# POLICY BRIEF SERIES ON STRENGTHENING WORKPLACE LEARNING (WPL) IMPLEMENTATION IN RWANDA

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## UNSUSTAINABLE FINANCING AND EMPLOYER INCENTIVES FOR STRENGTHENING WORKPLACE LEARNING (WPL) IN RWANDA

### I. Context and Rationale

Rwanda is at a pivotal moment as it transitions from vision 2020 to 2050, with a clear ambition to secure higher living standards and improved well-being for its population. This shift underscores the critical need to invest in developing a dynamic, future ready workforce capable of meeting the growing demand of skilled labor. Skills development and employment promotion are central to Rwanda's transformative vision, aiming to become an upper-middle income country by 2035, and ultimately a high-income country by 2050.[1]

Workplace Learning (WPL) remains a cornerstone of Rwanda's skills development agenda. National frameworks notably the Workplace Learning Policy (2015), NESS 2024–2029, NST2 2024-2029, and Vision 2050 underscore the need for demand-driven training, stronger collaboration with the private sector, and inclusive pathways that link youth to employment.[2]

Despite the Workplace Learning Policy emphasis, financing for WPL has not kept pace with its ambitions. Funding streams remain inconsistent and fragmented. Government budget allocations fluctuate and do not adequately cover the real costs of WPL. At the same time, host employers shoulder significant responsibilities without sufficient incentives especially small and medium-sized enterprises, which often lack the resources to meet supervision, insurance, equipment, and trainee support costs.[3] These financial constraints slow down the expansion of apprenticeship and internship opportunities, weaken the quality of training, and limit the participation of private-sector actors.

As a result, national targets under NESS 2025-2029 and NST2 2024-2029 risk being undermined. To realize the country's human capital aspirations, WPL requires a more stable and predictable financing model supported by deliberate fiscal incentives. While NSDEPS and NST2 envision financing and employer incentive reforms, success hinges on quality training, strong coordination, and inclusive incentives. If effectively implemented, these strategies build a skilled, industry ready workforce, fueling the transformation envisaged under Vision 2050[4].

AJPRODHO JIJUKIRWA's 2025 Assessment on the implementation of the Work place learning policy revealed that only 16% of 446 companies surveyed had a formal workplace learning program in place. Additionally, 91% of employees reported not receiving any structured training aligned with WPL requirements. These gaps were largely attributed to insufficient financial support, supervision costs, and capacity limitations, particularly among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).[5]

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[1] *National Skills development and employment promotion strategy 2019-2024*

[2] *Workplace learning policy 2015, recent TVET/skills-development Reforms, PSGYE, Economic Update, NST2/Vision2050 alignment with National Policy on Workplace Learning to prepare Rwandan Youth for employment(Workplace Learning Policy),July 2015*

[3] *AJPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA, (2025) Performance Assessment report on WPL Policy: only 16% firms with WPL programs; 91% of employees untrained; SMEs lack funding/supervision capacity,2025*

[4] *primature.gov.rw+2rtb.gov.rw+2*

[5] *Assessment of WPL implementation, AJPRODHO,2025.*

Recent reviews of TVET and skills governance further reveal inadequate monitoring systems, a lack of standardized financing indicators, and limited budget allocations specifically earmarked for workplace learning (World Bank, 2024a; World Bank, 2024b).

In 2025, the Government of Rwanda and key stakeholders launched a national technical committee to strengthen coordination and financing of WPL, acknowledging persistent systemic gaps in infrastructure, funding models, and incentive structures (AJPRODHO assessment on WPL, 2025). However, the availability of comprehensive, multi-year national data on WPL financing and the uptake of incentives remains limited due to challenges of data accessibility.

