



VOICES OF CHANGE

A collection of Most Significant Change Stories of education actors that participated in the Leading, Teaching and Learning Together programme 2017-2021



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Dear reader,

The Rwandan Government considers education as a cornerstone pillar to achieving the country's envisioned socio-economic transformation. Developing knowledge infrastructure by strongly investing in education and training is key in facilitating the acceleration and increase of skills, capacities and competences of Rwandan people.

Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB)'s vision is to promote the quality of basic education. Achieving quality education concerns us all. It requires collaboration with different actors. The Government of Rwanda acknowledges different development partners for their invaluable support in improving the quality of (basic) education. VVOB-education for development is one of these partners.

During the last five years, REB has collaborated closely with VVOB, together with the University of Rwanda College of Education (UR-CE) to improve the quality of basic education through a five-year programme known as Umusemburo w'Ireme ry'Uburezi (Leading, Teaching and Learning Together—LTLT).

This programme has been implemented in primary and secondary schools in 17 out of 30 districts. It focused on capacity development for teachers and school leaders, the two most critical sets of actors in raising the quality of primary and secondary education. VVOB and UR-CE together delivered Certificate and Diploma courses for

Preface

system and school-based leaders while providing opportunities for school leaders to support one another in supportive professional learning communities.

A Diploma course in Effective School Leadership has equipped head teachers and deputy head teachers with the competences to fulfil their roles as school leaders. A Certificate course in Educational Mentorship and Coaching provided school-based mentors and school subject leaders in STEM with effective tools and skills to facilitate school-based continuous professional development.

As a result, we see schools change into supportive and encouraging places where sector education inspectors, teachers, school leaders and parents work together towards common goals and where school leaders and teachers are equally engaged in decision-making.

To discover more, I warmly invite you to read on.

Dr. Nelson Mbarushimana,

Director General

Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB)

Country Programmes Manager's message

Dear reader,

It is my pleasure to present to you the VVOB project book entitled "Voices of Change: A collection of Most Significant Change Stories of education actors that participated in the Leading, Teaching and Learning Together programme 2017-2021". VVOB – education for development is an international non-profit organisation with over 35 years of experience in implementing programmes and projects with one shared passion: to ensure the improvement of quality education. Through capacity development, VVOB provides support to ministries of education in Africa, Asia, and South America to improve (initial) professional development of teachers and school leaders in early childhood, primary, general secondary, and technical and vocational education.

In Rwanda, VVOB has been implementing projects and programmes for over 18 years. We provide strategic support and capacity development to the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the University of Rwanda College of Education (UR-CE), both on teacher professional development (pre-and in-service) and school leadership.

Since 2017, we have implemented a five-year programme called 'Leading, Teaching and Learning Together - Umusemburo w'Iremerey'Uburezi' (LTLT). In line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 – to provide inclusive and equitable quality education for all male and female learners, the LTLT programme aimed to strengthen the competences of key education actors within the basic education system in Rwanda to fulfil their roles, through improved Continuous Professional Development (CPD) support systems and peer learning networks.

As the LTLT five-year programme comes to an end in 2021, we are excited to reflect with our partners on the impact of this programme, through the eyes of the participants. These five years have been a remarkable achievement for VVOB in Rwanda. At a system level, evidence-based professional standards for effective school leadership were established, which describe the key roles, responsibilities, and required competences to be an effective school leader. These standards now serve as a framework for recruitment, assessment, and professional development of school leaders. We successfully



transitioned through the Covid-19 induced steep learning curve, that required our CPD programmes to shift from in person to online modalities. So far, participation in the CPD programmes has shown positive effects on school leadership practices, which has in turn laid a strong foundation for creating an enabling environment for quality teaching and learning in schools. Using the Most Significant Change Story methodology, different

change stories from programme beneficiaries have been collected and selected and are documented in this project book.

I wish to acknowledge our strong partnerships and collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the University of Rwanda College of Education (UR-CE), which has enabled the implementation, success, and growth of this programme over the five years.

