



POLICY BRIEF

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS FOR STRENGTHENING WORKPLACE LEARNING (WPL) IN RWANDA

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1. Context and Rationale

Workplace Learning (WPL) remains a central pillar in Rwanda's drive to develop a competitive, productive, and employable workforce. This aligns with national priorities outlined in NESS 2024-2029, the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), and Vision 2050. The success of WPL depends on coherent collaboration between government institutions such as MIFOTRA, MINEDUC/RTB, private sector actors represented through PSF and sector associations, district authorities, CSOs, and training institutions¹.

Despite its strategic importance, WPL implementation is weakened by fragmented governance structures and limited coordination. District-level mechanisms function unevenly, roles and responsibilities lack clarity, and monitoring and quality-assurance systems remain insufficient. These gaps restrict the availability of quality placements, undermine mentorship standards, and limit the participation of women, rural youth, and persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, the current WPL Policy (2015) developed during the Vision 2020 period no longer fully aligns with today's human-capital priorities, evolving labor-market demands, or inclusivity imperatives. As Rwanda strengthens its skills ecosystem under NESS 2024-2029, upgrading WPL governance, monitoring, and inclusivity frameworks has become essential. Without modernized coordination systems and clearer institutional mandates, WPL cannot effectively support the transition toward a knowledge-based and innovation-driven economy².

Currently, WPL implementation in Rwanda is characterized by partial engagement of the private sector, CSOs, and community structures. Coordination mechanisms at the district level are underdeveloped, with limited formal roles for stakeholders and inconsistent monitoring systems. CSO participation is often project-dependent and lacks predictable funding, while many vulnerable learners women, youth in rural areas, and persons with disabilities face barriers to accessing WPL opportunities³.

Private sector involvement, particularly among SMEs, remains low due to weak incentives and unclear benefits, resulting in a misalignment between training provision and labor-market demands. Community-based structures, critical for mobilization, mentorship, and last-mile support, remain underutilized, further limiting the reach and inclusivity of WPL initiatives.

3. Policy Problem Statement

The limited engagement of private sector actors and CSOs in WPL stems from structural and coordination barriers. CSOs often participate in an ad-hoc, project-dependent manner without clearly defined roles or stable resources, while support systems for vulnerable learners remain insufficient. Engagement mechanisms for private enterprises and sector associations are unclear, and incentives for consistent participation are weak.

Economically and socially, this gap is significant: Rwanda's private sector is the largest employer, yet many firms particularly SMEs do not engage in WPL due to weak coordination and limited visible benefits. CSOs are crucial for mobilizing disadvantaged youth and supporting workplace

¹ rwandatrade.rw+1

² nesa.gov.rw+2 [AUDA-NEPAD+2](http://auda.gov.rw+2)

³ lms.rw+1

readiness, while community structures provide essential last-mile support, particularly in rural areas. Without addressing these challenges, WPL cannot achieve national goals for equity, competitiveness, and productivity⁴.

4. Purpose of the Policy Brief

This brief provides actionable recommendations to strengthen institutional coordination, improve monitoring systems, and enhance inclusivity in WPL. It guides government institutions, private sector actors, and CSOs in designing strategies that increase stakeholder engagement, expand access for vulnerable learners, and ensure that workplace learning aligns with labor-market needs and Rwanda's broader human capital development objectives.

5. Policy Implications and Actionable Recommendations

Integrating Private Sector and CSOs into Coordination Mechanisms: Formal representation of the Private Sector Federation (PSF), CSOs, and sector associations in WPL coordination committees ensures structured participation, predictable engagement, efficient information flow, and collective decision-making. Developing joint work plans connecting employers, TVET institutions, and CSOs ensures training programs respond to industry needs while remaining accessible to vulnerable learners⁵.

Funding Community-Based Mobilization and Mentorship: Targeted financing for CSOs enables learner mobilization, workplace-readiness training, and continuous mentorship, which is critical for retention and skill acquisition. Community-based follow-up mechanisms reduce dropout rates, particularly among women, rural youth, and persons with disabilities, by providing ongoing support and accountability⁶.

Introducing Stipends and Inclusion Support: Stipends for transport, meals, and assistive devices remove economic barriers, enabling learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to fully participate in WPL opportunities. Special mentorship initiatives for girls, youth with disabilities, and rural learners equip them to navigate workplace expectations and maximize learning outcomes. Community mentorship networks anchored by CSOs provide psychosocial support, peer learning, and guidance, fostering an inclusive learning environment.⁷

Establishing Structured Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with PSF, chambers, and CSOs clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations, moving beyond project-based engagement to strategic partnerships. Sector skills platforms facilitate continuous dialogue, curriculum alignment, identification of emerging skills, and workforce planning⁸.

Recognition and Incentive Systems: National and district-level recognition schemes highlight exemplary CSOs and private sector WPL champions, enhancing visibility and motivation.

⁴ primature.gov.rw+2rtb.gov.rw+2

⁵ primature.gov.rw+2rtb.gov.rw+2

⁶ HYPERLINK "https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/09/09/rwanda-afe-200-000-youths-to-benefit-from-skills-development-program?utm_source=chatgpt.com" [worldbank.org](https://www.worldbank.org)+1

⁷ [rwandatrade.rw+1](https://www.rwandatrade.rw+1)

⁸ [Open.Enabel+2primature.gov.rw+2](https://www.open.enabel+2primature.gov.rw+2)

Incentives for CSO engagement in mentoring, job matching, and outreach encourage consistent participation⁹.

6. Expected Impact

These interventions are expected to yield multiple benefits:

- **Greater Inclusiveness:** Expanded WPL access ensures women, vulnerable youth, and persons with disabilities benefit from skills development opportunities.
- **Stronger Community Ownership:** Increased placement uptake in rural districts through active community engagement.
- **Improved Labour-Market Relevance:** Stronger private sector engagement aligns training with industry needs.
- **Higher Placement and Retention:** Community-based support and mentorship reduce dropout rates and strengthen learner outcomes.
- **Coherent Partnerships:** Predictable collaboration between government, private sector, and CSOs reinforces NESS and NST2 implementation.

7. Target Institutions

- **Lead:** MIFOTRA, MINEDUC
- **Co-Lead:** PSF, MINALOC, RTB
- **Supporting Actors:** CSOs, development partners, district authorities

8. Conclusion

Strengthening institutional coordination, monitoring systems, and inclusivity in Rwanda's WPL ecosystem is essential for achieving national human capital development goals. Integrating private sector actors, CSOs, and community structures, combined with targeted support for vulnerable learners, structured partnerships, and recognition systems, will enhance WPL effectiveness, equity, and labor-market relevance¹⁰. These measures will ensure Rwanda's workforce is equipped with the skills needed for inclusive economic growth and long-term competitiveness.

9. References

- Government of Rwanda. (2015). *Workplace Learning Policy*.
- Ministry of Education. (2024). *National Employment Strategy and Skills Development (NESS 2024-2029)*.
- Government of Rwanda. (2020). *Vision 2050*.
- Rwanda Private Sector Federation (PSF) Reports on SME Engagement in Skills Development.

⁹ [rwandatrade.rw+1](https://www.rwandatrade.rw+1)

¹⁰ HYPERLINK "https://www.primature.gov.rw/news-detail/pm-nsengiyumva-presented-to-parliament-governments-five-year-program-nst2?utm_source=chatgpt.com" [primature.gov.rw+2rtb.gov.rw+2](https://www.primature.gov.rw+2rtb.gov.rw+2)