## 2. Policy Problem Statement

Rwanda lacks a long-term and consolidated financing mechanism capable of sustaining the full implementation of WPL. Employers particularly SMEs carry a substantial portion of the financial burden associated with hosting trainees. These challenges create disparities in access, reduce training quality, and undermine policy commitments to equitable and demanded skills development. Without cost-sharing mechanisms or fiscal incentives, many businesses will continue to struggle to participate consistently, limiting national coverage and quality.[6]

## 3. Purpose of the Policy Brief

This policy brief aims to highlight the financing gaps affecting Workplace Learning (WPL) in Rwanda and to inform policymakers and institutional partners about the need for sustainable, long-term financing mechanisms and employer support incentive schemes. It emphasizes how well-designed funding frameworks can strengthen and expand WPL implementation under the National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS) 2024–2029, while also demonstrating how coherent financing approaches can stimulate employment creation and increase private-sector engagement in skills development[7].

## 4. Policy Implications and Actionable Recommendations

To strengthen Rwanda's Workplace Learning (WPL) system and ensure its long-term impact, several strategic measures should be considered as follows:

a. Establishing a National Workplace Learning Fund would provide a stable, multi-year financing mechanism. This fund could draw on government budget allocations, contributions from the private sector through levies or voluntary support and investments from development partners. By financing placement costs, training equipment, coordination, mentor development, monitoring systems, and tracer studies, such a fund would address current gaps and enhance the quality and scale of workplace-based learning.

b. Introducing targeted employer incentives would help reduce the financial burden on host organizations, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. Measures such as tax credits for firms hosting trainees, wage subsidies for SMEs, and matching grants for equipment upgrades and workplace safety improvements would make participation more attractive.

[6] *Rwanda Economic Update: Investing in skills Development can spur Rwanda's private sector growth and economic transformation, World Bank Group, publication September,17,2024*
[7] *the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2024–2029)*

c. Establishing a dedicated WPL budget line within MIFOTRA, the Rwanda TVET Board (RTB) or district budgets and performance contracts to promote a more decentralized and sustainable WPL systems with predictable and stable annual funding nationwide. Such an allocation would support essential activities including mentorship, coordination, trainee induction, mentor certification programs, and targeted assistance for vulnerable trainees. A formal budget line would reduce reliance on ad-hoc funding and enable long-term planning and program sustainability.
d. Explore public–private co-financing partnerships to expand investment in WPL. Joint investment in sector-based training hubs, innovation funds linked to priority economic sectors, and shared procurement of equipment for apprenticeships would maximize resources and leverage the expertise of both sectors. International experience shows that such co-financing arrangements increase efficiency and align well with Rwanda's broader economic transformation agenda8.
e. Improving WPL infrastructure and technological support is critical to delivering high-quality training across the country. Providing equipment grants to TVET institutions and SMEs, deploying mobile training units to underserved districts, and investing in digital reporting systems for coordination and monitoring would enhance efficiency, transparency, and national coverage.

Together, these measures would create a more inclusive, effective, and sustainable WPL ecosystem, capable of preparing a skilled, job-ready workforce that meets the evolving needs of Rwanda's economy.

**5. Expected Impact and Actionable Recommendations.**

Adopting these financing reforms will create a more robust and sustainable Workplace Learning system in Rwanda by:

a. Ensuring consistent funding and targeted incentives, the country can expand high-quality placement opportunities nationwide and strengthen collaboration between public institutions and the private sector.
b. Enhancing the capacity of employers to host and mentor trainees effectively, while reducing dependence on short-term, donor-funded interventions. Importantly, they will improve access to WPL for women, rural youth, and persons with disabilities, promoting a more inclusive skills development landscape.
c. Collectively, these reforms will support the achievement of the goals outlined in NESS 2024-2029, NST2 2024-2029, and contribute directly to Rwanda's broader human-capital and economic aspirations under Vision 2050.

**6. Target Institutions and Roles**

The effective implementation of Workplace Learning (WPL) in Rwanda depends on the clear assignment of roles and responsibilities across key institutions.