My deep appreciation goes to our funding partners, the Mastercard Foundation's Leaders in Teaching Initiative, the Belgian Government (the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation-DGD), and the ELMA foundation who have trusted VVOB as an implementing partner in Rwanda.

VVOB will continue to promote the quality of education through strengthening school leadership support systems and look forward to continuing the journey towards improved learning outcomes.

Mariëne Kiggundu
Country Programmes Manager
VVOB in Rwanda

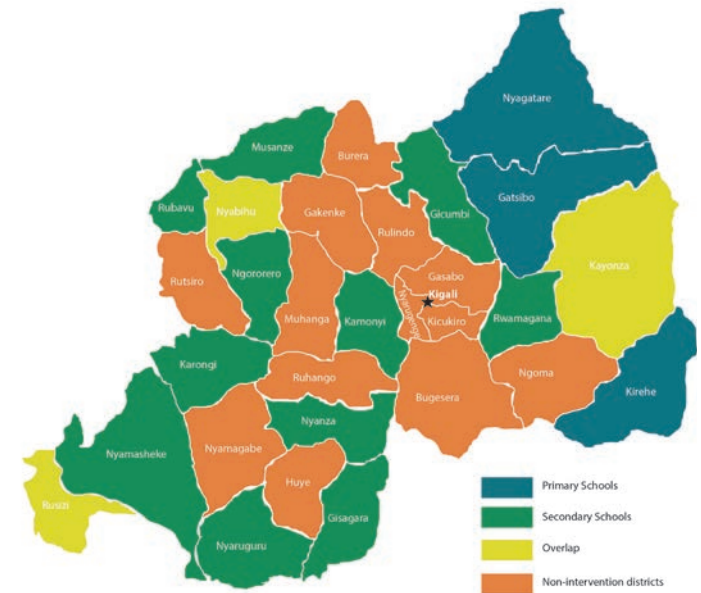
Background

Teachers and school leaders are the two most critical sets of actors in raising the quality of primary and secondary education ¹. Teachers are crucial when it comes to improving learning outcomes and learner wellbeing ². School leaders who support, evaluate and develop teacher quality and create a positive learning environment also have a high impact on learning outcomes ³.

While Rwanda has been successful in getting more students into the education system, ensuring that they transition through the system and gain the correct skills needed for the labour market is a challenge ⁴.

To support the Rwandan Ministry of Education in improving the quality of basic education in Rwanda, VVOB - Education for Development in partnership with the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the University of Rwanda College of Education (UR-CE) and with funding from the Mastercard Foundation, the Belgian government and the ELMA foundation, jointly implemented a programme called Leading, Learning and Teaching Together (LTLT)/ Umusemburo w'Ireme ry'Uburezi.

The LTLT programme ran from January 2017 till December 2021, covering all primary schools in six districts and all secondary schools in 14 districts (with 3 overlapping districts).



VVOB intervention map 2017- 2021

The main objective of the LTLT programme was to advance the implementation of the Competence Based Curriculum while supporting the improvement of learning outcomes in Mathematics and STEM in a gender responsive environment. To achieve this, the programme aimed to strengthen the competences of key education actors through improved Continuous Professional Development (CPD) support systems. The CPD support focused on two main modalities:

1. Training programmes on Effective School Leadership and on Educational Mentorship and Coaching;
2. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for headteachers and Communities of Practice (CoPs) for (new) teachers.

¹ Robinson, Loyd and Rowe, 2008. The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes: An Analysis of the Differential Effects of Leadership Types. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(5)

² Hattie, J. (2003) Teachers Make a Difference: What Is the Research Evidence? Distinguishing Expert Teachers from Novice and Experienced Teachers. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) Annual Conference on: Building Teacher Quality.

³ Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. School Leadership and Management, 28, 27-42. doi:10.1080/13632430701800060

⁴ Mastercard Foundation, 2017. The secondary education teachers initiative. Toronto

By the end of 2021, **809** headteachers, **545** of deputy headteachers and **20** district officials have been trained in Effective School Leadership.

In addition, **228** Sector Education Inspectors, **1253** School-Based Mentors and **1522** STEM School Subject Leaders and math School Subject Leaders have been trained in Educational Mentorship and Coaching.

