2021:6 Sida Decentralised Evaluation

FCG Sweden

Evaluation of the National Employment Program of Rwanda

Final Report

Sida

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August 2020

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BDA	Business Development Advisor
BDEU	Business Development Employment Unit
BDF	Business Development Fund
EDPRS	The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EICV 2,3,4	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoR	Government of Rwanda
IBT	Industrial Based Training
ICPC	Integrated Craft Production Centre
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPRC	Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centre
LODA	Local Administrative Entities Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labour
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MSME	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
MVT	Massive Vocational Training
MYICT	Ministry of Youth and Information and Communication Technology
NCBS	National Capacity Building Secretariat
NCPD	National Council for People with Disabilities
NEP	National Employment Programme
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NSDEPS	National Skills Development & Employment Promotion Strategy 2019-2024
RBD	Rwanda Development Board
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RRT	Rapid Response Training
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WDA	Workforce Development Agency

Preface

This evaluation was contracted by the Embassy of Sweden in Kigali through the Sida Framework Agreement for Evaluation Services, and conducted by FCG Sweden.

The Evaluation Team consisted of Sarah Gray, Charles Twesigye-Bakwatsa, Arthur Byabagambi, Alice Bamusiime and Alison Mead Richardson. This final report has been quality assured by Florence Etta whose work was independent of the team. Kajsa Österberg Åström provided project management support.

Executive Summary

The Government of Rwanda's (GoR's) commitment to poverty reduction was reflected in Rwanda's long-term strategy, the Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2018 (EDPRS 2) medium-term framework with an overarching goal to achieve sustainable economic growth. A low level of skills and low labour productivity prevail in all sectors of the economy stifling private sector growth and competitiveness. A major factor contributing to youth underemployment is skills mismatch and limited job growth. Employment promotion in Rwanda in the context of the National Employment Programme (NEP) rests on the assumptions that the private sector will be the source of most job creation, that low skill and productivity levels represent major constraints on employment and that there is a need for appropriate labour market interventions to support vulnerable groups. Based on these challenges the NEP was designed under the following four Pillars:

1. Skills development for improved employability
2. Entrepreneurship and business development
3. Labour market Interventions
4. Coordination and monitoring & evaluation

Moving large numbers of the workforce from traditional agriculture to off-farm jobs is critical for accelerating poverty reduction and attaining the aspirations of socio-economic transformation. Achieving these goals requires creating an additional 214,000 decent non-farm jobs per year. The NEP was conceived as the GoR's comprehensive medium-term strategy to respond to this challenge by developing relevant skills, particularly among youth and women, and increasing off-farm employment generation through access to finance and business development services. The above framework is now replaced by Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024.

This final evaluation, as set out in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), covers the entire five-year programme period of implementation from November 2014 to December 2019. Since a full evaluation of all NEP instruments was not feasible the ToR requested a focus on Pillars 1, 2 and 4. The evaluation had three **main objectives**:

1) Evaluate the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the NEP program to help key stakeholders understand the direct and indirect results of the NEP programme and key factors that have determined achievement of results;
2) To provide a facilitated process among key participants in the NEP to reflect and learn from what has worked well and less well in the implementation of the NEP;

3) To formulate concrete and actionable recommendations that can inform discussions on future programming in the sector, particularly implementation of the Government of Rwanda's new skills development and employment strategy 2019-2024.

Key Findings:

Relevance: Rwanda has pursued a private sector-led economic model, in which the private sector continues to be promoted as the main driver of the economy and source of jobs. Public sector and governance reforms undertaken by the GoR since 1998 have progressively shifted towards a framework that supports enterprise development, with the Government focussing on creating enabling conditions for businesses to form, expand and promote economic growth and job creation.

In terms of fostering linkages between the demand and supply side of the labour market, NEP's Pillar 1 aimed to improve the demand side by investing in activities that increased the availability of productive and well-paid jobs. In general, NEP Pillar 1 interventions were considered partially relevant to the needs and aspirations of the target beneficiaries and the labour market. NEP intervened in the skills that are in high demand, especially those related to construction). Under Pillar 2, NEP was relevant, to the extent that it: a) facilitated financial inclusion of the target groups by providing timely and affordable finance; and b) motivated and empowered beneficiaries to appreciate financial institutions and develop credible partnerships to work with them in order to grow their businesses. BDF's financial instruments also aimed to change the attitudes of participating financial institutions towards the target group by proving that they were credible borrowers. To the extent that these financial instruments facilitated attitude change, they were relevant.

Efficiency: The absence of a detailed budget breakdown with associated expenditure to date limit the evaluation team's ability to draw conclusions regarding efficiency criteria. Skills training provision was overall fairly efficient although improvements could be made. NEP used local government structures for mobilisation and monitoring of beneficiaries. Financial intermediaries (Business Development Fund, Umurenge SACCOs and other Micro Finance Institutions) did not require and did not charge NEP for costs relating to their additional expertise. Stationing two Business Development Advisors at Sector level was not efficient since the number of potential borrowers suggests that there was insufficient professional work available. The financing instruments could have been more efficiently utilised to catalyse business establishment and spur growth of enterprises and ultimately create jobs among the target groups.

Effectiveness: A number of issues need to be emphasised under this criterion:

i. The potential for linking industry with training service providers, possibly through Rwanda Polytechnic (RP) and create partnerships was insufficiently explored. The RP could identify suitable employers where a high proportion of their production is based on technical skills related to Mass Vocational Training (MVT) components. A key selection criterion would be the opportunity for MVT trainees to get challenging and supportive apprenticeships in industrial work practices. The Government could support the SME/industrial establishments to acquire and equip their establishments with more modern equipment, and could incentivise them through business opportunities, as well as grants for training, research and innovations. In turn, the participating SMEs would undertake to admit specific numbers for a specified apprenticeship period. The partnerships would emphasise maximising exposure of trainees to innovative work so that they can master the skills they have learnt but also develop the spirit of improvement and respond to the needs of different clients. The industrial environment should be evolving especially in technology used, considering changing market demands. Participating SMEs could be selected based on their ability to support different value chains1 (especially in agro-industries, automobiles, construction, hospitality, etc.) and delivery approaches that meet the changing needs of the market.. In this respect, RP could start by mapping out potential workplaces and innovation centres and identify the capacity gaps in the SMEs considered eligible for apprenticeship.

ii. The status and performance requirements of BDAs: a core aspect of NEP in creating the linkage between Pillars 1 and 2, was not captured and little action has been taken. The issues of quality, high turnover, scope of services and corresponding facilitation/remuneration/motivation, were noted in the MTE but were not adequately addressed to the end of the program.

iii. Monitoring, evaluation and learning: The Business Development Fund (BDF) could have questioned the interventions where subsidised loans were provided several times over but the beneficiaries remain informal and did not create any jobs. It would seem that there was insufficient connection between inputs and outputs, ultimately raising concerns on outcomes. Learning could have been mainstreamed to monitor performance from the perspective of NEP's Results Framework and not using parameters of a financial institution.

iv. Managing information and stakeholders' expectations: According to interviews with beneficiaries there were conflicting messages coming from Government authorities which incentivised people to go to bank counters for loans. NEP and BDF did not clearly target the information and ensure that each message was received by the appropriate recipient. Communication focused on BDF funding whereas it was the participating financial institutions that potential borrowers should approach. A situation arises where BDF could be seen as competing for clients with MFIs. In some instances, MFIs were concerned that their established customers would request to switch away from commercial lending products to BDF

[1] For instance, under agro-industries such as grain milling NEP could have TVET students rotated from machinery fabrication, maintenance, packaging, etc.; In automobile, apprenticeship could expose trainees to aspects of fitting, electrical installations, panel beating and welding, paint mixing and spraying, welding, etc.

supported products, such as guaranteed loans with low interest rates, which would undermine the commercial viability of the MFI.

v. Although financial intermediaries were part of the funding chain, there was evidence of gaps in the information flow. Without feedback, especially from frontline financial actors, risk analysis would be inappropriately handled. Information gaps between BDF and the financial intermediaries on what is perceived as a risk for which the financial intermediaries could redeem the guarantee, as well as on who or what data could be accessible to BDF and NEP. Very critical monitoring data on loan clients could not be obtained because it was not requested from the SACCOs. A database that connected all key stakeholders through Memorandums of Understanding on what data was expected for program management, should have been developed over the five years of implementation.

vi. Managerial capacity of Cooperatives needs to be addressed if the cooperative approach is to work: the cooperative movement is a good concept enabling the poor to mobilise capital and work together for strength in solidarity. GoR has adopted this approach as the most preferred modus operandi for start-ups. It even designed incentives for people working in cooperatives under the start-up toolkit and MSME Guarantee. However, it seems to have overlooked the challenges of ensuring internal integrity of these cooperatives. It was even more challenging within youth groups which were formed without any form of close trusting relationships between members. It is unclear to the evaluation whether or how these issues were appreciated and there were no specific capacity building interventions undertaken to address them.

Pillar 4: The NEP coordination structure directly linked to the institutions concerned with or contributing to NEP's objectives (in particular the Ministries responsible for commerce, education, labour and finance), by way of high level representation on NEP's Steering Committee and Technical Committee where decisions were made. The sectors/clusters of EDPRS 2 (now NST) are also structures with functions such as skills development, private sector development, infrastructure, crosscutting, etc. This enabled physical participation of key ministries and helped considerably with resolving issues that were cross-sectoral. NEP's implementation structure made it easy to consolidate and bring together all scattered initiatives and interventions in job creation and entrepreneurship development. This brought about some level of coherence, helped eliminate or reduce waste and is perhaps the most visible achievement and innovation in NEP's design. It also helped improve coordination within local government and at the community level where all actions are more integrated. The NEP structure should have helped establish and enhance links between Pillars 1, 2 and 3 as was suggested by its design, but the different components appear to have been implemented as separate entities. Despite the strong positioning and centrality of the coordination and M&E functions, there appear to have been significant gaps in oversight.

Lack of a solid M&E was exacerbated by the high mobility of many clients, especially among youth beneficiaries. This not only affected monitoring, it also severely constrained the loan recovery process.

Cross-Cutting Issues: The evaluation included an assessment of key crosscutting issues critical to Sida's strategy and GoR's development policies specifically regarding gender, environmental sustainability, human rights and social inclusion. NEP's design mainstreamed gender equality and social inclusion. The majority of women beneficiaries are to be found in the BDF collateral/guarantee products, Rapid Response Training and Industrial Based Training, but few in technical trades that are not stereotypical for women (mechanical engineering, welding, masonry), but rather traditional sectors such as tailoring and culinary art which tend to be less lucrative. Contracts with SMEs included targets for gender integration (at least 30% of beneficiaries). There were obstacles that impeded female participants and NEP disbursed less financial support to TVET centres away from District centres which would be easier for rural women to access on a daily basis. Safeguards were effective in ensuring social inclusion and low negative impact on the social systems and structures. The National Council for People with Disabilities was a member of the NEP technical steering committee and had a role in ensuring the participation of PWDs.

Environmental safeguards were largely overlooked. As such, very little has been achieved in the areas of environmental impact and mitigation. Opportunities existed for integrating key environmental aspects into the strategic implementation framework of NEP.

Conclusions

The Rwanda labour market is changing fast and significantly. For demands on technical and vocational skills this is especially so. There is considerable potential that should be explored on the demand side and skill gaps to be filled on the supply side. Key aspects of the future labour market will incorporate formalised certification, sophistication and regulation (especially in the food and construction sectors), along with digitalisation. Business development advice is essential within the current country context, but in this instance it was poorly conceptualised and implemented. BDAs are a key bridge in the financing and development of MSMEs but their role was not clear and, consequently it was inappropriately implemented including an absence of any formal job description or contractual obligations. An inadequate understanding of BDAs' role led to the recruitment of underqualified people to do a job that was neither defined or well remunerated and which was not properly facilitated. BDF was tasked with bridging the financial gap by creating access to affordable finance for start-ups as well as to grow existing enterprises to create decent jobs, but these two outcomes are at different levels. It appears, from the results framework and the results, that outcomes could have been clarified through a solid Theory of Change.

Recommendations

Six key recommendations are set out under Chapter 10.

1 Introduction

This report details the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the team that undertook the final evaluation of Sida's support to the Government of Rwanda's (GoR) National Employment Programme (NEP) and in particular its work on skills development for improved employability along with entrepreneurship and business development.

The team consisted of Sarah Gray, Charles Twesigye-Bakwatsa, Arthur Byabagambi and Alice Bamusiime. This final report has been quality assured by Florence Etta whose work was independent of the team.

The assignment took place between January 2020 and May 2020, beginning with an inception phase. Together with The Swedish Embassy in Kigali and senior NEP staff, the team established a mutual understanding for the purpose, scope, conceptual framework and limitations of the assignment.

It was agreed that the assignment would follow the requirements as set out in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1). In March 2020 a global pandemic, due to the spread of Covid-19, was declared by the World Health Organisation and this required the team to finalise all work on the assignment remotely.

The evaluation team wishes to express sincere thanks to everyone who assisted their work by agreeing to be interviewed for this assignment. Also, gratitude is extended to all the staff at NEP for their support and cooperation throughout this undertaking.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Government of Rwanda's (GoR's) commitment to poverty reduction is reflected in Rwanda's long-term strategy, the Vision 2020 and the EDPRS 2 medium-term framework. The overarching goal of the GoR is to achieve sustainable economic growth. Under the new Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST), the GoR has set an even more ambitious plan to accelerate growth and transform the economy with emphasis on zero poverty, competitive medium income economy and shared prosperity centred around high value exports and skilled and productive human resources. At present a low level of skills and low labour productivity prevail in all sectors of the economy stifling private sector growth and competitiveness. A major factor contributing to youth underemployment is skills mismatch and limited job growth and expansion.

According to the integrated household living conditions survey EICV5 (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2018) which was compiled using data from 2016/7 most measurements of wellbeing continue to improve; from demographics, housing conditions, economic activity and access to electricity but literacy levels have stagnated and a substantial number of households experienced shocks due for example to drought and high food prices. In addition, poverty and extreme poverty did not reduce significantly as compared to EICV4, which provides an update on the level of poverty based on 2013/14 Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey.

In general Rwanda is experiencing fast social, demographic and economic transformation. In 2018 the World Bank cites the growth in GDP to be 8.7% which is one of the highest in the world. The government has committed to developing relevant skills, particularly for youth and women and to undertaking educational reforms to increase the alignment of training to labour market needs.

The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (Government of Rwanda, 2013) underscores Rwanda's development objective of providing off-farm jobs to 50% of the workforce by 2020. This is now replaced by Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024. The EDPRS 1 assessment revealed that non-farm workers are five times more productive than farmworkers and are 50% less likely to be in poverty. Consequently, moving large numbers of the workforce from traditional agriculture to off-farm jobs is critical for accelerating poverty reduction and attaining the aspirations of socio-economic transformation by 2050. Achieving these goals requires creating an additional 200,000 decent non-farm jobs per year. The NEP was conceived as the GoR's comprehensive medium-term strategy to respond to this challenge by developing relevant skills, particularly among youth and women, and increasing off-farm employment generation through access to finance and business development services.

Employment promotion in Rwanda in the context of NEP rests on the following assumptions: first, the private sector will be the source of most job creation; second, low skill and productivity levels represent an important constraint on employment promotion; and third, there is a need for appropriate labour market interventions by Government in collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders to improve the efficiency of labour markets and to support vulnerable groups. Based on these challenges, the NEP is designed under the following four Pillars:

1. Skills development for improved employability
2. Entrepreneurship and Business Development
3. Labour Market Interventions
4. Coordination and Monitoring & Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation (March 2017) found that the NEP was effectively aligned to "Rwanda's Vision 2020" and to the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS 2) 2013-2018. It was deemed relevant as it addressed high unemployment and poverty among youth and women groups. Beneficiaries were however, mostly urban and peri-urban. The outputs generated were mainly efficient, but the level of efficiency varies from output to output. In terms of job creation, establishing a framework for reliably estimating jobs actually created or the extent to which NEP is influential in achieving job creation, was acknowledged to be very challenging. There was no monitoring beyond the activity level, so actual achievements cannot be comprehensively understood or publicised. The evaluation did establish that there were inspiring case studies where the skills, toolkits and MSME support have helped beneficiaries to increase their employability and create productive employment for themselves and others.

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECT AND SCOPE

In terms of relevance to the target group and the labour market, the evaluation builds on the assessment in the Mid Term Evaluation, March 2017. With the completion of NEP as a government programme, the ToR requires an assessment of the relevance of the National Skills and Employment Strategy 2019-2024 to Vision 2050 and the NST.

According to the ToR, The Embassy of Sweden's funding agreement with the GoR, for support to the NEP ended in December 2019 and the GoR is in the process of operationalizing a new National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy 2019-2024. To support this process, this final evaluation of the NEP was conducted. The purpose of the final evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the results achieved by the NEP and contribute to learning by understanding cause-effect relationships and what factors made possible or created obstacles to the achievement of these results. Evidence-based lessons and actionable recommendations to support the implementation of the GoR's new National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy 2019-2024 are provided. In addition, the Swedish Government is developing a new bilateral development cooperation strategy.

The evaluation had **three main objectives:**

1. Evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the NEP to help key stakeholders understand the direct and indirect results and key factors that have determined achievement of results;
2. To provide a facilitated process among key participants to reflect and learn from what has worked well and less well in the implementation of the NEP;
3. To formulate concrete and actionable recommendations that can inform discussions on future programming, particularly implementation of the Government of Rwanda's new skills development and employment strategy 2019-2024.

The evaluation includes both a summative and a formative element. The summative component provides a comprehensive account of the achievements of the programme in accordance with the five OECD/DAC standard criteria; effectiveness relevance, efficiency, sustainability and impact. The formative part of the evaluation provides evidence-based learning and advice to both the Embassy and the Government of Rwanda.

1.2.1 Scope

This final evaluation, as set out in the ToR (see Annex 1), covers the entire five-year programme period i.e. from November, 2014 to December, 2019. Since a full evaluation of all NEP instruments will not be feasible with the resources provided under this assignment, the ToR requests a focus on the following interventions:

Pillar 1

- Massive Vocational Training
- Rapid Response Training
- Recognition of Prior Learning

Pillar 2

- Business Development Advisors (BDA) support to MSMEs

- Support to MSMEs and ICPCs through loans or guarantees and grant or equity schemes managed by the Business Development Fund (BDF).

Pillar 4

- Governance, coordination and monitoring of the NEP
- Role of the NEP Secretariat

The rationale for the selection of these NEP instruments were that they are:

- Closely linked to NEP's objective of contributing to sustainable job creation
- Designed to reach a large number of beneficiaries,
- Consume a large part of the overall NEP budget.

Other NEP instruments, as provided under Pillar 3 have been briefly reviewed and assessed through desk studies. Pillar 3 includes other labour market interventions such as promoting access to an employment service platforms, including the newly established (www.kora.rw).

The cross-cutting issues of gender and the environment are directly relevant to the grass roots interventions, especially those related to training, adoption of new technologies and financial inclusion, and these are firmly within the scope of the evaluation.

2 Methodology

2.1 OVERALL APPROACH

The study used the widely recognised and tested OECD/DAC quality standards. As such, the evaluation adhered to the principles of impartiality, independence and credibility, and stakeholders' confidentiality was protected as needed.

The overall approach was theory-based in the sense that it reviewed and validated the programme's theory of change and assessed the logic behind. Additional information was sought on conditions and factors as a basis for determining whether the design was consistent with, and appropriate for the delivery of the intended outcomes and impact.

To achieve a comprehensive and meaningful evaluation with the available resources, the evaluation team relied upon both primary observations and objective secondary data. Observations include both data collected from secondary sources, as well as primary data derived from team interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders, such as government and private sector, civil society organisations, trainers and trainees, staff in financial institutions and other beneficiaries. The evaluation also includes a limited quantitative survey (see Annex 4) covering five districts in all five provinces.

Importantly, the evaluation approach was utilisation-focused, and conducted in a manner that aimed to enhance the use of a) findings, and b) the process itself, to inform decisions and improve performance. To this end, as further elaborated below, the evaluation team ensured that the Swedish Embassy in Kigali, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the GoR, principally the NEP Secretariat and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM), all had an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions on the evaluation method and process as well as on the key deliverables. They were consulted during the data collection and analysis phase, ensuring space for reflection, discussion and feedback.

Finally, gender and youth are significant issues within NEP and therefore for this evaluation. Disaggregated data is captured where available, in regard to gender and youth inequality issues from a socio-economic perspective. The selection of survey respondents, interviewees and focus group participants targeted women and youth under the age of 35 in order to get a good overview of the issues that affect these groups.

2.2 ETHICS AND PARTICIPATION

The evaluation was planned and implemented in a transparent and participatory manner respecting stakeholders' views while ensuring independence of the evaluation consultants.

Recognised research methods in social science are applied throughout the contextual analysis and evaluation, such as standard data collection tools and data analysis strategies.

2.3 INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data and information for this evaluation was collected through desk reviews as well as through undertaking a quantitative survey, along with key stakeholder and field based qualitative interviews. Several methods for data and information collection were used:

- Annex 4 provides a separate report which gives a comprehensive account of the quantitative survey.
- A desk review of NEP's annual reports, stakeholder meeting minutes, policy documents, government data and other relevant documents was undertaken.
- Interviews (face to face or telephonic) with representatives of all the key institutions and other key informants were conducted.
- Field level interviews with district personnel, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions, Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO's) and other relevant stakeholders were conducted. These interviews were individual or carried out in small groups. Focus group discussions were held with selected beneficiaries, especially Business Development Advisors (BDAs), Business Development Fund (BDF) borrowers and trainees

2.4 PROCESS OF ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPING CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation included three different areas of investigation, each requiring specific sets of data in order to reach useful conclusions. These are described briefly below:

Evaluation of programme outcomes and impacts required both primary and secondary data to describe and/or measure the changes brought about by the NEP interventions. Primary data collection was quantitative and qualitative, drawn from a questionnaire (see Annex 1) and key informant interviews and focus group discussions (See Annex 2). Secondary data was particularly relevant when assessing contribution towards impacts.

Evaluation of performance - including the efficiency with which available resources have been used and the extent to which NEP Secretariat has been able to adapt and respond in a timely manner to changing circumstances was assessed primarily through quarterly and annual reports, steering committee minutes, as well as through interviews with collaborating stakeholders.

Cross-cutting issues of gender and environmental impact were assessed through specific questions in interviews and focus group discussions as well as through disaggregation of quantitative data. In particular, women's access to training and employment, along with access to finance were determined from focus groups and stakeholder interviews.

3 Findings: Relevance

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Rwanda has pursued a private sector-led economic model, in which the private sector continues to be promoted as the main driver of the economy and source of jobs. The public sector has indeed contracted by divesting many economic functions related to service delivery to the private sector, and by contracting-out certain public sector activities where possible. Public sector and governance reforms undertaken by the GoR since 1998 have progressively shifted towards a framework that supports enterprise development, with the Government focussing on creating enabling conditions for businesses to form, expand and promote economic growth and job creation.

Rwanda perceives its growing population as young and vibrant and a vital resource that can contribute to fast and sustainable growth. But for young people to become a resource, they need to be knowledgeable, and in possession of the right skills, experience and attitude. Hence, making Rwanda's human capital into a competitive resource and anchoring it to contribute to sustainable economic growth and social progress, is a major aspiration under the country's Vision 2050. The Government's pursuit of a knowledge-based economy is in recognition of human capital as being Rwanda's most important resource, especially given its limited and degraded natural capital endowment.

NEP's design identified the main challenge as lack of skills and inadequate private investment. In this respect, NEP aimed to achieve two goals: i) equip the labour-force with relevant skills that increased employability, including self-employment; and ii) facilitate and support activities that create more stable and better jobs by promoting the formation of new businesses and growing existing ones. Interventions under Pillar 1 are relevant to the needs and priorities of the target group, to the extent that they promote skills and increase competitiveness in the jobs market. On the other hand, the interventions under Pillar 2 are relevant to the target group to the extent that they support entrepreneurs to start or expand businesses that create jobs.

Questions posed by the Evaluation

- To what extent were the design and approach of NEP interventions relevant to the needs and priorities of the target group?
- To what extent were NEP interventions relevant to the needs of the Rwandan labour market?

3.2 PILLAR 1

Rwanda's labour market has a large number of under-educated and unskilled workers; a considerable number of workers with basic education but no skills; workers with skills informally acquired but with limited education and no certification, and a growing number of graduates from higher institutions of learning with very limited marketable skills. Participants in the labour market are also varied in terms of socio-demographics. Firstly, there are poor people for whom a job is expected to be a pathway out of poverty and often a source of basic livelihood for a number of dependants. Then there are young people from middle-class households, who have education and ambition and who need to be enabled to contribute to the country's innovation agenda.

While NEP's interventions under Pillar 1 had to respond to the needs, priorities and circumstances of a whole range of participants in the labour market, its strategic focus was on youth and women, and the skill sets targeted had to be those with the greatest potential to significantly increase employability of youth and women, but these were not always prioritized.

In terms of fostering linkages, NEP's Pillar 1 aimed to improve demand by investing in activities that increased the availability of productive and well-paid jobs, through:

i. Upgrading skills so that Rwanda's growing labour-force is more productive and competitive. Skilling or upskilling the workforce increases labour productivity and enables labour-intensive industries to be attracted.
ii. Certification and formal recognition of skills previously acquired. Most workers in the construction industry have acquired skills on-the-job and it is difficult to assess their professional competences. Employers rely on credible references from previous clients/employers, but with increasing industry regulation it will be difficult to be employed without certification or formal evidence of competences. Formal recognition of these skills through a process that tests existing competences was considered key to future employability.

Mass Vocational Training (MVT): was designed to transfer basic practical skills, over a short period of time (3-6 months), preferably to youth, women and people with disabilities (MVT guidelines). Initially there was no minimum educational requirement, but during implementation more educated applicants were preferred especially where training was hosted at Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres (IPRCs) or privately run Technical and Vocational Training Centres (TVETs). As a short-term intervention, MVT was relevant to those with minimum basic education, and some institutions required completion of 9 years' basic education (9-YBE). As MVT was designed to cover the needs of the unemployed and unskilled it was highly relevant.

Nonetheless, the majority of those targeted were expected to create their own jobs through enterprise development (under Pillar 2). Others that choose the path of employment were expected to be equipped with the skills demanded by employers (by linking or aligning skills development to industry needs). The range of skills was not appropriate to equip them with skills in entrepreneurship, as training only focused on technical skills. Also, since training was aimed at triggering transformation in livelihoods and career prospects, sensitization and training could have integrated aspects of career guidance and support to enable these beneficiaries to make appropriate choices. This was especially relevant to rural, under-educated youth most of whom were engaged in low return farm-based work, with very limited exposure to careers that required technical skills.

The vocational areas offered through the MVT were mostly in relation to priority sectors noted in the NST although key sectors, such as agro-processing and ICT have not been adequately covered. Given that NEP, and specifically the MVT, targeted women and youth the subjects offered might have been more relevant to their needs. The percentage of women served by the MVT was 40% and this proportion may have been increased if more subjects which appeal to women were offered. A middle-income country requires a number of services that are not currently widely available in Rwanda. These include personal services (beauty therapy, hairdressing, massage, nail technology), early childhood education and others. Some of these services may be linked to hospitality and health industries. These are vocational areas, along with creative arts, financial and social services and administration, that women typically gravitate towards. They provide opportunities for both employment and self-employment which combine well with the productive and reproductive roles of women. The 2016 WDA Tracer Study Report identifies that beauty therapy, hairdressing and aesthetics are included in the main trades where training in VTCs (not specifically NEP) leads to the 84% employability rate for graduates, indicating that there is high demand for qualified people in these fields. The later Situational Analysis study by WDA (Taremwa 2018) concluded that there was no significant variation in employment, self-employment or under-employment across gender or between particular trades. Industrial attachments are a key element in making TVET relevant but only 22% of MVT trainees benefited from placements[2]. Industrial attachments for trainees were not systematically rolled out especially under the MVT, leaving nearly 80% of graduates with very limited practical exposure and experience.

Rapid Response Training (RRT): was designed to provide critical skills in specific trades for specific industries. Training content and delivery was developed and executed by qualified private companies and was therefore fully aligned to the needs of the particular job. The training process exposed trainees to the nature of the job and the working environment (including compensation and other benefits), and enabled trainees to appreciate future work prospects and to make informed decisions. The RRT vocational skills were much more relevant to women as the focus was on garment manufacturing and textiles and leather. Here the percentage of women trained was 65%[3].

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): was designed to respond to the needs of that section of Rwanda's labour-force that possessed informally acquired skills. This category dominates the construction sector (including masonry, welding, carpentry and plumbing). In designing RPL, NEP recognised that this workforce was making a significant contribution to the economy in terms of service delivery and employment. However, workers could not grow and increase the value of their labour if they remained informal. Also, as Rwanda's economic transformation advances this category of worker could be progressively excluded due to rapidly changing technologies, rising competition from more educated trainees, regional integration

[2] Findings from the Quantitative Survey for the NEP Final Evaluation, March 2020

[3] Ibid.

and increasing industrial regulation[4]. Therefore, the assessment and certification of competences was relevant to the needs, aspirations and circumstances of beneficiaries as it enabled them to participate and compete in an increasingly formal labour market. Construction work is a highly sensitive area where quality and safety are critical.

However, for youth (under 30 years of age) the relevance of RPL is lower because acquiring skills in the informal sector takes years and it is this age of worker who is primarily targeted by NEP. Likewise, only 5% of places in the RPL programme out of a total of nearly 15,000[5] went to women.

In general, NEP's Pillar 1 interventions were considered partially relevant to the needs and aspirations of the target beneficiaries and the labour market. NEP intervened in the skills that are in high demand in the different local economies and nationally (especially those related to construction).

3.3 PILLAR 2

NEP's interventions aimed to increase the number of decent jobs in order to absorb the growing number of people entering the labour market. This was central to the annual job creation target of 200,000 jobs in the EDPRS II and 214,300 that GoR set in the subsequent medium term (NST 1 2017-2024). NEP has contributed to both successive strategies.

Pillar 2 activities were anchored to the GoR strategy of promoting private sector-led economic transformation, in which it was envisaged that most jobs would be provided by the private sector. NEP's theory of change (undocumented) emphasised that job creation would be realised by:

- Catalysing the establishment of new businesses; and
- Supporting existing firms to increase the demand for labour and capacity to provide decent jobs. NEP was expected to support firms through: access to affordable credit, provision of incentives, support to business advisory services, and policy actions that reduce barriers and create conducive conditions for businesses to grow.

The interventions are relevant to the extent that they aimed to increase the stock of jobs to keep pace with the annual cumulative targets. They were logically linked through the provision of business advisory services to translate ideas into bankable business plans which are then financed to become operational businesses.

The interventions were:

3.3.1 Business Development Advisory Services

Business Development Advisors (BDAs) were intended to deliver a critical aspect of enterprise development by shaping business ideas and turning them into bankable

[4] Rwanda has established a National TVET Qualifications framework with WDA restructured to specifically take responsibility for this. Also national building codes have been reviewed to emphasize professional skills as part of construction site licensing.

[5] Findings from the Quantitative Survey for the NEP Final Evaluation, March 2020.

businesses and assisting with access to finance (through a process of business planning), and providing post-financial coaching and mentorship.

BDAs were premised on the expectation that young MVT graduates would have skills but no finance and therefore required support to approach participating financing institutions (SACCOs and MFIs which are located in every sector). Loan finance was provided by the participating financial institution along with a loan guarantee provided by The Business Development Fund (BDF) on preferential terms.

In the design of NEP, BDAs were vital for catalysing enterprise development. This is because most target enterprises would be micro and therefore informal which limits their growth as informal businesses that are unstructured or inappropriately managed cannot create many jobs. Growth requires access to finance, so facilitating this was critical from the following perspectives:

i. NEP was building on the experience of high failure rates for start-ups, that has been largely linked to lack of professional guidance and access to finance;
ii. Start-up entrepreneurs are not in a position to pay for services, and most had no business experience or a track record of working with financial institutions. BDAs were therefore an instrument to facilitate financial inclusion.
iii. The business development environment is difficult to start and grow a business despite a very supportive policy environment.
iv. BDA's services were expected to provide some form of assurance or cover for NEP's investment in start-up enterprises. The BDA's services would contribute to reduced risk of business failure by providing practical entrepreneurship development services which would protect both the investment under Pillar 1 and the financial support provided by BDF's loan guarantees, subsidised lending and grants.

3.3.2 Support to MSMEs and ICPCs through Access to Finance - the Guarantee Scheme

Lack of access to affordable finance is considered to be a barrier to business start-ups and growth in Rwanda. NEP's target borrowers were in a very high risk category given that they:

i. Were start-ups with no business experience or track record;
ii. Had no experience of working with financial institutions, and many of them had a risk averse attitude towards borrowing;
iii. Had no savings and many had no bank account; and
iv. Were mostly youth and women without adequate assets to provide as collateral, but also a low level of trustworthiness. Thus, even among those who could engage few had the trust of relatives to borrow seed money or assets for use as collateral.

Integrated Craft Production Centres (ICPCs): Support to ICPCs aimed at supporting innovation in local value chains. This would also contribute to regional industrialisation. To the extent that the interventions resulted in increased employment and competitiveness of local crafts-based entrepreneurs, they were relevant. The intervention contributed to SME policy and decentralisation by boosting local economic development.

NEP’s intervention was relevant, to the extent that it: a) facilitated financial inclusion of the target groups by providing timely and affordable finance; and b) motivated and empowered beneficiaries to appreciate financial institutions and develop credible partnerships to work with them in order to grow their businesses. BDF’s financial instruments also aimed to change the attitudes of participating financial institutions towards the target group by proving that they were credible borrowers. To the extent that these financial instruments facilitated attitude towards NEP’s target groups, especially youth and PWDs, they were relevant.

4 Findings: Efficiency

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The absence of a detailed budget breakdown with associated expenditure to date limit the evaluation team's ability to draw conclusions regarding efficiency criteria. Proxy indicators were planned to be used; such as the adequacy of staffing at field level and training resources available, such as equipment and IT infrastructure. Also, availability of resources to enable field staff to regularly monitor activities and outcomes, and to respond to issues arising. NEP requested RP to provide financial data regarding funding transferred to provincial training institutions and TVET schools, etc. but this was not available in time for the finalisation of this report.

Questions posed by the Evaluation:

- Can the costs of the project be justified by its results?
- Did governance, management and implementation structure of NEP support cost-effective implementation?
- Have human resources been utilised efficiently throughout the implementation of NEP?

4.2 PILLAR 1

The efficiency in NEP's implementation was perhaps best demonstrated by the decision to use existing facilities, institutional structures and expertise to implement skills development activities.

NEP's monitoring data is too limited to undertake any convincing analysis of efficiency. Also, we do not know, for example, how the number of trainees per trade was decided. The period of training in most cases was just 3 months which was clearly a cost consideration, but some argued that this was too short to be effective. The equipment and premises along with the trainers were established for the purpose of running mainstream courses so fixed costs and staffing costs were low. NEP only paid for the cost of additional materials used. It was reported in some instances that trainers paid less attention to MVT trainees as they received no incentive payment for the additional work involved and had their regular courses to oversee, in some cases concurrently.

MVT Start-up Toolkits: The technical and administrative cost of managing several small and diverse sets of toolkit projects through different financial intermediaries, specifically SACCOs, across the country represents a high overhead cost. The grant of 50% along with a subsidised loan, after investing in skilling the beneficiary also represents a considerable level of investment that may not have been efficiently allocated. Additional investment of 70% of the BDA services (even if this only covered elaboration of business plan without any coaching) means that the role of the BDA was to facilitate acquisition of the loan which did not involve considerable effort in appraisal. This added very little to the beneficiaries who particularly needed entrepreneurship training and mentorship.

It would appear that the toolkit was largely supply oriented, and its provision did not consider the entrepreneurial interest or ability of the beneficiaries. It was offered to MVT graduates without sufficient screening or orientation and entrepreneurship development support to the target beneficiaries, as the evaluation team understood during field work. As a result, a number of beneficiaries in both individual and group categories failed to utilise it to create jobs. Even beneficiaries that re-paid the loan, a sizeable number were not working, had abandoned it or could not be traced. Some opted to rent them out and look for jobs elsewhere making it difficult to evaluate how such toolkits were used to create jobs. NEP reports 8,521 toolkits[6] provided to training graduates, but it was difficult to establish loan repayment or operational status, to determine their likelihood of serving their intended purpose.

