that a workforce development strategy for Burundi needs to address: (i) many Burundians lack basic foundational skills that are the foundations for any growth strategy (ii) the existing institutional framework is currently not structured for a demand led workforce development strategy and (iii) existing training programs are fragmented, donor driven, lack integration and do not target soft generic skills or middle level or specialized skills, all required for upgrading.

The World Bank as Partner

The World Bank report, *Burundi: Education and Skills for Workforce Development*, is a key input in helping Burundi establish and implement a strategy for skills development. It analyzes priority sectors that drive the economy and outlines a workforce development strategy that will prepare these sectors to successfully upgrade.

The World Bank's Country Economic Memorandum recommends that growth policy should focus on closing the infrastructure gap; gaining from regional integration; improving the business environment; promoting new growth sources; and strengthening the country's fiscal position. Similarly, the joint World Bank Group Business Plan for the country emphasizes the need for sector-specific approaches, in addition to economy-wide ones, such as in agribusiness (coffee/tea/sugar), telecom and energy.

Table 1: Elements of a workforce development upgrading strategy for Burundi

ISSUE	ACTION		OUTCOME	
Many Burundians lack basic skills to support broad-based growth and productivity improvement	Implementation of basic education reform focusing on expansion with attention to quality		Significant improvement of the education attainment of the labor force by 2025	
		SHORT-TERM		MEDIUM-TERM
	<i>Policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement basic education reform, including regulation of promotion between grades 6 and 7, reduce repetition and drop out Vocational education/training in CEMs to start after grade 9 (instead of grade 6) Prepare plan for managed expansion of post-basic education (see below) 		
	<i>Intervention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement an in-service teacher training program for grade 7-9 teachers (new system) School construction program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School construction program Institute learning assessments in specific grades to upgrade teacher programs and curricula reforms 	
Upgrading in priority sectors: Training programs for producers are fragmented, donor driven and lack integration with value chain upgrading strategy; lack of practical generic skills, and targeted middle level and specialized skills required for upgrading	Improvement of skills for the coffee and agribusiness sectors		Increased productivity of coffee producers and better quality employment for young workers in coffee and agribusiness sector	
		SHORT-TERM		MEDIUM-TERM
	<i>Policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy decision to upgrade coffee sector and establish institutional mechanisms for coordination of a package of services for value chain upgrading 		
	<i>Intervention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training package for producers and middle-level technicians as part of integrated program focusing on a package of interventions (access to credit, land, incentives for women/young people, marketing) Introduce English language training programs for school leavers who will enter these sectors Introduce components focusing on generic employability skills (communication, work ethics, etc.) in vocational/technical programs Provide information to young people about employment prospects and training in coffee/agribusiness sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgrade selected CEMs and CFP's in collaboration with private sector and other stakeholders to deliver training to producers and young people entering these sectors. Revise programs of CEMs and CEFs for these sectors Introduce apprenticeship programs for young trainees so that they can take up employment after graduating Upgrade tertiary education courses in the fields of agronomy, marketing and management 	
The implementation of the basic education reform will require managed expansion and upgrading of quality of post-basic education, including through private providers Incentives for young people are not aligned with priorities and emerging labor market needs Despite some positive initial steps, workforce development lacks an overall strategic framework and coordination between different stakeholders and quality assurance mechanisms to ensure responsiveness to a changing labor market	Managed expansion of post-basic education and implementation of a demand-led approach for workforce development		More qualified secondary and tertiary education graduates who are employable and in demand by growing sectors Workforce Development is better coordinated and focused on labor market demand: WfD benchmark upgrades from latent to emergent (as per SABER framework)	
		SHORT-TERM		MEDIUM-TERM
	<i>Policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reform the existing scholarship program for higher education to manage uncontrolled expansion, prioritize specific programs, and increase enrolment in TVET Operationalize the public-private partnership through clear regulations and financing mechanisms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt policy for occupational standards and qualifications frameworks, beginning with specific priority sectors
	<i>Intervention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish some CFPs in partnership with private sector and provide funding based on results Undertake occupational analysis by sector and identify broad-band occupational profiles Develop information system for policy analysis including tracking the labor market performance of graduates, internal efficiency and unit costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create qualification framework for occupations in specific sectors Put in place a quality assurance framework Introduce competence-based approach and have employers participate in testing and certifying graduates of TVET programs and selected higher education programs Introduce a competitive fund for tertiary education to channel resources into priority programs and strengthen quality assurance mechanisms and accreditation systems 	

¹ CEM – Centre d'enseignement des métiers; CFP – Centre de formation professionnel

MORE ON THE TOPIC

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