In primary education, the programme also trained **48** of Teacher Training College tutors in Educational Mentorship and Coaching with a specific focus on induction programmes for new teachers.

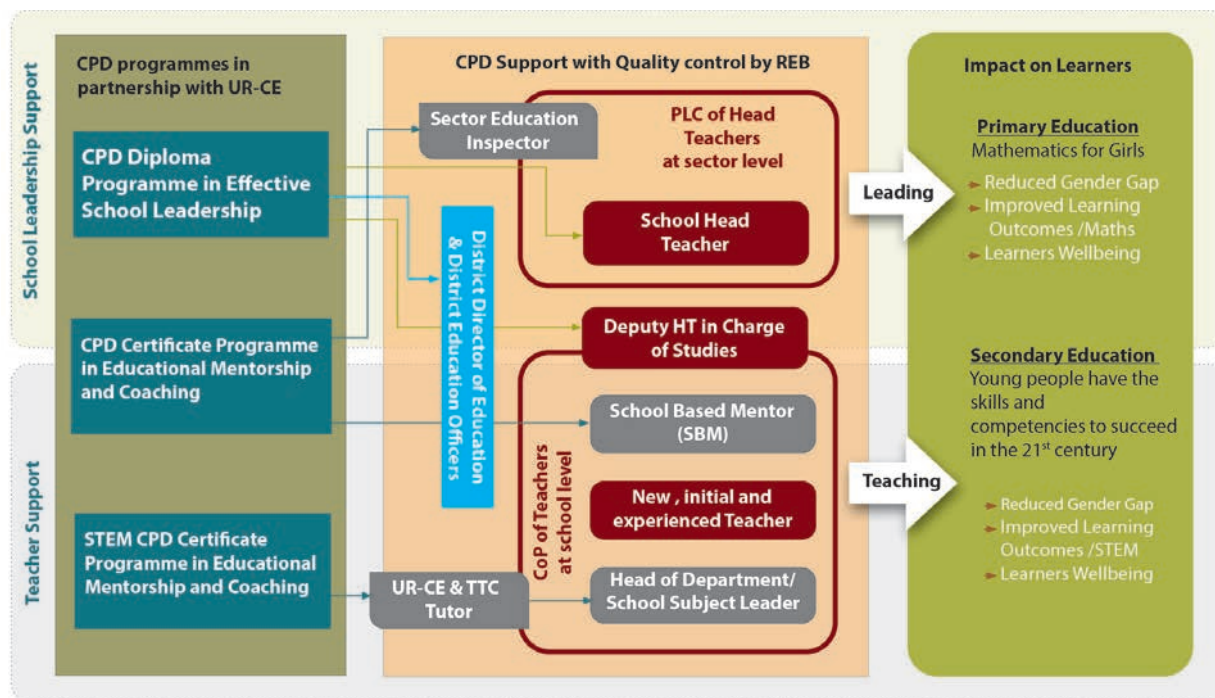
A majority of sectors have now formed PLCs and every targeted school now organizes at least two CoP sessions per year.

Through these improved CPD support systems, thousands of other teachers and students have been reached indirectly.

Since the programme has come to a close in 2021, it is now time to reflect on the key changes of the programme through the eyes of programme participants.

Using the Most Significant Change Story methodology ⁵, different change stories have been collected and selected.

This project book documents a selection of the Most Significant Change Stories from headteachers, School-Based Mentors, School Subject Leaders in STEM, District Directors of Education, District Education Officers and TTC Tutors. The book further zooms in on two cross-cutting changes: Inclusive education and integration of ICT in teaching.



Intervention logic: Leading, Teaching and Learning Together programme

⁵ Davies and Jart, 2005. The Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique: A guide to its use.



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REFLECTIONS FROM OPERATIONAL PARTNERS UR-CE AND REB



The UR/VVOB training programme will leave behind a lasting impression- Dr. Uworwabayeho

Dear esteemed reader, I am Dr. Alphonse Uworwabayeho. I am a senior lecturer in Mathematics at the University of Rwanda-College of Education (UR-CE). I am the coordinator of the 'Leading, Teaching and Learning Together' joint activities implemented by UR-CE and VVOB.