Thus, with respect to the MVT start-up toolkit, the outcome cannot justify the investment. The evaluation considers that a detailed cost-benefit analysis is required to appreciate the potential net return.

The RPL leveraged on the national umbrella platform of construction workers (STECOMA) to mobilise, sensitise and certify workers. The approach of making it voluntary, where those certified inspired others to register, shows that NEP did not need to invest much time and resources in mobilisation and preparation of potential beneficiaries. NEP relied on the expertise and facilities existing at IPRCs and in some areas leveraged facilities at workplaces which served as certification centres.

Human resource utilisation: Local government structures at Sector and Cell levels were involved in the mobilisation of trainees, but not in post-training follow-up. The proximity of these structures to the communities where beneficiaries were drawn, could have been better utilised by NEP to ensure timely collection of up-to-date administrative data on all beneficiaries' profiles and expected outcomes.

Business Development Employment Units (BDE/Us) were responsible for incorporating NEP related indicators and targets into their annual performance targets (Imihigo) and to report to MINALOC and MINICOM. The burden of multiple reporting lines could have been avoided by designing tools that could be used by Sectors and Cells to collect data. BDE/Us could then have compiled these and reported to their respective district authorities and NEP authorities simultaneously. Also, timely payment of BDAs could have motivated them to collect and submit regular reports while regular meetings with BDAs or their representatives could have helped BDE/Us to get updates and clarify any issues, especially with regard to post-training and post-financing interventions.

BDE/Us could have screened toolkit beneficiaries (through cross-references including character checks) and only recommend the toolkits for a few individuals, while others could be connected to enterprises to provide further training and supervision.

[6] NEP Five-year Report 2014 – 2019 (NEP, 2019)

Skills training was efficient although improvements could be made. Only 5 trades attracted 5% or more trainees, and all (except tailoring, hair dressing and hospitality) were dominated by men. Regarding beauty and aesthetics, 70% of the institutions offering skills training had less than 10 trainees, often only 1 or 2[7]. This would call in to question how such small classes could effectively or efficiently be provided for. TVET institutions often set minimum class sizes as employing qualified instructors must be cost effective.

According to NEPs 5-year Report, over five years Pillar 1 contributed 23.5% of one year's decent off-farm job creation target of 214,300. Therefore, on average the intervention made an annual contribution of 4.7% to the national job creation target. Given the investment in NEP, this contribution could have been expected to be higher. (This Evaluation's ToR states that a total funding of SEK 156 400 000 (approx.US$15million) was provided between 2014-2019.)

4.3 PILLAR 2

Key implementation tasks under Pillar 2 were mobilisation and sensitisation of target beneficiaries, selection and support to formulate business plans, screen, provide funding and conduct post-finance follow-up to recover loans and mentor businesses to create jobs.

NEP used local government structures for mobilisation and monitoring. Financial intermediaries (BDF, Umurenge SACCOs, MFIs) did not charge NEP for their expertise.

Business Development Advisory (BDA) Services: Stationing 2 BDAs per Sector (891 trained) was inefficient since the number of potential borrowers at Sector level would provide insufficient work. BDAs informed the evaluation team that they were paid a very minimal fees (Rwf 10,000) for each small business plan, if it was approved for a loan. The beneficiary contributed 30%. The bulk (70%)[8] was paid by NEP on approval of the loan and these payments were often much in arrears.

The financing instruments could have been more efficiently utilised to catalyse establishment and spur growth of enterprises and ultimately create jobs among the target groups. For instance, the subsidised loans given to individuals trading in imported finished goods (mostly retailing clothes) or such services as moto transport, created at the most one job if they were start-ups. Yet, it could have created more direct and indirect jobs if it was used to finance start-ups or expansion of SMEs in value chains like agro-processing.

Efficiency of the Guarantee fund: Many beneficiaries of the guarantee funds could have found collateral and therefore did not really need the guarantee. This was illustrated in the cases where some clients opted to find alternative sources of collateral when additional conditions were introduced to secure the toolkit facility.

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[7] NEP's Five Year Report

[8] NEP Secretariat report that 50% of their Rwf 7,000 contribution was expected to be paid at the submission of the project to the bank and 50% upon approval of the loan.

The guarantee could have been more efficiently targeted on transformational businesses and those with innovative concepts that would clearly support local value chains and create jobs. Indeed, it seems to have worked well in cases where beneficiaries contributed own collateral for larger loans such as a Polyclinic that created 23 jobs.

Equity: Graduate youth in agribusiness projects were funded through a combination of loan guarantees and equity. Beneficiaries demonstrated that they had innovative business ideas and clearly lacked funding. This also addressed local value chains that have potential to grow and create jobs.

Human resource utilisation: Key human resources were not utilised efficiently – especially BDAs and BDF expertise. BDAs were not paid for post-finance follow-up work and BDF staff at district Kora Wigire Centres were available but often not approached for technical advice. It was established that a few BDAs made use of the facilities at BDF Kora Wigire centres and asked for advice on technical issues on business plans but there was little effort to encourage BDAs and clients to use this service.

A significant number of projects were rejected (no figures available) by SACCOs perhaps for lack of adequate professional time to undertake detailed appraisal. BDF involvement in this or closer inter-linkages and sharing of information between SACCOs, District BDF/Kora Wigire Centres, BDE Units and NEP Secretariat could have improved efficiency in loan appraisals.

Integrated Craft Production Centres (ICPCs):

The Auditor General[9] found that machinery supplied to the ICPCs did not always conform to specification and some was outdated.

Similar to the Auditor General, the evaluation team made the following observations:

- Machinery tended to be obsolete, some of which was below the quality of existing machinery in the ICPCs. Some leaders of ICPCs insisted on new members bringing in better value (more modern machines, skills) so that the ICPCs could be more competitive.
- Members were often under-skilled. The skills they had acquired at the TVETs were inferior to the skills required for the machines. Many beneficiaries had not been exposed to the equipment procured. No after-sales services to help them learn was offered.
- There were often disagreements between leaders and other members on the cost and quality of the machines, leading to delays in approval and consequently in procurement and delivery of machinery. This was also highlighted by BDF as one of the reasons for delayed disbursement.

[9] NEP Audit Report for the year ended 30 June 2018

4.4 PILLAR 4. GOVERNANCE AND NEP SECRETARIAT

Overall, NEP's governance and coordination structure was designed in a way that facilitated cost-effective implementation. First, it brought together all (or most) strands in the skills, labour market and business chain. This helped to implement decisions on a timely basis, collectively and harmoniously. Secondly, it relied on existing structures (mostly central and local government structures) supported and coordinated by a lean NEP Secretariat structure. On the other hand, embedding NEP activities in existing structures may have compromised results, notwithstanding the savings and other benefits. Efficiency could have been optimised if there was a robust monitoring and evaluation system.

Use of ICT services: Significant efficiency opportunities were lost in using manual design, monitoring and reporting tools. ICT services were used on a very limited scale in communication and reporting and this compromised efficiency, transparency and quality of data. It was reportedly the main reason for delayed disbursement of toolkits and SME loans during the first half of the program. Although online sharing of information and decisions significantly improved during the latter period, the enthusiasm of beneficiaries could have already reduced leading some youth to abandon the program.

5 Findings: Effectiveness

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The evaluation assessed the strengths and challenges of employment and training, along with business development and access to finance; including how these were part of an integrated approach. To assess the effectiveness of the lending program in support of MSMEs the evaluation team required access to financial performance data on loans supported by BDF, of which a rudimentary report has been provided. The team also enquired from individual SACCO's and other participating financial institutions regarding the performance of the guaranteed lending programme.

On gender, beyond the specific evaluation questions, the team sought to understand how gender is perceived in the labour market and whether the program responded effectively to improve prospects for women. NEP's design considered that youth, women, people with disabilities (PWDs) and rural workers were most likely to be unemployed. Hence, the program prioritised these socio-demographic categories by implementing specific tailored activities and integrating incentives to address employment barriers.

Questions posed by the Evaluation:

- To what extent have the various NEP interventions (especially under Pillar 1) contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?
- To what extent has NEP promoted and facilitated linkages between the different pillars as part of an integrated approach to employment promotion? If so, why? If not, why not?
- To what extent have the target groups been reached and how have they been selected?
- Has the M&E system delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning? How could the M&E system be improved to better capture outcomes and inform implementation of similar government programs in the future?
- To what extent have lessons learned from what works well and less well and findings from evaluations such as Mid Term Review been used to improve and adjust programme implementation?

5.2 PILLAR 1

The evaluation considers skills development interventions, the focus of Pillar 1 to be central to success for the entire NEP. This is because the core aim was to increase employability and competitiveness of the labour force. This means that the quality of skills development determines success in terms of the individual's competitiveness in the jobs market or enabling their self-employment.

Also, Pillar 1 can increase the attractiveness of Rwanda for inward foreign investment by positioning the country as having a critical mass of skilled people. Enterprises based on professional technical skills directly contribute to the Government's aim of building a knowledge-based economy. Any ineffectiveness across NEP (including labour market interventions under Pillar 3) have to be linked to the quality of outcomes under Pillar 1.

5.2.1 Contribution to Intended Outcomes

Interventions improved skills or otherwise supported 50,309 beneficiaries[10], over the five-year period. Just over half (52.6%) were beneficiaries of MVT. Assuming all trainees completed their courses and were employed, Pillar 1 over the entire 5-year period contributed 23.5% of one annual NST 1 job creation target of 214,300 and 25.1% of the EDPRS' target of 200,000 jobs. On average, the interventions made an annual contribution of 4.7% to the national job creation target s[11] (under NST 1) and 5% under EDPRS II.

Table 1: Number of NEP Pillar 1 Beneficiaries by Gender

Training Program	No. of Beneficiaries	Male %	Female (%)
Mass Vocational Training	(9,585) 17,332	60	40
Rapid Response Training	(2,093) 5,829	(65) 54	(35) 46
Recognition of Prior Learning	(14,896) 19,756	(95) 94	(5) 6
Apprenticeship	1,976	51	49
Reconversion of University Graduates	928	58	42
Industrial-based Training	3,575	57	43
Skills Upgrading under ICPCs	913	89	11
Total	**50,309**		

Source: RDB (2019): NEP Five-Year Report, October 2019.

Note: The numbers in the database provided by NEP (shown above in brackets) do not tally with the numbers reported in NEP's 5-year report as the data had to be cleaned prior to sample selection for the quantitative survey.

This contribution is modest compared to the national target of over one million jobs in a five-year period. It should be emphasised that NEP is the main instrument for realising the 214,300 off-farm annual jobs (NST target 2018 to 2024).

The findings from the quantitative survey (Annex 4) reveal a more detailed picture with respect to the increased employability of NEP beneficiaries. For instance, this indicates that 48.2% of respondents were employed at the end of NEP compared to

[10] Where possible the figures quoted exclude The Skills Development Fund (SDF) which was managed by the NEP Secretariat starting in 2019. This intervention is implemented by WDA with funding from the World Bank.

[11] Analysis taken from NEP 5-year Report

22.6% at the beginning. In addition, 32% of respondents indicated that they remained unprepared for the labour market. The survey found that the status of unemployment among beneficiaries had slightly increased from 32.5% at the beginning to 34% by the end. This one-third of beneficiaries need to be re-skilled and/or supported in other ways to get decent jobs or to start own businesses.

The extent to which Pillar 1 interventions were effective in contributing towards increased employability and employment creation can be attributed to a combination of factors:

i. **Intense mobilisation activities**: NEP was extensively publicised by district authorities which undertook effective awareness and communication activities down to Sectors and Cells levels.
ii. **Strong incentive package**: Local government leaders used the incentives (free training and access to finance and toolkits) to mobilise the target groups.
iii. **Participation of prospective employers in skills development**: NEP made considerable progress in involving the private sector in skills development by involving employers in skill gap identification surveys for MVT. In addition, the skills development activities under RRT[12] were designed and conducted by international employers and undertaken by them in-house. The type and quality of skills developed not only fit specific companies in which they were trained but were standardised for any employer and work environment in the same industry. The approach used under RRT differs fundamentally from the traditional TVET setting, where industry is compelled to recruit the graduates of skill providers where curricula tend to be delinked from their actual demand for specific skills. Under RRT, the employer defines the skill sets it needs in liaison with the Work Development Authority (WDA), and then trains to the standards it requires. Competitiveness was enhanced because the industry understood precisely the skills it needed and had the capacity, motivation and freedom to train their workforce to satisfactory levels. It is hoped that MVT beneficiaries will in future gain from industrial contributions to curriculum development and apprenticeships.
iv. **Linkages with umbrella organisations**: Implementation involved development of partnerships with key actors and representative organisations such as those targeting youth, women and people with disabilities which resulted in increased efficacy. For instance, mobilising and reaching nearly 20,000 informal workers that were assessed under RPL would not have been possible without active participation of STECOMA, an umbrella union representing construction workers.

[12] For instance, in the partnership between garment factory investors and the Government, the GoR undertook to meet the costs of training, including materials and trainer expertise, while the Investor was given free will to hire while bound by the provision of employing at least 70% of the trained workers. In most cases, they employed more depending on the operations. WDA requested that factories document and submit their training curriculum to be aligned with existing curricula in the national qualifications and accreditation framework.

v. **Access to skills development centres**: Hosting MVT courses in community polytechnics and TVET schools (having closer geographic proximity to target groups), enhanced targeting and completion of courses. It enabled the poor to participate to completion. Some trainees would otherwise have dropped out on account of their inability to meet food and accommodation costs which helped advance social inclusion. However, the coverage of NEP interventions undertaken through community TVET schools was limited, as funding to most community TVETs was discontinued after one or two tranches despite the increasing demand. Hence this benefit did not spread over a considerable number of rural target beneficiaries.

vi. **Supervision by local authorities**: Local Government Units integrated NEP targets into their *Imihigo* (performance contracts) and actively took on the role of supervision and monitoring. They visited training centres and sensitised participants to complete courses and to receive financial support. This was evidenced in the visitor records of TVET schools and could have significantly improved monitoring if there been a clear M&E system and if local government been appropriately guided.

vii. **Support to TVETs from IPRCs** was lacking and unsystematic which impacted negatively on the quality of training. The quality and adequacy of facilities in some privately-run TVET schools plus the motivation of instructors, who received little incentive to attend to the needs of MVT students, along with other institutional incapacities of TVET schools affected the outcomes of some interventions.

The evaluation noted missed opportunities, especially in fostering partnerships between industry and skill providers (particularly training institutions i.e. IPRCs and TVET schools). There was limited effort by IPRCs and TVETs to learn from industry, beyond the integration of RRT training curricula[13] by WDA. The opportunity of fostering partnerships to increase industrial exposure of trainees appears to have essentially failed due to lack of interest from potential industrial employers (to some extent substituted by using public sector placements but these would be less relevant to most MVT trainees).

The evaluation observed that the NEP Secretariat and beneficiaries appreciated the RRT approach to skills building. However, it was unclear how the relevant authorities planned to take this forward. The high cost of GoR's subsidies to incentivise inward investment and the few industries actively involved in global value chains were key constraints.

Certification by a competent authority is a strong enabler as beneficiaries no longer have to rely on word of mouth or references to evidence their professional competence. The certification process is also considered fundamental to the transition

[13] While the evaluation was told that the RRT curriculum was integrated into the national TVET curricula, no evidence that TVET curricula were revised based on RRT was provided. However, WDA awarded certificates to RRT trainees after aligning it with the National TVET Qualifications Framework.

from informal to formal business and to pursue opportunities created by regional integration. It is part of a process which motivates construction companies to register and become more professional. In the context of job creation, informal jobs are less likely to grow to create decent jobs, and registered businesses are easier to support and motivate if they can compete for public tenders. Construction workers are probably more likely to comply with building codes if they have WDA certificates.

From the perspective of the economy and national policy, the relevance of the activities undertaken by RPL, was limited. This is largely because the activities undertaken focused on formally recognising the existing skills that the target beneficiaries had and not equipping them with new skills based on changing market demands. Workers aspiring to move to new markets or better, more stable jobs, would not benefit from certification of existing skills. Additional skills add value and economic competitiveness rather than evidence of existing skill.

5.2.2 Gender issue related to Pillar 1

RPL interventions were not effective in terms of gender equality. This was due to the fact that the interventions focused on a few trades that are traditionally gender-biased. For instance, 92% of beneficiaries were in masonry. People with skills in other domains, even within the construction sector, did not typically benefit from RPL certification. This may have contributed to widening gender imbalances.

Regarding economic trends in Rwanda, NEP interventions in many respects have not matched the orientation given by the national strategy as to where most jobs will be created. Indeed, as Figure 1 below shows, 49% of beneficiaries were in masonry out of 34 NEP supported trades. Only 5 trades had 5% or more participants, and all trades (except tailoring, hair dressing and hospitality) were dominated by men. Regarding beauty and aesthetics, 70% of the institutions[14] offering training had less than 10 trainees.

NEP’s Target Beneficiaries

Although NEP’s design clearly targeted youth, women and PWDs, it appeared from the range of beneficiaries that NEP may in fact have attempted to reach all segments of the Rwandan labour force. NEP may have lost its focus in the process. For instance, only 22% of the 26,574 beneficiaries of the MVT, RPL and RRT, were women, while youth represented only half (52%) of the beneficiaries. In rural areas across the country, the proportion of youth benefiting from NEP was less than half[15]. Moreover, perceived barriers that would exclude rural youth (such as education, physical accessibility and socioeconomic factors) were mitigated by removing minimum entry qualifications (except in IPRCs which mostly admitted youth with minimum 9 year’s basic education). Delivering skills development through community based TVET schools enabled the rural poor to access training in areas geographically close to participating TVET schools. But, TVET schools had significant limitations leading to underperformance. For instance, many potential

[14] NEP 5-year Report

[15] NEP 5-year Report

participants did not take up the opportunity due to the limited variety of trades[16]. Also, some TVET schools hire temporary staff to train NEP students, with the risk of compromising training quality.

The desire to spread the program nationally without expanding the resource envelope resulted in each district having insignificant numbers. Most districts got about 1% of the beneficiaries in the 3 main programs (MVT, RRT and RPL)[17]. The evaluation observed that 33% of beneficiaries came from two Kigali City Districts of Gasabo and Kicukiro, which is equal to the beneficiaries from the provinces of South and West which have the greatest concentration of poverty[18]. This skewed distribution may result from the large numbers of trainees under RRT, especially under garment manufacturing and cobblestone construction, which were concentrated in Gasabo district. Also, most construction workers who participated in the assessment and certification process under RPL are concentrated in urban areas. NEP may have been less effective in poverty reduction, given that locations and the trades targeted did not match the country's poverty maps[19], but private sector growth is very often urban centric.

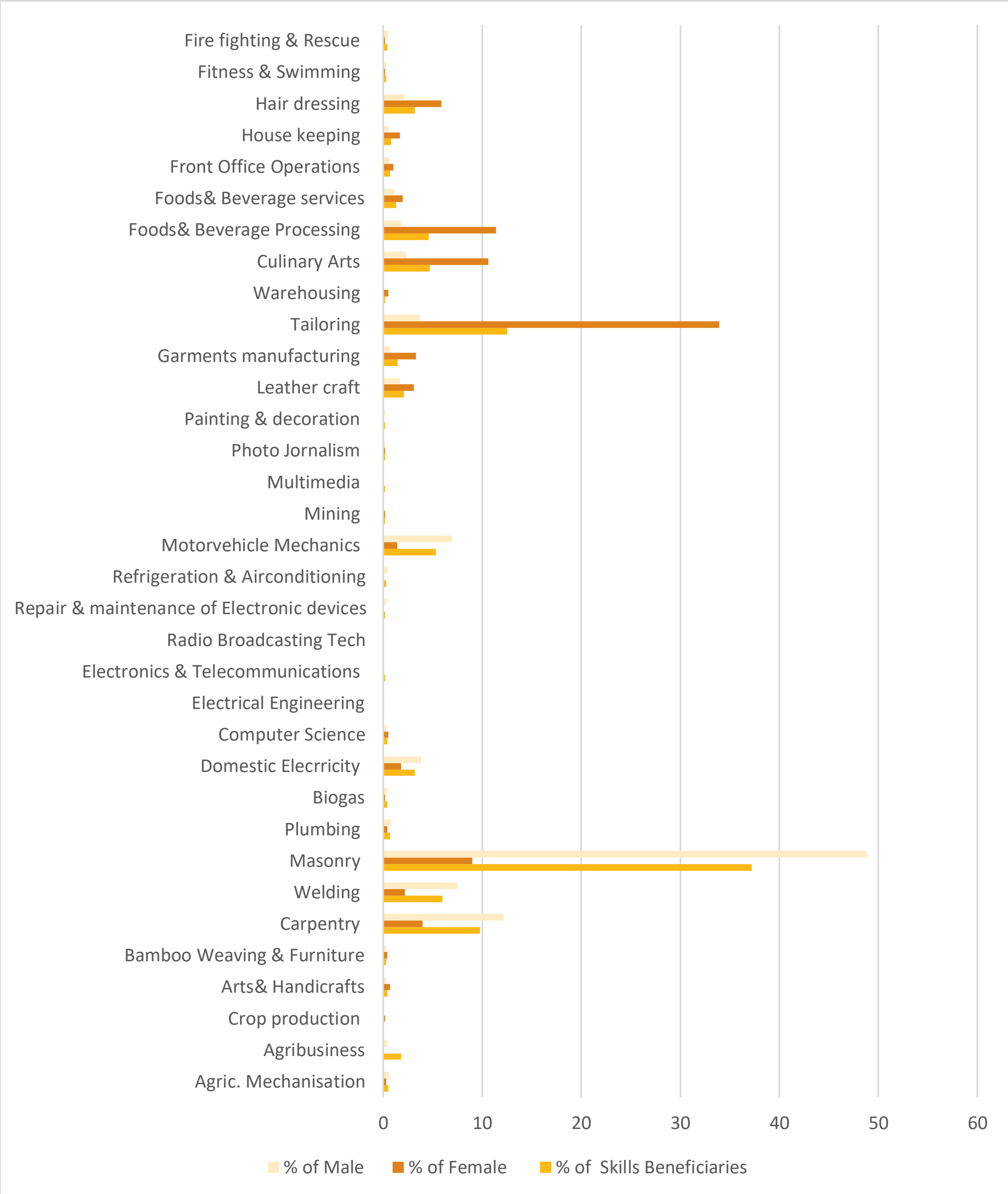
[16] For instance, Maraba TVET school accepted 400 participants but only 164 (41%) turned up. The most affected were girls who preferred culinary art and hair dressing.

[17] NEP Database, and NEP Five Year Narrative Report (pg54).

[18] Indeed, EICV 5 (2016/17) reported the Southern Province and Western Province as the regions where poverty headcount rates increased (by 3.1% and 1.90% respectively) while all other regions registered decline in poverty between 2014 and 2017.

[19] The poorest districts (concentrated in the South and Western Provinces and parts of the East)) got the smallest number of beneficiaries in NEP. Yet employment and employment creation interventions are a key poverty reduction and social inclusion measure. If locational factors regarding training institutions e.g. IPRCs, firms, etc. were a key limiting factor, then affirmative action could have been taken to prioritize beneficiaries from poor districts.

Figure 1: NEP Pillar 1 Interventions by TVET Trades and Gender



Data source: RDB (2019): NEP Narrative Report FY 2014/15- 2018/19

While poverty targeting was an important aspect in the expected NEP outcomes, the evaluation noted that it could have been more clearly emphasised in the design. For instance, according to the EICV 5, 93% of Rwanda's poor are in rural areas, which implies any intervention that targeted rural areas had a very good chance of reaching and significantly impacting the poor.

In the design of NEP's Pillar 1, the Ministry of Youth & ICT and District authorities were expected to select potential beneficiaries and establish a database. It appears that this was abandoned for good reason and the role of these institutions was switched to mobilisation, advocacy and orientation so that eligible and interested beneficiaries could respond to opportunities whenever they were available. The change may have helped avoid institutional bureaucracy, corruption and exclusion or underrepresentation of disadvantaged groups by making the process as transparent as possible, as demand for training outstripped supply. The approach of intensive community-based mobilisation by local authorities providing information through publicly accessible media, and transparent platforms for selection of beneficiaries, may have increased the possibility of reaching the target groups. The minimum qualification for MVT and RRT was basic literacy. The responsiveness of the beneficiary selection process is reflected in the high levels of unemployment among MVT participants prior to NEP (88%), high completion rates of the training activities[20] and good representation of youth from poor backgrounds[21]. The enthusiasm and interest of the trainees interviewed by the evaluation team suggests they were the right individuals for the courses/trades they were training in. However, the high incidence of inappropriate use of the start-up toolkit facility, including incidences of abandoning the facility after loan approval, and reports that many beneficiaries were doing odd jobs unrelated to trades they trained in, sharply contradicts this view.

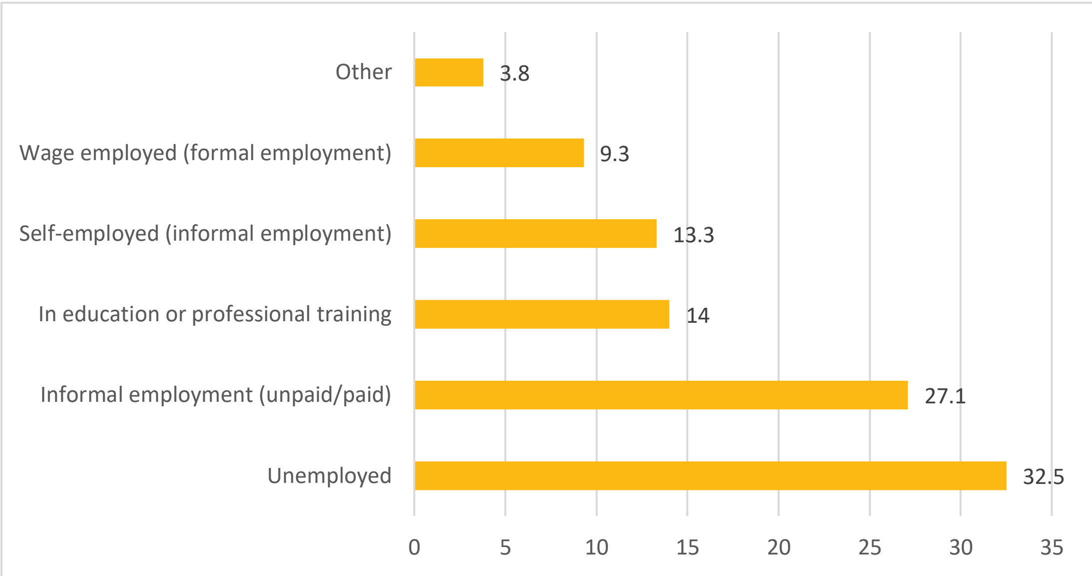
Looking at prior occupation of beneficiaries, based on the quantitative survey, the program was relevant to the target group of Pillar 1. It was aligned with the strategic goal of increasing employability and employment creation. Figure 2 shows that one in three of the beneficiaries were unemployed, and about 60% were either unemployed or involved in non-remunerative labour prior to NEP[22].

[20] As narrated in interviews with IPRCs' and Mango/C&D officials. Less than 20% of enrolled participants dropped out. The caution, however, is that there may have been limited incentives to report dropout rates as funding may then have been withheld.

[21] From the Quantitative survey for this evaluation, 31% of the NEP beneficiaries could be categorized as vulnerable (Ubudehe category 1&2) while 58% were in category 3. This is the category to target as they had the potential to transform themselves and others.

[22] Findings from the Quantitative Survey for the NEP Final Evaluation, March 2020.

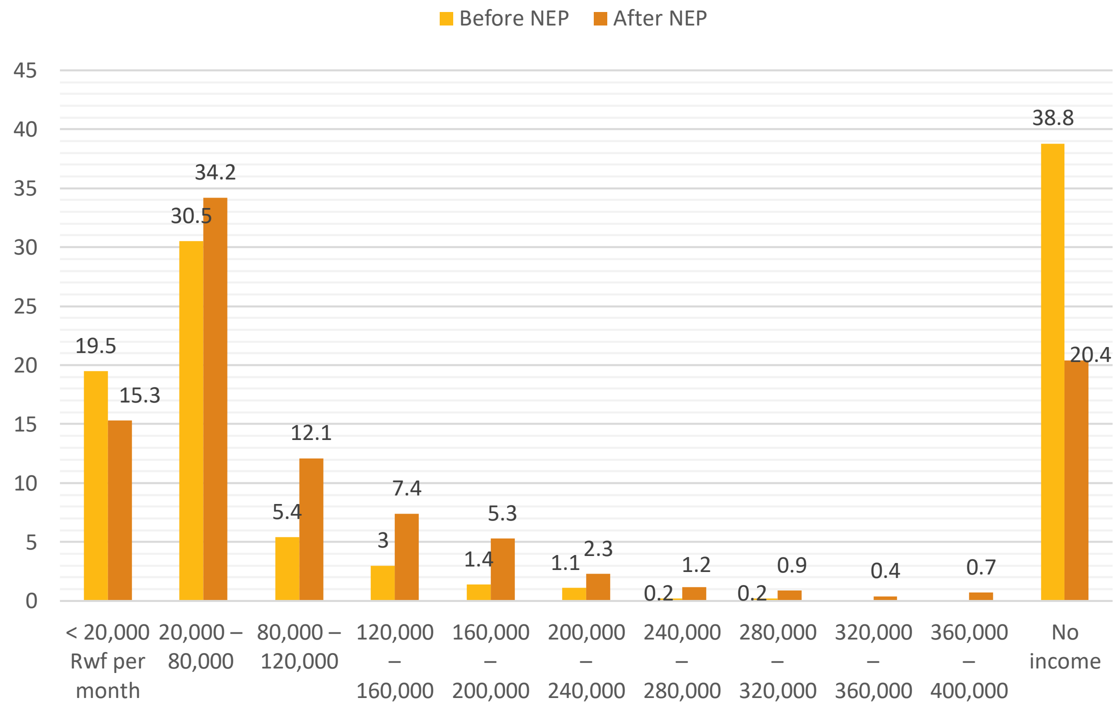
Figure 2: Employment Status of Sampled Pillar 1 Beneficiaries prior to NEP Support (%)



Source: Quantitative Survey for the NEP Final Evaluation (Annex 4)

The Quantitative Survey (Annex 4) found that 19.5% of trainees earned less than Rfw 20,000 before training and this dropped to 15.3% after training. 30.5% earned Rfw 20-80,000 before training and this rose to 34.2% after training, see Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Income Status



Additional findings from the survey indicated that:

- 18% increase in monthly earnings across all income levels
- 83% consider current incomes to meet living conditions
- 24% have second jobs to supplement income
- 59% report improved living conditions [skilled employment]
- 0.7% report worsened conditions [failed enterprises & debt]
- Higher increase among males 15% than females 13%. Doubles for earnings above 200k
- 47% saving and 70% have bank accounts
- 9% started new enterprises, 12% were existing

A key message from the skills development activities under NEP is that while the policy goal was to equip beneficiaries with the skills needed by industry, most beneficiaries are insufficiently equipped for job demands. Advancing technologies, changing employer preferences, consumer demands and other economic factors, do not seem to have been adequately integrated into skills development. Integrated ICT and digital skill training are missing. The Government's resolve to transit Rwanda into a green, knowledge-based economy provides another opportunity that has not adequately addressed. It is instructive to note that these technical skills are at the heart of driving innovations in all sectors.

5.3 PILLAR 2

5.3.1 Introduction

NEP intervened at two levels, business advice and access to finance primarily through a MSME guaranteed loan scheme. These interventions aimed to deliver critical support services in a logical sequence:

i. BDAs sharpen the entrepreneurs' ideas and assist them to develop feasible business plans which can then be financed. BDAs were expected to accompany beneficiaries throughout the pre- and post-finance process to ensure that the established businesses are solid and operating profitably. The main performance measures here are:
   a. How many business plans have been developed and how many have been approved for funding (this measures the extent to which quality business plans have been developed as validated by the financing institution);
   b. The extent to which clients are satisfied with BDAs' pre- and post-financing services;
   c. The extent to which clients are knowledgeable or confident in running businesses;
   d. The extent to which clients develop the entrepreneurial capabilities needed to continuously innovate to create value and jobs;

ii. The Business Development Fund (BDF) provides a range of subsidised financial products including loan guarantees to mitigate collateral requirements and thereby enable start-up businesses to secure finance. The loan guarantee scheme was the most frequently used product, but towards the end this was expanded to subsidised loans along with the purchase by BDF of MSME equity. Loan guarantees where offered to participating financial institutions, usually SACCOs in rural areas. Key performance measures that could be applied are:

a. The extent to which target group members, in target sectors, received funding;
b. The extent to which funding catalysed start-ups or promoted growth;
c. The extent to which participating financial institutions successfully raised target beneficiaries up the financial ladder (financial inclusion) and;
d. The extent to which BDF's financing instruments succeeded in changing the attitude of financial institutions towards the target groups (lowering the borrower's risk profile).

The above success indicators have not been monitored in NEP's data collection processes and no surveys were conducted to trace borrower's success. Some individual case studies/success stories are to be found in NEP's literature, but these do not provide an overview of the programme as a whole.

From the Quantitative Survey (Annex 4) Table 46 shows that 76% of graduates from Pillar 1 did not start a business and of those that did 12% had graduated from RRT and 11% from MVT. It was found that 12% of female graduates started a new business as opposed to 7% of males. Of all who started a business, 93.4% (Table 47) did not access any credit and of those that did only 2.1% received credit supported by BDF (most BDF lending went to non-Pillar 1 clients which is also supported by NEP's figures and the approval of toolkits was often slow). A relatively higher proportion of female training beneficiaries (12%) than male counterparts (7%) started a business. In part this was explained by the BDAs and other local officials as the tendency for women to be willing to start small and persist in a business ventures. Men, on the other hand, were described to have a tendency to start big and thus request bigger amount of loans (that were often rejected for start-ups). Also, where such ventures failed, men were reported to be impatient compared to women, often jumping from one activity to another. These gender dynamics are critical information for design and effective implementation of NEP activities, if they can be sufficiently monitored, properly analysed and appropriately documented to inspire learning.

5.3.2 Business Development Advisors (BDAs)

The role of BDAs was designed to provide a full range of business support services from idea generation to financing and post-finance support. The program design also implicitly gave BDAs the role of monitoring and reporting on the progress of the small and micro businesses post-finance as there was no alternative source for this information, but no contractual obligation or facilitation was provided. NEP supported the recruitment and deployment of two BDAs in each of the 415 Sectors. BDA recruitment was undertaken by Sector Executive Secretaries and in total the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) trained and deployed 891 BDAs, the excess number being replacements for some who left.

Recruitment and deployment at Sector level was expected to enable BDAs to be closer to their clients and ease supervision by local authorities. To improve the quality of BDA services, RDB conducted a certification process for 610 BDAs (36% women) and just over half (52%) were assessed as having performed above average[23]. This apparently low level of overall performance could suggest that many BDAs had limited capacity to deliver appropriate advisory services. it underscores the challenges of recruitment and NEP's ability to attract suitable candidates. NEP's design assumed that candidates with capacity, skills and experience would be available within each Sector, which is not typically the case and as a result some BDAs were too young and inexperienced. With so many BDAs throughout the country it was not realistically possible for each trained BDA to secure sufficient income for their role to be financially attractive. (The response from BDAs interviewed indicated that they relied on a considerable range of income sources and some had not been paid on a timely basis by NEP). At Sector level there were insufficient resources to ensure that supervision of BDAs could be provided and as a result it was not uncommon for BDAs to quit their role without informing the local authority.

Performance of BDAs

Some 75,846 business plans are reported to have benefited from BDA services over the 5-year period. Of these 61,305 businesses were financed in more than 15 economic activities (these figures taken that NEP's Five Year Report appear to exclude the toolkit loans). Therefore, 81% of loan requests submitted with the assistance of BDAs were successfully funded. On average each of the 610 BDAs prepared around 120 business plans over the 5-year period for which they would have been paid a minimum of Rwf 10,000 depending on the size of the loan requested. There was considerable variation from just 60 projects in one Sector in Nyamagabe District to more than 300 in Gasabo District. This number over five years is not effective and implies that many beneficiaries were not ready or appropriately supported to become entrepreneurs. No funding was provided to prepare borrowers on issues such as financial literacy and business management. This raises questions regarding design, for instance, why were NEP's interventions spread so thinly across the entire country? The targeting and concentration of limited resources in a more limited number of 'priority' zones could have been more effective, or, alternatively, a clear strategy prioritising poverty reduction over economic growth would need to be agreed.