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[8] *The OECD argues that such cost-sharing or co-financing models reduce the barrier for firms (especially SMEs) to offer training, thus widening the reach of vocational training systems. OECD (2023), Building Future-Ready Vocational Education and Training Systems, OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/28551a79-en.*

a. MIFOTRA will lead the coordination of the WPL policy and the financing framework, including the establishment and management of the WPL Fund.
b. MINEDUC will provide oversight to ensure alignment with TVET and higher education programs, while the Rwanda TVET Board (RTB) will handle technical implementation, supervision, and quality assurance of training programs.
c. MINECOFIN will play a critical role in integrating WPL into national budgets, designing the incentive framework, and ensuring the sustainability of financing.
d. Private Sector Federation (PSF) will mobilize private sector engagement, encouraging businesses to participate actively in training programs.
e. MINALOC will coordinate WPL activities at the local level, and oversee implementation across districts, ensuring that national strategies translate effectively into local action.
f. All 30 Districts will ensure that a dedicated WPL fund is allocated and fully mainstreamed into district budgets and performance contracts every fiscal year. This commitment will help guarantee that the workplace learning (**Igira Ku Murimo**) Programme is effective, accessible, affordable and inclusive reaching learners at cell level.
g. Together, these institutions form a collaborative network that underpins a robust and inclusive WPL system.

## 7. Conclusion

For Rwanda to fully harness the power of Workplace Learning as a driver of skills development and inclusive employment, it needs a stable financing architecture backed by targeted employer incentives. Establishing a national WPL Fund, introducing tax and grant incentives, and strengthening cost-sharing partnerships will help secure long-term sustainability, raise training quality, and improve national coverage. These reforms are essential to support Rwanda's human capital goals and broader transformation agenda.

## 8. References


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- *Government of Rwanda (2023). National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS 2024–2029).*
- *Government of Rwanda (2024). NST2: National Strategy for Transformation 2024–2029.*
- *Government of Rwanda (2020). Vision 2050.*
- *ILO (2019). Apprenticeship Financing Models.*
- *OECD (2021). Employer Incentives for Work-Based Learning.*
- *World Bank (2020). Financing Skills Development in Low- and Middle-Income Countries.*
- *AJPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA (2025). Performance Assessment of the WPL policy in Rwanda*

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

### 1. Context and Rationale

The Workplace Learning Policy (2015) underscores that effective WPL implementation depends on "strong, coordinated partnerships with employers, civil society, and local community mechanisms," assigning the private sector a central role in hosting trainees, shaping demand-driven skills, and participating in sector coordination platforms, while positioning CSOs and community structures as key actors for mobilization, inclusion, and learner support.

This policy direction is reinforced by the National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS 2024–2029), which identifies multi-stakeholder collaboration, private-sector leadership, and community-driven outreach as essential accelerators of equitable skills development. Similarly, NST2 (2024-2029) calls for deeper public–private partnerships to ensure labour-market relevance, stronger engagement of non-state actors, and decentralized community participation in skills delivery. Under NST2, the government places high priority on private-sector led economic transformation, skills development, and job creation, with a commitment to partner with all stakeholders, including private firms, civil society, and development partners[9].

Collectively, these policies recognize that private sector actors, CSOs, and community structures are not peripheral but integral to a high-performing WPL system yet current participation remains limited, creating a critical implementation gap the present policy brief aims to address.

To operationalize these engagements, the WPL sets out institutional arrangements: national coordination led by MIFOTRA with partner roles for MINEDUC, RTB, the Private Sector Federation (PSF), Sector Skills Councils and other actors. The policy and its implementation guidelines recommend MoUs, joint planning, and sector platforms to link employers, training institutions and community/CSO actors in the WPL governance and delivery architecture[10].

The policy stresses three levers to increase private and CSO engagement: (a) clear quality standards and guidance for hosting trainees (so firms know what to do), (b) incentives/recognition to offset perceived costs to employers, and (c) funding or targeted support to CSOs/community actors for mobilization and inclusion services. These measures are proposed to move participation from ad-hoc, project-dependent engagement toward predictable, sustainable partnerships[11].