Since LTLT started, I have been the coordinator and I also facilitated one of the components of the programme relating to empowering math school subject leaders to conduct CoPs and CPDs in their schools.

To give you a brief background, this programme was a partnership between Rwanda Basic Education Board, VVOB and University of Rwanda (UR). VVOB sought to support REB to improve the quality of education through different programs.

However, since VVOB is not mandated to provide training, let alone issuing certificates, it was important to bring on board UR.

The role of UR-CE in this partnership therefore was to offer technical and financial support through developing modules, providing trainers and issuing certificates to those who underwent the training, as a higher institution of learning with a mandate to do so.

Not only that, we supported VVOB in monitoring and supporting trainees countrywide in their respective workplaces, because VVOB and REB did not have enough staff to do that.

I am proud and privileged to say that the UR-CE/VVOB programme left behind a lasting impression. The academic staff who were involved in this programme are now more knowledgeable and better equipped in their respective responsibilities.

Before this programme was introduced, there was no continuous professional development programmes in our college. It is VVOB which initiated it and we are very grateful for that.



Dr. Alphonse Uworwabayeho

Best Practices

Another key achievement of the training programme was that it introduced best practices, which were embedded in the skills training programme- a good example being school leadership skills.

The trainees got a master's in school leadership which they obtained progressively as they accomplished each step of the training. When it came to STEM, the training programme left behind a best practice of the 5Es, which has not only improved teaching and learning outcomes but also boosted academic performance in our schools.

All these things were new to us and as we speak, they have been embedded in our pre-service program. It has also led to the recognition of UR-CE. As of today, many people know who we are and our contribution towards improving the quality of education in Rwanda.

Another aspect that came out of the programme is that when we go to the field to discuss with alumni, the feedback we get is that the training led to positive outcomes and enshrined the spirit of working together for the good of the school community.

So, for me the most relevant components of the programme were training in school leadership, introducing the 5E's in science as well as mentorship and coaching. It is only fair to say that all components were relevant, especially if you have to classify them based on the number of participants in each category, since each component had its own target group.

I can therefore say that each component was relevant for the respective category of trainees, which goes to show that this was a well-thought programme. It is unfortunate that we were not able to reach all districts in the country, especially when it came to training primary school teachers. We were only able to cover 6 districts.

Worth mentioning is the aspect of induction of new teachers- a practice which never used to happen before. A new teacher would have to struggle through adapting to the new work environment and learning on the job, which affect teaching and learning outcomes, but today they are helped by their more experience peers.

Crosscutting impact

The fact that the programme touched on different categories of people was important because improving the quality education does not depend on one factor or one group of people. DEOs have to work with school leaders but also school leaders need school subject leaders or school-based mentors in order to achieve the desired goals.

The most important thing for me is that the training covered all these key categories of people to have more tangible and sustainable outcomes. If for example you trained DEOs or School Leaders alone, you would not be able to achieve the desired goal or change you want because teachers are not involved.

The involvement of all these key people in the training at different levels will bring about lasting change. We have already witnessed how the programme improved efficiency in school management and improved academic performance.

As the programme comes to an end, it is fair to say that the participants are not just more capable of executing their duties but they also have the necessary ICT skills and tools they received during the training.

Things like CoPs, CPDs, the gender aspect in planning and effective use of available resources to achieve more have all had a positive impact in our schools and communities.

Our focus now should be on how we can sustain this momentum, considering that the programme is coming to an end. The question now is, how can we sustain these achievements?

With REB and UR-CE still in charge and we also have DEOs who represent policymakers at the district level, we can be hopeful that this change brought by the LTLT programme can be sustained.



“Induction of new teachers, mentoring and coaching should be sustained” - Nehemiah Bacumuwenda

I am Nehemiah Bacumuwenda, a Curriculum Specialist at Rwanda Education Board (REB). I was appointed by REB to coordinate the University of Rwanda-College of Education (UR-CE) and VVOB programme, particularly the aspects of teaching, mentoring and coaching.