The concentration of business plans in areas not primarily targeted (such as commerce which accounted for 78%) may suggest an inability to identify and properly orient potential borrowers. Trade in finished goods (mostly imported clothing) may be relatively profitable and will have enabled beneficiaries to pay back loans and even make a profit, but it does not contribute to local value chains in NEP's target sectors, and would have an insignificant impact on job creation. There is no reason why SACCOs would need assistance to agree these types of loans. So, the public investment in affordable finance (through guarantees, etc.) would not yield the expected return in the form of job creation. This may in part explains why NEP

[23] NEP 5-year Report

contributed less than 5% of the jobs targeted by Government as outlined under Pillar 1.

Key advisory services as identified in NEP's original design, related to coaching, mentorship and monitoring/reporting on the SME start-ups were lacking. These are critical to proper set up and sustainability and it is unclear which entities were assigned this crucial role. The real challenges of start-up businesses begin with the practical work of translating business ideas from paper into action. This is when most SMEs need most support and guidance. If it was also expected that participating financial institutions would undertake borrower follow-up, given that they had to ensure loan recovery, but for SACCOs this was unrealistic given their limited capacity, logistic constraints and significant cost implications. Many beneficiaries had limited ability to effectively use financial support to establish and build resilient businesses, especially with regard to the toolkits.

Nonetheless, the network of BDAs appears to be functional as evidenced by the ease with which BDE/U Directors were able to mobilise whenever they are needed. This may suggest that many of them like their work. The BDAs constitute a potentially useful resource if they are adequately deployed and appropriately supervised and motivated.

The performance of BDAs was compromised by:

i. **BDA's qualifications:** dispensing professional services requires individuals to be qualified, at least broadly, in the field. In the case of practical business advisory services in a setting like Rwanda, and for clients such as the NEP beneficiaries it requires a lot of patience, passion and considerable practical experience. It also requires an understanding of the nature of business including regulation and marketing. BDAs had to be professional advisors, financial analysts and SME experts, as well as mentors and advocates, and to be good at networking. To possess these multiple skills they must have considerable experience.
ii. **BDA's remuneration:** As private service providers, their time had to be paid for, and reasonable enough to meet their basic needs and remain committed.
iii. **BDA's investment of time:** BDAs had to be based close to the beneficiary's operation in order to cost-effectively provide on-going support. This only works for BDAs with established businesses or main sources of livelihood in the locality and did not work for more mobile young clients.
iv. **BDA's scope of service:** This should provide clear guidance in terms of roles and responsibilities. It would also facilitate monitoring and enhance transparency in the coordination of BDA services.
v. **BDA's visibility**: Business advise and mentorship demands trust and credibility in the eyes of beneficiaries.

BDA services was largely associated with:

i. Generally low competence of many BDAs: most BDAs are young (65% aged 18-35 years)[24] and have limited exposure to business environment. For some,

[24] NEP Five-Year Narrative Report, October 2019. Pp46.

their only relevant qualification was the training in business planning conducted by RDB. Weak competences were demonstrated in the assessment by RDB in which half (52%) scored above average. The evaluation team learned that some BDAs had served previously as PROBAs[25] and were thus more knowledgeable about the business environment and the challenges of the NEP target groups, having worked with them for long.

ii. High turnover: Each sector was expected to have 2 BDAs but some sectors were reported to have only one[26]. Some left this work, sometimes without informing the local authorities. This points to the quality of recruitment but importantly to levels of remuneration. While there was evidence of a network among themselves and with the BDE Units, supervision and support was very limited. For instance, BDAs were formed into Cooperatives at district level and quickly formed a national Union of BDA Cooperatives but the last and only meeting they ever held was during the formation. BDAs met in the areas visited argued that they neither had the resources nor were they facilitated to undertake such organisational operations.

iii. Lack of clarity regarding BDA's scope of work led to unrealistic expectations. The GoR and NEP beneficiaries shared the voucher payment of Rwf 10,000 to BDAs in a ratio of 70/30, respectively. The vouchers were payable in two parts, i.e. Rwf 3,000 when a business plan was submitted followed by Rwf 7,000 when the loan was approved and disbursed. Compensation was tied to one deliverable (the business plan) but the expectation at design of NEP was that a whole range of services would be provided through BDAs.

iv. BDAs had no workplace which affected visibility and undermined trust and credibility.

v. The terms of payment for nearly all BDAs were violated. Reports of delayed payment of up 8 months were reported in almost all Districts visited. BDAs were reportedly demoralised by delayed payment of their vouchers and issues related to remuneration and facilitation were identified as the main cause of high turnover.

vi. NEP's initiative to certify BDAs and accredit them as business service providers at the expense of addressing issues in recruitment and working environment, may not be a cost-effective way of supporting entrepreneurship. The main challenge is to identity mechanisms for incentivising BDAs to deliver a full range of advisory services. Experience of delivering services to the kind of entrepreneurs supported by NEP is a more valuable qualification than certification.

vii. Lack of effective demand: In areas like Nyamagabe one BDA only managed to develop 60 business plans over a period of 5 years.

[25] PROBAs (Proximity Business Advisors) were recruited under an earlier program called *Hanga Umurimo* implemented by MINICOM.

[26] In Huye district, for example, only Kinazi out of 14 sectors still had two BDAs at the time of the evaluation. Thirteen sectors had only one BDA due to the high rate of attrition.

5.3.3 Effectiveness of the Financing Instruments

The BDF worked with a number of micro-finance institutions, with priority being given to Umurenge[27] SACCOs that are operational in every Sector. These SACCOs are community owned and their core mandate is to promote financial inclusion. The performance of the SME loan guarantees and BDF's other financial instruments is set out as follows:

i. **The toolkit scheme:** this was established in order to enable MVT trainees to start in business rather than having to depend on employment opportunities. The toolkits were valued at around Rwf 500,000, half of which was provided as a grant. The other half was a loan but this was 100% guaranteed by BDF. In order to obtain a toolkit the borrower had to save and open an account with at least Rwf 3,000 (which would pay their 30% contribution to the BDA's voucher of Rwf 10,000). Initially, the participating SACCOs were few and often not close to most borrowers' place of work or residence. The borrower could specify the tools required for their particular business and these tools would be purchased by the SACCO with the grant portion funded by BDF. (There were reports of considerable delays in this procurement process in some instances.) The borrower would collect the toolkit from the SACCO and transport the equipment to their planned place of work.

It was reported that due to poor repayment, some SACCOs latterly required personal collateral to be provided by the borrowers, in addition to the BDF guarantee. This was intended to reduce the 'moral hazard' induced by a 100% guarantee. From the BDF data provided to the evaluation it is not possible to clearly isolate the percentage of non-performing loans relating to these toolkits. It was suggested that SACCOs found this type of lending problematic as it was heavily subsidised and also difficult to monitor closely as the borrowers were generally not their regular customers. Low levels of repayment could undermine the repayment discipline that they had to enforce with regard to their own lending operations. In some cases, it was reported that there were lengthy delays in obtaining the guarantee pay-out on defaulting loans and some were declined by BDF.

ii. **The Guarantee Fund:** this provided guaranteed lending to borrowers, including those unrelated to Pillar I, and was designed to help bridge the finance gap for entrepreneurs who did not have sufficient collateral to obtain a business loan. A wide variety of guaranteed loans were approved by BDF, but the great majority were related to commerce or trade. One example from a borrower interviewed by the evaluation team is a healthcare polyclinic. This required a lot of money to rent premises and purchase specialist equipment, but the doctors were unable to raise sufficient capital. The BDF guarantee instrument enabled them to obtain the required finance and they subsequently took an additional loan to expand the facility. 23 professional jobs were created over a 5-year period in Kigali.

[27] A government initiative aimed at increasing financial inclusion.

iii. **Combined grant, loan and equity financing** for projects in agricultural value chains: this targeted graduates with business ideas and some evidence that their plans could be commercially viable. Given the grant element, it is clearly heavily subsidised, and the loan interest was just 12% per annum which is extremely low given the very high risk involved. Having successfully repaid the loan the entrepreneur would then have the option of buying-back BDF's equity stake in their company. Again, there is no dedicated financial analysis provided by BDF to indicate the rate of non-performing loans which have resulted to date from this initiative.

Table 2: Guarantee Performance (Current portfolio as reported by BDF)

BDF Performance	*Cummulative*		
Guarantees	Number of projects	Loan Amount	Guaranteed Amount
SME - NEP PROGRAM	8,111	75,633,097,442	28,503,191,806
NPLs - SME	515	15,420,339,923	6,190,464,611
SME performing well	**7,596**	**60,212,757,519**	**22,312,727,196**
NPLs - SME ratio by number of projects	6%		
NPLs - SME ratio by guaranteed amount	22%		

Note: NPL (non-performing loans)

According to the above Table, BDF currently has a total of 8,111 loans relating to NEP and of these 515 are reported to be non-performing. This represents 22% of the value of the total NEP portfolio, which is unsustainably high. It may in part be explained by the fact that the loans guaranteed are often for start-up businesses which are high risk, however the purpose of all guarantees is to provide participating financial institutions with a means of lowering their own commercial risk, but BDF's loan analysis needs to be sufficiently rigorous to prevent this level of potential default. There is no analysis to indicate how many loans have been written-off over the five years or the number of jobs that have been created by the businesses supported. As set out above, NEP's Five-Year Report states that a total of 61,305 MSMEs received access to finance and this figure appears to exclude the toolkit loans; which indicates reporting errors. This report also states (page 51) that around one third of the beneficiaries were female and 51% were below the age of 30.

There does appear to have a lack of focus regarding the use of the financing instruments without a clear strategy relating to which target groups and sectors should be supported in order to maximise job creation. As such, the jobs created may be few given the dominance of trade related lending.

The new initiative to support the graduates investing in agricultural value chains was very much appreciated by the borrowers interviewed. While it is too early to establish the actual jobs created and business viability, there are good indications that the firms created under 'Graduates in Agriculture Scheme' are innovative and resourceful in marketing their products. The young entrepreneurs were clearly focussed and motivated to stay the course. These are important indicators of performance and of the five interviewees[28] each had created between 2-5 jobs after receiving loans from Rwf 10 million (US $ 11,000).

In contrast, a group of six women who received repeat loans amounting to around Rwf 200 million for trading imported cloth, remained informal and created no additional jobs. The evaluation's engagement with them on institutional and structural issues seemed to suggest they were comfortable remaining small. It appeared to the evaluation that in dealing with these clients, NEP/BDF had acted more as a low risk commercial lender, rather than being focused on NEP's targeted goal which is the creation of off-farm jobs.

The financial instruments, particularly the SME guarantee, could be assessed to be effective to the extent that it had catalysed the creation of new firms by reducing barriers to access to finance and had established the potential for these firms to create value in competitive fields which could create decent jobs.

In terms of contribution towards job creation, the BDF loan guarantee was less effective in targeting MSMEs. The NEP Five Year Report states that the largest beneficiaries, by far, were individuals at 91% (page 52). Cooperatives received 6.2% and registered companies accounted for just 2.3%. (it should be noted that these figures are inconsistent as regards NEP's reporting regarding gender as quoted above). Companies, being formal and usually of a larger size tend to be more tax compliant than individuals. They are managed more transparently and professionally than privately owned businesses, and thus have greater opportunities to do business at scale and therefore create jobs. It is argued that individual businesses are the backbone of the private sector and therefore have to be supported, not only to create jobs but also to sustain the jobs already established.

5.3.4 The Integrated Craft Production Centres (ICPCs)

ICPCs were targeted for financing so that they could attract consumers by adding value to local production and to support the country's "Made in Rwanda" policy. NEP's contribution of Rwf 800,105,000, benefitted ICPCs around the country. It primarily enabled the procurement and installation of equipment along with some training of ICPC members.

In terms of infrastructure, the main benefit was that artisans, in leather craft, tailoring and carpentry, had modern spacious accommodation provided by the District authorities usually on the outskirts of each District. The ICPCs were recognised and supported by their respective local authorities. ICPC members reported to the evaluation team that they were losing advantage compared to artisans who continued to work in the commercial centres. ICPCs would be more attractive if they addressed value chain issues where input suppliers were more incentivised to operate in the same location and if they then expanded with facilities such as food outlets. More investment is required regarding publicity of products and services; and increased

[28] A young graduate of Food Science and technology processing silver fish (locally known as Nsambaza) was visited on site in Karongi. He sells his products in Kigali major supermarkets and plans to diversify to processing beans. Others involved in fruit processing have been profiled on TV. Each of these enterprises employs at least 2 professionals and 3 support staff.

investment to ensure production quality and a competitive edge. Indeed, one of the main factors cited for the inability of beneficiaries to showcase their works in the various 'Expo events' organised by MINICOM and The Private Sector Federation was the low quality of products.

ICPCs had a number of challenges that undermined effectiveness of the interventions:

i. Inadequate understanding of the market: It appears that cooperative members, for example working as carpenters were focusing on making furniture and in the ICPCs visited large stocks of finished but unsold goods were to be seen. They have not benefitted from innovation or been advised on appropriate product design or on marketing techniques. Consequently, their products may not be competitive even where there is local demand. This speaks to the fact that entrepreneurship and marketing skills were not integrated in the skills training they received.

ii. Costly materials, largely a result of inadequate appreciation of value chains: In Karongi district for example, the leather tannery complained about lack of raw materials. They were supplied from Kigali and this affected their ability to meet market demands. They have to delay delivering a product to business people. This causes credibility issues. While the leather processing enterprise in the Kayonza ICPC uses costly imported leather that renders their final products such as shoes more expensive than imported final products.

iii. ICPCs working on bulky value chains like wood and carpentry didn't seem to have well-planned layouts. As innovative centres, ICPCs ought to be designed to attract a range of integrated services to in order to create the needed impact.

iv. In 2019 large loan disbursements were made to 26 ICPCs in trades such as carpentry, tailoring and leather goods. The money has been used to purchase machinery that should boost the productivity of the cooperatives. In the ICPCs visited by the evaluation team it was observed that these machines were not being used optimally, perhaps due to a lack of training provided to the machine operatives. It was also noted that these cooperatives had already fallen behind on the loan repayments despite having been given a grace period. There appeared to be little prospect that these large loans could be repaid as the cooperatives required a significant level of institutional support and training in all areas, including: day to day operations, marketing, management and accountability. There was an assumption that the loan periods would be extended by BDF (as BDF was a Government-owned institution).

v. Some members had been persuaded by the District authority to leave their previous place of work in the centre of the town, to join these cooperatives, along with other individuals who they had no previous knowledge of. Ideally, a cooperative should be comprised of individuals who are well known to each other and trust one another, prior to agreeing to form the organisation. This knowledge and respect creates a strong and unified body of people who are better able to withstand the stresses and strains of working together. An absence of mutual trust is a major source of failure within cooperatives and transparency and accountability in the management of these organisation is essential (for which extensive training is required).

5.4 EFFECTIVENESS OF NEP FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

NEP's initiatives involved training in technical skills and access to decent jobs, which are some of the most gender unequal sectors in Rwanda. Economic empowerment of women is where Rwanda has made the least progress, compared to other domains such as education, political and social development[29]. Therefore, NEP's design positioned it to significantly contribute to closing the gender gap in access to stable, remunerative jobs. Women and youth were identified as the target group with key strategic actions including:

i. Representation of statutory gender and youth institutions, such as National Women's Council and National Council for Youth, on NEP's decision-making bodies;
ii. Gender disaggregated reporting; and
iii. Incentives for women and youth integrated into the design of Pillar 2 interventions, such that they received loan guarantees of 75% rather than 50% for others.

Nonetheless, results show that women were insufficiently reached and consistently fell below men with 25-30% of beneficiaries under Pillar 1. NEP's contribution to women's financial inclusion was roughly equal to men according to NEP's Five-Year Report but the share of BDF's total portfolio that went to women was smaller. Although women were generally trusted to be more reliable in paying back loans, there are significant barriers that prevented them from participating:

i. Social constructs that hold women to trades that are generally lower value although with high employment and livelihood prospects (e.g. hair dressing, tailoring and culinary arts). Indeed, women's share of the jobs in upcoming sectors of mining and quarrying (5.8%), transportation and storage (3%) and construction (14.6%) is quite low. In contrast, women dominate the low paying agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors (54.6%)[30].
ii. High cost of setting up businesses in trades that tend to be interesting to and dominated by women;
iii. Many women are risk-averse and are less likely to take on entrepreneurial responsibilities.
iv. Women shoulder a lot of domestic responsibilities that may conflict with business careers especially as they are less geographically mobile.

[29] According to the March 2019 report of the State of Gender Equality in Rwanda (gmo.gov.rw), women consistently performed behind men in key economic indicators: e.g. Three-quarters of those who accessed agricultural loans were men; labor force participation among men was 62.5% compared to 44.4% among women.

[30] National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), 2018, Labor force Survey 2018.

5.5 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE M&E IN DELIVERING INFORMATION

Central to any successful development program is a robust M&E framework. For a complex program like NEP, a typical M&E system must have mechanisms that enable easy, timely, reliable data collection, storage, sharing and the integration of data on inputs, processes, outputs and outcome indicators across all program components. A robust M&E system also facilitates stakeholder engagement, analysis and sharing of information for decision-making, and facilitates learning during implementation. As a sensitive political program, NEP required an M&E system where quick extraction of data would be possible to report on. Since there are locational features, geo-spatial characteristics should have been integrated to answer questions such as: Where are the beneficiaries? Where have the enterprises been established in relation to labour supply? How is this impacting access to jobs, labour mobility and other labour dynamics, etc.

NEP's M&E system comprised spreadsheets designed and managed at the NEP Secretariat under RDB (initially under MIFOTRA). Data collection and reporting tools were also in the form of Excel spreadsheets. The templates were provided to Local Government officials (BDE/Us) who were required to fill-in based on data collected locally. The core components of Pillars 1 and 2 should have been linked to enable appreciation of cause and effect relationship but this was not accomplished as Pillar 2 data was collated by BDF using their own formats. Data was entered and stored in centralised databases. Separate databases were maintained at different levels but appeared to be unreliable based on the information seen by this evaluation. This lack of reliability is also commented on by the Auditor General[31].

The nature of NEP's multi-level actors (NEP Secretariat, RDB, various line ministries, Districts, Sectors, WDA, RP, IPRCs, BDF, SACCOs, etc.) each with its own information needs, required a system that linked the components. In the absence of this, it is not possible to track progress or access information to facilitate decision-making.

There were no dedicated personnel at the level of implementing agencies to collect and manage data. The NEP Secretariat relied on Focal Points in the implementing institutions who may not have been sufficiently equipped to do NEP M&E work and could not dedicate the needed time for data collection, monitoring and reporting on NEP activities, given their institutional responsibilities and schedules. Moreover, NEP appears to have lacked the jurisdictional or institutional incentives to ensure compliance. NEP relied on reports from line agencies with limited feedback on the quality or appropriateness of the data collected. As a result, NEP Secretariat and key stakeholders may not be in the position to easily detect and address data integrity concerns (e.g. duplication, accuracy, completeness, etc.).

Under Pillar 2, a major assumption at design was that the newly established BDE/Us would serve as One-Stop-Centres and oversee the program's "Kora Wigire"

[31] Auditor General report on NEP for the year ended 30th June 2018

centres, but these are now technically facilitated by BDF from their separate offices in the District centres. The evaluation observed the following key concerns for harmonised coordination:

i. Reporting obligations for essential and sensitive data were allocated to institutions over whom NEP Secretariat had no sanctioning power, and there were no incentives to ensure accurate and timely reporting. The ability of NEP's implementing ministries and Local Government units to follow-up and satisfactorily report on components may have been undermined by capacity constraints, institutional bureaucracies and the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms.
ii. Information on critical issues could not be captured or traced: Some BDAs could not be paid as clients moved away from the SACCOs of initial registration (perhaps unknowingly or deliberately). it was difficult to track defaulters of toolkit loans who had moved away from the address where they had been registered.
iii. Capacity (and probably incentives) to report on program outcomes was limited, and this seems to have escaped management scrutiny. Consequently, reporting was confined to activities, with little or no information concerning results.

There are lessons learnt:

i. BDF learnt from repayment problems that collateral was an important element in ensuring loan performance, and subsequently adjusted it the guidelines. Solidarity guarantee (for group/cooperative lending) and parents standing in as surety/guarantee were innovations included after MTR.
ii. Moving transactions and operational procures online especially under BDF significantly reduced complaints of delays, thus freeing time for analytical work. It could have improved communication and information sharing between actors.
iii. Some beneficiaries did not complete the application procedures. Character is a key aspect of entrepreneurship development but appears to have been ignored.
iv. Transiting the start-up toolkit to micro-leasing: BDF has indicated that they have designed a micro-leasing product which has in effect replaced the start-up toolkit. By moving from the low value and high over-head toolkit, NEP appears to have learnt some valuable lessons and is shifting from financing individuals (most of whom did not really have solid interest or indeed a business idea) to finance innovation.

6 Findings: Pillar 4. The NEP Secretariat

Under Pillar 4, the evaluation assessed the overall governance, coordination and monitoring of NEP as well as the specific role of the NEP Secretariat, to understand the extent to which implementation was efficient and effective.

Questions Posed by the evaluation:

- *What risks and assumptions were considered critical to successful implementation of NEP and realization of its expected outcomes?*
- *To what extent did the assumptions made at project design hold during implementation?*
- *How well did the program implementation partners address or respond to potential risk of unanticipated changes such as institutional reforms, if any?*

6.1 NEP'S IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

The NEP Secretariat served mostly as a coordination and logistical facilitation structure. Both coordination and monitoring were critical functions of NEP considering the multi-sectoral nature of NEP and the many institutions that were involved. At least 21 institutions including line ministries, agencies and commissions with different functions have been involved (see Table 2 below).

NEP was initially positioned under the ministry responsible for labour (MIFOTRA), but in 2018 was shifted into the structure of the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). The overall effect of this change was that it then clearly held the function of program coordination and this was considered positive by stakeholders. The RDB is better placed to coordinate and provide strategic leadership and it has a long history in supporting private sector development through reforms aimed at attracting and sustaining business investments. RDB's work entails creating linkages and building synergy across development sectors driving economic growth, and it is familiar with the process of developing incentives for business development. Therefore, it is under this umbrella organization that initiatives targeting technical skills and employment creation can best be managed.

The apex position of the RDB and its dual mandate of initiating development policy and executing strategies, gives it leverage to support policy reforms, and initiate, implement, coordinate and/or support actions, across all relevant sectors. This should enable GoR to take the key measures needed to efficiently and effectively achieve NEP's objectives. The drawback of repositioning NEP within RDB could possibly come from the Secretariat's relatively low placement within RDB's bureaucracy, and the institution's heavy load of functions. Nonetheless, stakeholders interviewed did not deem this to be a major issue.

Table 3: Key Functions and Implementing Institutions under NEP's Coordination Structure.

	Key functions/ sectoral domains	Participating Institutions	Role in implementation
1	Labor, employment and industrial relations	MIFOTRA WDA	Ensure that young people joining the labor market have relevant skills demanded by industry, and are paid
2	Training and skills development	MINEDUC; UR; RP;	Align TVET education and other interventions with market demands; build capacity of TVET institutions to deliver quality products.
3	Enterprise and business development	MINICOM; RDB; BDF NIRDA; PSF	Implement policies and programs to promote SMEs; Innovation support
4	Budget, economy & investment policy management	MINECOFIN	Align incentives for job creation and economic growth to enhance inclusive development.
5	Decentralization & Local economic development	MINALOC LODA District Authorities	Promote local economic development, and mobilize citizens to participate in TVET education; facilitate NEP and monitor activities at local level.
6	Cross-cutting issues	MIGEPROF MINYOUTH MICT MINISPOC NWC NYC NCPD NRS	-Ensure that gender, disability, other social inclusion issues and ICT are mainstreamed across program activities; -Mobilize and support key interest groups: youth, women, persons with disabilities to increase their participation and benefit from NEP activities.
7	Coordination, monitoring, evaluation and learning	RDB	Provide strategic leadership and oversight to NEP Secretariat activities; promote linkages between employment and private sector development.

Data Source: RDB (2020): NEP Five-Year Report (2014-2019).

By bringing together institutions and corresponding sectoral functions related to NEP activities, RDB could facilitate attempts at bringing coherence and collaboration and facilitate inter-linkages. The evaluation, however, noted that the implementing structures were dominated by the public sector with very little representation of industry. This may have compromised outcomes with respect to enterprise development.

NEP was able to take timely decisions including proactive reforms to the implementation framework, to address emerging or unanticipated bottlenecks. The adjustment to require all beneficiaries (especially of the toolkit) to provide some form of collateral significantly contributed to reducing or preventing loan losses. These decisions involving different structures of Government could have been difficult without this leadership platform.

NEP's implementation structure made it easy to consolidate scattered initiatives and interventions in job creation and entrepreneurship development. This brought about some level of coherence, helped eliminate or reduce waste from duplication and ultimately improved efficiency. This is perhaps the most visible achievement and innovation in the NEP design. It also helped improve coordination at different levels especially within local government and at the community level where all actions are more integrated. The NEP structure should have helped establish links between the three Pillars as was suggested by the program's design, but nonetheless the different components appear to have been implemented as separate entities. Despite the strong positioning and centrality of the coordination and M&E functions, there appear to have been significant gaps in oversight.

Lack of a solid M&E system and function was exacerbated by the high mobility of many clients, especially youth beneficiaries. This not only affected monitoring, it also severely constrained the loan recovery process.

Integration within the RDB structure, where The Secretariat is allocated other duties that are considered primary, placed NEP (which is a time-bound and specific program) at risk of getting insufficient attention especially in decision-making. It was clearly not sufficiently in touch with the implementing entities in the Ministries and Districts, and it is understood that all focal points reported to their internal supervisors rather than directly to NEP, which may have slowed down decision-making. Going forward, The Secretariat may need to be given a specific role to effectively facilitate program implementation to deliver outcomes and also to foster accountability.

Sida's efforts to support capacity building for monitoring, evaluation and learning through technical assistance could have yielded better results if it was based on clear conditions for institutional capacity building. This would have helped incentivise effective use of the TA for improved learning and results management under NEP's implementing structure.

6.2 RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The performance of the financial instruments and the toolkit may have been significantly affected by an apparent disconnect between the different actors. The target beneficiaries are classified as high risk, owing to the fact that the majority were: a) start-ups with no experience or track record in business or entrepreneurship; b) youth with a tendency to have erratic and unstable behaviour especially with financial management; and c) poor with few assets to act as collateral. There were other factors for which financial intermediaries were reluctant or apprehensive to take on these beneficiaries as clients. For instance, many people perceived (perhaps because it was communicated as such) that the Government had provided funds to support and enhance their businesses. This may have increased the risk from two perspectives: a) by prompting people who lacked the vision or motivation to start and grow a business (or take a toolkit) to access loans which ultimately meant they were bound to fail and default on repayments; and b) perceiving the funds as effectively 'grants' from the Government with no strings or consequences, despite the agreements showing that either part or all was a loan. As a result of this moral hazard some financial intermediaries reported that they had difficulties recovering loans even from beneficiaries whose businesses were functioning well and seemingly making some profit.

From BDF's perspective, loan recovery from all beneficiaries was the responsibility of the lending institution, and where they found businesses working but failing to repay, they declined payment of their guarantee. Participating financial institutions interviewed indicated that there were inadequate incentives to encourage them to work with many of NEP's target beneficiaries. BDF's understanding was that these financial institutions had access to a range of benefits from collaboration, including borrowing BDF funds at below market rates, and this suggests that these actors perceived the risks and cost-benefits of implementing this component differently. The majority of loans ultimately went to commercial trading ventures which were not within the target group as they are unlikely to create new jobs, and which attracted considerably lower risk.

Secondly, mentorship of beneficiaries was not done, and the assumption that local actors including BDAs, SACCOs/MFIs and BDE Units would provide on-going business development support services including mentoring upcoming entrepreneurs did not materialize. There was no framework established and no guidelines or protocols were put in place to measure the support. No one was incentivized or facilitated to do it, yet it is an important factor for business growth and sustainability. This may suggest that its importance was misunderstood. In the absence of a support framework, the task would naturally have fallen to the BDE/Us Units and Sector administrations, (or the local Private Sector Federation branches), but these institutions neither had the budget nor the technical capacity to provide support. This reduced business performance, especially of start-ups.

Another area of risk that may not have been anticipated or properly factored in was the impact of inflation which raised the cost of materials by 100% during the five years of implementation. This resulted in significant increases in the unit cost of the training and partly/largely explains scaling down of training activities (especially under MVT) and the abandonment of some more costly interventions, notably industrial-based training (IBT)[32] after 2017. Nonetheless, skill providers interviewed indicated that the adjustments did not affect the quality of training for the sessions/phases undertaken.

[32] From interviews, it was established that under IBT, the unit cost of training increased from Rwf 800,000 to Rwf. 1,200,000. The main source of this cost being the doubling of prices of consumables most of which were imported. High inflation was pointed out as the main driving factor, along with the reluctance of suitable companies to participate.

7 Findings: Impact and sustainability

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The interviews, focus group discussions and quantitative survey included questions on the direct and indirect, negative and positive and unintended impact of the programme. This data provides some indications of impact and has to be relied upon rather than data on the general impact of the programme which is inherently difficult to disaggregate from other influences.

NEP's programme document (2014) did not explicitly elaborate the programme's outcome and/or impact statements and targets. This made it rather complex for a final evaluation to reach a conclusive judgment on the extent to which the programme had achieved its desired outcomes and impact. This lack of clarity in results statements and targets from the onset of the NEP is identified as a weakness in the programme design that should be rectified through development of a robust theory of change and M&E system from the commencement of future programmes.

The contribution of NEP in influencing national policy and programming frameworks to give more attention to technical and vocational training, skills enhancement and entrepreneurship development is considered as well as innovations and other specific measures undertaken to institutionalise and ensure continuity and scale-up. To the extent possible the evaluation considered whether NEP trainees are competitive in the labour market, how BDF/BDAs have supported start-up businesses, and the trust and confidence established between NEP-supported businesses and financing institutions.

Questions posed by the evaluation:

- *What is the overall impact of the programme in terms of direct or indirect, negative and positive results, intended and unintended?*
- *How successfully have new jobs been created and have lessons been learnt for future interventions?*
- *Which interventions are likely to produce the most significant impacts?*
- *Is it likely that the outcomes of the project are sustainable?*
- *Which factors promote sustainability of the benefits of NEP for the programme beneficiaries?*

7.2 PILLAR 1

Interviews with MVT beneficiaries confirmed that they benefited from the training they received through increased confidence and the recognition/appreciation of their technical skills. However, as shown by the quantitative survey, the percentage gaining employment in a trade directly related to the training received is disappointing. The period of training (usually just 3 months) is very short but it was stated by the IPRCs that this was adequate to provide a basic entry point into work. There were no opportunities for trainees to graduate to more advanced skills and very few (1,976) gained apprenticeships. Even those acquiring a toolkit did not appear to be guaranteed entry into their respective trade.

The RRT provided intensive skill development which included individuals who had dropped out early from school, but it was limited to applicants able to access urban industrial zones. It appeared to be rather costly per trainee, which raises questions regarding sustainability, but in many cases had a clear female bias. The use of an external training curriculum ensured that the skills were aligned to international standards and the working and contractual conditions were reported be of a high standard. The WDA has the opportunity now to progress development of their own competency based education and training approaches, using these external training curricula to inform development of national occupational standards for Rwanda. The overall impact of this intervention, in addition to the direct employment benefits, is to establish a standard for training and working conditions to which other local companies can aspire. However, in order to be sustainable, there needs to be a national mechanism to integrate this standard into the skills training, labour inspection and other employment activities, and/or to incentivise firms and TVET skill providers to adopt such standards. This could be achieved through the registered training provider quality assurance process managed by WDA.

For RPL beneficiaries, it was reported by STECOMA that certification had increased their bargaining power to negotiate the price of their labour and had increased job security through the provision of formal contracts. The numbers benefiting from certification, just under 20,000, in relation to the size of the informal labour force would be rather small and beneficiaries were predominantly working as masons.

All the interventions have been taken forward within the Priority Skills for Development Fund which the World Bank is financing in partnership with the GoR. The experience of NEP over the five years from 2014 to 2019 will have provided significant learning opportunities and should therefore ensure that outcomes improve. It is interesting to note that increased emphasis is now being placed on internships and apprenticeships which is an area of relative weakness under NEP. The concern however, is that successor programs may focus on scaling up activities, while the results call for reviewing and consolidating activities to improve quality and impact beyond the numbers. Moving from activities to outcomes requires more effort and a bigger resource envelope for the same or fewer numbers of beneficiaries but is highly likely to boost impact and sustainability.

Job creation and skills development remains high on GoR’s agenda, possibly beyond NST I. NEP’s activities and targets have been embedded as key indicators of NEP-implementing line ministries and all local government performance contracts (*Imihigo*). Government officials and senior policy makers expressed optimism that GoR would mobilise resources from different sources to scale up such activities. It is expected that public investments will integrate job creation as a key instruments for budget allocation. This provides an opportunity for development partners to engage GoR around aspects such as capacity development for results management, gender equality and social inclusion.

7.3 PILLAR 2

The NEP supported lending provided by BDF is not sustainable as set out on Page 29 above. The level of non-performing loans is stated to be 22% of the portfolio, whereas a well performing guarantee fund would expect to have this at less than 5%. The financial data provided provides very limited insight into the long term viability of BDF, but it is clearly heavily subsidised at this point in time.

The impact of the interventions undertaken under Pillar 2 may not be clearly and widely visible at this time, considering that start-up businesses were targeted and these take time to mature with an extremely high risk of failure. Nonetheless, the evaluation identified some case studies that are already impacting Rwanda's labour market and job creation:

A number of young people who would otherwise be unemployed, have been assisted to transform their innovative visions into tangible marketable products and to create at least one job for themselves. A more instructive case study is, however, that of professionals who have been enabled by the BDF guarantee scheme, to establish private enterprises which have the prospects of increasing the stock of decent off-farm jobs, for example, a group of medical specialists.

In designing NEP, the GoR identified entrepreneurship development as the most realistic way through which most decent jobs will be created for the majority of the people entering the job market, and some of the interventions in removing barriers to enterprise development appear to have created impact. Notwithstanding gaps, BDF has helped unlock the potential of agricultural value chains and provided a foundation to expand industrialisation (especially small scale, regionally-based agro-processing) and simultaneously demonstrated the entrepreneurship potential of well-educated but unskilled graduates. Whilst still small, this financial instrument has attracted youth into food value chains from fish processing in Karongi to peri-urban greenhouses producing horticultural products (especially peppers and tomatoes) from intensively utilised land close to Kigali.

Access to finance required potential beneficiaries to set up bank accounts and save some amount of money. This was required for various reasons, including as part collateral, and to meet costs for which the borrower was responsible (e.g. the 30% contribution to BDA services in the case of start-up toolkit and MSME loans). Beneficiary interviews indicated that some beneficiaries of MSME support had taken at least one subsequent loan under the same arrangements and had become valued clients of their financial institution. A few of these firms/individuals had access to business support networks and there were indications that they were growing.

7.4 PILLAR 4. NEP SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat is a programme dependent department under the RDB. Its long term sustainability is dependent on funding decisions by the GoR and possibly donor institutions. Its staffing appears to be streamlined and therefore its operating costs should not be excessive, and it demonstrated an ability to undertake coordination functions.

However, to establish real impact its core capacity related to monitoring and evaluation needs to be strengthened. A clear understanding of theory of change and logical framework analysis was missing which will prevent the Secretariat from measuring the impact of future iterations of the programme.

7.5 OVERALL IMPACT

In regard to policy and programming, NEP helped or motivated the GoR to shift its policy formulation and management approach from a sectoral or institutional approach to a more multi-sectoral approach to implementing complex cross-sectoral programs like employment and MSME development. Senior policy makers interviewed stated that they had learnt to look at issues of skills development, employability and employment creation from the perspective of the broader spectrum. They were optimistic that the multi-sectoral approach where key sectors pull together rather than each working on their component separately had been institutionalised. It is expected that this will enhance collaboration and coordination in the design and implementation of policies and programs beyond NEP.