Despite strong policy commitments, the implementation of Work Place Learning continues to face considerable limitations due to the weak engagement of private enterprises, CSOs, and community actors:

- **Ad-hoc and project-based CSO participation -** Many CSOs only engage when external donors fund their activities, resulting in limited continuity, weak institutional memory, and inconsistent support to learners.[12]

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[10] *rwandatrade.rw+1*

[11] *rwandatrade.rw+1*

[12] *Assessing Progress on CSO Enabling Environment in Rwanda. https://e-ihuriro.rcsprwanda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06.*

- **Limited support systems for vulnerable learners -** Women, rural youth, and persons with disabilities face significant barriers such as transport costs, inaccessible workplaces, and lack of mentoring.[13] Without CSO or community support, many cannot enroll or remain in WPL programs.
- **Unclear mechanisms for private sector involvement -** Private companies especially SMEs—lack clear guidance on how to host trainees, what standards to follow, and what benefits they receive from participation.[14]
- **Weak incentives for employer participation -** Employers often perceive WPL as costly or administratively heavy. Without recognition, subsidies, or tax incentives, participation remains limited.[15]
- **Low community involvement in mobilization and follow-up -** Community structures have strong local networks but are rarely assigned formal roles, limiting outreach especially to rural or vulnerable populations.[16]

## 2. Policy Problem Statement

The limited engagement of private sector actors, civil society organizations (CSOs), and community structures in Work-Based Learning (WPL) stems largely from structural gaps, weak coordination, and a lack of incentives. This insufficient involvement undermines Rwanda's skills ecosystem and slows progress toward inclusive employment. The private sector, though the country's largest employer, remains only partially integrated into the WPL system particularly small and medium enterprises which contributes to a persistent mismatch between training programs and labour-market needs.[17]

CSOs, which play a vital role in mobilizing marginalized groups, preparing learners for workplace environments, and providing follow-up support, are often underutilized, leaving vulnerable learners at risk of exclusion. At the community level, local actors are critical for last-mile engagement, ensuring that learners in remote areas can access available opportunities.

Without strong participation from all these actors, WPL cannot effectively support Rwanda's national goals for competitiveness, equity, and productivity.[18]

## 3. Purpose of the Policy Brief

This policy brief aims to guide policymakers by clearly outlining the underlying causes of weak stakeholder engagement in WPL and proposing practical, evidence-based solutions. It seeks to demonstrate why private sector firms, CSOs, and community structures are indispensable actors

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[13] *Disability-Inclusive Education and Employment: Understanding the Experiences of Young Men and Women with Disabilities – RWANDA. https://mastercardfdn.org/*
[14] *Workplace Learning Policy (2015)*
[15] *A Path to More Apprentice and Intern Opportunities in Rwanda. https://www.ideas42.org/project/a-path-to-more-apprentice-and-intern-opportunities-in-rwanda/*
[16] *Workplace Learning Policy (2015)*
[17] *rtb.gov.rw+2prima*
[18] *rtb.gov.rw+2prima*

for achieving Rwanda's human capital ambitions, and how their strengthened participation will improve access, relevance, and sustainability of workplace learning across all districts[19].

## 4. Policy Implications and Actionable Recommendations

The integration of private sector actors and civil society organizations (CSOs) into district-level WPL coordination mechanisms is essential for strengthening collaboration and ensuring effective implementation.

Formalizing the representation of institutions such as the Private Sector Federation (PSF), CSOs, and sector associations creates predictable engagement, improves information flow, and enables joint decision-making. Developing shared WPL work plans between employers, TVET institutions, and CSOs further ensures that training programs are aligned with industry needs while remaining accessible to vulnerable groups.

In addition, funding community-based mobilization and mentorship programs is critical. Targeted financing for CSOs allows them to conduct outreach, deliver workplace readiness training, and provide sustained mentorship, while trained community mentors help reduce dropout rates, particularly among rural youth, girls, and persons with disabilities. Introducing stipends and inclusion support for vulnerable learners—covering transport, meals, and assistive devices—helps remove economic barriers to participation, complemented by specialized mentorship initiatives tailored to girls and youth with disabilities. Community mentorship networks, often anchored by CSOs, also provide psychosocial support and peer learning.