REB, as the implementor of the education policy at the national level, was delighted to work with UR-CE and VVOB to oversee this programme which was aimed at improving the quality of education in Rwanda through teaching and learning.

I can say that this partnership left behind many positive outcomes, particularly on aspect of school management, which I closely followed up. The programme introduced new aspects especially mentoring and coaching, which we never had before.

Other important aspects relating to gender, such as encouraging girls to pursue sciences and sharing equal responsibilities, not defined by gender, as well as induction of new teachers were all new aspects in our education system which left a mark.

The assessment we did showed that the aforementioned aspects brought about tangible change, improving teaching and learning outcomes across the board. Worth mentioning is the fact that the programme introduced collaborative efforts between schools and TTCs, where the latter is able to follow up on the progress of new teachers who are released into the profession, to see if indeed they are following what they were taught.

This for me is a very relevant change because during this process, both the schools and TTCs are able to identify gaps in teaching and address them accordingly. This particular aspect complements the components of mentorship and coaching and induction of new teachers.

Before the UR-CE/VVOB programme, these components were unheard of. A new teacher would join the profession and struggle to cope without any support. This has changed completely.

We have realized the importance of supporting new teachers to adapt by learning



Nehemiah Bacumuwenda

from their more experienced peers. The impact of this has been felt not just in improvement in teaching and learning outcomes but also overall academic performance.

Sustainability is Key

As the programme comes to an end, I believe that we should find ways of sustaining these components because of the positive results we have seen. School leadership, improvement in STEM subjects and overall performance are key outcomes which we need to come up with strategies to sustain them. We have also seen growing interest in sciences from girls and improvement in their overall performance.

As I conclude, I would like to commend UR and VVOB for the efforts they invested in this programme and encourage more partnerships like this, which can contribute to the transformation of our education sector.



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**VOICES OF CHANGE:
SCHOOL LEADERS**

“How engaging students in morning quizzes improved learning outcomes” - Françoise Mukagatete

I am Françoise Mukagatete, the deputy head teacher at Groupe Scolaire Kabere, located in Kamonyi district, Southern Province. I took part in the UR-CE/VVOB Continuous Professional Development Diploma in Effective School Leadership (CPD-DESL) programme.

Participating in the UR-CE/VVOB training helped me to contribute towards improving learning outcomes in my school through morning quizzes which I introduced, to gauge the progress of our students.

I came up with the morning quiz strategy because previously, despite the efforts made by teachers, students continued to exhibit low performance levels whenever they were assessed.

I wondered what I could do in order to improve the performance. I took time to converse with teachers on what could be done to improve the performance of our students.

Once we identified the challenge, we decided to come up with the Morning Quiz strategy which would make the students more involved in the learning process.

We immediately started to give learners morning quizzes every day to gauge their comprehension levels. This strategy worked because students started revising their lessons every morning so that they don't fail the morning quiz.

Improved Punctuality

This strategy did not just improve learning outcomes but it also improved promptness and punctuality because every student must get to the school by 6:45 AM or even earlier, to have enough time to revise because the quiz starts at 7:00 AM. On my part I believe that is the most significant change I brought in my school community after the UR-CE/VVOB training.

This strategy led to great changes in our school because both teachers and learners strive to get to the school early to prepare for the morning quiz. The habit of late coming has been broken.



Françoise Mukagatete

Teachers arrive early to review what they taught the day before and come up with questions to test whether students still remember what they learned.

A win-win for all

As a result, both teachers and students get fully involved in the learning process and this has greatly improved performance in all lessons. The morning quizzes motivate students to work hard since the marks are reflected in their progress reports.

The more students are engaged in day-to-day quizzes, the higher the marks they score. This strategy is very important because it keeps the students fully engaged, remembering what they learned and this helps them to succeed in their exams.

I can therefore say that my participation in the UR-CE/VVOB CPD Programme equipped me with the skills to team up with the teachers to agree on what we can do to ensure that students effectively grasp the lessons they are given.

Every morning we interrogate them to check if they still remember everything they learned and where necessary, we engage parents in case we need their support.