Importantly, NEP has increased prioritisation of employment and job creation issues within the GoR's plans and budgets. All key policy makers interviewed indicated that line ministries are now required to include job creation related targets in their plans and show how their budgets have contributed (or will contribute) to job creation. Local government performance contracts include targets and indicators on skill development, employability and job creation. However, the extent of mainstreaming job creation in the public sector budget and what specific modalities are in place or being considered to ensure job creation is less clear.

NEP influenced the programming of some non-state partners' interventions, a number of which have aligned or adopted some important aspects of NEP. In some areas TVET training activities undertaken by NGOs, faith-based organisations and other partners, were harmonised and became more formal – e.g. from just providing skills through vocational training, to certification and accreditation (by or through partnership with WDA). Where this happened, the quality increased as well as the employability of graduates (who have received certificates accredited by WDA). In other areas, some TVET partners have been asked by district authorities for support and they adjusted their program activities to include the toolkit component, while some have subsequently adopted the toolkit aspect as part of their skills-building interventions. These examples are localised and do not appear across all districts.

8 Findings: Cross-cutting issues

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Beyond the above evaluation criteria (Chapters 3 – 7), the evaluation included an assessment of key crosscutting issues critical to Sida's strategy and GoR's development policies specifically regarding: gender, environmental sustainability, human rights and social inclusion.

8.2 GENDER

Questions posed by the evaluation:

- *How was gender equality integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention?*
- *Has the intervention had positive or negative effects on gender equality and how?*
- *Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up, if so, how?*
- *Are there any gender equality interventions that were implemented other than the ones designed in the policy that can be leveraged? If yes, what are these interventions, and what have been the positive and negative impacts?*
- *What were the obstacles that impeded the implementation of gender equality interventions that were designed?*

The evaluation noted that a lot of gender inequality concerns were inherent in the historical under-representation of women in TVET education, although Rwanda has closed the gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment. There were obstacles that impeded female participants and NEP disbursed less financial support to TVET centres away from District centres which would be easier for rural women to access on a daily basis. Interviews with Rwanda Polytechnic, IPRC principals, short course coordinators, and TVET School managers highlighted that female students remain significantly under-represented in technical/stereotypically male trades. The NEP secretariat in collaboration with the National Women's Council (NWC) and Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) conducted campaigns to mobilize more females to take up technical trades offered in TVETs and other technical trainings. In addition, best practices have been adopted by STECOMA in collaboration with private construction companies and the City of Kigali. It was reported that they have initiated measures to ensure that construction sites have health and safety safeguards, separate washrooms for women and bans on sexual harassment.

Initiatives specifically targeting Massive Vocational Training for females were put in place by the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) which NEP support through selected

TVETs such as: Nduba, Bushoki, Nyarugunga, Rutare, Gacuriro and Shyrongi. These targeted adolescent/teenage mothers who dropped out of school. The total number of females who completed the 6 months training for all cohorts was 1913[33]. The package included forming them into cooperatives; granting them toolkits for basic start-up and preparing bankable business plans. However, at the beginning there was a misperception by women who understood that BDF was giving free money rather than the offer of a loan guarantee. These misperceptions led to an increase of non-paying loans, and are attributed to inadequate information on the BDF products and their terms and conditions.

In contrast to the above, under Pillar 2 women-owned (or led) businesses, including cooperatives, received the majority of loan agreements as compared to men/youths. From discussions the dominance of women under Pillar 2 was attributed to a number of factors:

i. It was reported that a number of women empowerment and advocacy organisations proactively mobilised women to access NEP support, which gave women beneficiaries more opportunities to access information. Also, many previous interventions in entrepreneurship and business development, especially around access to information, training and skills development, as well as free or low-cost micro-finance, had targeted women and women's solidarity groups
ii. Stakeholders reported that women tended to be more willing to start small and therefore they applied for smaller amounts of financial support (loan and grant component) availed under NEP interventions.
iii. Female groups were more likely to be cohesive and work together over a longer time. This helped the performance of group lending and the use of 'peer guarantees' in financing projects run by groups and cooperatives. Women were reported to have more experience in small saving schemes within groups which were a critical factor in lending to cooperatives.
iv. The incentives embedded in NEP provided a 75% loan guarantee for women, compared to 50% for men.

In addition, the NEP programme also implemented another women empowerment initiative in collaboration with the City of Kigali authorities where they established market centres to support women who were formerly street vendors by providing them with decent selling places/market stalls. These market places were established in Nyabugogo, Mageragere, Gisozi and Kisementi with one year's rent paid and tax exemption. As a result, these women have "transitioned into entrepreneurs and they no longer move around with their babies on their backs" as the Chair of the Kisementi market narrated. They have also established relationships with and learnt to work with financial institutions.

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[33] Workplace Development Authority (WDA) National Tracer Survey and Employer Satisfaction Survey for TVET Graduates, 2016.

8.3 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

For social inclusion and human rights issues NEP was designed to address the employability and livelihood constraints primarily faced by disadvantaged youth, women and people in extreme poverty conditions, who typically have no access to competitive skills and networks to participate in the formal job market, or lack the economic assets and networks to start and manage profitable businesses.

The safeguards were effective in ensuring social inclusion and low negative impact on the social systems and structures. WDA's contracts under RRT included targets for gender integration (at least 30% of beneficiaries). The National Council for People with Disabilities (NCPD) was a member of the NEP technical steering committee and had a radical voice in ensuring the participation of PWDs. The evaluation learnt that 3.5% of beneficiaries were PWDs which is consistent with their representation in the population, bearing in mind that some would not be able to participate and in the past they would have been invisible. Most of these however were under Pillar 2, as most TVET schools have yet to fully integrate conditions, such as infrastructure, favourable for PWDs. The evaluation noted that the only trade where PWDs were most visible was in the manufacture of footwear.

Specific program components were designed for groups considered vulnerable who could not benefit from general skills development and job creation interventions. The Adolescent Girls' Initiative (AGI) was one, and another program targeted delinquent youth who had been victims of drug abuse and undergone rehabilitation. They were equipped with technical skills at the IWAWA national rehabilitation centre[34]. A third intervention specifically targeted people with disabilities under both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2.

8.4 ENVIRONMENT

Rwanda's development has and continues to be significantly affected by environmental degradation and climate change which are major threats to jobs in all key sectors targeted, notably agriculture and tourism. From adopting green energy and energy efficient technologies (including hydropower, Solar photovoltaics, modern biomass kilns and energy efficient cooking stoves), to water harvesting and irrigation technologies, improved sanitation, waste recycling and water treatment, green building and adoption of greenhouse farming, hillside terracing, afforestation and other initiatives in ecosystem rehabilitation, the GoR has made environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation/mitigation, an integral part of its national transformation agenda.

As such NEP was expected to contribute towards this. While there are opportunities in the skills development component and through supporting innovative

[34] Located on an island in Lake Kivu, Iwawa Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Centre trains thousands of graduates annually after not only rehabilitating them from drug addiction, but also equipping them with different vocational skills.

SMEs to create value while addressing environmental sustainability and climate change challenges, this was not implemented as a concerted effort by NEP. Opportunities existed to integrate key environmental aspects into the strategic implementation framework of NEP. Key environmental considerations relate to NEP's contribution to Rwanda's green growth and low carbon development agenda – e.g. promoting biomass for energy and leveraging technology to enhance the diffusion of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies; minimising waste and promotion of cost-effective natural resource use and waste management approaches/technologies to reduce pollution. Key design issues also relate to the extent to which training programs and selection of enterprise projects reflect environmental considerations.

Under Pillar 1, beneficiaries were trained in Solar PV and Irrigation Technology (at IPRC Huye) and in recycling and repair of end of life electronics (in Bugesera). Environment protection training was undertaken through a partnership with Enviro-Serve E-waste plant system to train 60 persons in recycling and repair of end of life electronics. None of the trades supported by NEP related to building the skills base for environmental and climate change adaptation or mitigation. The evaluation established, from interviews with IPRC officials and direct observation, that there is capacity to offer training using modern facilities (at least in trades related to solar PV fabrication, installation, maintenance and repair; air conditioning and refrigeration, irrigation technology and agricultural mechanization; fabrication of water harvesting machinery, electronics assembling and maintenance etc.).

Under Pillar 2, NEP supported some MSMEs involved in addressing environmental issues and with potential to create green jobs in a profitable and sustainable way. For example:

i. In Waste management, a cooperative in Huye District founded by 6 women was supported by a BDF loan guarantee to procure a truck specially designed and licensed to collect and transport solid waste. The cooperative has at least 2 fulltime staff (in addition to the members) and services residences and commercial businesses in/around Huye City. The services are provided on the basis of service contracts signed with individual clients mostly on a short-term basis (typically 1-3 months). They claimed that the financial support has enabled them to become more effective and to expand their clientele.

ii. In climate resilient agriculture a start-up youth enterprise in Huye Town was supported through the BDF "Graduate Youth in Agribusiness" to process and convert solid and municipal waste into organic fertilizer. The fertilizer produced had high demand among horticultural and other commercial farmers. Another young female entrepreneur was supported to construct and operate a greenhouse for intensive cultivation of tomatoes in Gasabo District. Interviewees suggested that there is considerable potential for growth and profitability of the business ventures as they address food and other agro-produce demands. Positioning these ventures as environmental innovations that create green jobs could increase prospects including leveraging opportunities in FONERWA and global climate funding mechanisms.

iii. In energy conservation a firm involved in promotion of energy saving technologies, based in Rubavu District, Western Province, was supported to train staff in fabrication of energy-saving cooking stoves. It remained unclear whether the initiative had extended into marketing of the products and there was a demand from ordinary citizens.

Senior officials at NEP Secretariat indicated that there were on-going initiatives with the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) to support programs in green jobs. BDF reported that they had recently designed and partnered with FONERWA[35] to implement a financing product termed “cool lease” for green businesses with innovations that contribute to reducing Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

The evaluation noted that NEP’s implementation manual nor the design document had any provisions or guidelines on environmental and social safeguards. Nonetheless, the range of project activities and SME projects funded had potential for environmental impact (e.g. occupational health and safety in mechanical workshops and other industrial activities such as in the ICPCs, location of projects in environmentally sensitive areas, handling of dangerous waste or corrosive chemicals, etc.), there should have been precautions embedded in the training curricula of relevant trades, and the design and financing guidelines under Pillar 2.

[35] FONERWA is an investment fund which supports public and private projects with the potential to achieve transformative change and which are aligned with Rwanda’s commitment to building a strong green economy.

9 Conclusions

The NEP design document clearly identified the main source of stable, well-paying jobs for the growing labour force as being derived from private investment (both foreign and domestic) in a number of key sectors, including: agribusiness; light manufacturing (including assembling of consumer electronics, automobiles, manufacturing of garments and foot wear); construction; information and communication technologies (ICTs); tourism and hospitality; mining, as well as services. Thus, NEP interventions were successful to the extent that they equipped the labour force with some of the knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes needed by these sectors. The results shown in NEP’s own five year report show low effectiveness in terms of job creation and the quantitative survey shows impact on incomes to be positive but relatively low.

The contribution of Pillar 1 interventions towards increasing employability and employment creation, may have been limited by a number of issues, key of which are insufficient skilling and exposure; capacity of some training centres especially regarding training personnel and modern equipment; adequate supervision and partnership between IPRCs and TVET schools and inadequate exposure of trainees to practical work through industrial attachments, work-based training and apprenticeships.

The quality and adequacy of facilities in some privately-run TVET schools plus the motivation of instructors who received little incentive to attend to the needs of MVT students along with other institutional capacities at TVET schools affected the outcomes of some interventions. TVET schools, especially those private owned, raised the concern of inadequate funding and equipment while appreciating support provided under NEP especially regarding consumables and remuneration of instructors.

The Rwanda labour market is changing rapidly and significantly, particularly demand for technical and vocational skills. There is considerable potential on the demand side and skill gaps to be filled on the supply side. Key aspects of the future labour market will incorporate formalised certification, sophistication and regulation (especially in the hospitality and construction sectors), along with increased demand for workers with advanced ICT skills.

It is likely that in keeping with other African countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Botswana, and South Africa, Rwanda will advance its competency-based education and training (CBET) system. It will also become more international and integrated, which makes any form of certification by a nationally recognised authority extremely relevant to both the economy and individual trainees. The labour market is also demanding more advanced skills and, as the Government identifies and promotes diversified economic growth pathways new opportunities will require new skill sets in every employment sector. Therefore, the principles underlying interventions in

MVT, RPL and RRT are very relevant, but this begs the question as to whether all the skills are advancing in step with this rapid change.

TVET schools are not adequately prepared to respond to the changing needs of skilling for a productive and innovative workforce, but they are often more accessible to the rural poor due to their geographic spread outside of the major towns. There are possible issues around the qualifications of instructors and how a growing demand for instructors with higher qualifications would be met. Developing a competitive knowledge-based economy in an increasingly technology-driven era should be a fundamental criterion in designing skills development interventions. The quality and range of skills will not only impact outcomes under Pillar 1, but will also influence entrepreneurship and employment creation under Pillar 2 and thereby help to catalyse Rwanda's transformation agenda.

Business development advice is essential within the current country context, but in this instance it was inadequately conceptualised and implemented. BDAs are a key bridge in the financing and development of MSMEs but their role was not clear and, consequently it was inappropriately implemented including an absence of any formal job description or contractual obligations. An inadequate understanding of BDAs' role led to the recruitment of underqualified people to do a job that was neither defined or well remunerated and which was not properly facilitated (no professional workspace, etc.). Recent recruitment hired young job seekers who were mostly motivated by the prospect of some payment, rather than the opportunity to advise and mentor new entrepreneurs, even if they had the knowledge, experience and training to do so. In a few cases, where the scheme managed to retain suitably qualified BDAs (often PROBAs from a previous intervention), for example in Gasabo and Karongi districts, there was a higher level of performance and a closer working relationship with the BDE Units. There was no evidence of mutually beneficial working relations having been established between BDF and BDAs. In some BDF district offices there was a dismissive attitude towards the contribution of BDAs.

BDF was tasked with bridging the financial gap by creating access to affordable finance for start-ups as well as to grow existing enterprises to create decent jobs. These two outcomes are at different levels. It appears, from the results framework and the results, that this could have been clarified through the development of a solid Theory of Change at the design stage. There was evidence from the qualitative interviews that some firms that benefited significantly did not actually create new jobs.

The evaluation found a challenge with perception of free public money at several levels in the NEP, perhaps linked to a culture of the interventions from the post-conflict situation. It was also exacerbated by the way communication was made about NEP funding. Stakeholders interviewed argued that many beneficiaries of NEP support who had failed to pay back (including the start-up toolkits who were only required to pay back 50%) exhibited a poor attitude towards repayment, rather than poor business performance. There is need to rethink the way Government interventions are communicated to properly manage the expectations.

The risks associated with the nature of target beneficiaries and those related to information flow among stakeholders especially regarding financing and the obligations of borrowers, were not properly analysed and insured or taken into consideration in the implementation arrangements. Had this been done NEP outcomes would have been strengthened, especially since there are many precedents (including the micro-credit component of the VUP Umurenge programme) where beneficiaries tend to be reluctant to pay back loans that they perceive as 'government grants', even when they are clearly able to pay back. Attempts to transfer such risk to the financial intermediaries (SACCOs and other MFIs) led to stand-offs, and MFIs may discourage potential beneficiaries as a way of avoiding such risks. It should be emphasised that these categories are already high-risk borrowers and financing them at lower than normal lending rates was sufficient incentive.

NEP's coordination/implementation support structure was lean and embracing, but the capacity and incentives for delivery through the public service structures may have been overestimated. The NEP Secretariat was able to bring together the different initiatives and key actors in the employment and enterprise development domain, enhanced by repositioning under RDB. It was well linked to the national development coordination framework, particularly line ministries (MINICOM, MINEDUC, MIFOTRA and MINECOFIN) and therefore to the relevant EDPRS 2/NST I clusters). It was however, less effective in monitoring implementation and results management under Pillars 1 and 2. The NEP Secretariat could not effectively support the more than 20 ministries and agencies to deliver and report, as it lacked adequate technical support, even though technical assistance was provided. It is the view of the evaluation that technical assistance in M&E could have been utilised effectively if the Secretariat had appreciated its value and place. This points to the need to strengthen the strategic leadership at levels above the NEP Secretariat.

There was insufficient focus on results, specifically outcomes, particularly the contribution to the national job creation target. A robust framework for monitoring, evaluation and learning was lacking yet this was recognised as a requirement at the time of design, and as being critical to successful implementation of NEP's activities and the realisation of expected outcomes. This not only affected the implementation process, including the scope and timeliness of decisions made, but it made it considerably more difficult to measure progress and results both internally and by the external evaluations.

Promoting gender equality and equity requires much more than state level gender institutions are able to deliver, especially considering that they are encumbered by mandates, bureaucracy and technical capacity concerns. Thus, although NEP's design enlisted the participation of institutions such as MIGEPROF, the National Women's Council and the Gender Monitoring Office, among other national institutions, gender mainstreaming outcomes were modest, particularly under Pillar 1. The proactive participation of women's empowerment networks and CSOs in mobilising women, sensitising, providing information, coaching and encouraging women to leverage financial support services, would be more effective in increasing gender outcomes.

NEP did not allow for the issue that cooperative-working tends to promote 'group think' which may be at variance with strong entrepreneurial values and the ability to innovate. NEP and The Rwanda Cooperative Agency have yet to evolve a mechanism to ensure that ICPC groups that were hastily formed into cooperatives will make high-risk borrowers, unless there are mechanisms in place to provide ongoing and intensive support to address cohesion and internal management issues, not to mention a lack of knowledge regarding use and maintenance of equipment, etc. Managerial capacity of Cooperatives needs to be addressed if the cooperative approach is to work: the cooperative movement is a good concept enabling the poor to mobilise capital and working together for strength in solidarity. GoR has adopted this approach as the most preferred modus operandi for start-ups. It even designed incentives for people working in cooperatives under the start-up toolkit and SME Guarantee. However, it seems to have overlooked the challenges ensuring the internal integrity of these cooperatives/ICPCs. Conflicts associated with cooperatives were responsible for institutional collapse and underperformance of many start-ups using the toolkits. The fear of such challenges is what is keeping many women's groups informal and close knit. It was made even more challenging within youth which were formed without any form of close trusting relationships between members. It was unclear to the evaluation team whether or how these issues were appreciated but there were no specific capacity building interventions undertaken to address them.

Information and Communication Technology and the Digital Economy

Rwanda was one of the first African countries to embrace prioritisation of the information, communication and technology (ICT) revolution. It has, over the last two decades made considerable investments in building ICT infrastructure, reforming policy and institutional frameworks to embrace e-governance, e-learning and e-commerce. It is therefore imperative to appreciate that skills training interventions that do not integrate ICT and equip the labour force to actively participate in the digital economy will result in a labour force that is uncompetitive in the medium to longer term. NEP has done little in this respect, except under Pillar 3 where it worked with GIZ on an internet-based employment service to match job vacancies with job seekers.

Without investing in the skills and businesses that embrace and promote ICT-based solutions, even online labour market information platforms may not benefit a large proportion of the labour force. In addition, the support to ICPCs to promote innovation and excellence needs to be facilitated by ICT tools. For example, ICT could have been used to aid training and marketing solutions for the ICPC members and for their recording and bookkeeping. It should be noted that at this time mobile computing tools such as smartphones are being availed to a range of users across Rwanda at increasingly affordable rates. There are opportunities for digital entrepreneurship and participation in the global online economy for youth with the advanced digital skills and these opportunities are increasingly being taken up by youth in developing countries. Contemporary TVET is moving towards a more blended delivery model which incorporates online and mobile learning with face-to-face instruction.

Moving forward, there are considerable opportunities that could be leveraged by NEP interventions to increase employable skills and expand prospects for enterprise development:

i. Rwanda is moving most of its service delivery systems online, and indeed, has already established transited procurement (umucyo.gov.rw) as well as payments and related transactions for government services (irembo.gov.rw), trade and commercially related information (e-soko), among others;

ii. The GoR is implementing some innovative measures to facilitate access to digital equipment to facilitate communication, learning, e-governance and especially e-commerce. For instance, through private sector partnerships (e.g. Mara Holdings), affordable smartphone (mobile computing and communication devices) are being provided to citizens and households, targeting those in Ubudehe (socio-economic) category 1 and 2[36]. This will facilitate an accelerated move towards more widespread access to ICT facilities; there are considerable opportunities for jobs and business establishment in the whole range of services that increasingly rely on digital platforms and networks.

iii. Some TVET institutions, particularly IPRCs are equipped with modern facilities to provide training and/or host ICT-based innovations for all or most of the trades.

[36] There are four Ubudehe categories, where category 1 applies to the poorest section of Rwandan society.

10 Recommendations

Review TVET investment priorities and approaches with a view to increasing the funding allocated to TVET centres, especially those in rural areas. This would enable such centres to upgrade their training facilities as well as the numbers and quality of instructors, etc. Cost-effective TVET will be accessible, especially to rural young people, if more investment is directed to expanding and modernising their local TVET centres. This will also help absorb the many learners who complete 9 to 12 years basic education and is consistent with the new national strategies for education in Rwanda. Sida's strategic engagement in Rwanda around skills development for employability and employment creation could have much wider impact on Rwanda's development framework if it aims to expand the opportunities for access to quality TVET education through targeted interventions within future skills enhancement programmes. More emphasis on ICT and green technologies is required.

IPRCs and TVET institutions to adopt entrepreneurial capabilities in designing and delivering skills training. Feedback or tracer studies could help validate the training content and delivery approaches of TVET institutions. Systematically planned rather than ad hoc tracer studies are important for measuring impact of TVET programmes to inform at both institutional and national level, as promoted in the National Skills Development Employment Promotion Strategy. Developing entrepreneurial skills means shifting from a bureaucratic culture to being proactive and sensitive to market demands. It means perceiving trainees as clients and leveraging their strengths and the incentives from Government and partners, to continuously design skills packages that are attractive, value-adding and affordable to a range of clients. The content and delivery approaches must reflect the real needs and circumstances of users – from youth who have only basic education to those with higher qualifications; those who are working fulltime to those who do not have stable jobs. This will enable them to accommodate the needs of upcoming entrepreneurs (and local cottage industries) as well as support flexibility in career development, which is typically expected in a transitional economic environment. RP and WDA should develop the policy and regulatory instruments to facilitate this shift across public and private TVET institutions. For this to happen, the institutional frameworks for both public and private TVET skills providers must be reviewed to enhance the linkages with industry.

Enhance the role of non-state actors in implementation and monitoring of the skills development and entrepreneurship development activities: Consider partnership with, or active participation of non-state actors (including civil society and business organisations) in skills development and employment creation. One important role for non-state actors is participation in Sector Skills Councils along with industry representatives to contribute to, and guide, the development of national occupational standards. Some components especially those relating to information dissemination, skills development, monitoring and creation of business linkages to support upcoming women entrepreneurs, are likely to be more effective if executed by NGOs and private sector entities with more experience, flexibility and innovative capacity than state agencies. Innovative green technology proponents from the private sector should also be promoted.

Review and repackage Business Development Advisory services to make them more relevant and effective especially for start-up businesses across sectoral domains. Key actions will include:

i. Restructure the BDAs and place the function more appropriately for it to work effectively. Opportunities for optimising effectiveness and efficiency in delivering BDA services lies in working with the decentralised BDF offices (*Kora Wigire* Centres). District BDF offices have more experience with business appraisal and have access to a range of facilities (including ICT infrastructure), professional networks and resources to support the delivery of BDA services. In addition, central to the restructuring process will be deciding what kind of business support services should be subsidised, which businesses should be targeted, and how BDAs should be recruited, facilitated, assessed and compensated. A whole range of issues will need to be considered in the re-defined functions of the BDAs. For instance, NEP has to rethink the viability of having many BDAs stationed at sector level doing little, or a fewer number of effective and well positioned BDAs that command respect and are well facilitated and motivated to deliver essential advisory services to entrepreneurs throughout each district. The focus also needs to shift to a wider package of advisory services beyond access to finance, so as to create a network of robust businesses that are thriving and creating decent jobs.

ii. Appropriate incentives to attract and retain the best BDAs will be required. Building on the PROBA's experience, NEP should identify and recruit competent resource persons based on practical knowledge and skills, as well as innovation and commitment to provide the services. Incentives for Business Development Advisory Centres must be introduced to attract and remunerate competent personnel. This may require commissioning a study on how to run them (preferably through a public-private partnership) and how they can be sustainably financed while providing a range of services on business development and on-going coaching. Dialogue with all critical stakeholders, especially at sub-national levels should be undertaken with the most appropriate way to integrate advisory services into local government structures and/or the Private Sector Federation and other business platforms depending on local relevance and availability, being considered.

iii. Ensure that capacity building support is urgently provided to all ICPC's and other cooperatives covering all aspects of their institutional arrangements along with their technical skills and sales and marketing competence, etc.

Identify innovative approaches to effectively mainstream gender equality with a clear aim of achieving gender parity in acquisition of employable competitive skills, access to decent jobs and incomes: Key actions include:

i. Mainstream gender issues into skills training at all levels by providing the tools, checklists and regulations required for addressing gender barriers. A national strategy for gender mainstreaming from education to the workplace and business sector, should be developed and implemented for all related national strategies. Issues of workplace safety, safety in school attendance (e.g. by providing subsidised accommodation to women participants), etc.

ii. Establish mechanisms for mobilisation and mentorship of women with a view to promoting excellence and motivating women to take up skilled professions while de-constructing the socio-cultural and economic barriers that limit or discourage women's and men's participation in certain trades or economic activities.

iii. Provide a range of incentives to enable women to access and participate in TVET skills acquisition, upgrading and exposure to modern workplaces. Such incentives may include provision of scholarships for women willing to pursue trades that are considered to have more job opportunities in which women's participation is significantly low; improve the facilities for women in TVET centres; and train TVET managers, instructors and other personnel to enable them to provide equitable guidance and other forms of support to female TVET participants.

iv. Support TVET institutions to develop and market trades that are attractive to one gender in sectors dominated by another gender: Beyond the campaigns and other motivational initiatives, it needs to be appreciated that some gender biases are more linked to human physiology than a result of social constructs. For instance, the masculinity associated with most construction-related professions like masonry, plumbing, electrical installation and carpentry, will always make them less preferred by a majority of women. This explains the odds against any campaign succeeding at getting a significant number of women enrolled in these trades however lucrative the opportunities associated with these trades may be. Nonetheless, a more innovative way may be to explore opportunities in other areas associated with these trades which would enable women to take advantage of job and income opportunities in such sectors. For instance, women can be encouraged to develop competitive skills in interior design, painting and landscaping, among other opportunities in the same sectors.

v. Provide incentives to the private sector actors to support women in TVET activities. This should target SMEs to provide apprenticeship and jobs, financing institutions to enable female TVET graduates and practitioners to set up and expand businesses.

vi. Mobilize female participants to take up financially rewarding trades/trainings and discourage them from stereotypically female trades that are less rewarding and hard to start businesses such as culinary art that was said to be expensive to start a business.

vii. Support all TVET centres, especially in rural areas, to establish facilities to enhance attraction and retention as well as improve learning conditions for women and girls.

viii. Strengthen existing public-private partnerships with TVET institutions and private sector entities that have the potential to offer employment, mentorship and workplace training for TVET graduates to develop into model work places for gender mainstreaming best practice.

ix. Strengthen the capacity of micro finance institutions and business development service providers to effectively analyse and respond to the specific financial and business support needs of women at all levels;

x. Provide incentives to TVET institutions and employer-institutions to create space for and invest in skills-upgrading for women and girls to increase their employability and competitiveness

xi. Scale-up public investments in TVET training to increase scholarships for girls in poor or disadvantaged communities to access TVETs and provide support mechanisms to enable women and girls.

xii. Develop and implement comprehensive but locally contextualised awareness raising campaigns and programs targeting increased motivation, confidence and support systems for girls and women to participate in TVET programs that offer more competitive employment and entrepreneurship/business opportunities in different localities of Rwanda.

Establish a robust M&E system to report outcomes, manage knowledge and support decision-making: The Government adopted NEP as a major instrument for delivering on its targets relating to employability and job creation. A national employment program must be fundamentally different from the past if it is going to deliver. It must specify and focus on outcomes and targets and consistently use these as the standard for reviewing and managing the process. The actions undertaken after the Mid Term Evaluation suggest that there is a determination to learn and act on emerging lessons. However, there was insufficient learning from field implementation.

Given the considerable sums of government and development partner funding that supported NEP, a more robust logical framework/ theory of change and M&E framework are imperative. Four key actions needed to improve the M&E are:

i. **Structured Programme Planning** done collaboratively which specifies impact, outcomes, indicators and targets. The planning process should also define baselines for all indicators and results targeted over the next phase of implementation.

ii. **Consistently focussing on outcomes**: this will determine everything else along the way including selection of appropriate indicators and setting realistic baselines, the levels at which to best to collect data, and the knowledge, skills and logistical inputs required to collect data. The Programme should adopt the Results-based Management (RBM) approach to work that ensures monitoring of outcomes rather than outputs only.

iii. **Building the infrastructure needed:** to collect, share and report on the progress towards outcomes. It must be linked with every centre of NEP-related action including financial institutions.

iv. **Improving the strategic leadership and oversight of the NEP Secretariat**: Demand for quality, timely and reliable data will come from a leadership that is under pressure to account and has to demonstrate that NEP is making good (or not) progress.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the National Employment Program of Rwanda

Date: November 8th 2019

1. Introduction

The Swedish Embassy in Kigali is commissioning a final evaluation of the National Employment Program (NEP) in Rwanda, which is implemented by the Government of Rwanda and has been partially funded by the Swedish Embassy between November 2014 and December 2019.

Swedish development cooperation in Rwanda is currently guided by Sweden's Strategy for Development Cooperation with Rwanda 2015-2019, available here. This overarching strategy has three support areas: (1) better environment, limited climate impact and greater resilience to environmental impact, climate change and natural disasters, (2) strengthened democracy and gender equality, and greater respect for human rights and (3) better opportunities and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions. Sweden also supports capacity building within research and higher education in Rwanda, guided by the Strategy for Research Cooperation and Research in Development Cooperation 2015-2021. The funding support to the NEP has been provided as part of Sweden's work to increase opportunity's and tools to enable poor people to improve their living conditions. A total funding of 156 400 000 SEK has been provided between 2014-2019.

Rwanda has experienced fast social, demographic and economic transformation. Since 2000 it has recorded an average 8% annual growth in GDP, mainly driven by agriculture and services, and poverty rates declined sharply between 2000-2010. Despite continued rapid growth, poverty rates have stagnated since 2012 and remain high at 55% as measured by the World Bank's international 1,9 PPP USD/day poverty line, pointing to the need for more inclusive growth patterns.

The Government of Rwanda's (GoR's) commitment to poverty reduction has been reflected in several of its long-term strategy, not least the Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2 (EDPRS 2) medium-term framework, now replaced by the Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation 2017-2024 respectively. Low levels of skills and low labour productivity continue to be recognized as key hindrances to economic growth, stifling private sector growth, competitiveness and job creation, leading to unemployment and high underemployment.

Approximately 70% of Rwanda's labour force is employed in the agriculture sector which is marked by lower labour productivity and lower wages relative to industry and services1 . The EDPRS 2 and Vision 2020 underscored Rwanda's development objective of providing off-farm jobs to 50% of the workforce by 2020, up from 28.4% in 2011. The strategy to reduce the share of population employed in the agricultural sector was informed by the shortage of available arable land and persistent findings that nonfarm workers are five times more productive than farmworkers and 50% less likely to be in poverty. The NEP was conceived as the GoR's comprehensive medium-term strategy to respond to this challenge by developing relevant skills, particularly among youth and women, and increasing off-farm employment generation through access to finance and business development services.

2. Evaluation rationale

The Swedish Embassy's current funding agreement with the GoR, represented by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, for support to the NEP comes to an end in December 2019 and the GoR is in the process of operationalizing a new National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy 2019-2024. In this context, the Embassy and the GoR have agreed on the importance of carrying out an external final evaluation of the NEP to better understand the results and effects of the NEP interventions, to what extent and how the NEP has contributed to its overarching goal and extract important learnings that can help in the operationalization of the GoR's new skills and employment strategy.

In addition, Sweden's bilateral development cooperation strategy with Rwanda is coming to an end in December 2019. Within the next few months the Swedish government is expected to decide on a new bilateral development cooperation strategy for the coming four years. Once the new strategy is decided, the Embassy will embark on a strategy operationalization process during the spring of 2020. This final evaluation is expected to also provide useful information for this process.

3. Evaluation object:

The evaluation object is the National Employment Program of Rwanda, supported by the Swedish Embassy in Kigali through budget support from November 2014 to December 2019.

The National Employment Programme (NEP) was launched in April 2014 by the Rwandan government as a five-year comprehensive intervention to address the unemployment challenges by addressing structural and institutional bottlenecks prevalent in labour supply and demand.

The goal of the NEP is to increase off-farm jobs and productivity through the establishment of a framework for better planning, implementation and coordination among Rwandan ministries and government agencies, to optimize the impact of employment interventions and contribute to the target of creating 200,000 off-farm jobs every year. The NEP's five-year document states that the "NEP…is designed to serve the following objectives (1) creating sufficient jobs that are adequately remunerative and sustainable across the economy, (2) equipping the workforce with vital skills and attitude for increased productivity that are needed for the private sector growth, and (3) provide a national framework for coordinating all employment and related initiatives and activities in the public, private sector and civil society."

The NEP was, hence, envisaged as a coordinating umbrella for all governmental labour market interventions. It has included up to ten ministries and seven national institutions, and been implemented at district level in all of Rwanda's 30 districts. The implementation of the NEP has been coordinated by a Steering Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Labour and Public Service NEP's core implementing ministries and authorities: Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF); Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM); Ministry of Youth and ICT (MYICT); Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC); Business Development Fund (BDF); Rwanda Development Board (RDB); Workforce Development Authority (WDA); University of Rwanda (UR); City of Kigali (CoK); National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA); Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA); National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) and Rwanda's district authorities. (MIFOTRA), and comprised of key government ministries. The NEP Secretariat constitutes the programme management unit and is responsible for coordination and monitoring of results. The NEP Secretariat was originally placed in the MIFOTRA Single Implementation Unit and then moved to the new Capacity Development And Employment Service Board (CESB), created in October 2016. In 2018, the Secretariat was moved to the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). The bulk of the implementation is done by the implementing line agencies and ministries, which are responsible for those components of the programme that fall within their statutory mandate.

The programming of NEP is structured around four pillars:

Pillar 1 Skills Development: NEP provides several different short-term technical and vocational training, as well as longer term trainings for internships in work places. The skills improvement is expected to increase access to wage employment in private sector or self-employment. For the latter purpose, some of the beneficiaries also obtain subsidised start-up tool kits to start their own enterprises. This pillar has absorbed approximately one-third of the NEP resources and the Ministry of Education and the Rwanda Work Force Development Agency (WDA) are lead implementers.

The main instruments under Pillar I include:

▪ In-company training of job seekers through Rapid Responsive Training (RRT); ▪ Short-term Massive Vocational Training; ▪ Recognition of Prior Learning of craftsmen and artisans; ▪ Apprenticeship and other forms of industry-based trainings;

Pillar 2 Entrepreneurship and Business Development: NEP includes instruments to promote self-employment and create employment opportunities through business development services to low income people. This pillar has absorbed the largest part of the NEP budget, almost two-thirds, and is primarily implemented by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Business Development Fund and Rwanda Development Board.

The main instruments under Pillar II include:

▪ Coach start-up MSMEs to develop bankable projects by Business Development Advisors; ▪ Facilitate start-up toolkits to apprentices, short-term vocational training to graduates and

selected disadvantaged groups of youth, women and persons with disabilities for self-

employment; ▪ Start-up and early growth investments in businesses through quasi-equity by BDF; ▪ MSMEs and start-ups supported to access finance through guarantees and grants by BDF; ▪ Support acquisition of equipment and skills upgrading of Integrated Craft Production Centres.

Pillar 3 Labour Market Intervention: NEP includes providing labour market opportunities to the most vulnerable groups of society and reaching the poorest households by offering on-the-job training to the existing operations of public works schemes that will bring the beneficiaries closer to the labour market and increase their employability. The pillar also includes development of employment centres.