Establishing structured public–private partnerships (PPPs) through Memoranda of Understanding with PSF, chambers, and CSOs clarifies roles and expectations, fostering long-term collaboration beyond short-term projects[20]. Sector skills platforms further promote ongoing dialogue, curriculum alignment, and identification of emerging workforce needs. Lastly, recognition and incentive systems at both national and district levels encourage active participation by employers and CSOs. Awards and visibility for committed actors, alongside incentives for mentoring and outreach, help strengthen motivation and reinforce the sustainability of WPL engagement across all sectors[21].

## 5. Expected Impact

The expected impact of these interventions includes greater inclusiveness in WPL access, particularly for women, vulnerable youth, and persons with disabilities. Strengthened community ownership is anticipated to increase participation in rural areas, while deeper private sector involvement will enhance the labour-market relevance of training programs.

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[19] *the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2024–2029)*

[20] *NST2 (2024–2029) calls for deeper public–private partnerships to ensure labour-market relevance, stronger engagement of non-state actors, and decentralized community participation in skills delivery.*

[21] *the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP 2024–2029)*

Mentorship and follow-up systems are expected to support higher placement and retention rates, contributing to more sustainable outcomes for learners.

Overall, these measures will foster more predictable and coherent partnerships that align effectively with NESS and NST2 targets.

## 6. Target and Responsible Institutions

a) **Lead Institutions:**

   a. MIFOTRA – Provide policy oversight and coordination of the implementation of the Work Place Learning.
   b. MINEDUC – Lead the effort to integrate the WPL into Rwanda education system with special focus on TVET.

**b) Co-Leads:**

- PSF – This institution should mobilize employers, oversee the sector coordination and PPP facilitation
- MINALOC – Support with community engagement and decentralized implementation of the WPL policy.
- RTB – Provide technical lead while ensuring curriculum alignment and quality assurance.

**c) Supporting Actors:**

   a. District Authorities – Provide local coordination, monitoring and galvanize community mobilization.
   b. CSOs,
   c. CSOs, - lead and coordinate outreach, learner support, mentorship, and advocate for inclusive learning.
   d. Development Partners – provide financial and technical assistance for capacity building and incentive schemes.

## 7. Conclusion

Strengthening the engagement of private sector actors, CSOs, and community structures in workplace learning is essential for building an inclusive, demand-driven, and sustainable skills development system in Rwanda. Through coordinated mechanisms, targeted incentives, structured partnerships, and community-based support, WPL can effectively reach vulnerable populations and align better with labour market needs. Implementing the recommendations in this policy brief will advance national goals for human capital development, productivity, and equitable economic growth.

## 8. References


- *Government of Rwanda (2015). Workplace Learning Policy. Government of Rwanda (2023). National Employment and Skills Strategy (NESS 2024–2029).*
- *Government of Rwanda (2024). NST2: National Strategy for Transformation 2024–2029.*
- *Government of Rwanda (2020). Vision 2050.*
- *ILO (2022). Strengthening Partnerships for Work-Based Learning.*

## STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION, MONITORING SYSTEMS, AND INCLUSIVITY IN WORKPLACE LEARNING (WPL) IN RWANDA

### 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 institutions[22].

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 economy[23].

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 opportunities[24].

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

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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 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 productivity[25].

## 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 learners[26].

**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 accountability[27].

**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.[28]

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[26] *primature.gov.rw+2rtb.gov.rw+2*

[27] *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+1*

[28] *rwandatrade.rw+1*

**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 planning[29].

**Recognition and Incentive Systems:** National and district-level recognition schemes highlight exemplary CSOs and private sector WPL champions, enhancing visibility and motivation. Incentives for CSO engagement in mentoring, job matching, and outreach encourage consistent participation[30].

## 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 relevance[31]. These measures will ensure Rwanda's workforce is equipped with the skills needed for inclusive economic growth and long-term competitiveness.