Pillar 4 Coordination and Monitoring & Evaluation: NEP has an important role to coordinate all public institutions relevant to employment promotion and this is facilitated by the NEP Secretariat, which is also responsible for monitoring of the activities.

The intended beneficiaries of NEP are to a large extent unskilled workers, especially women and youth, who have been unable to gain productive employment and MSMEs requiring financing and investment. NEP also partly covers the same target groups as the national social security program, Vision Umurenge Program (VUP), through pillar 3 interventions.

The Swedish Embassy in Kigali has provided funding to the NEP under two funding agreements covering 2014-2017 and 2017-2019 respectively, for a total of 156 400 000 SEK. Swedish funds go without earmarking to the government budget and are then transferred to NEP implementing institutions, which implement according to the NEP action plan and budget for each fiscal year. The Government of Rwanda has also provided funding to all four pillars of the NEP. Other active donor's in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector include GIZ, Swiss Development Cooperation, World Bank and MasterCard Foundation but, none of them have funded the full NEP programme and budget.

The limited availability of indicators, baseline information and independently verifiable data is considered a challenge for this final evaluation, as well as limited monitoring and reporting at outcome-level. The absence of a detailed budget breakdown, with associated expenditures against consistently defined budget lines from year to year also difficult assessment of costs vis-à-vis results.

For further information, the programme proposal is attached as Annex D.

The intervention logic or theory of change of the programme shall be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

4. Evaluation scope

The evaluation should cover the period July 1st 2014 to December 31st 2019. Since an in-depth evaluation of all the NEP instruments and components will not be feasible with the resources and time available for this assignment, the scope of the assignment has been adjusted. The following pillars are proposed for a in-depth evaluation including field-level data collection:

Pillar 1

- Massive Vocational Training

- Rapid Response Training

- Recognition of Prior Learning

Pillar 2

- Business Development Advisors (BDA) support to MSMEs

- Support to MSMEs through direct guarantee scheme and grant scheme implemented by the Business Development Fund

Pillar 4

- Governance, coordination and monitoring of the NEP

- Role of the NEP Secretariat

The rationale behind the prioritization of the assignment is that the above interventions are closely linked to the NEPs objective of contributing to sustainable job creation, have absorbed a majority of the NEP budget and are expected to have reached a large number of beneficiaries. As NEP is designed as an integrated employment promotion program, all pillars and intervention areas are intended to be interlinked and coordinated. Pillar 3 is to be evaluated based primarily on secondary sources, complemented with some key interviews.

Other NEP instruments, which are not the focus of the evaluation, should be briefly reviewed and assessed based primarily on secondary sources in order to get a holistic overview.

To maximize the utility of the evaluation, the recommendations should be concise and actionable and focused on informing implementation and monitoring of the Government of Rwanda's new skills and employment strategy.

The scope of the evaluation should be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report and agreed in the preparatory phase of the assignment.

5. Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The purpose of the final evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of the results achieved by the NEP and contribute to learning by understanding cause-effect relationships and what factors made possible or created obstacles to the achievement of these results. The evaluation should contribute with key evidence-based lessons and actionable recommendations to inform the implementation of the GoR's new National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy 2019-2024 and improve future interventions in the sector.

The primary intended users of the final evaluation are the Swedish Embassy in Kigali, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the GoR, principally the RDB and NEP Secretariat, the MIFOTRA and the MINICOM.

The evaluation is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the evaluation process.

Other stakeholders that should be kept informed about the evaluation include other key ministries involved in the implementation of the NEP, donors funding programs closely aligned with NEP objectives and district authorities participating in NEP implementation at district level.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

6. Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

1) Evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the NEP program to help key stakeholders understand the direct and indirect results of the NEP program and key factors that have determined achievement of results,

2) To provide a facilitated process among key participants in the NEP to reflect and learn from what has worked well and less well in the implementation of the NEP,

3) To formulate concrete and actionable recommendations that can inform discussions on future programming in the sector, particularly implementation of the Government of Rwanda's new skills development and employment strategy 2019-2024.

The evaluation questions are:

Relevance

• To what extent were the NEP interventions relevant to the needs and priorities of the target group?

Efficiency

• Can the costs for the project be justified by its results?

• Does the governance, management and implementation structure and processes of NEP supported a cost-effective implementation?

Effectiveness

• To which extent have the interventions contributed to intended outcomes? If so, why? If not, why not?

• To which extent has NEP promoted and facilitated linkages between the different pillars as part of a integrated approach to employment promotion? If so, why? If not, why not?

• To what extent have the target groups been reached and how have they been selected?

• Have the M&E system delivered robust and useful information that could be used to assess progress towards outcomes and contribute to learning? How could the M&E system be improved to better capture outcomes and inform implementation of similar government programs in the future?

• To what extent has lessons learned from what works well and less well and findings from evaluations such as MTR been used to improve and adjust programme implementation?

• Gender o How was gender equality integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention?

o Has the intervention had positive or negative effects on gender equality and how?

o Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up? If so, how?

Impact

• What is the overall impact of the programme in terms of direct or indirect, negative and positive results, intended and unintended?

• Which interventions under which NEP pillar are likely to produce the most significant impacts?

Sustainability

• Is it likely that the benefits (outcomes) of the project are sustainable?

• Which factors promote (or encumber) the sustainability of the benefits?

Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further developed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

7. Evaluation approach and methods

This will be a summary evaluation, but with a learning approach. It is anticipated that a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to address the evaluation questions appropriately.

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report. Limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. A gender responsive methodology, methods and tools and data analysis techniques should be used. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods. The evaluator should also identify limitations and constraints with the chosen approach and method and to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them.

The NEP is a nation-wide program implemented in all 30 district of Rwanda. Based on a clear and transparent methodology, the evaluation will propose a selection of districts to visit. These will be proposed to and agreed with the Swedish Embassy.

Sida's approach to evaluation is utilization-focused, which means the evaluator should facilitate the entire evaluation process with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

8. Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by the Swedish Embassy in Kigali. The primary intended users of the final evaluation are the Swedish Embassy in Kigali, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the GoR, principally the NEP Secretariat and the RDB, the MIFOTRA and the MINICOM. A reference group including the Swedish Embassy and Sida, the RDB, Rwanda Polytechnic, Business Development Fund and the MIFOTRA will review deliverables of the assignment, provide feedback and participate in key meetings and discussions with the Consultants.

The Government of Rwanda, through the NEP Secretariat, has contributed to the ToR and will participate in the start-up meeting of the evaluation, as well as in the debriefing workshop, where preliminary findings and conclusions are discussed. The Government of Rwanda, facilitated through the NEP Secretariat, will also be provided with an opportunity to comment on the inception report, as well as the final report, but will not be involved in the management of the evaluation. Hence the commissioner will evaluate tenders, approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation.

9. Evaluation quality

All Sida & apos;s evaluations shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation3 . The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation4 . The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

10. Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluation shall be carried out between January 15 th 2020 and May 15 th 2020. The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase.

The table below lists key phases and deliverables for the evaluation process. Deadlines for final inception report and final report must be kept in the tender, but alternative deadlines for other deliverables and organization of the assignment may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Phase	Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
Preparatory Phase	Literature review / Refine methodology and work plan	Consultant	Start January 15th
	Start-up meeting in Stockholm	Swedish Embassy	January 22 nd2020
	Kick-off meeting in Kigali	Reference Group	February 3 rd2020
	Preparatory interviews and data gathering		
	Submission Draft Inception Report		February 10 th2020
	Deadline comments on inception report	Reference Group	February 17 th2020
	Submission Final Inception Report		February 20 th2020
Implementation Phase	Primary and additional secondary data collection and analysis	Evaluators	
	Debriefing meeting	Embassy of Sweden	
	Submission draft evaluation report		Tentative April 10th 2020
Reporting Phase	Presentation and validation evaluation findings	Reference Group NEP High-Level Technical Committee - Government of Rwanda	April 20 th2020
	Seminar in Kigali	Other key sector donors and stakeholders	
	Comments on evaluation report	Reference Group	April 24 th2020
	Submission Final evaluation report		April 30 th2020

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology (including how a utilization-focused and gender responsive approach will be ensured), methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

The final report shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final report should have clear structure and follow the report format in the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report Template for decentralised evaluations (see Annex C). The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages. The evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail and a clear distinction between the two shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed. Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect a gender analysis/an analysis of identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term. The report should be no more than 40 pages, excluding annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report). The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation.

The evaluator shall, upon approval of the final report, insert the report into the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report for decentralised evaluations and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to sida@nordicmorning.com, always with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's Evaluation Unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.

2. The full evaluation title.

3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".

4. Type of allocation "sakanslag".

5. Type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas.

11. Evaluation team qualification

In addition to the qualifications already stated in the framework agreement for evaluation services, the evaluation team shall include the following competencies

- A Senior Evaluator (Level 1)
- Evaluation experience from at least 5 sector/budget support programs of similar scope and complexity.

- At least 7 years working experience within the thematic area of the evaluation (technical and vocational education and training (TVET), labour market interventions, entrepreneurship, business development).
- Experience applying gender responsive evaluation methodologies and/or evaluating programs with strong focus on women's economic empowerment and gender equality.
- Spoken Kinyarwanda

It is desirable that the evaluation team includes the following competencies

- Work experience in the East Africa and/or Sub-Saharan Africa region.
- Spoken French.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is highly recommended that local consultants are included in the team if appropriate.

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

12. Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is 1 800 000 SEK.

The contact person at Swedish Embassy is Emili Pérez, Senior Programme Manager, Embassy of Sweden in Kigali. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant Sida documentation will be primarily provided by the NEP Secretariat at RDB and by Emili Pérez, Senior Programme Manager, Embassy of Sweden in Kigali.

Contact details to intended users (cooperation partners, Swedish Embassies, other donors etc.) will be provided by by Emili Pérez, Senior Programme Manager, Embassy of Sweden in Kigali and by the NEP Secretariat at RDB.

The NEP Secretariat will provide overall assistance to the evaluation team including sharing documentation, informing relevant stakeholders within the Government of Rwanda that this evaluation is on-going, contact information and facilitate booking of meetings.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics for interviews, data collection and field visits including any necessary security arrangements.

Annex 2: Documentation consulted

Author/ Organisation	Title	Date of Publication
Sida	Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation with Rwanda 2015 – 2019	2014
Sida	Sida's decision on NEP Funding	2013
NEP	National Employment Programme Annual Narrative Progress Report FY 2014/15	2015
NEP	National Employment Programme Annual Narrative Progress Report FY 2015/16	2016
NEP	National Employment Programme Annual Narrative Progress Report Quarter One 2016/17	January 2017
NEP	Five Year Final Report	January 2020
Republic of Rwanda	Design of Five-Year National Employment Programme (NEP) for Rwanda – Final	January, 2014
Republic of Rwanda	2015-16 Consolidated Annual Financial Report of NEP	October, 2016
NEP	National Employment Programme Action Plan FY 2016/17	2016
NEP	Minutes of Steering Committee meetings	various
Republic of Rwanda	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY 2013 – 2018 – Shaping Our Future	2013
NEP/MIFOTRA	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	October 2015
Republic of Rwanda /MINECOFIN	Rwanda Vision 2050	July 2016
Republic of Rwanda /MINECOFIN	Rwanda Vision 2020	July 2000
SIPU	Mid-Term Evaluation of the National Employment Programme, Rwanda	March 2017
Workforce Development Authority (WDA) Nathan K. Taremwa (consultant)	A Situational Analysis of the National Employment Programme (NEP) Beneficiaries with more focus on Employability and Access to Finance for Own Job Creation. (June, 2014- June, 2017)	2017
Government of Rwanda	The State of Gender Equality in Rwanda	March 2019

Auditor General, Government of Rwanda	NEP Audit Report for the year ended 30th June 2018	2019
Workforce Development Agency (WDA)	Situational Analysis study by Taremwa	2018
Workforce Development Agency (WDA)	National Tracer Survey and Employer Satisfaction Survey for TVET Graduates, 2016 Final Report	June 2016

Annex 3: Interviewees

Exempted from this report for data protection.

Annex 4: Quantitative Survey Report

EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM OF RWANDA
Draft evaluation report (Quantitative survey)

<u>Submitted to:</u>
The Swedish Embassy Kigali
<u>Submitted by:</u>
FCG Sweden
<u>Author:</u>
Arthur Byabagambi
<u>Date:</u>
May 2020

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Acronyms

9-YBE	Nine Years Basic Education
BDA	Business Development Advisor
BDF	Business Development Fund
EDPRS	The Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EICV 2,3,4	Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey
FDA	Food and Drug Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoR	Government of Rwanda
IBT	Industrial Based Training
ICPC	Integrated Craft Production Centre
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPRC	Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centre
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labour
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
MINiCOM	Ministry of Trade, Industry, and East African Community Affairs
MSME	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
MVT	Massive Vocational Training
MYICT	Ministry of Youth and Information and Communication Technology
NCBS	National Capacity Building Secretariat
NCPD	National Council for People with Disabilities
NEP	National Employment Programme
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
NWC	National Women's Council
NYC	National youth Council
ODK	Open Data Kit
PfoR	Payment for Results
PPE	Personal protective equipment
PWD	People with Disabilities
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RRT	Rapid Response Training
RSB	Rwanda Standards Board
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
ToR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VSLA	Village savings and loans associations
WDA	Workforce Development Agency

Executive summary

Introduction and background

The Swedish Embassy's current funding agreement with the Government of Rwanda (GoR), represented by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, for support to the National Employment Programme (NEP) came to an end in December 2019 and the GoR is in the process of operationalizing a new National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy 2019-2024.

The final evaluation of the NEP intends to provide an independent assessment of results achieved by the NEP and contribute to learning by understanding cause-effect relationships and what factors made possible or created obstacles to the achievement of the results. To conduct a comprehensive and informative final evaluation of the NEP, this quantitative survey of the beneficiaries of the select interventions implemented through the NEP was conducted across the country.

This survey report elaborates the purpose of the NEP quantitative survey, overall approach and methodology used and key findings.

Approach and methodology

The NEP final evaluation quantitative survey was conducted in March 2020. A total of 570 beneficiaries from the Rapid Response Training (RRT), Massive Vocational Training (MVT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) were surveyed in five districts of Gasabo in Kigali, Gatsibo in Eastern province, Karongi in Western province, Musanze in Northern province and Nyaruguru in Southern province as shown below.

NEP interventions	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total #
MVT	64	97	74	88	62	385
RPL	47	7	27	6	47	134
RRT	34	3	8	6	0	51
Total	145	107	109	100	109	570

The three interventions are selected from the first pillar of the NEP in accordance with the evaluation's ToR and the districts are selected based on geographical locations (urban, peri-urban and rural), poverty profiles i.e. highest and lowest poverty levels and prevalence of NEP interventions.

A total of 28 trades are part of the analysis as well as the multi-stage cluster sampling design used in this survey. The 28 trades are classified into 9 broader occupational categories including agriculture, beauty and aesthetics, carpentry, construction, mechanics, hospitality, ICT, Textile and leather and garment manufacturing.

Data gathered through the survey focuses on: Quality and relevance of training and skills development interventions; performance of industrial attachments; employment status; income status and livelihood conditions; levels of access to finance and identification of challenges experienced pre- and post-training. The key findings are summarized below.

Key findings

Socio-economic profiles of the NEP beneficiaries

The NEP database shows a total of total of 26,574 from its three interventions; RRT 2,093; MVT 9,585; and RPL 14,896. Only 22% are female, though this survey sampled 42% females

and 58% males in line with its ToR. The beneficiaries' range between 19 and 72 years of age with 52% being youth between the ages of 19 and 30 years.
58% of beneficiaries are in Ubudehe socio-economic category 3 with low representation of vulnerable groups of categories 2 (34%) and 1 (7%). This is mostly attributed to the minimum requirement for most interventions such as the MVT to have completed at least nine year's basic education, rendering some ineligible. There is also low participation of people with disabilities, representing only 3.5% of trainees.

Participation in NEP interventions

NEP reports MVT was delivered to 16,998 beneficiaries (40% female), however the data provided only has 9,585 trainees (40% female) against a cumulative target of 16,998 beneficiaries. NEP reports the RRT was delivered to 5,829 beneficiaries (46% female), the data provided only has 2,093 beneficiaries (65% female) against a cumulative target of 7,700 beneficiaries. RPL reached 19,756 beneficiaries (6% female) since 2016 according to NEP reports, data provided only has 14,896 beneficiaries (5% female).

MVT and RRT percentages of trainees vary slightly across all 30 districts with most of trainees representing 1 – 5% of the total number of NEP trainees. It is only Gasabo district that has up to 18% of all the beneficiaries, attributed to the RRT in garment industries. In terms of the total number of beneficiaries by intervention, the RRT (8%) covers the lowest percentage of beneficiaries by intervention, compared against RPL (56%) and MVT (36%). The largest numbers of beneficiaries for all interventions are found in Kicukiro (21%), Gasabo (12%), Rwamagana (5%) and Karongi (5%).

According to guidelines from the NEP Secretariat, participants in the MVT and RRT were required to have an interest in training, availability and to be Rwandan citizens. However, during implementation, specifically for the MVT, trainees were also required to have completed 9-YBE. 19% of the trainees identify improving access to employment as their main motivation for attending trainings. This view is most prevalent in the peri-urban areas, such as the Musanze district (23%) in which the largest number of trainees were youth. 14% of trainees describe the need to improve their technical skills in different trades as their motivation.

Through the RRT and MVT, NEP has provided access to training for 11,678 beneficiaries (45% female; 55% male) in 28 trades. 32% of trainings have been in construction related trades such as masonry and welding. This is closely followed by training in textiles and leather trades (30%), specifically tailoring, most of whose beneficiaries are women (76%). Many trainings dubbed tailoring are mostly in the garment manufacturing occupation rather than basic tailoring as most of these trainees are beneficiaries of the RRT intervention. It is evident that trainings for different trades were selected and implemented mostly based the areas' economic potentialities as well as on the availability of training service providers in the different areas. There is also evidence of alignment between the trades trained and Rwanda's economic development agenda.

Prior to participating in the interventions, 33% of beneficiaries were unemployed. The rest were either enrolled in formal education institutions or were in different forms of formal and informal employment. 46% of the beneficiaries of NEP interventions have secondary education or higher levels of education. Only 2.6% have no education. 21% obtained information about NEP interventions from central and local government authorities. 37% obtained the information from mutual contacts in areas were the trainings were being conducted. 21% of the participants in trainings confirm having encountered various challenges during the trainings. The most common challenge reported by 7.7% was the distance to the training facilities.

Quality and relevance of interventions

The most satisfactory aspect of the NEP supported trainings is the competence of the trainers and teaching methods. Trainers both at workplaces and in training institutions demonstrate mastery of the trades they train in and deliver trainings in an appropriate way. There is notable appreciation by the trainees for training content that matches labour market needs. There are high levels of satisfaction with the training facilities' safety conditions.

Highest levels of dissatisfaction are expressed in regard to access to accommodation, meals and other amenities. This is closely followed by and related to accessibility to the training locations. Many trainees elaborate how they reside in very remote areas and had to travel for an hour or more to the training locations. Not only did many not have the finances to use public transport but sometimes there is hardly any public transport.

75.6% of trainees describe themselves as having been trained well enough to compete on the labour market in their respective trades. Contrarily, 24.4% consider themselves unprepared for the job market. Trainees that consider themselves well prepared attribute this to delivered content that addressed real occupational issues, trainers shared experiences and trainings involved more practical demonstrations than theoretical classroom work. Other skills and traits trainees acquired from the NEP supported trainings are the entrepreneurship mindset (22%) and innovativeness (20%), that enhanced their capacity to use their new skills to venture into markets. 32% of trainees consider themselves not competitive enough for the labour market in their respective trades. Respondents attribute this mostly to the absence of trainers in linking them to employment opportunities. This view is shared mostly by MVT trainees from the IPRCs.

22% of trainees participated in different forms of industrial attachment. Many of the NEP beneficiaries that attended industrial attachment did so for two to three months. Only 39% that participated in the industrial attachments received cash remuneration. 53% received no payment for the entire duration of their industrial attachments. The lack of payment affected participation and in some cases retention of beneficiaries. 96% that participated in industrial attachment express satisfaction with the experience, skills and knowledge obtained. Only 4% express discontent with the lack of sufficient exposure to practical resources to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Employment status

66% of beneficiaries confirm that they are currently employed at the time of the survey, with 17.7% of them describing themselves as in and out of employment. The highest rates of employment are observed among beneficiaries of the RRT (79%) and RPL (78%) and less in MVT (60%). In terms of gender there are higher employment rates among males (75%) than females (53%).

16% of the beneficiaries that are currently employed are either in full-time contractual employment (16%) or Part-time informal employment (10%). Overall 26% are in formal employment while 22% are in informal employment. A large proportion of formal sector workers are mostly RRT beneficiaries (53%) indicating success in the objective to create employment by requiring companies participating in the RRT to employ at least 70% of beneficiaries they train. Part-time informal work “gigs” are predominated by RPL beneficiaries (19%). Rationalizing the RPL intervention that is formalizing this traditionally informal sector. Males dominate employment across all categories of employment. The highest female representation is in full-time formal employment (12.8%) mostly in garment manufacturing. There are more females (7%) than males (3%) in self-employed in the informal sector which is also predominated by beneficiaries of the MVT (6%), indicating more females benefiting from the MVT created their own jobs than males, although less females (40%) than males (60%) benefited from the trainings.

34% are employed in the trades in which they received training and/or certification, while 14% are employed in other trades. The highest proportion of those employed in their trade of training are located in the urban areas (44%). 66% of RRT beneficiaries are employed in their trades of training followed by RPL (44%) and least in MVT (26%). Majority of those employed in trades other than those of training are among the MVT (18%) beneficiaries. Much as MVT reaches largest numbers, technical skills provided do not necessarily translate into employment creation in the trained trades, compared to RRT that reaches less but retains more trainees in their trades of training.

The highest levels of employment are recorded in the construction and carpentry trades (24%) and the manufacturing sector, more specifically garment manufacturing (12%). There are also a considerable proportion employed in the hospitality sub-sector (9%).

30% of the beneficiaries accessed employment after participating in the NEP trainings while 27% were employed even before participating in interventions. Overall in all regions it takes an average of three months and three weeks to access employment after training. RRT beneficiaries take an average of one and half months to access their first employment, while beneficiaries of MVT take an average of four and half months to access employment. Meanwhile, after training, females on average accessed employment faster (3 months) than male counterparts (4 months). Access to employment across districts does not follow a consistent trend, but ranges between 2 and 5 months with the longest durations observed in the more rural areas. 18% of the beneficiaries either sourced employment by applying directly to employers or by starting up their own enterprises (14%). 12.5% acknowledge being self-employed. On average each has employed an average of two employees. With a total of 26,574 beneficiaries reached by the NEP interventions, we assume 3,322 (12.5%) created at least 6,644 jobs for other people that did not participate directly in the NEP interventions.

Income status and economic livelihoods

17% consider incomes earned from current employment as sufficient to meet their financial needs. 83% consider current earnings as insufficient given the prevailing costs of living and remuneration they receive for the nature of work that they perform. In order to supplement income, at least 24% acknowledge having a second job. Even though a majority record their incomes as being insufficient, 59% confirm an improvement in the livelihoods following their participation in the NEP interventions. This is explained by most as an improvement in their ability to obtain gainful employment or create their own jobs through the skills provided and options given which was not the case before. 0.7% report their livelihood conditions have worsened. These include beneficiaries that started enterprises using small loans after the trainings and the businesses did not work out. Such people were left indebted and are struggling to pay back loans with limited or no sources of income and some have lost or are in the process of losing their collateral.

Comparing the before and after situations, there is a 14% increase in number of beneficiaries that earn 200,000 Rwf or less per month and a 3% increase among those earning between 200,000Rwf and 320,000 Rwf per month. No one reports earning more than 320,000 Rwf per month before participating in the interventions, but 1.1% report earning between 320,000 and 400,000 Rwf per month after. Generally, the number of beneficiaries reporting no income reduced by 18% after engaging with NEP from 39% to 20% indicating a contribution of the three NEP interventions to improving the monthly earnings of its beneficiaries.

The highest increase in the number of beneficiaries earning incomes below 200,000 Rwf is realized among MVT (20%) and RRT (18%) beneficiaries, meanwhile the proportions under RPL in this income category reduced by 4%. For those earning between 200,000-320,000 Rwf, the percentage increase is highest among RPL (7%) and RRT (4%) and least among the MVT (3%) beneficiaries.

The highest increase in the number of beneficiaries earning incomes below 200,000 Rwf is realized among males (15%) than females (13%). The trend is similar for those earning between 200,000-320,000 Rwf, here the percentage increase is higher among males (5%) than females (2.5%). Almost twice the proportion of males (6.9%) earn more than 200,000 Rwf than females (3.4%), indicating higher remuneration for males in trades.

47% confirm saving some of their earnings with an average saving of about 37,680 Rwf per month and 70% confirm having bank accounts. More males (52%) save and own bank accounts, compared to females (40%). Average savings by men is higher than that by women.

Access to finance

Only 9% from the RRT, MVT and RPL started new enterprises, 10% already had existing businesses that they expanded or continued to operate. Of those that started enterprises 12% are from RRT (12%) and 11% MVT. Only 2% of those in the RPL confirm having started enterprises as 14% already had their own enterprises. Meanwhile almost twice as many females (12%) than males (7%) started enterprises. However, more males (12%) confirm having owned enterprises than females (9%) before participating in the NEP interventions.

12% used their own savings to start the businesses, 5% borrowed from acquaintances while borrowing from formal lenders such as commercial banks and SACCOs is only reported by 2%. Slightly more males (2%) than females (1%) report borrowing from financial institutions. Average borrowing is 288,9000 Rwf and the maximum amount borrowed is 850,000 Rwf.

37% confirm they received different forms of support from the NEP in regard to financing and running enterprises. Regarding other business support 30% identify business incubator space, specifically the Integrated Craft Production Centers (ICPCs) as the most outstanding support from the NEP.

The most common constraint to enterprise development experienced is difficulty in accessing financing reported by at least 20% of the respondents. The second (13%) most prevalent issue is the cost of doing business which in many cases makes most of the enterprises unprofitable. Overwhelming competition (13%) in the market has also made starting or growing enterprises in the different vocations very difficult. 12% identify stringent regulatory requirements such as standards from regulatory authorities make it difficult for MSMEs to do any business.

52% consider NEP interventions, specifically training, to have mainstreamed gender adequately. More females (55%) than males (50%) identify how all communications about trainings emphasized how women and youth were the main target.

Key Lessons learned

- Vulnerable groups such as Ubudehe category one and PWDs have not adequately benefitted from the three NEP interventions. Concerted strategies such us support to grassroots TVET schools, partnerships with civil society and incentives for females could be considered.
- Trainee selection and enrolment processes are not rigorous enough to assess and ensure trainees motivations for participating in different trades.
- Short trainings are considered adequate to rapidly fill the skills gaps, however a blanket approach to duration of training is compromising quality of graduates in certain trades.
- Selection of trades of training is done well with consideration of geographical areas potentialities and alignment to national strategic priority economic sectors. But key sectors such as agro-processing and ICT have not been adequately covered by the programme
- Industrial attachment for trainees has not been systematically rolled out especially under the MVT, leaving nearly 80% of graduates with very limited exposure and experience.
- Access to credit to start up or run existing MSMEs remains still limited despite development of several financing instruments by partners such as BDF.
- Rate of development of start-ups is too low and attrition rate is very high.
- There is no explicit theory of change for all the interventions especially the RPL, making it difficult for programme implementers to strategize for impact.
- NEP has automated monitoring tools but there is no systematic mechanism or structures for post-training and post-financing monitoring and supervision contributing to limitations in implementing a results-based management approach across interventions.

Introduction

The Swedish Embassy's current funding agreement with the Government of Rwanda (GoR), represented by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, for support to the National Employment Programme (NEP) came to an end in December 2019 and the GoR is in the process of operationalizing a new National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy 2019-2024. In this context, the Embassy and the GoR agreed on carrying out an external final evaluation of the NEP to better understand the results and effects of the NEP interventions, to what extent and how the interventions have contributed to the programmes overarching goal and document lessons that can help in operationalization of the GoR's new skills and employment strategy.

In addition, Sweden's bilateral development cooperation strategy with Rwanda ended in December 2019. Within the next few months the Swedish government is expected to decide on a new bilateral development cooperation strategy for the coming four years. Once the new strategy is decided, the Embassy will embark on a strategy operationalization process during the spring of 2020. This final evaluation is expected to inform this process.

To conduct a comprehensive and informative final evaluation of the NEP, a quantitative survey of various beneficiaries of the different interventions implemented through the NEP was conducted across the country. Given the limitations in time and cost, the survey targeted a sample of beneficiaries from only three interventions of the NEP from one district in each of the five provinces, to reach a total of not less than 500 beneficiaries.

This survey report elaborates the purpose of the NEP beneficiaries quantitative survey, overall approach and methodology used and key findings.

Rational and purpose

The purpose of the final evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of results achieved by the NEP and contribute to learning by understanding cause-effect relationships and what factors made possible or created obstacles to the achievement of these results.

The specific objectives of the quantitative survey are to:

- Assess competitiveness of beneficiaries of NEP interventions, specifically Rapid Response Training (RRT), Massive Vocational Training (MVT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- Establish the employment situation of the NEP interventions' beneficiaries.
- Assess changes in incomes and livelihood standards of the NEP interventions' beneficiaries.
- Assess the beneficiaries' levels of satisfaction with the NEP interventions.
- Assess the impact of the NEP training and other support on beneficiaries' employability and entrepreneurship

Scope of the quantitative survey

The NEP final evaluation quantitative survey was conducted between 02 and 20 March 2020. The first week involved the finalization and translation of the survey questionnaire that was included in the evaluation's inception report. Also, during this week, a team of 15 enumerators was trained on how to administer the survey questionnaire that was digitized in the Open Data Kit (ODK) application and installed on their tablets. The training included a pilot of the ODK tool to ensure proper question sequencing and feasibility of the proposed methodology. Data collection for the survey commenced on 09 March and was completed on 19 March 2020.

Since an in-depth evaluation of all the NEP instruments and components was not feasible with the resources and time available for this assignment, the scope of the assignment has been adjusted. Therefore, in line with the adjusted scope for the entire evaluation, the quantitative survey primarily focuses on the first pillar of the NEP that includes three interventions: MVT, RRT and RPL.

Data gathered through the evaluation survey focuses on: Quality and relevance of training and skills development interventions; Satisfaction with internship programs and other job attachments; Employment status [employed (formal/informal), self-employed, unemployed or underemployed]; Income status and livelihood conditions; Levels of access to finance and Identify challenges experienced pre and post-training.

Methodology

Overall approach

The overall evaluation of the NEP uses a triangulation design, encompassing mixed methods including this broad-scale quantitative survey of beneficiaries of three NEP interventions and qualitative interviews with individuals and groups as well as observational data collection, photography and mapping.

The quantitative survey planning and implementation was conducted in four phases.

The first phase was the planning and design phase that were part of the inception phase of the evaluation. During the planning, key stakeholders were engaged in defining the scope and expectations of the quantitative survey. This resulted in the key objectives outlined in section two above. Also, during these consultations, the rationale for the terms of reference (ToR) limiting the survey to the three target groups (MVT, RPL and RRT) was established and it informed the design of the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was also adapted to align to the two tracer surveys commissioned by the NEP in 2016 and 2018. Though not fully aligned as these two tracer studies did not primarily focus on these three interventions, some relevant inputs to the survey tool were adapted and outputs from those surveys are used for comparative purposes in this final evaluation. The second part of the planning phase was the survey design, this involved mostly the sample design elaborated in the section below.

The fieldwork data collection was conducted over a two week period in five districts also presented below. All data gathered was submitted through the ODK app to the ODK servers from which it was extracted, cleaned and analyzed to produce the information detailed in the finding’s sections of this report.

Beneficiaries sample design

In this phase the consultants conducted a detailed review of the project beneficiaries’ information to first of all understand identities of the beneficiaries (gender, contact details), NEP interventions in which they participated (RPL, MVT and RRT) and their registered geographical locations. This information aided the consulting team to identify the sampling frame and inform the sample design approach.

Overall, the beneficiaries’ survey was conducted in five districts of Rwanda, primarily in which the beneficiaries registered as their districts of residence or operation. A multi-stage sampling methodology is used to select the districts, trades and respondents to the survey.

Based on databases of beneficiaries provided by the NEP Secretariat, as shown in table 1 below, the Programme has supported a total of 26,574 from its three interventions; RRT 2,093; MVT 9,585; and RPL 14,896[37].

[37] Numbers provided are only based on information obtained through the NEP database.

Table 1: Table of all beneficiaries of the NEP training interventions

	Interventions	RPL			RRT					MVT										
	Districts	**CP**	**CO**	**Total**	**MC**	**TL**	**GM**	**ICT**	**Total**	**AG**	**BA**	**CP**	**CO**	**MC**	**HP**	**ICT**	**TL**	**UN**	**Total**	**G-Total**
1	Gasabo	222	713	*935*	2	1,669	100	16	*1,787*	1	71	10	58	15	139	20	25	1	*340*	3,062
2	Kicukiro	5,222	-	*5,222*	-	18	32	-	*50*	-	44	10	50	31	107	34	2	-	*278*	5,550
3	Nyarugenge	497	122	*619*	-	27	5	-	*32*	1	38	3	61	4	23	18	1	-	*149*	800
4	Bugesera	388	112	*500*	-	2	7	-	*9*	-	-	31	119	7	5	1	29	-	*192*	701
5	Gatsibo	409	-	*409*	-	1	6	-	*7*	46	1	83	216	4	47	4	134	-	*535*	951
6	Kayonza	596	-	*596*	-	1	9	-	*10*	2	2	30	63	5	7	1	54	-	*164*	770
7	Kirehe	529	-	*529*	-	1	6	-	*7*	-	3	20	109	2	2	-	101	-	*237*	773
8	Ngoma	758	-	*758*	-	-	4	-	*4*	1	2	1	106	25	89	-	76	-	*300*	1,062
9	Nyagatare	544	-	*544*	-	5	9	-	*14*	3	4	13	147	4	9	2	118	-	*300*	858
10	Rwamagana	837	-	*837*	-	2	10	-	*12*	2	1	52	150	40	57	3	70	-	*375*	1,224
11	Gisagara	252	-	*252*	-	-	5	-	*5*	13	1	55	68	3	28	2	108	-	*278*	535
12	Huye	120	-	*120*	-	1	7	-	*8*	27	38	79	248	28	100	2	122	-	*644*	772
13	Kamonyi	568	-	*568*	-	4	9	-	*13*	1	3	17	39	7	35	2	65	-	*169*	750
14	Muhanga	375	15	*390*	-	-	8	-	*8*	49	36	56	210	77	100	1	179	14	*722*	1,120
15	Nyamagabe	248	-	*248*	-	1	2	-	*3*	4	1	60	72	23	143	2	85	-	*390*	641
16	Nyanza	29	-	*29*	1	-	4	-	*5*	2	4	108	252	110	13	-	107	-	*596*	630
17	Nyaruguru	462	-	*462*	-	-	6	-	*6*	1	7	50	92	3	12	-	53	-	*218*	686
18	Ruhango	222	-	*222*	1	-	10	-	*11*	1	19	27	73	17	63	7	62	-	*269*	502
19	Burera	3	-	*3*	-	-	1	-	*1*	1	-	19	86	30	-	4	1	-	*141*	145
20	Gakenke	6	-	*6*	-	-	5	-	*5*	40	-	32	57	6	3	2	51	-	*191*	202
21	Gicumbi	5	-	*5*	-	1	3	-	*4*	93	2	2	100	36	70	1	94	-	*398*	407
22	Musanze	455	-	*455*	-	5	2	-	*7*	1	-	10	309	38	69	-	1	-	*428*	890
23	Rulindo	5	-	*5*	-	2	-	-	*2*	65	-	31	184	2	184	23	45	-	*534*	541
24	Karongi	936	87	*1,023*	-	1	14	-	*15*	-	-	24	143	7	50	7	-	-	*231*	1,269
25	Ngororero	30	-	*30*	-	-	9	-	*9*	-	2	66	132	7	4	1	94	-	*306*	345
26	Nyabihu	13	-	*13*	-	-	3	-	*3*	-	-	3	79	36	3	-	1	-	*122*	138
27	Nyamasheke	14	-	*14*	-	1	12	-	*13*	-	-	31	168	87	103	3	21	-	*413*	440
28	Rubavu	7	-	*7*	-	-	2	-	*2*	-	-	15	61	86	4	19	35	9	*229*	238
29	Rusizi	9	-	*9*	1	4	8	-	*13*	-	1	71	68	6	9	3	20	-	*178*	200
30	Rutsiro	-	-	-	25	1	2	-	*28*	-	-	2	141	18	1	-	2	-	*164*	192
	Unidentified	86		*86*	-	-	-	-	-	26	-	-	41	-	26	1	-	-	*94*	206
	Total	**13,847**	**1,049**	***14,896***	**30**	**1,747**	**300**	**16**	***2,093***	**380**	**280**	**1,011**	**3,702**	**764**	**1,505**	**163**	**1,756**	**24**	***9,585***	**26,574**
	Female	648	53	*701*	6	1,158	193	1	*1,358*	250	158	185	484	81	1,148	48	1,510	6	*3,870*	5,929
	Male	13,199	996	*14,195*	24	589	107	15	*735*	130	122	826	3,218	683	357	115	246	18	*5,715*	20,645

Occupational Field		Trades
AG	**Agriculture**	Agribusiness, Crop production
BA	**Beauty & Aesthetics**	Fitness & Swimming, Hairdressing
CP	**Carpentry**	Carpentry, Arts and Crafts
CO	**Construction**	Electricity, Domestic electricity, Painting, Painting & Decorating, Scaffolding, Plumbing, Masonry, Welding, Airconditioning & Refrigeration
MC	**Mechanics**	Biogas, Mining, Motor vehicle Mechanics
HP	**Hospitality**	Culinary arts, Foods and Beverages, Housekeeping
ICT	**ICT**	Computer Science, Photojournalism, Electronics and Telecoms, Electronic repairs
TL	**Textile & Leather**	Leather, Tailoring
GM	**Garment manufacturing**	Garments Manufacturing
UN	**Unidentified**	Unidentified

The multi-stage sampling process commenced with the clustering for three levels of sampling. The first level covered the selection of districts, the second level included selection of trades and the final level involved selection of individuals in the survey.