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[29] Open.Enabel+2primature.gov.rw+2
[30] rwandatrade.rw+1
[31] 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

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## IMPROVING TRAINING, INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES, AND WORKPLACE CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE WPL IN RWANDA

### 1. Context and Rationale

High-quality WPL is essential for developing a skilled, productive, and competitive workforce in Rwanda, as emphasized in Vision 2050, NESS 2024–2029, NST2 2024-2029 and the revised TVET Policy (2021)[32]. Effective WPL requires modernized, technology-enabled training environments in both educational institutions and host workplaces. Many TVET centers operate with outdated tools, overcrowded workshops, and limited digital learning capacity. Likewise, SMEs, which represent the majority of potential training hosts, often lack sufficient equipment, training spaces, and certified workplace trainers. These deficiencies limit practical skill development, restrict rural participation, and reduce knowledge-driven collaboration, which are critical for a competitive, knowledge-based economy. NST2 highlights that modernized infrastructure is central to achieving national targets for productivity, employability, and human-capital development[33].

### 2. Current Status on Improving Training, Infrastructure, Facilities, and Workplace Capacity

Currently, WPL delivery in Rwanda is hampered by limited training facilities, weak digital integration, and insufficient workplace mentorship capacity. Many TVET institutions and SMEs lack modern tools, digital platforms, and certified trainers, undermining practical, hands-on learning and alignment with industry needs. Rural learners face additional barriers due to the lack of accessible training hubs and mobile learning units[34]. Coordination between industry and educational institutions is often weak, further reducing opportunities for students to acquire workplace-relevant skills and limiting inclusive participation, particularly for women, youth, and vulnerable groups[35].

### 3. Policy Problem Statement

The WPL system cannot consistently provide high-quality, inclusive, and industry-aligned training due to outdated infrastructure, limited workplace capacity, and inadequate digital resources. Without modernized facilities and certified workplace trainers, graduates remain underprepared

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[34] *rtb.gov.rw+2prima*
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for labor-market demands, which reduces employability, limits innovation, and undermines Rwanda's transition to a knowledge-based economy[36].

SMEs and rural districts are disproportionately affected, with limited participation in training and weak mentorship opportunities for vulnerable learners. This gap threatens the country's broader human-capital development objectives and the effective implementation of NESS, NST2, and Vision 2050 priorities[37].

## 4. Purpose of the Policy Brief

This policy brief aims to guide government institutions, private sector actors, CSOs, and development partners in modernizing WPL infrastructure and workplace capacity. It emphasizes investment in industry-aligned facilities, updated equipment, digital resources, and certified workplace mentors to improve training quality, inclusivity, and labor-market relevance across Rwanda.

## 5. Policy Implications and Actionable Recommendations

To strengthen WPL implementation, the government, private sector, and development partners should collaborate to establish TVET-industry training hubs and sector-specific Centers of Excellence in key sectors such as construction, agribusiness, ICT, renewable energy, tourism, and hospitality. Equipment grants should be provided to TVET institutions and SMEs to modernize tools, safety gear, and digital learning platforms, ensuring hands-on, industry-relevant training. Workplace trainer certification programs must be implemented to enhance mentorship and pedagogical skills, while mobile training units should extend access to rural districts. Public-private partnerships can co-finance innovation labs, digital learning hubs, and sector-specific centers, ensuring training remains practical, industry-relevant, and inclusive.

Government institutions, including MINEDUC, MIFOTRA, and RTB, should coordinate national investments in training infrastructure, set standards for equipment and digital resources, and oversee workplace trainer certification programs. The private sector through PSF, sector associations, and enterprises should co-finance training hubs, provide modern equipment, and deliver certified mentorship to ensure alignment with labor-market needs[38]. CSOs and development partners should support innovation hubs, foster inclusive participation, and strengthen community-level mobilization and monitoring, especially for rural and vulnerable learners.

## 6. Expected Impact

These reforms are expected to deliver high-quality, hands-on, industry-relevant training that standardizes learning environments across TVET institutions and workplaces. SME participation, particularly in rural areas, will increase, enhancing equitable access for learners. Graduates will

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[36] *National employment and skills strategy (ness 2024–2029) & national strategy for transformation 2 (nst**2, 2024–2029)***

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gain improved employability, digital literacy, and innovation capacity[39]. Strengthened collaboration between industry and training institutions will improve mentorship quality, workplace readiness, and inclusive participation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Collectively, these measures will support national human-capital development goals outlined in NESS, NST2, and Vision 2050[40].

## 7. Target Institutions

The lead institutions responsible for implementing these recommendations are MINEDUC and MIFOTRA, with RTB and PSF as co-leads. Supporting actors include CSOs, development partners, and district authorities, all of whom play essential roles in ensuring inclusive WPL delivery and alignment with labor-market needs.

## 8. Conclusion

Modernizing WPL infrastructure, workplace capacity, and digital integration is essential to produce a skilled, employable, and innovative workforce in Rwanda. Collaborative investment by government, private sector, and development partners will strengthen TVET institutions, SMEs, and workplace learning environments. Updated tools, certified trainers, and inclusive access will enhance practical skill development, promote equity, and ensure alignment with national and international labor-market standards, supporting Rwanda's broader economic transformation under Vision 2050[41], NESS, and NST2.

## 9. References


- Workplace Learning Policy (2019)
- NESS 2024–2029
- TVET Policy (2015, revised 2021)
- Vision 2050
- National Employment Programme (NEP) 2021


[39] *HYPERLINK "https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099042925072519857/pdf/P181050-91b2a0ff-86ac-4609-b74a-9320746296f0.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com"World Bank+1*

[40] *minecofin.gov.rw+1*

[41] *PolicyVault.Africa+1*

## ENHANCING EMPLOYER INCENTIVES AND SME PARTICIPATION IN WORKPLACE LEARNING (WPL) IN RWANDA

### 1. Context and Rationale

Rwanda's economic development and human-capital agenda rely heavily on effective WPL, yet SMEs the backbone of the private sector remain underrepresented in WPL initiatives. National policies such as the Workplace Learning Policy (2019), the National Employment Policy (2021), and the revised TVET Policy (2015/2021) emphasize private-sector engagement as essential for demand-driven skills development. Without stronger SME participation, the country risks failing to achieve national WPL targets outlined in Vision 2050 and NESS 2024–2029.

SMEs dominate Rwanda's private sector, accounting for approximately 90% of all businesses and employing the majority of the working population (MINICOM, 2020). Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are particularly well-positioned to expand training in priority sectors, including construction, manufacturing, and hospitality, while providing opportunities for women, youth, and low-skilled workers. Enhancing employer engagement is therefore central to improving employability, productivity, and inclusive growth.[42]

Currently, WPL implementation in Rwanda faces several limitations that hinder SME involvement. Many employers are not adequately incentivized to host trainees, limiting the expansion of training slots in key sectors. Employers are often excluded from the design of training programs, reducing the relevance of skills delivered relative to labor-market needs.[43] SMEs, which employ large numbers of youth and women, often encounter high supervision costs and opportunity costs, further discouraging participation.[44] These challenges, contribute to a supply-driven model that fails to produce job-ready graduates.

### 2. Policy Problem Statement

Employer participation in WPL remains low due to multiple structural barriers. The absence of a structured incentive package increases the costs and risks associated with hosting trainees. Limited visibility and recognition for firms contributing to national skills development reduce motivation, while high supervision and opportunity costs particularly affect SMEs with tight production schedules. In addition, fragmented coordination between TVET institutions and industry leads to inconsistent placement opportunities, misaligned training content, and weak mentorship. These gaps undermine the effectiveness of WPL in producing a skilled, employable workforce.