Cluster 1: Sampling of districts

Rwanda is made up of 30 districts spread across five provinces. As shown in table 1 above, beneficiaries of the selected NEP interventions originate or are located in almost all 30 districts. Therefore, selection criteria were developed to determine the districts to be sampled, while ensuring the evaluation considers all five provinces. The criteria for selection of districts included:

i. ***Geographical location*** – One district in each of the 5 provinces with a distinctive balance between rural and urban or peri-urban settings. This criterion aimed to create a balance between accessibility and socio-economic characteristics of respondents. Wherever possible, a district hosting a secondary city is prioritised to represent the urban setting.

ii. ***Poverty profiles*** – The districts selected in each province should represent or lie within the categories of the highest (41.5 – 16.1%) or lowest (3.5 – 16.1%) rates of extreme poverty as reported by the Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, EICV5 (2016/17)

iii. **NEP interventions** – The two districts selected are identified from the list of districts in which the three NEP interventions (RRT, RPL and MVT) have been mostly implemented or have beneficiaries originating from or working in. This reduced risk of failing to locate the targeted minimum number of respondents.

Table 2: Table of selected districts for sampling

#	Province	Districts	Location		Poverty Rates		NEP Interventions		
			Urban	Rural	High	Low	High	Medium	Low
1	Kigali	Gasabo							
2	East	Gatsibo							
3	North	Musanze							
4	South	Nyaruguru							
5	West	Karongi							

Cluster 2: Sampling of trades

The second cluster of sampling is from the trades in which the different beneficiaries were trained or supported to obtain employment through the three NEP interventions (RRT, MVT and RPL). The 28 Trades in the databases provided have been classified into 9 categories (Occupations) that have all been included in the sampling frame used in this survey. The trade categories include:

Table 3: Table of selected trades for sampling

1. AG: Agriculture	Agribusiness, Crop production
2. BA: Beauty & Aesthetics	Fitness & Swimming, Hairdressing
3. CP: Carpentry	Carpentry, Arts and Crafts

4. CO: Construction	Electricity, Domestic electricity, Painting, Painting & Decorating, Scaffolding, Plumbing, Masonry, Welding, Airconditioning & Refrigeration
5. MC: Mechanics	Biogas, Mining, Motor vehicle Mechanics
6. HP: Hospitality	Culinary arts, Foods and Beverages, Housekeeping
7. ICT: Info. & Com Technology	Computer Science, Photojournalism, Electronics and Telecoms, Electronic repairs
8. TL: Textile & Leather	Leather, Tailoring
9. GM: Garment Manufacturing	Garment manufacturing

Cluster 3: Sampling of respondents

The respondents for this quantitative survey are drawn from the sampling frame of beneficiaries of the RRT, RPL and MVT interventions of the NEP. Although the three databases have a total of 26,574 beneficiaries, the sampled respondents are only drawn from the five selected districts presented in cluster one above.

To calculate the required sample size for this survey, the random sampling formula below was used.

$$n = \frac{Nz^2pq}{(E^2(N-1) + z^2pq}$$

$$500 = \frac{26{,}574*1.96^2*0.5*0.5}{(0.043^2(26{,}574-1) + 1.96^2*0.5*0.5}$$

Where:

n = Required sample size

N = Population size

P and q = Population proportions

Z = Level of confidence equal to 1.96 at 95% confidence level

E = Margin of error or level of accuracy which is 4.23% in this case (0.04)

Based on the above calculations the quantitative survey targeted a sample of 500 respondents. To allow for non-response and mitigate risks associated with inaccuracy and errors in data collection, the sample size was over drawn by 14% to obtain a total sample of 570 respondents to the survey

As shown in the table below a total sample size of 570 respondents was drawn in unequal proportions from all five districts, the survey targeted to sample proportionately across the trades to ensure equitable distribution of the sample size across the trades. Also, to achieve equal distribution of gender across the sample the sampling within the trades and districts aimed to sample equal proportions of males and females across the trades and districts.

	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
1.Agriculture	1	30	0	1	0	32
2.Beauty & Aesthetics	18	0	0	0	7	25
3.Carpentry	23	17	24	8	16	88
4.Construction	25	22	53	15	54	169
5.Mechanics	11	3	4	34	2	54

6.Hospitality	15	20	15	36	17	103
7.ICT	21	0	5	0	0	26
8.Textile & Leather	2	15	2	3	13	35
9.Garment Manufacturing	29	0	6	3	0	38
Total	**145**	**107**	**109**	**100**	**109**	**570**

Limitations

The database provided by the NEP did not provide full contact details of all beneficiaries across interventions which limited the ability of the survey to identify and locate all targeted respondents. Also, inaccuracy and or changes in location and/or contacts details of respondents increased the time spent trying to locate respondents.

As shown in table 1 above, females represented no more than 22% of all the beneficiaries of the three interventions and yet the survey targeted to survey equal proportions of males and females. This created difficulties in locating mostly females across the different trades, resulting still in a lower representation of females in the final sampled respondents.

Various beneficiaries have received trainings in more than one trade through the different interventions. This made it difficult to tie respondents to specific trades, making a targeted survey tedious. Also, interventions have been implemented quite differently across the different geographical areas targeting specific trades more appropriate to specific locations. This made it difficult to obtain a balance between numbers sampled in different trades across all districts, for example ICT training in RRT is only done in Kigali Province, implying almost no other district provided required samples.

The interventions sampled did not reach equal numbers of males and females and yet the survey targeted even proportions. This implies the study purposefully over samples within the underrepresented female population, hence reducing the research’s rigor.

Findings

This findings section of the quantitative survey for the NEP final evaluation provides an elaboration of the survey findings that have been summarized in the tables. The tables provide the summary findings for each of the survey variables disaggregated by district and the last column in most tables shows the findings for the entire sampled population. These findings mainly aim to complement and/or provide supporting evidence for the main body of the report of which this survey report is a part. The survey also uses information gathered from Programme literature reviewed as well as consultations with the different stakeholders.

Socio-economic profiles of the NEP beneficiaries

The socio-economic profiles section describes the demographics of the surveyed respondents as well as summarizes their socio-economic categories and varying levels of vulnerability.

NEP beneficiaries' gender and age patterns

The survey reached a total of 570 respondents of which 41.8% (238) are females and 58.2% (332) are males. Much as the target was to reach equal proportions, the survey was not able to reach the required numbers of females as there is under-representation of females in all the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) interventions covered by this study. Reviewing the numbers in the overall database, females only represent 22% (5,929) of the 26,574 beneficiaries of the MVT, RPL and RRT interventions of the NEP. This underrepresentation of women is mostly observed in the RPL (5%) and MVT (40%) interventions. However, the RRT interventions do have more female (65%) representation compared to the males.

Table 4: Gender of the quantitative survey respondents

Respondents gender	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Female	49.7	43.9	37.6	56.0	20.2	41.8
Male	50.3	56.1	62.4	44.0	79.8	58.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5 below shows the age ranges for the beneficiaries of the NEP interventions. Overall more than half (52%) of the beneficiaries of the NEP interventions are youth between the ages of 19 and 30 years. None of the trainees sampled were 18 years or less and the oldest is 72 years.

The median age of the beneficiaries is 30 years and most of the older beneficiaries are from the RPL intervention with an average age of 33. The proportion of youth beneficiaries varies slightly across the districts with no notable differences between the urban and rural areas. However, peri-urban areas, specifically Musanze record the highest proportion of youth (62%) beneficiaries. While the more rural areas of Gatsibo (40%) and Nyaruguru (46%) indicate lower percentages of youth beneficiaries.

Table 5: Ages of the quantitative survey respondents

Respondents Age	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
0 - 18	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
19 - 24	11.7	14.0	27.5	28.0	9.2	17.5
25 - 30	38.6	26.2	33.0	34.0	37.6	34.2

31 - 35	20.7	20.6	22.9	19.0	21.1	20.9
36 - 40	15.9	17.8	6.4	6.0	19.3	13.3
41 - 45	9.7	11.2	2.8	3.0	7.3	7.0
46 - 50	2.1	6.5	2.8	5.0	0.9	3.3
51 and above	1.4	3.7	4.6	5.0	4.6	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Socio-economic categories

All households and their members in Rwanda are classified into four socio-economic categories based on their living standards and economic wellbeing. The first two categories are defined as the most vulnerable with category one classified as the most vulnerable. Category three households are classified as less vulnerable and in most cases productive enough to support themselves and their dependents satisfactorily. Category four are the "rich", often with the capacity to employ or lead others economic growth.

Table 6: Socio-economic categories of the quantitative survey respondents

Respondents Ubudehe Categories	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Category 1	4.8	7.5	7.3	5.0	11.9	7.3
Category 2	32.4	31.8	33.9	41.0	29.4	33.7
Category 3	62.8	59.8	57.8	54.0	57.8	58.4
Category 4	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Unidentified	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6 above presents the socio-economic categories of the beneficiaries of the NEP interventions. The majority of the beneficiaries of the NEP interventions are in category three (58%) with less representation of the more vulnerable groups of categories two (34%) and one (7%).

This is mostly attributed by stakeholders to the minimum requirement for most of those required to participate in interventions such as the MVT to have completed at least nine years basic education (9-YBE) which in many cases most vulnerable members of society will not have completed mainly due to the financial constraints associated with progressing through that level of education, hence rendering many potential beneficiaries in category one and or two ineligible. Although this minimum academic qualification is not provided for in the NEP guidelines for MVT or RRT, FGD participants and implementing partners confirm that this was a requirement for enrolment in MVT.

Also, the higher number of category three beneficiaries is explained through the larger proportions of RPL beneficiaries reached by the NEP being those in active employment (reached at workplaces). Thus, most of these in the workplace are mostly considered in less vulnerable groups (category 3) as they are able to work and applying directly to employers or by starting up their own enterprises (14%). support themselves.

Table 7: Other vulnerabilities of the quantitative survey respondents

Respondents with Disabilities (PWDs)	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot%

Deaf or partially deaf	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.4
Blind or visual impairment	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Mental health issues	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Physical disability	0.0	0.9	0.9	0.0	6.4	1.6
Minor physical disabilities	0.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	2.8	1.1
No disability	99.3	96.4	98.2	99.0	89.9	96.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The survey also established the incidence of persons with disabilities (PWDs) among the beneficiaries of the NEP. Overall there is a small proportion of PWDs not exceeding 3.5% of the beneficiaries of the MVT, RPL and RRT interventions. Stakeholders explain how there was no specific strategy implemented under Pillar 1: skills development that targeted specifically PWD, this was more addressed under pillar 2's business development projects that had specific intentions for this more vulnerable group. Although, MVT eligibility guidelines clearly called on PWD to apply for, specifically the MVT intervention.

Participation in NEP interventions

The NEP interventions covered within the scope of this quantitative survey primarily are the RRT, MVT and RPL interventions that all fall under Pillar 1: employability skills development.

Massive vocational training has been implemented by the NEP since 2014 through the workforce development authority (WDA) and later through Rwanda Polytechnic (RP) as well. In this intervention training is provided by Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges (IPRCs) and TVET schools, although some MVT trainings have also been by private companies such as Photojournalism trainings through Kigali Today Ltd. NEP reports indicate that the MVT has been delivered to 17,332 beneficiaries (40% female)[38], however the data provided only has 9,585 trainees (40% female) against a cumulative target of 16,998 beneficiaries.

Rapid Response Training is a skills development intervention that facilitates companies to secure skilled employees through on work training and retention of at least 70% of the trainees as company employees. Introduced in 2015, this intervention has predominantly been implemented by large-scale industries working in the textile sub-sector including Pink Mango C&D, UFACO, New Kigali Design and Vision Garments. NEP reports indicate that the RRT has been delivered to 5,829 beneficiaries (46% female)[38], however the data provided only has 2,093 beneficiaries (65% female) against a cumulative target of 7,700 beneficiaries.

Recognition of prior learning is an intervention that gives recognition to un-certified skilled people that have acquired skills our of formal education systems by providing them with a "skills Passport" after undergoing and on-the job assessment of different competences. The assessments are done by the RP in collaboration with STECOMA, a cooperative of un-certified skilled workers. Beneficiaries of this intervention have been only in the construction

[38] NEP Five Year Report 2014 – 2019, NEP Secretariat, 2020

sector, specifically in masonry (92%). NEP reports indicate that the RPL has reached to 19,756 beneficiaries (6% female) since 2016[38], however the data provided only has 14,896 beneficiaries (5% female).

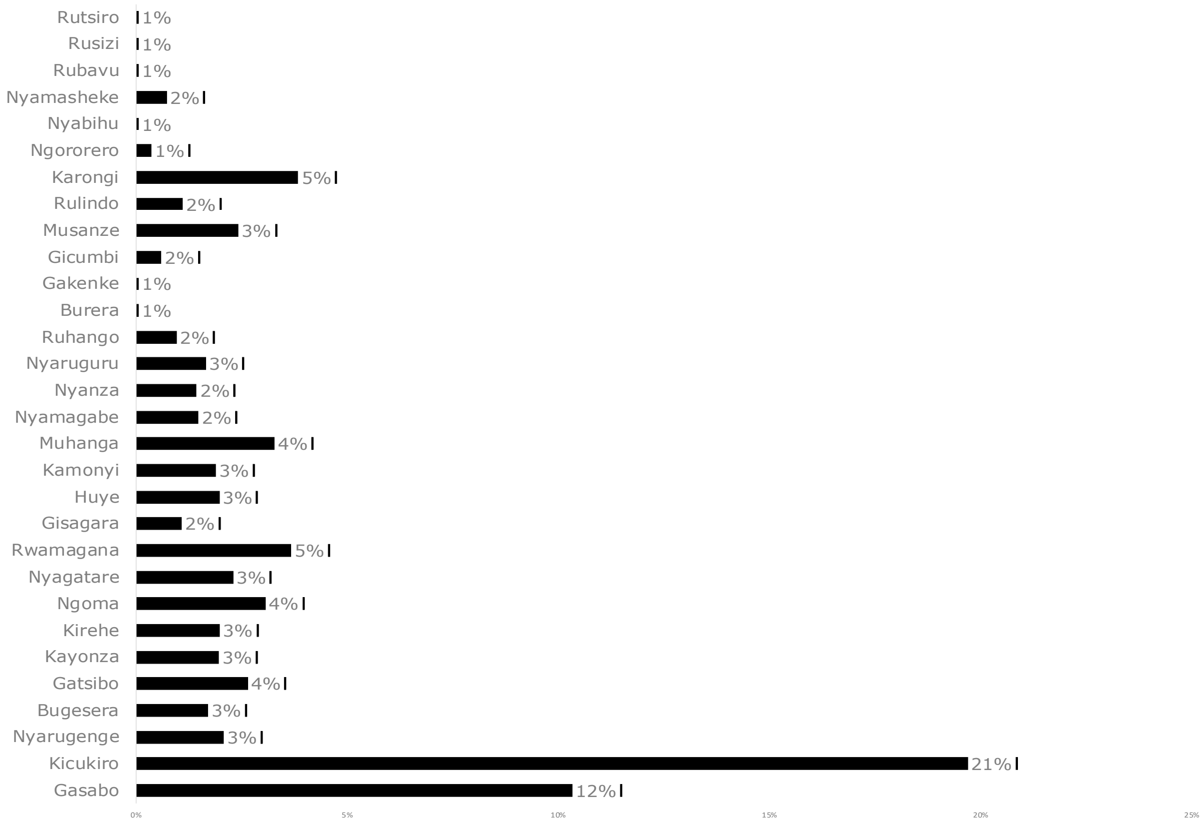
For this quantitative survey, of the 570 respondents reached by the survey 78% of them confirm having attended one or more trainings supported by the NEP under the RRT and/or MVT programmes.

Table 8: Respondents participation in sampled NEP intervention

Participation in NEP training	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Respondents participating in training	81.4	73.8	75.2	94.0	67.0	78.2
NEP interventions	**Gasabo**	**Gatsibo**	**Karongi**	**Musanze**	**Nyaruguru**	**Tot%**
MVT	44.1	90.7	67.9	88.0	56.9	67.5
RPL	32.4	6.5	24.8	6.0	43.1	23.5
RRT	23.4	2.8	7.3	6.0	0.0	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Considering only the training interventions, i.e. MVT and RRT, the percentages of trainees vary slightly across all 30 districts with most of trainees in the training programmes representing 1 – 5% of the total number of NEP trainees. It is only Gasabo district that has up to 18% of all the beneficiaries of NEP's skills development interventions. This is mostly attributed to the high numbers of trainees and support provided to the textile sub-sector (garments manufacturing and tailoring trades) that together form 15% of all the trainees of NEP's training interventions, specifically benefiting from the RRT intervention. Although the number of trainees under the RRT, specifically under garment manufacturing and tailoring, out-number the other trainees when disaggregated by district, in terms of total number of all beneficiaries by intervention, the RRT (8%) covers the lowest percentage of beneficiaries by intervention, when compared against RPL (56%) and MVT (36%). This follows a similar trend in the sampling used by this survey where MVT (67%) is the highest, followed by (RPL (24%) and RRT (9%) as shown in table 8 above. Meanwhile the largest numbers of beneficiaries for all interventions are found in Kicukiro (21%), Gasabo (12%), Rwamagana (5%) and Karongi (5%) as shown in figure one below.

Figure 1: Percentages of beneficiaries of the MVT, RPL and RRT disaggregated by district



All that was required of participants in the MVT and RRT trainings, according to guidelines from the NEP Secretariat, was interest in training, availability and to be a Rwandan citizen. However, consultations with training providers specifically for the MVT, trainees were also required to have completed 9-YBE. This is rationalized through the requirement for all trainees to be literate and numerate, given the nature of theoretical and practical training they would receive. This was different for RRT, were companies consulted confirm there is no need for any academic qualifications for anyone to benefit from the RRT intervention in their respective factories. These rather open requirements implied almost any unemployed citizen qualified for trainings, therefore the quantitative survey assessed trainees' motivations to establish reasons for their enrollment into the NEP training programmes.

As shown in table 9 below, 19% of the trainees identify improving access to employment as their main motivation for attending trainings. This view is most prevalent in the peri-urban areas, such as the Musanze district (23%) in which the largest number of trainees were youth as described in section 4.4.1 above. Also, a notable proportion of the trainees describe the need to improve their technical skills in different trades (14%) as a key driver to participating in the trainings. This is mostly observed in the urban areas and remote rural areas of Gasabo and Nyaruguru respectively. It is important to note that after seeking employment, the second most prevalent driver for many trainees is the fact that trainings were provided with no tuition fees required from them (16%). Although this increased access to training opportunities, it also presented the risk of beneficiaries participating in training mostly because they were free but not necessarily to practice the learned skills and/or trades as evidenced in focus group discussions with trainees.

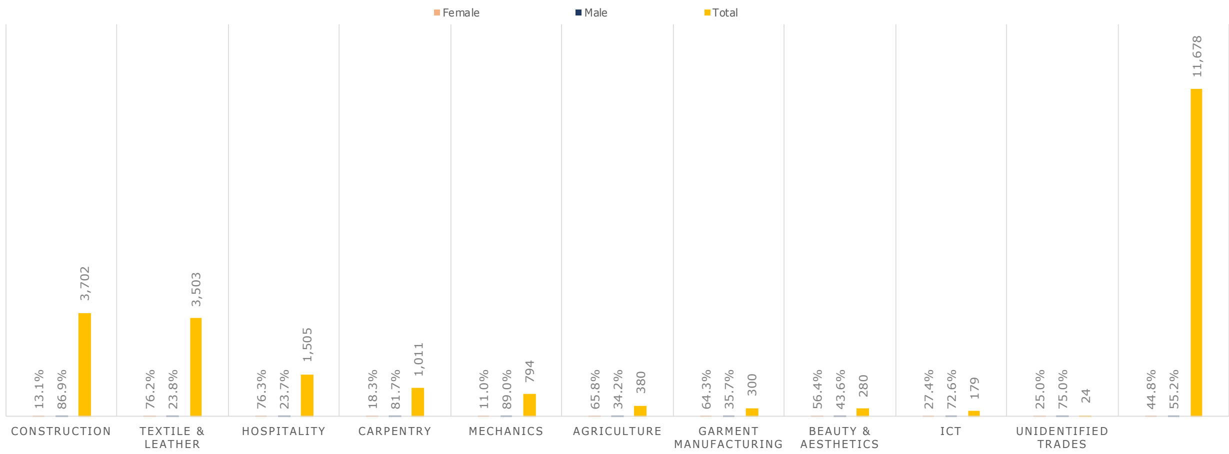
Table 9: Motivations for participation in sampled NEP interventions

Motivation for participating in training	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Training center is close to home of parents or other relatives	12.8	15.7	13.6	14.7	12.3	13.7
Low or no tuition fees	16.5	16.8	14.3	17.0	15.2	16.0
Improve my chances to find employment	17.4	16.8	20.3	22.6	17.2	18.5
Improve my trade know how	14.2	13.8	14.0	13.4	14.9	14.1
Increase my income	12.4	12.7	11.3	12.0	14.9	12.8
Friends and relatives participating in the programmes	7.9	10.9	8.9	6.9	7.8	8.5
National requirement to practice my trade	13.2	7.5	9.9	8.6	10.3	10.2
Other	5.5	5.8	7.8	4.9	7.3	6.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Through the RRT and MVT, NEP has provided access to training for 11,678 beneficiaries (45% female; 55% male) in in 24 trades presented in table 10 below. Most (32%) of the trainings have been in construction related trades such as masonry and welding. This is closely followed by training in textiles and leather trades (30%), specifically tailoring, most of whose beneficiaries are women (76%). However, a review of details indicates most of the trainings dubbed tailoring are mostly in the garment manufacturing occupation rather than basic tailoring as most of these trainees are beneficiaries of the RRT intervention that was delivered through the mostly medium and large-scale textile industries. Therefore, in terms of proportions training in textile or garment manufacturing is the trained trade with the most trainees. Training in hospitality related trades (13%) are the third most prevalent trainings for the NEP beneficiaries. Trainings in hospitality are mostly in the trades of culinary arts and foods and beverage services. Carpentry (9%) is also among the most dominant trainings, but with a very low female representation (18%).

In terms of geographical distribution of trainings, it is evident that the trainings for different trades were selected and implemented mostly based on the availability of training service providers in the different areas as well as the areas' economic potentialities. For example, there are mostly higher numbers of trainees in districts with or closer to IPRCs where most of the trainings were conducted and in areas where industries, such as the textile industries are present. Regarding potentialities, the assessment observes more trainees for trades such as hospitality in areas with more vibrant tourism activities such as Musanze and Karongi.

Figure 2: Number of trainees and proportions by gender



There is also evidence of alignment between the trades trained and Rwanda's economic development agenda. In the pervious and current development cycles the country has moved towards a more knowledge-based and services-led economy and less of an agrarian one with a strong drive to promote the "made in Rwanda" brand. This has resulted in national development focus on priority sectors including; construction, manufacturing and hospitality. This resonates with the most trained trades described above that cover construction, hospitality and garment manufacturing. However, there are still some gaps observed such as the marginal training in ICT-related fields (2%) and very low participation of females in the STEM-related vocational trades such as construction and mechanical engineering occupations.

Table 10: Respondents participation in training in different trades

Trained trades	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Carpentry	15.9	15.9	22	8	14.7	15.3
Masonry	2.8	3.7	16.5	2	31.2	11.3
Culinary arts	6.2	0.9	12.8	10	13.8	8.7
Biogas	3.4	1.9	3.7	33	0.9	8.6
Tailoring	1.4	14	7.3	6	2.8	6.3
Agribusiness	0.7	28	0	1	0	5.9
Food and beverage services	2.1	3.7	0.9	21	0.9	5.7
Food and beverage processing	2.1	14	0	5	0.9	4.4
Welding	0.7	4.7	7.3	4	3.6	4.1
Garment manufacturing	20	0	0	0	0	4.0
Hair dressing	6.2	0	0	0	6.4	2.5
Leather crafts	0	0	0	0	8.3	1.7
Domestic electricity	2.1	1.9	0.9	3	0	1.6
Plumbing	0.7	2.8	0.9	0	2.8	1.4
Fitness and Swimming	6.2	0	0	0	0	1.2
Computer science	5.5	0	0	0	0	1.1

Electronics and telecommunications	2.1	0	2.8	0	0	1.1
Photojournalism	4.1	0	0	0	0	0.8
Motor vehicle mechanics	2.8	0	0	0	0.9	0.7
Radio broadcasting technics	2.8	0	0	0	0	0.6
Mining	1.4	0.9	0	0	0	0.5
Painting and decoration	2.1	0	0	0	0	0.4
Repair and maintenance of electronics	0	0	1.8	0	0	0.4
No training	8.7	7.6	23.1	7	12.8	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

Regarding the employment status of beneficiaries of the NEP interventions, as shown in table 11 below, prior to participating in the different interventions, most (33%) of the beneficiaries were unemployed. The rest of the beneficiaries were either enrolled in formal education institutions (14%) or were in different forms of employment. Those who were in employment were mostly in informal paid or unpaid employment (27%), with the majority of these residing in rural areas such as Nyaruguru district (52%). This category includes many of whom were engaged in mostly subsistence agriculture. Also, a considerable number of the NEP beneficiaries were in self-employment (27%) in the informal sector. Only a few of the beneficiaries were in formal waged employment (9%), most of those in formal employment are found in the urban areas, Gasabo district (17%).

Most of the unemployed beneficiaries (88%) are observed to have enrolled in the MVT intervention. The unemployed enrolled in RRT (9%) and RPL (3%) only form a small percentage, implying most of these beneficiaries already had some form of employment at the time they engaged in the NEP interventions.

Table 11: Previous employment before participating in NEP interventions

Previous employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot%
Wage employed (formal employment)	16.6	7.5	8.3	6.0	8.3	9.3
Self-employed (informal employment)	18.6	19.6	15.6	11.0	1.8	13.3
Informal employment (unpaid/paid)	22.1	25.2	24.8	11.0	52.3	27.1
In education or professional training	15.2	11.2	7.3	16.0	20.2	14.0
Unemployed	21.4	36.4	39.4	48.0	17.4	32.5
Other	6.2	0.1	4.6	8.0	0.0	3.8
Tot%	100.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

46% of the beneficiaries of NEP interventions have secondary education or higher levels of education. Only 2.6% have no education. Other than those who participated in the RPL interventions majority of the beneficiaries with no education participated in only MVT. A review of all these beneficiaries shows that all these beneficiaries with no education participated in MVT trainings in only TVET schools in rural areas. There are also a few isolated cases of beneficiaries with incomplete or only primary education that participated in trainings in IPRCs. This indicates inconsistencies in application of the enrollment guidelines, especially in the IPRCs.

Notably 81% of the beneficiaries of the RRT have at least a secondary level of education with none having lower than no primary level education, despite no requirement for any level of education in RRT.

Table 12: Academic qualifications of participants in NEP interventions

Academic qualifications	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
No education	0.0	4.7	2.8	0.0	5.5	2.6
Primary Education (Drop out)	5.5	9.3	8.3	4.0	10.1	7.4
Primary Education (Completed)	13.8	23.4	19.3	12.0	23.9	18.5
Secondary Education / TSS (Incomplete)	27.6	41.1	15.6	20.0	22.9	25.4
Secondary Education /TSS (Completed)	33.8	16.8	37.6	44.0	33.0	33.0
Tertiary Education (University) (Incomplete)	1.4	1.9	2.8	6.0	0.0	2.4
Tertiary Education (University) (Completed)	16.6	2.8	12.8	13.0	4.6	10.0
Other	1.3	0.0	0.8	1.0	0.0	0.7
Tot%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Publicizing of information about the training programmes and other NEP interventions has been a key responsibility of critical government organs including the local government authorities (districts, sectors and cells), central government ministries and agencies (Ministry of youth (MINIYOUTH), Ministry of gender and family promotion (MIGEPROF), National Women's Council (NWC), National youth Council (NYC) and WDA. These entities have used various mechanisms ranging from mass media, social media to community engagements. Generally, these channels have been considerably effective in their role of communication and mobilization given the numbers that have enrolled in the various initiatives.

The effectiveness of these public entities is reflected in the findings summarized in table 13 below were at least 21% of the beneficiaries confirm having obtained information about the NEP interventions from central and local government authorities. However, importantly, most of the (37%) obtained the information from mutual contacts in areas were the trainings were being conducted.

Table 13: Sources of information about NEP interventions

Sources of information about trainings	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot%

Friends/ family members or acquaintances	37.9	31.8	45.9	58.0	14.7	37.4
Radio news and/or TV	3.4	5.6	7.3	4.0	3.7	4.7
Newspaper, posters, leaflets, billboards	9.7	5.6	2.8	14.0	10.0	8.4
Internet websites and/or social media	9.7	3.7	0.0	5.0	4.6	4.9
Local leaders / Local Government officials	15.9	29.0	12.8	10.0	36.7	20.7
Former graduates	6.2	7.5	13.8	4.0	1.8	6.7
Trainers/ teachers of the training institution	3.4	10.3	10.1	5.0	2.8	6.1
Employers	9.7	0.9	5.5	0.0	14.7	6.5
Others	4.1	5.6	1.8	0.0	11.0	4.6
Tot%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

At least 21% of the participants in the NEP supported trainings confirm having encountered various challenges during the trainings. The commonest challenges for most was the distance to the training facilities (7.7%). Consultations with trainees confirm that this contributed to some of the trainees dropping out of the trainings. Also, private TVET schools situated at village levels allay their concerns over trainings, specifically MVT, being conducted mostly within IPRCs and Public TVET schools which are located mostly near or within commercial centers, which limits access for most of those residing in remote areas. This is reported to mostly affect women and other vulnerable groups such as PWDs, which possibly explains the low representation of these categories in many of the MVT trainings, especially at IPRCs.

The second most prevalent challenge was the quality of training provided (6.7%). Respondents who express this concern identify weaknesses in the quality and/or quantity of materials and quality of instruction. This issue is detailed further in the following section. Other challenges in training included personal commitments that limited participation (2.7%) and additional costs incurred to participate in training (2.3%).

Table 14: Challenges encountered in participating in NEP trainings

Challenges in participating in trainings	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot%
Encountered challenges	16.6	33.6	18.3	18.0	18.3	20.7%
Nature of challenges	**Gasabo**	**Gatsibo**	**Karongi**	**Musanze**	**Nyaruguru**	**Tot%**
Tuition costs were very high (not affordable)	1.4	0.9	6.4	3.0	0.0	2.3
Training period was too long for me to participate (duration)	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Training center was quite far	6.9	12.1	3.7	3.0	12.8	7.7
Personal commitments		4.7	0.9	7.0	0.9	2.7

Training sessions / subjects were too hard to follow	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.0	0.7
Societal pressures e.g. gender, physical disability, care of family member/s	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Training was not of good quality (inadequate equipment, poor instructors)	3.4	15.0	6.4	4.0	4.6	6.7
No challenges	83.4	66.4	81.7	82.0	81.7	79.0
Tot%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Quality and relevance of interventions

Respondents to the survey provided a rating of satisfaction with the quality of training that they received in the various training facilities. Based on the responses provided 11 aspects of the trainings are summarized in table 15 below. Overall the most satisfactory aspect of the NEP supported trainings is the competence of the trainers and teaching methods. Trainees consulted explain how the trainers both at workplaces and in training institutions demonstrate mastery of the trades they train in and deliver trainings in an appropriate way. There is also notable appreciation for the training content that many of the trainees reiterate matches the labour market needs. Considerable proportions of the trainees also expressed high levels of satisfaction with the training facilities safety conditions in terms of appropriate recognition of different trades safety standards and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Trainees also consider the trainings to have been gender mainstreamed by first of all prioritizing females in the public communication but also the timetables for many programmes, especially in IPRCs, ensured interventions such as MVT trainings were conducted in the evenings which made it possible for many to programme their daily activities with the training schedules.

There are mixed reactions regarding satisfaction with duration of training as respondents mostly relate this to the nature of a trade. Trainees rationalize how for some trades such as hospitality, textile and leather, short trainings are appropriate as one acquires the skills necessary to deliver on a single job. While trades like carpentry and construction require more time to master skills necessary to make a competitive craftsman.

The least levels of satisfaction or highest levels of dissatisfaction are expressed in regard to access to accommodation, meals and other amenities. This is closely followed by and related to accessibility to the training locations. Many of the trainees elaborate how they reside in very remote areas and had to travel for an hour or more to the training locations. Not only did many not have the finances to use public transport but some explain how there is sometimes hardly any public transport to the training venues from their villages, especially in rural areas. This issue they mention affected the completion and attendance rates for many of the trainees. Project records availed are not able to provide sufficient data to establish the drop-out rates for the different trainings.

Table 15:Levels of satisfaction with training conditions

Training condition	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total %
Competence of trainers and teaching methods	10.1	11.3	9.6	9.9	10.6	10.2
Training content (relevance of content to market needs)	9.9	9.8	9.7	9.6	10.4	9.9
Safety conditions during practical training (safety standards, PPE)	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.6	10.2	9.8
Gender sensitive / family friendly timetable and venue	9.8	10.9	8.8	9.3	10.8	9.8
Duration of training	9.4	10.8	8.9	9	10	9.5
Training room facilities (space, lighting, noise)	9.4	9.9	9.3	9.8	8	9.4
Balance between Practical and Theoretical Content	9.4	8.4	9.8	9.7	9.3	9.4
Training and practice materials (equipment, tools, machinery, technology)	9.6	8.3	9.6	9.6	8.4	9.2
Hygiene and sanitation facilities	8.9	8.7	9.4	9.4	9.3	9.2
Training Location (Distance, accessibility, convenience)	8.1	7.7	8.9	8.7	8.4	8.4
Accommodation, meals and any other amenities	5.5	4.4	6.1	5.4	4.5	5.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As shown in table 16 below, following the trainings which for most lasted between three and six months, majority 75.6% of the trainees describe themselves as having been trained well enough to compete on the labour market in their respective trades. Contrarily, 24.4% consider themselves unprepared for the job market.