### 3. Purpose of the Policy Brief

This policy brief aims to provide actionable recommendations to enhance employer incentives, increase SME participation, and strengthen industry engagement in Workplace Learning (WPL) across Rwanda. It outlines strategies to reduce barriers, improve the relevance and quality of training, and ensure equitable and productive participation in skills development programs. By fostering stronger collaboration between government institutions, the private sector, and

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*[42] UNDP Rwanda: Unlocking Rwanda's entrepreneurial potential. https://shorturl.at/WeCUJ*
*[43] World bank. https://shorturl.at/OroJ8*
*[44] Pathways to work: Work Experience and Work-Based Learning. https://shorturl.at/lLFBC*

development partners, the brief seeks to promote demand-driven, industry-aligned, and inclusive WPL that contributes directly to Rwanda's Vision 2050 human-capital objectives.

## 4. Policy Implications and Actionable Recommendations

To increase SME engagement in WPL, it is essential to implement fiscal and financial incentives. Tax credits or deductions should be offered to employers hosting accredited trainees, while SME Training Support Grants can cover mentor time, equipment, and supervisory costs. Subsidized insurance coverage for trainees can reduce employer liability concerns. In addition, recognition and reward mechanisms such as a National Employer Recognition and WPL Excellence Awards Program and an annual WPL Employer Index can enhance visibility and encourage consistent participation.

Administrative burdens should be reduced through the digitization of placement processes via a national WPL coordination platform that facilitates seamless matching, reporting, and certification. Standardized Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) can minimize paperwork and negotiation time. Strengthening industry partnerships is also critical: co-developing sector-based WPL models with PSF, chambers, and cooperatives, and expanding local TVET-industry collaborations, will ensure regular engagement, workplace audits, and joint curriculum updates.

Government institutions, including MINEDUC, MIFOTRA, and MINICOM, should lead the development of a national employer incentive framework, operationalize the digital coordination platform, and monitor SME participation through annual reporting. The private sector, including PSF, sector associations, and enterprises, should co-design sector-specific WPL models, provide mentorship and industry-standard training environments, and actively engage in recognition programs.

The TVET institutions and RTB should strengthen industry engagement units, support SMEs with training materials, assessment tools, and supervision. CSOs and development partners should provide technical assistance for digital systems, facilitate employer grants, and support advocacy, awareness campaigns, and SME capacity building.

## 5. Expected Impact

If implemented, these reforms are expected to increase SME participation, expand training placements, and strengthen industry-led skills development. Improved alignment between training programs and labor-market needs will enhance graduate employability and increase transitions into decent jobs or entrepreneurship. Enhanced supervision quality and mentorship, especially in priority growth sectors, will improve training outcomes and inclusivity for women, youth, and vulnerable learners. Collectively, these reforms will contribute toward achieving NESS 2024–2029 targets, the NST2, and Vision 2050 human-capital priorities.

## 6. Target and Responsible Institutions

**Lead institutions:**

- **Ministry of Education (MINEDUC):** Develop and operationalize WLP coordination platform which and oversee the integration of WPL in the TVET curriculum.
- **Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA):** Should align WPL initiative with national employment strategies and supervises employer's implementation of WPL.
- **Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM):** Facilitate partnerships between employers and TVET.

**Co-leads:**

- **Private Sector Federation (PSF)**: Should mobilize SMEs to participate in the WPL.
- **Rwanda TVET Board (RTB):** Should provide technical assistance on curriculum update and workplace standards.

**Supporting actors:**

- **TVET institutions:** Implement WPL placement and supervise trainees
- **CSOs and development partners:** Provide technical assistance, advocacy, and SMEs capacity building.

## 7. Conclusion

Enhancing employer incentives and SME participation in WPL is critical to Rwanda's human-capital development and labor-market outcomes. Fiscal and financial incentives, recognition programs, digitized administrative processes, and stronger industry partnerships will increase SME engagement, improve training relevance, and expand opportunities for women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Collaborative implementation by government, private sector, and development partners will ensure a more inclusive, productive, and market-aligned WPL system, supporting Rwanda's broader economic transformation under Vision 2050, NESS, and NST2.9.

## 8. References


- Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). Workplace Learning Policy, 2019.
- Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIROTRA). National Employment Policy, 2021.
- Ministry of Education. TVET Policy (2015; Revised 2021).
- Government of Rwanda. Vision 2050.
- MINICOM. SME Development Policy, 2020.