Table 16: Perceptions of preparedness for the labour market

Level of preparation for employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Very well prepared	21.4	6.5	7.3	11.0	2.8	10.5
Well prepared	60.0	50.5	78.9	81.0	57.8	65.1
Not prepared enough	16.6	29.9	12.8	7.0	33.9	20.0
Not prepared at all	2.1	13.1	0.9	1.0	5.5	4.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Trainees that consider themselves to be well prepared by the NEP supported trainings attribute this preparedness to three key reasons. Primarily trainings delivered content that addressed real occupational issues. This view is shared mostly by the RRT trainees that only underwent workplace-based trainings. Trainees also identify the fact that most of the trainers shared practical "real world" experiences and the trainings involved more practical demonstrations than theoretical classroom work. This not only imparted the required skills but also exposed them to much required pragmatic knowledge.

Table 17: Reasons for perceptions of preparedness for the labour market

Reasons for preparedness	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Training content addressed real occupational issues	24.70%	21.50%	24.50%	23.20%	27.80%	24.30%
Trainers shared practical experience	24.20%	24.90%	23.20%	22.90%	25.80%	24.00%
Practical demonstrations were adequate	23.30%	21.50%	20.20%	21.80%	23.40%	22.10%
Received business management training	10.90%	18.50%	11.30%	12.20%	12.40%	12.50%
Trainers gave me employment	9.00%	5.40%	9.60%	9.70%	4.80%	8.20%
Trainers connected me to an employer	6.90%	5.40%	8.60%	8.60%	4.30%	7.10%
Others	1.00%	2.90%	2.60%	1.70%	1.40%	1.80%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

32% of trainees consider themselves unprepared to compete on the labour market in their respective trades. Many of these respondents attribute this mostly to the absence of trainers in linking them to employment opportunities. This view is shared mostly by MVT trainees from the IPRCs. The IPRCs have not been facilitated to provide any post training support. There are also various anecdotal reasons for the less preparedness ranging from trainees who claim they have never received required certificates to those who dropped out before completing training for various reasons.

Table 18: Reasons for perceptions of unpreparedness for the labour market

Unpreparedness reasons	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Trainers did not create job opportunities	31.0%	50.8%	10.5%	16.7%	24.2%	32.4%
Others	23.8%	13.8%	31.6%	16.7%	24.2%	21.1%
Practical demonstrations were inadequate	21.4%	15.4%	10.5%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%

Training content was very theoretical	7.1%	7.7%	10.5%	33.3%	12.1%	11.3%
Trainers did not share enough practical experience	7.1%	7.7%	31.6%	16.7%	10.6%	10.8%
No business management skills developed	9.5%	4.6%	5.3%	0.0%	12.1%	7.8%

Almost all the trainees of the NEP interventions, especially those who consider themselves to have been well prepared from table 16 above mention different sources of their competitiveness in the labour market following completion of their different trainings. As shown in table 19 below most of the trainees (29%) consider the acquisition of technical skills, both theoretical and practical, has made them more competitive than they were in the labour market. Testimonies from RRT beneficiaries demonstrate how not only have they been given employment in garment industries but because of the skills they have acquired they are able to establish tailoring businesses on the side that they are able to run concurrently while employed in the industries. This they attribute to the extensive skills and knowledge they have acquired from on the job training.

Other skills and traits trainees acquired from the NEP supported trainings are the entrepreneurship mindset (22%) and innovativeness (20%), that enhanced their capacity to use their new skills to venture into markets in their areas, wherever possible.

Table 19: Reasons for sources of competitiveness of trainees

Sources of labour market competitiveness	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Technical skills in the trade	26.7	30.7	29.9	28.3	28.9	28.8
Entrepreneurship ability to identify and exploit opportunities and/or to remain focused and resilient despite the challenges	24.4	16.1	21.1	30.7	18.9	22.0
Innovation to make products or provide services that are relevant to specific needs of customers	20.3	16.1	19.9	21.5	20.8	19.7
Ability to develop and present bankable project or business plan	13.3	18.0	13.1	8.8	15.5	14.0
Ability to work with financial institutions to acquire and use credit in ways that cultivate trust and confidence	11.8	18.4	12.4	7.6	15.8	13.4

Others	3.6	0.6	3.6	3.2	0.0	2.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Only 22% of the trainees confirm that they participated in different forms of industrial attachment. Many of these are from the MVT trainings that were conducted in the IPRCs, mostly in the hospitality and construction trades.

Table 20: Participation in industrial attachments

Industrial attachment/internship	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Participation in industrial attachment/internship	27.6	14.0	36.7	15.0	15.6	22.3
Nature of industrial attachment / internship	**Gasabo**	**Gatsibo**	**Karongi**	**Musanze**	**Nyaruguru**	**Tot %**
Large scale manufacturing or fabrication business or construction	11.0	3.7	3.7	3.0	0.0	4.7
Small scale manufacturing or assembling entity	4.1	4.7	11.0	0.0	1.8	4.4
Large scale service entity e.g. hotel	2.1	1.9	13.8	9.0	1.8	5.4
Small scale service enterprise	3.4	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	1.4
Others	6.9	3.7	5.5	3.0	11.9	6.3
N/A	72.4	86.0	63.3	85.0	84.4	77.7

Many of the NEP beneficiaries that attended industrial attachment did so for mostly two to three months. Only a few attended for up to 6 months. This is consistent across trades and geographical regions with no substantial differences.

Table 21: Duration of industrial attachments

Average duration of industrial attachment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Number of months	2.6	3.1	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.7

Only 39% of the beneficiaries that participated in the industrial attachments (8.6%) received cash remunerations during their attachments while 3% were usually paid in kind, for example those in the hospitality received meals in compensation. Majority (53%) received no payment for the entire duration of their industrial attachments. This lack of payment affected the participation and in some cases retention of beneficiaries in the industrial attachments or even after as some explain how they incurred costs such as transport and meals during the attachment that they could not afford to sustain their participation.

Table 22: Remuneration for industrial attachments

Payment for industrial attachment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Paid in cash	15.9	2.8	11.0	3.0	7.3	8.6
Paid in Kind	1.4	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Unpaid	10.3	10.3	23.9	10.0	5.5	11.9
Others	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.0	2.8	1.2
N/A	72.4	86.0	63.3	85.0	84.4	77.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

96% of the beneficiaries (21.4%) that participated in the industrial attachment express satisfaction with the experience, skills and knowledge obtained from the attachments. It is only 4% of these beneficiaries (0.9%) that express varying levels of dissatisfaction with the attachments.

Table 23: Levels of satisfaction with industrial attachments

Satisfaction with industrial attachment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Very satisfied	12.4	3.7	8.3	1.0	0.9	5.8
Satisfied	14.5	9.4	26.6	14.0	13.8	15.6
Dissatisfied	0.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.5
Very dissatisfied	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.4
No attachment	72.4	86.0	63.3	85.0	84.4	77.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As shown in table 24 below, most of the beneficiaries of the industrial attachments that are satisfied with the internship attribute this to the reason that many of them were exposed to practical skills and knowledge that was extremely relevant to their vocations of choice. There is also much recognition of industrial attachments that were well programmed and situations where employees demonstrated interest in trainees' skills development and/or provided them with employment after the internships. The provision of employment is observed mostly in the hospitality and garments manufacturing trades and less in trades such as construction and carpentry.

Table 24: Reasons for satisfaction with industrial attachment

Reasons for satisfaction with industrial attachment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Lesson learnt were relevant to my vocation	23.5	33.3	26.5	26.5	25.9	26.1
Sufficient practical exposure for my vocation	23.5	23.1	27.3	26.5	25.9	25.4
The program was well organised	22	20.5	24.2	18.4	19	21.7

Employer showed interest in my skills development	13.6	12.8	16.7	12.2	19	15.1
I was provided with employment	17.4	10.3	5.3	16.3	10.3	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

As shown in table 25 below, the 4% of beneficiaries that participated in industrial attachments that express dissatisfaction in their experiences associate the discontent with the lack of sufficient exposure to practical resources to enhance their skills and knowledge. Also, some of the respondents especially in rural areas, specifically Gatsibo, reiterate how the places of industrial attachment did not help in any way in providing them with employment after the internships, especially in trades such as construction.

Table 25: Reasons for dissatisfaction with industrial attachment

Reasons for dissatisfaction with industrial attachment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Insufficient practical exposure for my vocation	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.6
Others	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	1.6
Provided no network /advice / opportunity for employment	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Total	0.8	0.8	1.6	0.0	0.8	3.9

Employment status

NEP reports indicate various levels of employment of the beneficiaries of their different interventions. Other than two tracer studies conducted in 2016 and 2018, there is insufficient post-training data to validate the levels of employment of NEP beneficiaries as there is no evident monitoring mechanism that robustly tracks this change over time. Therefore, this quantitative survey endeavors to estimate the status and levels of employment of NEP's beneficiaries from the three interventions.

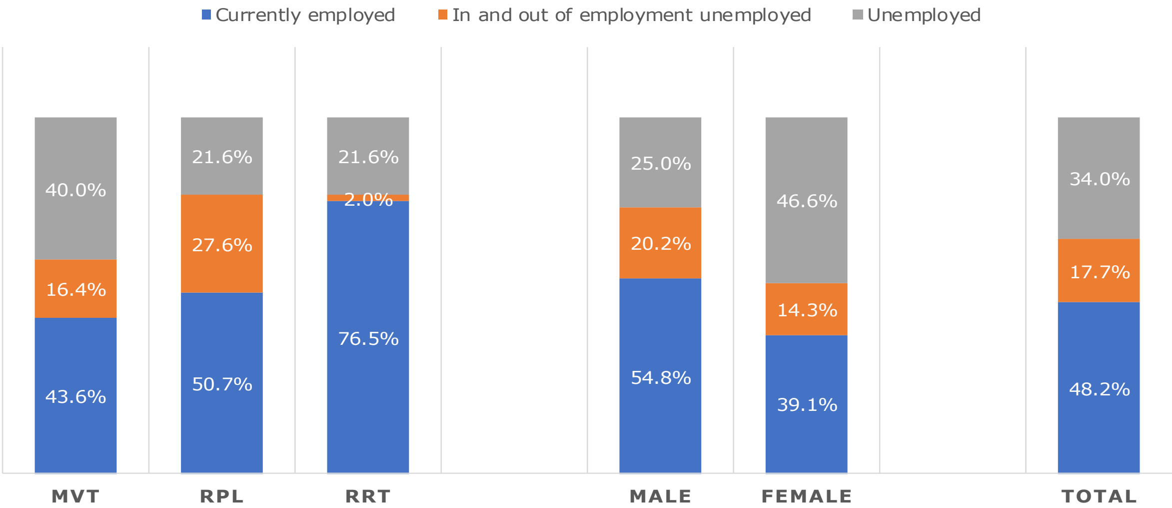
All respondents to the survey are asked if they are currently employed and as shown in table 26 below, 66% of the respondents confirm that they were currently employed at the time of the survey, with 17.7% of them describing their current state of employment as in and out of employment.

Table 26: Employment status beneficiaries of sampled NEP interventions

Current employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Employed	59.3%	59.8%	38.5%	25.0%	53.2%	48.2%
In and out of employment unemployed	15.9%	14.0%	25.7%	19.0%	14.7%	17.7%
Unemployed	24.8%	26.2%	35.8%	56.0%	32.1%	34.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As shown in figure three below the highest rates of employment are observed among beneficiaries of the RRT (79%) and RPL (78%) and less in MVT (60%). In terms of gender there are higher employment rates among males (75%) than females (53%).

Figure 3: Employment status of beneficiaries disaggregated by intervention and gender



Although 66% of the beneficiaries report being employed, only 48% that are currently employed are able to define their current nature of employment. The 17% that report to be in and out of employment decline being identified under any category for their prevalent nature of employment. However, the nature of employment majority of them describe falls under the Part-time informal employment.

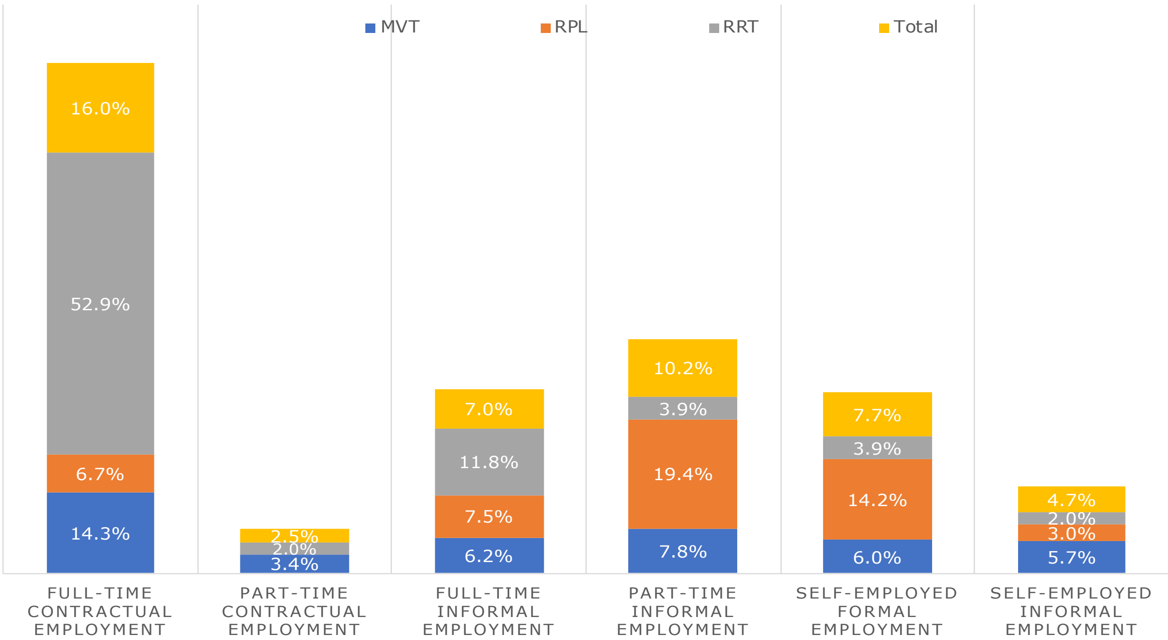
As shown in table 27 below, many of the beneficiaries that are currently employed are either in full-time contractual employment (16%) or Part-time informal employment (10%). Overall, 26% are in formal employment while 22% are in informal employment.

Table 27: Nature of employment of beneficiaries of sampled NEP interventions

Nature of employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Full-time contractual employment	27.6%	10.3%	17.4%	10.0%	10.1%	16.0%
Part-time contractual employment	2.1%	5.6%	1.8%	0.0%	2.8%	2.5%
Full-time informal employment	9.0%	10.3%	1.8%	1.0%	11.9%	7.0%
Part-time informal employment	5.5%	18.7%	4.6%	2.0%	21.1%	10.2%
Self-employed formal employment	13.1%	4.7%	8.3%	7.0%	3.7%	7.7%
Self-employed informal employment	2.1%	10.3%	3.7%	5.0%	3.7%	4.7%
Currently unemployed	40.7%	40.2%	62.4%	75.0%	46.8%	51.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

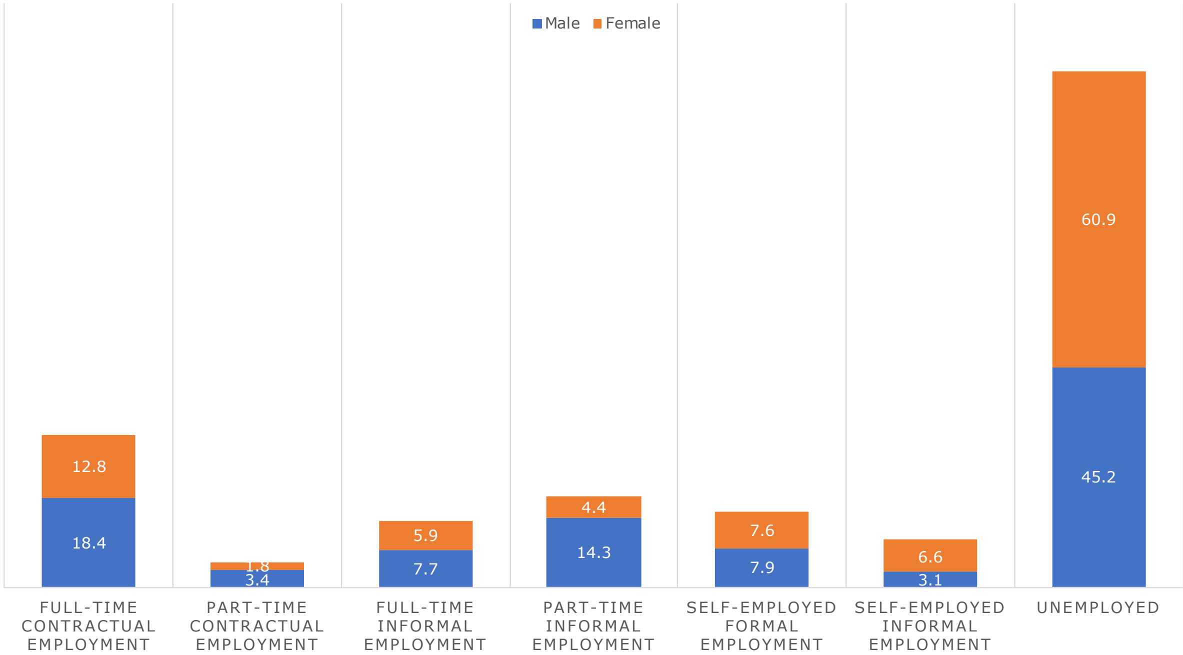
Figure 4 below demonstrates that the large proportion of formal sector workers is mostly driven by more than half of whom are RRT beneficiaries (53%). This indicates a general success in the objective to create employment by requiring companies participating in the RRT to employ at least 70% of the beneficiaries that they train. Meanwhile part-time informal work "gigs" are predominated by RPL beneficiaries (19%). By nature, the kind of work performed by many of the workers in trades such as masonry and carpentry, that form most of the beneficiaries of the RPL, is casual work with rarely any form of fixed-term contractual labour. This further rationalizes the NEPs RPL intervention that is generally formalizing this traditionally informal sector rather than creating jobs as many of these beneficiaries also report being previously employed before participating in the NEP interventions.

Figure 4: Nature of employment of beneficiaries disaggregated by NEP interventions



Regarding the nature of employment disaggregated by gender, figure 5 below shows that males dominate employment across all categories of employment. The highest female representation is in full-time formal employment (12.8%), which is mostly explained through the significant number of women who have accessed employment in garment manufacturing through the RRT intervention. Remarkably there are also more females (7%) than males (3%) self-employed in the informal sector. Relating this analysis to the figure 4 above, informal self-employment is predominated by beneficiaries of the MVT (6%), which indicates that more females benefiting from the MVT have been able to create their own jobs than males in terms of proportions, although less females (40%) than males (60%) benefited from the trainings.

Figure 5: Nature of employment of beneficiaries disaggregated by gender



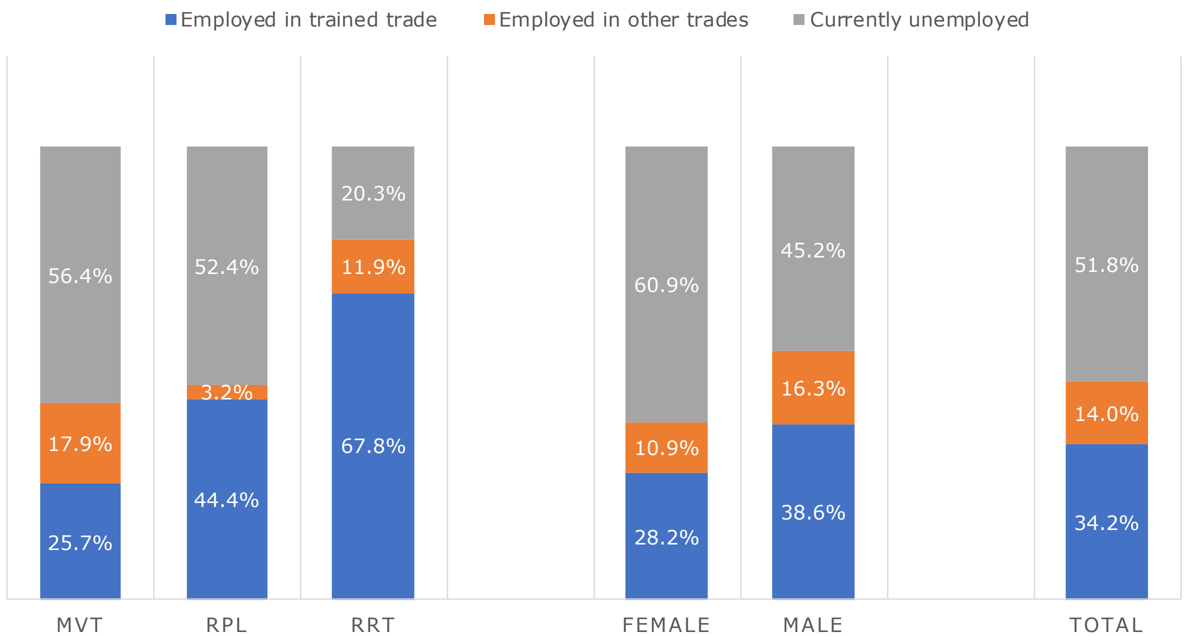
To assess the contribution of the training and certification interventions to employment creation, beneficiaries of the NEP interventions are asked to specify whether they are employed in the trades in which they received training and/or certification or other trades. As shown in table 28 below, 34% are employed in the trades in which they received training and/or certification, while 14% are employed in other trades. The highest proportion of those employed in their trade of training are locate in the urban areas, Gasabo district (44%). Consultations with trainees confirm that there are more employment opportunities in one's specific trade of training if one resides near urban areas or trading centers, while for those in rural areas it is usually not easy to obtain employment in the trained trade or setting up a business in the trained trade is mostly not feasible. This is reiterated mostly by trainees in trades such as hospitality, welding and ICT, among others.

Table 28: Nature of trade of employment among beneficiaries

Trade of employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Employed in trained trade	44.1%	40.2%	28.4%	14.0%	39.4%	34.2%
Employed in other trades	15.2%	19.6%	10.1%	11.0%	13.8%	14.0%
Currently unemployed	40.7%	40.2%	61.5%	75.0%	46.8%	51.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The assessment also observes that it is mostly beneficiaries of the RRT (68%) that are employed in their trades of training followed by RPL (44%) and least in MVT (26%) as shown in figure 6 below. Also, majority of those employed in trades other than those of training are among the MVT (18%) beneficiaries. This indicates that much as the MVT reaches the largest numbers of beneficiaries, the technical skills provided do not necessarily translate into employment creation in the trained trades, as opposed to RRT that reaches much lower numbers but retains trainees in their trades of training.

Figure 6: Nature of trade of employment disaggregated by intervention and gender



In table 29 below the survey assesses the time it takes to access employment after participating in the NEP interventions. Overall, 30% of the beneficiaries confirm that they access employment only after participating in the NEP trainings. At least 27% of the beneficiaries confirm that they were employed even before participating in the interventions.

Disaggregated by gender and intervention, the survey findings indicate that RRT beneficiaries take an average of one and half months to access their first employment, while beneficiaries of MVT take an average of four and half months to access employment. Meanwhile, after training, females on average accessed employment faster (3 months) than their male counterparts (4 months). Overall, in all areas it takes an average of three months and three weeks to access employment.

Access to employment across districts does not follow a consistent trade, but ranges between 2 and 5 months with the longest durations observed in the more rural areas of Nyaruguru and Gatsibo. Although There is generally a highest unemployment rate in Musanze district, those who obtained employment after participating in the NEP trainings take the least time to access employment (1 month and 3 weeks).

Table 29: Time to access and access to employment

Average time to first employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Months
Time to first employment (Months)	3.1	5.1	3.0	1.9	4.7	3.7
	Female			**Male**		**Months**
	3.1			4.0		3.7
	MVT		**RPL**		**RRT**	
	4.5		2.5		1.5	
Access to employment	**Gasabo**	**Gatsibo**	**Karongi**	**Musanze**	**Nyaruguru**	**Tot %**
Obtained employment after NEP training	37.9%	41.1%	25.7%	18.0%	25.7%	30.4%
Previously employed	31.7%	21.5%	25.7%	14.0%	38.5%	26.8%

Mostly unemployed	30.3%	37.4%	48.6%	68.0%	35.8%	42.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

To further analyze the time it takes to access the different kinds of employment, table 30 below presents the two year employment history of all the NEP intervention beneficiaries for each of the districts surveyed.

Table 30: Time to access first employment and type of employment

Gasabo						
Period after completion	**Working in Formal employment**	**Working in Self employment**	**Working in Informal employment**	**Unpaid employment**	**Unemployed**	**Further studies**
Year One						
Months 1 – 3	4.8%	3.4%	2.1%	3.4%	2.8%	1.4%
Months 4 – 6	14.5%	15.2%	10.3%	0.0%	9.0%	2.1%
Months 7 – 9	2.8%	2.8%	6.2%	1.4%	0.0%	1.4%
Months 10 – 12	9.0%	4.1%	4.8%	3.4%	4.1%	2.1%
Year Two						
Months 13 – 15	9.0%	4.8%	5.5%	0.7%	3.4%	2.1%
Months 16 – 18	4.1%	2.1%	2.8%	5.5%	2.8%	1.4%
Months 19 – 21	2.1%	2.1%	2.8%	2.8%	0.7%	0.7%
Months 22 – 24	2.1%	2.1%	2.8%	0.7%	1.4%	1.4%
Total	48.3%	36.6%	37.2%	17.9%	24.1%	12.4%
Gatsibo						
Period after completion	**Working in Formal employment**	**Working in Self employment**	**Working in Informal employment**	**Unpaid employment**	**Unemployed**	**Further studies**
Year One						
Months 1 – 3	0.9%	0.0%	5.6%	4.7%	0.9%	0.9%
Months 4 – 6	12.1%	11.2%	20.6%	5.6%	13.1%	0.0%
Months 7 – 9	0.9%	5.6%	5.6%	1.9%	0.9%	0.0%
Months 10 – 12	0.0%	3.7%	3.7%	0.9%	4.7%	0.9%
Year Two						
Months 13 – 15	0.9%	11.2%	7.5%	2.8%	6.5%	0.9%
Months 16 – 18	0.0%	1.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Months 19 – 21	0.9%	6.5%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	2.8%
Months 22 – 24	0.0%	2.8%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Total	15.9%	43.0%	45.8%	17.8%	27.1%	7.5%
Karongi						
Period after completion	**Working in Formal employment**	**Working in Self employment**	**Working in Informal employment**	**Unpaid employment**	**Unemployed**	**Further studies**
Year One						
Months 1 – 3	2.8%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%
Months 4 – 6	11.0%	11.9%	15.6%	0.9%	8.3%	1.8%
Months 7 – 9	6.4%	5.5%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
Months 10 – 12	1.8%	0.9%	3.7%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%
Year Two						
Months 13 – 15	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%	0.9%	5.5%	1.8%
Months 16 – 18	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Months 19 – 21	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.0%
Months 22 – 24	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%
Total	24.8%	22.9%	28.4%	2.8%	18.3%	4.6%
Musanze						
Period after completion	**Working in Formal employment**	**Working in Self employment**	**Working in Informal employment**	**Unpaid employment**	**Unemployed**	**Further studies**
Year One						
Months 1 – 3	0.0%	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%	6.0%	0.0%
Months 4 – 6	7.0%	5.0%	2.0%	2.0%	12.0%	7.0%
Months 7 – 9	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	0.0%

Months 10 – 12	3.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	0.0%
Year Two						
Months 13 – 15	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	4.0%	2.0%
Months 16 – 18	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%	1.0%
Months 19 – 21	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Months 22 – 24	0.0%	2.0%	1.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	14.0%	16.0%	7.0%	7.0%	32.0%	10.0%
Nyaruguru						
Period after completion	**Working in Formal employment**	**Working in Self employment**	**Working in Informal employment**	**Unpaid employment**	**Unemployed**	**Further studies**
Year One						
Months 1 – 3	3.7%	10.1%	5.5%	4.6%	1.8%	5.5%
Months 4 – 6	4.6%	5.5%	30.3%	0.9%	8.3%	0.0%
Months 7 – 9	2.8%	0.0%	7.3%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Months 10 – 12	0.0%	2.8%	4.6%	7.3%	3.7%	2.8%
Year Two						
Months 13 – 15	2.8%	4.6%	13.8%	0.9%	5.5%	2.8%
Months 16 – 18	5.5%	8.3%	3.7%	6.4%	5.5%	1.8%
Months 19 – 21	2.8%	5.5%	2.8%	3.7%	0.9%	4.6%
Months 22 – 24	0.9%	0.0%	0.9%	2.8%	0.9%	0.0%
Total	22.9%	36.7%	68.8%	27.5%	26.6%	17.4%
All Districts						
Period after completion	**Working in Formal employment**	**Working in Self employment**	**Working in Informal employment**	**Unpaid employment**	**Unemployed**	**Further studies**
Year One						
Months 1 – 3	2.6%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%	2.5%	1.6%
Months 4 – 6	10.2%	12.1%	16.1%	1.8%	10.0%	2.1%
Months 7 – 9	3.0%	3.3%	5.6%	0.9%	1.2%	0.5%
Months 10 – 12	3.2%	2.6%	4.0%	2.5%	3.7%	1.2%
Year Two						
Months 13 – 15	3.5%	4.7%	6.0%	1.2%	4.9%	1.9%
Months 16 – 18	2.3%	2.6%	1.8%	3.2%	1.9%	1.1%
Months 19 – 21	1.4%	3.0%	1.4%	1.8%	0.5%	1.6%
Months 22 – 24	0.7%	1.4%	1.6%	0.9%	0.7%	0.5%
Total	26.8%	33.0%	39.5%	14.9%	25.4%	10.5%

In addition to establishing how long it takes to access their first employment the assessment reviews mechanisms used by the NEP intervention beneficiaries to access the employment. As shown in table 31 below most of the beneficiaries either sourced employment by applying directly to employers (18%) and starting up their own enterprises (14%). Notably, those that report applying directly also include those that were retained under the RRT intervention, especially in Gasabo. However, the largest proportion of the beneficiaries (29%) assert how they have tried all the mentioned options but have never obtained any employment.

Table 31: sourcing of first employment

Access to first employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Applied directly to an employer	27.6%	13.1%	16.5%	3.0%	22.9%	17.5%
Immediately moved into self-employment	14.5%	13.1%	8.3%	21.0%	14.7%	14.2%
Continued working where I was working before	15.9%	16.8%	10.1%	3.0%	21.1%	13.7%

Used personal contacts to find employment	6.2%	12.1%	7.3%	4.0%	10.1%	7.9%
Approached by an employer	11.7%	3.7%	7.3%	5.0%	4.6%	6.8%
No training attended	3.4%	0.9%	16.5%	7.0%	0.0%	5.4%
Trainer linked me to employer	6.2%	5.6%	0.0%	1.0%	2.8%	3.3%
Tried all options still unemployed	11.7%	34.6%	31.2%	52.0%	21.1%	28.6%
Other	2.8%	0.0%	2.8%	4.0%	2.8%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Disaggregated by geographical areas within the sampled districts, it is evident that the highest levels of employment (86%) reported by the beneficiaries are individuals located within the urban areas of Gasabo district and the trading centers within the rural districts. The numbers also show there is more employment in the per-urban areas 21% than the rural areas (18%).

Table 32: Geographical location of employed beneficiaries

Areas of employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Urban	86.2%	22.8%	41.4%	36.4%	31.1%	47.9%
Rural	2.8%	31.6%	8.6%	15.9%	37.8%	18.4%
Peri-urban	3.7%	30.4%	30.0%	20.5%	25.7%	20.5%
No response	7.3%	15.2%	20.0%	27.3%	5.4%	13.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In terms of under employment, the assessment does not find any indication of under employment among the NEP beneficiaries that report being employed at the time of the survey. As shown in table 33 below, the employed respondents work for an average of 43 and half house per week, which is equivalent to an average of 7 hours per day for 6 days a week as most report working from Monday to Saturday.

Table 33: Average hours worked by employed beneficiaries

Average work hours	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Hours of work per week	43.8	43.1	42.6	46.5	42.6	43.5

12.5% of the beneficiaries of NEP's interventions acknowledge being self-employed. On average each of the beneficiaries that ventured into self-employment have employed an average of two employees, with the highest average of 3 recorded in Musanze district. With a total of 26,574 beneficiaries reached by the NEP interventions, we can assume that 3322 (12.5%) of these have been able to create at least 6,644 jobs for other people that did not participate directly in the NEP interventions.

Table 34: Jobs created by NEP interventions beneficiaries

Number of employees	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total

Self-employed	15.2%	15.0%	11.9%	12.0%	7.3%	12.5 %
Average number of employees	2	2	1	3	2	2
Total number of employees	169	145	40	65	131	550

In terms of employment across the different trades, the highest levels of employment are recorded in the construction and carpentry trades (24%) and the manufacturing sector, more specifically garment manufacturing (12%). There are also considerable number of employed beneficiaries in the hospitality sub-sector (9%).

Table 35: Sub-sectors of employment

Sub-sectors of employment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	0.7	17.8	1.8	1.0	1.8	4.4
Wholesale and retail trade	7.6	0.9	0.0	6.0	0.9	3.3
Transportation and storage	2.8	0.9	2.8	0.0	0.0	1.4
Accommodation and food service / Hospitality	4.1	7.5	14.7	19.0	0.0	8.6
Real estate activities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.2
Professional, scientific and technical activities	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Public administration and defense	2.1	0.0	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.1
Education	0.7	0.9	0.0	1.0	1.8	0.9
Human health and social work activities	0.0	0.9	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.5
Saloon, beautification and related services	2.8	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.8	1.2
Manufacturing, including garment manufacturing & tailoring	17.2	16.8	6.4	8.0	11.0	12.3
Water supply, sewage, waste management services	0.7	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.4
Other	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.0	1.8	0.9
Electricity, gas, and air conditioning supply	2.1	3.7	0.9	6.0	3.7	3.2
Mining and quarrying	0.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.5
Construction, including carpentry	22.1	20.6	30.3	8.0	38.5	24.0

Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	0.7	0.9	0.9	2.0	0.9	1.1
Information and communication technology	5.5	0.0	4.6	0.0	0.9	2.5
Administrative and support service activities	0.7	2.8	0.0	1.0	0.9	1.1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3.4	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.1
No jobs	24.1	24.3	33.0	45.0	33.0	31.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The beneficiaries that mention having been continuously unemployed or are in and out of employment mention several reasons for the high prevalence of unemployment among their categories of beneficiaries or rather citizens. The main reason given is the scarcity of jobs (46%). Notably this reason is mostly given in urban areas, Gasabo (50%) and rural areas, Karongi (51%) and Nyaruguru (50%). The second most prevalent reason is the lack of sufficient capital to start or run an enterprise. This reason is mostly given by youth that predominated the survey in Musanze (49%). A small proportion (0.2%) of respondents, mostly young women mention engagement in childcare as the most significant constraint to accessing employment.

Table 36: Reasons for unemployment

Reasons for unemployment	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Limited availability of jobs (Job scarcity)	50.3	42.1	51.4	35.0	49.5	46.1
Insufficient capital to start and run own enterprise	26.2	29.9	16.5	49.0	16.5	27.2
Lack of connections/ contacts/ networks	8.3	13.1	15.6	3.0	16.5	11.2
Insufficient skills and inadequate qualifications	6.9	5.6	6.4	4.0	7.3	6.1
Lack of self-confidence	5.5	3.7	7.3	6.0	4.7	5.5
Lack of adequate experience	2.8	4.7	0.9	1.0	4.6	2.8
Other	0.0	0.9	1.8	0.0	0.9	0.7
Engaged in childcare or family/ household care	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Income status and economic livelihoods

The survey assessed the effects of the employment created on the beneficiaries' income levels and overall livelihood standards. This assessment of livelihood standards and economic wellbeing is only limited to perceptions of status as the data available, time and resources for this assessment do not allow for a more robust analysis of these variables.

Table 37 below presents perceptions of the levels of satisfaction among the intervention beneficiaries. Only 17% consider their earnings from their current employment as sufficient to meet their personal and household needs. The majority (83%) consider their current earnings as insufficient given the prevailing cost of living and remuneration they receive for the nature of work that they perform.

Table 37: Adequacy of income for beneficiaries

Sufficiency of Income	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
More than Enough	0.7	1.9	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.7
Enough	23.4	15.0	15.6	7.0	18.4	16.4
Not Enough	48.3	36.4	39.4	38.0	42.2	41.4
Not Enough at All	13.1	23.4	21.1	23.0	12.8	18.2
No income at all	14.5	23.4	23.9	31.0	26.6	23.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In order to supplement or ensure consistency of income at least 24% of the beneficiaries acknowledge having a second job to earn incomes enough to meet their financial needs.

Table 38: Beneficiaries engaging in second occupation

Engagement in secondary occupations	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Have second jobs	22.1	21.5	24.8	27.0	26.6	24.2

Even though the majority of NEP beneficiaries record their incomes as being insufficient, 59% confirm that there has been an improvement in the livelihoods following their participation in the NEP interventions. This is explained by most as an improvement in their ability to obtain gainful employment or to create own jobs through the skills provided and options given. Most of these mention how prior to training they did not possess any marketable skills or only had theoretical proficiencies, but the short-term trainings provided them with exposure to opportunity and for many, they are currently using the skills acquired to earn a living, implying improvement in living standards. Some beneficiaries that attempted to start enterprises using small loans after the trainings were left indebted and are struggling to pay back such loans as their businesses failed.

Table 39: Perceptions of change in livelihoods among NEP beneficiaries

Change in livelihood	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Improved significantly	10.3	0.9	2.8	7.0	4.6	5.4
Improved slightly	60.0	44.9	60.6	56.0	44.0	53.5
No change	29.0	54.2	34.9	37.0	50.5	40.4
Worsened	0.7	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.9	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In Tables 40 and 41 below, the survey findings summarize the monthly earnings of NEP beneficiaries before and after participating in the interventions. Overall there has been a substantial increase in the number of beneficiaries that confirm an increase in income. Comparing before and after, there is a 14% increase in the number of beneficiaries that earn 200,000 Rwf or less per month and a 3% increase among those earning between 200,000Rwf and 320,000 Rwf per month. The number of beneficiaries reporting "no income" reduced by 18% after engaging with NEP from 39% to 20% indicating a contribution of the three NEP interventions to improving monthly earnings of beneficiaries.

Table 40: Beneficiaries' average monthly incomes before interacting with NEP

Average monthly income before NEP	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
< 20,000 Rwf per month	11.7	24.3	22.0	21.0	21.1	19.5
20,000 – 80,000 Rwf	33.1	19.6	37.6	29.0	32.1	30.5
80,000 – 120,000 Rwf	11.0	4.7	2.8	2.0	4.6	5.4
120,000 – 160,000 Rwf	4.1	1.9	1.8	2.0	4.6	3.0
160,000 – 200,000 Rwf	4.1	0.0	0.9	1.0	0.0	1.4
200,000 – 240,000 Rwf	1.4	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.9	1.1
240,000 – 280,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.2
280,000 – 320,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.2
320,000 – 360,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
360,000 – 400,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
400,000 – 1,000,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
More than 1,000,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No income	34.5	49.5	32.1	45.0	34.9	38.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 41: Beneficiaries' average monthly incomes after interacting with NEP

Average monthly income after NEP	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Less than 20,000 Rwf per month	6.9	32.7	11.0	10.0	18.3	15.3
20,000 – 80,000 Rwf	35.2	26.2	41.3	38.0	30.3	34.2
80,000 – 120,000 Rwf	11.7	11.2	15.6	7.0	14.7	12.1
120,000 – 160,000 Rwf	13.8	5.6	1.8	4.0	9.2	7.4
160,000 – 200,000 Rwf	11.0	4.7	5.5	1.0	1.8	5.3
200,000 – 240,000 Rwf	3.4	0.9	2.8	3.0	0.9	2.3
240,000 – 280,000 Rwf	1.4	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.8	1.2
280,000 – 320,000 Rwf	1.4	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.9	0.9
320,000 – 360,000 Rwf	0.7	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.4
360,000 – 400,000 Rwf	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.7
400,000 – 1,000,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
More than 1,000,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No income	13.1	17.8	18.3	36.0	20.2	20.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Disaggregated by intervention, the highest increase in number of beneficiaries earning incomes below 200,000 Rwf is realized among MVT (20%) and RRT (18%), while the proportions under RPL in this income category reduced by 4% as shown in Table 42. For those earning between 200,000-320,000 Rwf, the percentage increase is highest among RPL (7%) and RRT (4%) and least among the MVT (3%) beneficiaries.

Table 42: Beneficiaries' average incomes disaggregated by interventions

	Before NEP			After NEP		
Average monthly income	**MVT**	**RPL**	**RRT**	**MVT**	**RPL**	**RRT**
Less than 20,000 Rwf per month	16.4	25.4	27.5	15.8	17.2	5.9
20,000 – 80,000 Rwf	24.4	46.3	35.3	29.6	44.0	43.1
80,000 – 120,000 Rwf	4.2	10.4	2.0	11.4	13.4	13.7
120,000 – 160,000 Rwf	3.4	3.0	0.0	8.3	4.5	7.8
160,000 – 200,000 Rwf	0.5	3.7	2.0	3.9	6.0	13.7
200,000 – 240,000 Rwf	1.0	1.5	0.0	2.1	3.7	0.0
240,000 – 280,000 Rwf	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	2.2	2.0
280,000 – 320,000 Rwf	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.7	2.0
320,000 – 360,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.0
360,000 – 400,000 Rwf	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.7	0.0
No income	49.6	9.7	33.3	26.2	6.7	11.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 43: Beneficiaries' average incomes disaggregated by gender

	Before NEP %		After NEP %	
Average monthly income (Rwf)	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Less than 20,000	16.6	23.5	13.6	17.6
20,000 – 80,000	34.3	25.2	33.7	34.9
80,000 – 120,000	6.0	4.6	15.7	7.1
120,000 – 160,000	4.5	0.8	9.9	3.8
160,000 – 200,000	1.8	0.8	5.7	4.6
200,000 – 240,000	1.2	0.8	3.0	1.3
240,000 – 280,000	0.3	0.0	1.5	0.8
280,000 – 320,000	0.3	0.0	1.2	0.4
320,000 – 360,000	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0
360,000 – 400,000	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.8
No income	34.9	44.1	14.5	28.6

From the incomes earned through employment and/or entrepreneurship in the different trades, at least 47% of the beneficiaries confirm saving some of the earnings from their economic activities. Overall on average beneficiaries save about 37,680 Rwf per month and 70% confirm having bank accounts through which they conduct their financial transactions. When disaggregated by gender more males save and have bank accounts, compared to females. The average savings by men is higher than that of women.

Table 44: Beneficiaries of the NEP that are formally financially included

Financially included	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Saving income (%)	60.7	44.9	50.5	26.0	45.9	46.8
Average monthly saving (Rwf)	40,148	26,010	49,436	48,923	25,761	37,680
Own a bank account (%)	82.1	64.5	67.0	54.0	78.0	70.2
Financially included by gender	**Male**			**Female**		
Saving income (%)	52.1			39.5		
Average monthly saving (Rwf)	40,014			33,382		
Own a bank account (%)	72.9			66.4		

Access to finance

Having identified access to finance for enterprises as a major impediment to employment creation and entrepreneurship the NEP prioritized access to financing for micro, small and medium enterprises. The survey asked beneficiaries of the three training interventions about access to finance. This aimed to establish the extent to which they benefited from Pillar 2 interventions as well as providing data for an assessment of Pillar 2.

As shown in Table 45 below, 9% of the beneficiaries of the RRT, MVT and RPL trainings started a new enterprise in their respective trade. Another 10% already had existing businesses that they expanded or continued to operate using their new and/or upgraded and certified skills.

Disaggregated by intervention, the highest proportions of beneficiaries that started enterprises are from the RRT (12%) followed by the MVT (11%). Only 2% of those in the RPL confirmed starting an enterprise as most (14%) already had their own enterprise. Meanwhile in terms of gender, almost twice as many females (12%) than males (7%) started new enterprises. However, more males (12%) confirm having owned enterprises than females (9%) before participating in the NEP interventions.

Table 45: Status of enterprises after interacting with NEP interventions

Status of Enterprises	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Started new enterprise	8.3	6.5	8.3	18.0	5.5	9.1
Expanded existing enterprise	17.9	10.3	5.5	3.0	11.9	10.4
Did not start any business	73.8	83.2	86.2	79.0	82.6	80.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In order to start these enterprises most of the intervention beneficiaries (12%) used their own saving to start the businesses. This number is highest in the urban areas such as Gasabo (19%) and peri-urban areas, Musanze (16%), compared to the remote rural areas like Nyaruguru (3%).

The second most common sources of funding for enterprises is from acquaintances, this includes contributions from these same sources, reported by 5% of the beneficiaries. Borrowing from formal lenders such as commercial banks, microfinance institutions (MFIs) and SACCOs is only reported by 2% of the respondents. Slightly more males (2%) than females (1%) report borrowing from financial institutions.

Table 46: Beneficiaries sources of funding for enterprises

Source of funding for Enterprises	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Own savings	19%	8%	11%	16%	3%	12%
Contributions for friends / relatives	8%	6%	1%	5%	5%	5%
Selling assets	4%	7%	0%	1%	3%	3%
Borrowing from informal lenders	3%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Borrowing from formal lenders	1%	2%	3%	0%	4%	2%
Other	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Did not start any business	64%	77%	83%	77%	83%	76%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

NEP intervention beneficiaries that accesses credit, formally or informally, describe five main sources of support that enabled them to access the credit to start or run their enterprises, following participation in NEP training. As shown in table 47 below, most (3%) used support from acquaintances, 2% accessed credit mostly from formal institutions through support from the business development advisors (BDAs) and less than 1% accesses support through Village Savings and Loan Associations, cooperatives and their training institutions. Those that accessed credit with support from their training institutions are only identified in Gasabo (1.4%).

Table 47: Beneficiaries access to credit for enterprises

Support for access to credit	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Relative or friend	4.8%	5.6%	2.8%	1.0%	0.9%	3.2%
Business Development Fund (BDF) / BDA	3.4%	2.8%	2.8%	0.0%	0.9%	2.1%
NGO	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.4%
Public entity (local government)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Savings group (VSLA, cooperative)	0.7%	0.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Training institution	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
No credit accessed	89.0%	90.7%	93.6%	98.0%	97.2%	93.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Those that took loans to finance their enterprises borrowed an average of 288,900Rwf. There is no substantial difference observed between the urban and rural areas in terms of the average or median amounts borrowed. It is only in Musanze district were the average amounts go as low as 146,667Rwf and as earlier observed the beneficiaries in this area are mostly younger youths. Regarding the maximum borrowing, the highest amount recorded is 850,000Rwf. This highest amount is observed in Gasabo, while the lowest maximum is observed in Musanze (260,000 Rwf).

Table 48: Value of loans to fund enterprises

Value of credit	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Average amount borrowed	295,666	280,000	284,285	146,667	321,429	288,900
Maximum amount borrowed	850,000	600,000	500,000	260,000	650,000	850,000
Median amount borrowed	250,000	250,000	200,000	120,000	250,000	250,000

To further analyse the nature of support provided to beneficiaries by the NEP in regard to starting and strengthening their enterprises, the survey asked respondents to describe the direct and indirect support they received. As seen in table 49 below, 37% of the beneficiaries confirm that they received different forms of support from the NEP in regard to financing and running enterprises.

The largest number (30%) of the beneficiaries identify business incubator space as the most significant support. On further probing the assessment identifies the Integrated Craft Production Centres (ICPCs) as the space described by these beneficiaries. Most of those that identify this facility are from trades such as carpentry, tailoring, welding and leather crafts. Such beneficiaries identify the free or subsidized space as a major contribution for those that wished to start up enterprises. 14% identify technical assistance in terms of business advisory services as the second most accessed support service from the NEP. This is mostly reported by those in rural areas such as Nyaruguru (21%) and Gatsibo (18%). This is identified as the services provided by the business development advisors supported by the NEP.

Table 49: Nature of support from NEP accessed by beneficiaries

Support from NEP to run enterprise	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Respondents supported	40.7%	43.0%	27.5%	26.0%	45.0%	36.8%
Nature of Support from NEP	**Gasabo**	**Gatsibo**	**Karongi**	**Musanze**	**Nyaruguru**	**Total**
Business incubation center (space)	37.2%	29.0%	25.7%	26.0%	29.4%	30.0%
Technical assistance (advisory services)	11.7%	17.8%	9.2%	13.0%	21.1%	14.4%
Business management support (training)	5.5%	5.6%	2.8%	1.0%	5.5%	4.2%
Connection to Business mentorship or networks	2.8%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.6%
Business registration	2.1%	1.9%	0.9%	1.0%	0.9%	1.4%
Cooperatives formation and registration	1.4%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	1.4%

Access to capital (credit, equity, toolkit)	1.4%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	1.2%
Other	0.7%	0.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%
No support for financing enterprise	37.2%	38.3%	59.6%	59.0%	35.8%	45.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

NEP beneficiaries that started enterprises or who had previously run enterprises identify several challenges that they encountered that hinder their growth and survival. These challenges are listed in table 50 below in order of prevalence.

The most common constraint to enterprise development experienced by the beneficiaries was the difficulty in accessing financing either for a start-up or for on-going working capital. This issue is raised by at least 20% of the respondents to the survey.

The second most prevalent issue is the costs of doing business which in many cases makes most of the enterprises unprofitable. 13% of the respondents identify this challenge and mention that the costs of raw materials and labour simply make businesses unfeasible. Many beneficiaries consulted explain how, even if they accessed credit the cost of purchasing raw materials, in for example leather processing, would make the final products more expensive than imported leather products, hence killing the enterprises.

Overwhelming competition in the market has also made starting or growing enterprises in the different vocations very difficult. 13% of the beneficiaries describe how, even though the GoR has put in place policies such as “Made in Rwanda”, the market is still flooded with foreign products and other producers in carpentry, welding, garment manufacturing, and these render small enterprises and inexperienced start-ups uncompetitive in both quality and price.

12% identify stringent regulatory requirements such as standards from regulatory authorities such are Rwanda Standards Board (RSB), Food and Drug Authority (FDA) as well as tax regimes, that make it difficult for MSMEs to do any business. These requirements are seen as not only costly to businesses, but many enterprises are rarely equipped with the skills, knowledge and expertise to ensure continued compliance.

Table 50: Challenges encountered by enterprises

Challenges encountered by enterprises	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Tot %
Difficult to get funding (start-up and working capital)	20.2	21.8	17.8	22.4	19.0	20.1
Cost of doing business rendering business not feasible (raw materials, labour)	13.2	13.2	12.8	14.2	12.8	13.2
Overwhelming competition in the market	12.8	11.8	14.3	12.8	12.0	12.7
Regulatory requirements rendering business not feasible (taxes, standards, processes)	12.3	12.3	11.8	11.7	13.4	12.3

Lack of entrepreneurial/ business management skills	10.8	10.8	10.9	10.6	12.4	11.1
Low demand for my goods and/or services the market	11.0	10.4	11.4	11.3	10.1	10.8
Lack of necessary educational background (including technical skills)	10.0	9.5	10.5	8.3	10.6	9.9
Location of business is not ideal	9.6	10.0	10.4	8.8	9.9	9.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Given the importance of competitiveness of the MSMEs in their growth and survival, beneficiaries rate the levels of competitiveness of their enterprises. As shown in table 51 below, majority of the beneficiaries (57%) identify their enterprises as less competitive that than the competition, compared to 17% that rate their enterprises as either more competitive or at the same level as competitors. This general view is mostly informed by the fact that many of the beneficiaries are start-ups that are trying to compete with established enterprises that either have the experience, capital or established relationships with the clientele, making it difficult for newcomers to compete favourably.

Table 51: Beneficiaries perceptions of own enterprises competitiveness

Rating of enterprises competitiveness	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Better than competitors	19.3	2.8	13.8	21.0	3.7	12.5
Same level as competitors	4.8	5.6	7.3	2.0	1.8	4.4
Poorer than competitors	49.7	77.6	40.4	38.0	16.5	56.7
No Idea about the difference	26.2	14.0	38.5	39.0	78.0	26.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Regarding the gender sensitiveness of NEP interventions, 52% of beneficiaries consider NEP interventions, specifically training, to have mainstreamed gender adequately. More females (55%) than males (50%) that acknowledge gender was mainstreamed mostly identify how all communications about trainings emphasized how women and youth were the main target of the programmes. Almost any female that applied was enrolled in trainings while some males were left out indicating priority was given to females.

Table 52: Perceptions of gender-mainstreaming in NEP interventions

Perceptions of gender mainstreaming in NEP	Gasabo	Gatsibo	Karongi	Musanze	Nyaruguru	Total
Very high	13.1	1.9	0.0	22.0	0.0	7.5
High	53.8	45.8	41.3	33.0	44.0	44.4

Moderate	17.2	28.0	48.6	33.0	32.1	30.9
Low	15.9	24.3	10.1	12.0	23.9	17.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Lessons Learned

In this section of the survey, the assessment documents key observations made during the planning and data collection stages of the quantitative survey and stakeholder consultations. The lessons include both positive observations that can be borrowed from in later stages of the programme as well as processes that either were not as effective or efficient as expected or could be improved to enhance realization of intended impacts.

The NEP has instituted documented guidelines for each of its interventions that clearly state eligibility criteria, roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of the different interventions. Much as these well documented guidelines are in place, the execution has tended to slightly deviate from the guidelines and contributed to lessening the effectiveness of the interventions. For example, as shown in the demographic data, there is considerably low participation of most vulnerable groups such as the category one (7%) and PWDs (3.5%) citizens. Some of the causes of these low numbers have been limited implementation of targeted enrolment processes that focus primarily on ensuring such vulnerable groups enrol into the vocational training programmes. Also, there are no clear incentives for such groups that could further enhance their participation. This low participation of special interest groups is also reflected in the proportions of women participating in the vocational trades and science and technology fields. Acknowledging the context of the TVET sector that globally has lower proportions of females, this calls for more strategically incentivized approaches to attract women into these fields as equality in recruitment cannot be guaranteed through untailored open enrolment.

To further enhance participation of more vulnerable groups, the evaluation identifies TVET schools located at village levels and civil society organizations operating with wider networks at grassroots levels. These entities provide greater opportunities for enhancing enrolment for these vulnerable groups than sector or district level training institutions such as IPRCs that are not only inaccessible but also have stringent enrolment requirements that automatically exclude such groups of citizens.

The eligibility criteria for the NEP supported training was quite open, as per the guidelines. This has presented the programme with the risk of enrolling citizens not entirely interested in trades training but rather only taking advantage of free services. As shown in this survey at least 16% participated in training simply because it was free and not necessarily to improve their trade know-how or create employment. It is therefore prudent that for the next enrolment cycles, the vetting process ought to be improved to enhance the probability of those enrolling in programmes actually having interest in the trades they register for, not only to increase potential effectiveness of the training programmes but to also enhance value for money.

On completion of training there is an indication that (other than in interventions that are work-place based such as the RRT) there is no systematic industry attachment or internship. This has left many trainees with limited exposure to a working environment which also affects their confidence to practice workshop skills. As recorded in the survey no more than 22% of the beneficiaries confirm attending any form of industry attachment. Those consulted confirm that the attachment they accessed has been mainly through personal contacts and not necessarily through the training programmes support. It is essential that the next phase of the NEP considered a systematic mechanism that ensures all recipients of training, especially in the MVT, receive a minimum period of industry attachment including certification on completion and there should be a mechanism for assessing the attachment to gauge its value-added to the trainee.

The NEP through its implementing institutions such as BDF have made tremendous strides in developing various products that are enhancing access to finance for enterprise development by the different beneficiaries of the NEP beyond those from the three interventions reviewed. Products such as grants, credit guarantees, micro-leasing, Sacco-refinancing and quasi-equity provide a range of options to citizens that opt to start or grow their businesses. Despite these financing options, uptake by NEP beneficiaries remains very low as revealed by this survey where not more than 2% of beneficiaries confirm accessing credit from formal financial institutions and almost the same proportion still borrowing from informal money lenders to start or run enterprises. Various reasons are observed for low uptake of loans ranging from stringent loan appraisal requirements to high interest rates. The NEP needs to review the BDF approach of access to finance and realign lending to market realities. For instance, an option could be increased lending to existing SMEs guaranteeing employment to TVET graduates as a mechanism to build existing enterprises, sensitization of public authorities on the financial products' design and the role of BDF in access to finance as it has been misconstrued by borrowers as a "public service" not as a commercial entity. This could ensure implementation of financial products across all regions is done against set standards to avoid mismanagement observed.

The survey shows a very low rate of start-ups with no more than 9% of beneficiaries confirming starting up an enterprise after training. Anecdotes from consulted beneficiaries indicates that many of them have attempted to start SMEs using facilities such as the toolkits. But many have not lasted more than a year and have either sold their toolkits or left them lying idle. Reasons for this are detailed in the report mostly in regard to failure to compete in the respective trade. There is an indication of high attrition rates of SMEs despite the vast amount of strategic support provided by the NEP. One plausible solution that has been used but has not been rolled out systematically has been support in development of cooperatives and use of the ICPCs model. However, the lack of comprehensive training and post-finance monitoring and support has greatly contributed to the observed attrition rates.

Annex 1: Quantitative survey questionnaire

Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon, my name is [state your name].

We are collecting data to establish the current status of beneficiaries of the different interventions of the Government of Rwanda's National Employment Programme (NEP).

These interventions include the massive vocational training (MVT), Rapid Response Training (RRT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) that have been implemented between 2014 and 2019, as well as business start-up support to beneficiaries through the BDA and BDF (explain these terms if respondent is not familiar). P

You have been randomly selected from lists of those that participated in one or more of these interventions and have been considered a relevant source of information for the ongoing evaluation of the NEP.

This survey is voluntary and the information that you give will be confidential. The information will be used to establish the extent to which the program has achieved its objectives and provide lessons for future programs. The views you express will not be clearly identified and tagged to you as it will not include anyone's specific name. There will be no way to identify that you gave this information, hence you are free to express your issues as truly as you believe them to be.

Could you please spare some time (around 30 minutes) for the interview?

A: Background information

A1	**Respondent Name**	[enter name]				
A2	**Respondent Gender**	1. Male 2. Female				
A3	**Respondent Age**	[enter years]				
A4	**Marital Status**	1.Married 2.Single, 3. Widowed				
A5	**District and Sector of Origin**	1.[enter sector] 2.[enter district]				
A6	**District and Sector of Work**	1.[enter sector] 2.[enter district] 3.[Unemployed / NA]				
A7	**Respondent Contact details**	[enter phone number]				
A8	**Respondent NEP Category**	1. MVT	2. RRT	3.RPL	4. Unidentified	
A9	**Current Ubudehe Category**	1.	2	3	4	5.Don't Know
A10	**Does respondent have any form of disability?**	1.Yes 2. No				
A11	**If, yes to disability (A10), state or describe** *[observe or ask]*					
	1.Deaf or partially deaf 2. Blind or visual impairment 3. Mental health issues 4. Serious physical bodily disability e.g. lacks one or both upper limbs 6. Minor physical disabilities (Please specify)					

B: Participation in NEP Interventions

B1. What was your main motivation for participating in the NEP supported trainings?	
*Rank these seven items, with **1** being the **Most Important** and **7** being the **Least Important***	
Motivation	**Ranking**
Training centre is close to home of parents or other relatives (easy access)	
Low or no tuition fees (affordable)	
Improve my chances to find employment	
Improve my trade know how (skills development)	
Increase my income	
Friends and relatives participating in the programmes (reputation)	
National requirement to practice my trade (certification)	
Other [Please specify]	

B2. What training programmes did the NEP support you to participate in?						
Institution	Trade	Qualification obtained	Period enrolled			
			From		To	
			Month	Year	Month	Year

B3. What did you do before you participated in the NEP supported interventions?	
1.Wage employed (formal employment)	4.In education or professional training
2.Self-employed (informal employment)	5.Unemployed
3.Informal employment (unpaid/paid)	6. Other [Please specify]

B4. Highest academic qualification before engaging in NEP supported training	
1. No education	5.Secondary Education /TSS (Completed)
2. Primary Education (Drop out)	6. Tertiary Education (University) (Incomplete)
3. Primary Education (Completed)	7. Tertiary Education (University) (Completed)
4. Secondary Education / TSS (Incomplete)	8. Other [Please specify]

B5. Did you face any difficulties in participating in the NEP supported trainings	
1. No 2. Yes	
B6. If Yes, what difficulty affected you the most?	*[Choose only one]*
1.Tuition costs were very high (not affordable)	
2.Training period was too long for me to participate (duration)	
3.Training centre was quite far (not easy to access)	
4.Personal commitments (financial or family related)	
5.Training sessions / subjects were too hard to follow	
6.Societal pressures e.g. gender, physical disability, care of family member/s	
7.Training was not of good quality (inadequate equipment, poor instructors)	

B7. How did you get to know about the NEP supported training in which you participated?	
1.Friends/ family members or acquaintances	6.Former graduates
2.Radio news and/or TV	7.Trainers/ teachers of the training institution
3.Newspaper, posters, leaflets, billboards	8.Employers
4.Internet websites and/or social media	9.Other [Please specify]
5. Local leaders / Local Government officials	

C: Quality and Relevance of Interventions

C1. Did you participate in any training supported by the NEP?						
1.No 2. Yes						
C2. How do you rate the conditions you experienced at your training institution?						
(1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = fair; 4 = good; 5 = very good; N/A= not applicable)						
	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**NA**
1.Training Location (Distance, accessibility, convenience)						
2.Training room facilities (space, lighting, noise)						
3.Training and practice materials (equipment, tools, machinery, technology)						
4.Safety conditions during practical training (safety standards, PPE)						
5.Accommodation, meals and any other amenities						
6.Hygiene and sanitation facilities						
7.Training content (relevance of content to market needs)						
8.Balance between Practical and Theoretical Content						
9.Competence of trainers and teaching methods						
10.Duration of training						
11. Gender sensitive / family friendly timetable and venue						

C3. To what extent did the NEP supported interventions prepare you for employment in your occupation?	
1.Very well prepared	3.Not prepared enough
2.Well prepared	4.Not prepared at all
C4. Why do you say you were well prepared (options 1&2)?	*[Choose no more than 2 options]*
1.Trainers shared practical experience	5.Trainers connected me to an employer
2.Training content addressed real occupational issues	6.Recieved business management training
3.Practical demonstrations were adequate	7. Other [Please specify]
4.Trainers gave me employment	
C5. Why do you say you were well NOT prepared (options 3&4)?	*[Choose no more than 2 options]*
1.Trainers did not share enough practical experience	4.Trainers did not create job opportunities
2.Training content was very theoretical	5.No business management skills developed
3.Practical demonstrations were inadequate	6. Other [Please specify]
C6. What specific knowledge, skills or experiences do you consider you have acquired to help you or your business to be more competitive and sustainable? *[Choose no more than 2 options]*	
1.Technical skills in the trade	4.Ability to develop and present bankable project or business plan

2.Innovation to make products or provide services that are relevant to specific needs of customers	5.Ability to work with financial institutions to acquire and use credit in ways that cultivate trust and confidence
3.Entrepreneurship ability to identify and exploit opportunities and/or to remain focused and resilient despite the challenges	6.Other [Please specify]

C7. Did you receive any industrial attachment or internship during or after participating in the NEP intervention?	
1.No 2. Yes	
C8. If you answered Yes above, How would you describe the enterprises or institutions where you got industrial attachment/internship?	
1.Large scale manufacturing or fabrication business or construction	4.Small scale service enterprise e.g. home-based cottage.
2.Small scale manufacturing or assembling entity	5. Other [Please specify]
3.Large scale service entity e.g. hotel	

C9. If yes, how long was the industrial attachment or internship?
_____________________ [enter # of months)

C10. Did you receive any form of payment for the industrial attachment or internship?	
1.Yes, Paid in cash	3.Unpaid
2.Yes, Paid in Kind	4. Other [Please specify]

C11. How SATISFIED were you with the industrial attachment or internship	
1.Very Satisfied	3.Disatisfied
2.Satisfied	4.Very Dissatisfied

C12. What satisfied you the most about the industrial attachment or internship (options 1&2)?	
1.Lesson learnt were relevant to my vocation	4.The program was well organised
2.Sufficient practical exposure for my vocation	5.Employer showed interest in my skills development
3.I was provided with employment	6. Other [Please specify]

C13. What DISSATISFIED you the most about the industrial attachment or internship (options 1&2)?	
1.Involved in tasks not relevant to my vocation	4.The program had no schedule/poorly organised
2.Insufficient practical exposure for my vocation	5. Employer showed no interest in my skills development
3.Provided no network/advice/opportunity for employment	6. Other [Please specify]

D: Employment Status

D1. Do you currently have any form of employment	
1.No 2. Yes 3. In and out of employment	
D2. If currently employed, what is the nature of your employment?	
1.Full-time contractual employment	5.Self-employed formal employment

2.Part-time contractual employment	6.Self-employed informal employment
3.Full-time informal employment	7.Unemployed
4.Part-time informal employment	8. Other [Please specify]

D3. Is your current employment in the trade in which you were supported through the NEP?

1.No 2. Yes

D4. After participating in the NEP supported intervention, how long did it take to get a job?

1.____ [Enter Months] 2. Was already employed 3. Still Unemployed

D5. How would you describe the area/environment where you are currently working?

1.Urban setting 2. Rural setting 3. Peri-urban setting.

D6. How many hours per week are you working on average?

1.____ [Enter Hours] 2. Unemployed

D7. For the self-employed, or established their own businesses, how many people do you employ?

1.____ [Enter number of employees] 2. Unemployed / in employment

D8. Describe your employment history following completion of your participation in the NEP interventions.

[√ Check only one appropriate category for each three-month period]

Period after completion	Working in Formal employment	Working in Self employment	Working in Informal employment	Unpaid employment	Unemployed	Further studies
Year One						
Months 1 – 3						
Months 4 – 6						
Months 7 – 9						
Months 10 – 12						
Year Two						
Months 1 – 3						
Months 4 – 6						
Months 7 – 9						
Months 10 – 12						

D9. How did you find your very first job after completing your participation in the NEP interventions?

1.Immediately moved into self-employment	5.Used personal contacts to find employment
2.Applied directly to an employer	6.Continued working where I was working before
3.Was approached by an employer	7.Tried all options still unemployed
4.Trainer linked me to employee	8. Other [Please specify]

D10. In which sector or sub-sector are you currently employed? *[Select only one option]*

1.Agriculture, forestry and fishing	12.Accommodation and food service (hospitality)
2.Manufacturing	13.Financial and insurance activities
3.Electricity, gas, and air conditioning supply	14.Real estate activities

4.Mining and quarrying	15.Professional, scientific and technical activities
5.Construction	16.Public administration and defense
6.Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	17.Education
7.Information and communication technology	18.Human health and social work activities
8.Administrative and support service activities	19.Saloon, beautification and related services
9.Arts, entertainment and recreation	20. Water supply, sewage, waste management services
10.Wholesale and retail trade	21. Other [Please specify]
11.Transportation and storage	
D11. For the currently unemployed, what is the main reason for unemployment? *[Select only 1 option]*	
1.Limited availability of jobs (Job scarcity)	6.Lack of self-confidence
2.Lack of connections/ contacts/ networks	7.Engaged in childcare or family/ household care
3.Lack of adequate experience	8.Societal norms, traditions and cultural barriers
4.Insufficient skills and inadequate qualifications	9.Other [Please specify]
5.Insufficient capital to start and run own enterprise	

E: Income status and livelihood conditions

E1. Is the income you earn from your current primary occupation enough to meet your financial needs?	
1.It is more than Enough	4.It is Not Enough At All
2.It is Enough	5.No income at all
3.It is Not Enough	
E2. Are you engaged in any other secondary occupations or activities to supplement your income?	
1.Yes 2. No 3. No income at all	
E3. How did your economic status, financial wellbeing and overall livelihood change after participating in the NEP supported interventions?	
1.Improved significantly	3.No change
2.Improved slightly	4.Worsened
E4. What was your average monthly income before you engaged in the NEP interventions?	
1. Less than 20,000 Rwf per month	9. 320,000 – 360,000 Rwf
2. 20,000 – 80,000 Rwf	10. 360,000 – 400,000 Rwf
3. 80,000 – 120,000 Rwf	11. 360,000 – 400,000 Rwf
4. 120,000 – 160,000 Rwf	12. 400,000 – 1,000,000 Rwf
5. 160,000 – 200,000 Rwf	13. More than 1,000,000 Rwf
6. 200,000 – 240,000 Rwf	
7. 240,000 – 280,000 Rwf	
8. 280,000 – 320,000 Rwf	
E5. What is your average monthly income After you engaged in the NEP interventions?	
1. Less than 20,000 Rwf per month	9. 320,000 – 360,000 Rwf
2. 20,000 – 80,000 Rwf	10. 360,000 – 400,000 Rwf
3. 80,000 – 120,000 Rwf	11. 360,000 – 400,000 Rwf
4. 120,000 – 160,000 Rwf	12. 400,000 – 1,000,000 Rwf

5. 160,000 – 200,000 Rwf	13. More than 1,000,000 Rwf
6. 200,000 – 240,000 Rwf	
7. 240,000 – 280,000 Rwf	
8. 280,000 – 320,000 Rwf	
E6. Do you save any of your income?	
1.Yes 2. No 3. No income at all	
E7. On Average how much do you save per month?	
[Enter Amount]	
E8. Do you have a bank account (Commercial bank/SACCO/MFI)?	
1.Yes 2. No	

F: Access to finance

F1: Did you start, expand, or sustain any enterprise after participating in the NEP interventions?	
1.Yes, Started new enterprise	3.No did not start any business [Skip section]
2.Yes, extended or expanded existing enterprise	
F2: If you started or expanded any enterprise, how did you source funding used for the business?	
1.Own savings	4.Borrowing from informal lenders
2.Contributions for friends/relatives	5.Borrowing from formal lenders (Banks, MFI, SACCO)
3.Selling assets	6. Other [Please specify]
F3: Did any individual or organisation assist you access credit to start, grow or sustain your enterprise?	
1.A relative or friend	5. A savings group (VSLA, cooperative)
2.Business Development Fund (BDF)/BDA	6.Training institution
3. An NGO	7.None
4. A Public entity (local government)	8. No credit accessed
F4: How much did you borrow to start or expand your business?	
__________________ [Enter Amount]	
F5: Did you receive any support from the NEP to start or improve/expand your business?	
1. Yes 2. Not aware of any	
F6: If you received any support directly or indirectly from the NEP, please specify the support?	
1.Business incubation centre (space)	5.Business registration
2.Technical assistance (advisory services)	6.Cooperatives formation and registration
3.Business management support (training)	7. Access to capital (credit, equity, toolkit)
4.Connection to Business mentorship or networks	8.Other [Please specify]

F7: If you encountered any difficulties in starting or growing your enterprise, please rank this list?	
Rank these seven items, with ***1*** *being the* ***Most Important*** *and* ***8*** *being the* ***Least Important***	
Items	Ranking
1.Lack of necessary educational background (including technical skills)	
2.Difficult to get funding (start-up and working capital)	
3.Lack of entrepreneurial/ business management skills	

4.Overwhelming competition in the market	
5.Low demand for my goods and/or services the market	
6.Location of my business is not ideal	
7.Regulatory requirements rendering business not feasible (taxes, standards, processes)	
8.Cost of doing business rendering business not feasible (raw materials, labour)	

F8: How do you rate your enterprise compared to other businesses within your sector and at your scale of production	
1. Better than competitors	3. Poorer than competitors
2. Same level as competitors	4. No Idea about the difference

F9: How do you rate NEP's support for women and girls in accessing trainings and business start- up?	
1. High	3. Moderate
2. Very High	4. Low

G: Conclusion

G1: Any Suggestions on how a National Initiative Working to increase employment creation can be made more effective to have greater impact on all Men, Women, Youth?
1. 2.
ENTER GPS COORDINATES

Evaluation of the National Employment Program of Rwanda

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the final evaluation of Sida's support to the Government of Rwanda's National Employment Programme (NEP) and in particular its work on skills development for improved employability along with entrepreneurship and business development. The evaluation covers the entire five-year programme period of implementation from November 2014 to December 2019, with a focus on Pillars 1, 2 and 4. The evaluation details findings and conclusions in the areas of NEP's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, as well as for cross-cutting issues, including gender, social inclusion and human rights and the environment. A number of recommendations are made to inform discussions on future programming in the sector, particularly implementation of the Government of Rwanda's new skills development and employment strategy 2019–2024.

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