As the initiator of this strategy, I also monitor its implementation and keep the recorded marks which I share with the Deputy Head Teacher in Charge of Studies.

Our performance has greatly improved and the morning quiz has made learning and teaching more enjoyable since it is interactive.



Exploiting school resources to support vulnerable Students - a case study of Petit Séminaire de Rwesero



Sébastien Mukurizehe

My name is Sébastien Mukurizehe, the Head teacher of Petit Séminaire de Rwesero, located in Gicumbi district, Northern Province. The training I underwent in Effective School Leadership focused on how we can manage a school as an organisation, with a specific focus on the impact of school land exploitation on

students' retention and performance. Poverty is a major hindrance to education. Children from poor families drop out of school when their parents cannot afford school fees. However, exploiting available school resources such as land, can help schools to retain students from poor families.

Following the training which I was offered by UR-CE/VVOB, I started thinking about my responsibility in the physical resource management.

Together with the administrative staff, we sat down and analysed the current utilization of our school land and identified ways to improve it.

As a result, we decided to come up with the best ways to efficiently and effectively manage and exploit the available school land, with the view of supporting poor or vulnerable students who were performing well to remain in school.

As a private-owned school, Rwesero Minor Seminary largely depends on school fees from the parents. Every year we register a good number of seminarians who come from poor families which cannot afford school fees.

Previously, as a practice, we would send home all the students whose parents cannot pay school fees on time.

In a bid to achieve inclusive education, we decided to retain some students from poor families, particularly those who behave and perform well, through efficient and effective use of our school land.

To address the challenge of insufficient funding, we started growing on the school land some of the food which we previously used to buy from the market. We had an interesting outcome from the investment we made in school land exploitation.

We registered a good production of vegetables, bananas and sweet potatoes. We have been able to save money, which allowed us to retain three students who fulfilled the aforementioned criteria.

Today, these students who come from poor households are happily studying without being preoccupied with the worry of being sent home. They actually performed well in the second term district examinations.

In conclusion, as a school leader, I consider this the most significant for myself and for my school, thanks to the training I got from UR-CE/VVOB. The fact that we have students who can perform well and conduct themselves well but are hindered by poverty, gave me sleepless nights.

I am proud to have brought about this change and I am convinced that the school land can be effectively and efficiently used to resolve challenges we face.

Today the three beneficiary students have the moral, mental and financial security to pursue their studies without any worry.



Hakorimana on pooling resources from within to tackle challenges at Groupe Scolaire Bisagara

Located in rural Mushikiri Sector, Kirehe district in Eastern Province, Groupe Scolaire Bisagara faced a number of logistical challenges which hindered academic performance. The head teacher, Evariste Hakorimana, came up with a plan.

I have been able to work with students, teachers and the parent's committee to identify the challenges we face as a school and find solutions.

We were able to collaborate as partners in education and bought a photocopier machine out of the money we got from agricultural activities at the school, without any support from donors.

Initially we had a farm and cows but they were not being utilised well. After my training with UR-CE/VVOB, I discussed with teachers and parents and we agreed that there is something we can do to improve the productivity of our agricultural activities, beyond just producing food to provide lunch for students in upper classes.

Though providing lunch was one thing, we agreed that every year there is something we can do to increase the productivity of our land and the income generated is used to do something that will improve learning and teaching outcomes.

A timely solution

We noticed that the school was spending a lot of money on photocopying assessment forms and other documents, sometimes getting the school into debts. Even then, it was not being properly done, sometimes leading to delays in progress assessment, frustrating students. There were issues of safety and security of assessment reports since they were photocopied outside the school.

In other cases, assessment was not properly done because of the fear of photocopying costs. Today we have our own photocopier machine which has helped us cut down on photocopying and printing costs.

This has helped us to improve on learning outcomes. We have seen the performance of our students improve while the cost of achieving this progress was greatly reduced. Additionally, the work of teachers was eased as a result.



Evariste Hakorimana

Joint efforts paid off

This for me was a significant change because through the joint efforts of the school administration, teachers, students and parents, we managed to acquire a photocopier machine that helped us achieve our objective.

Today, the school leaders are able to prepare clean and timely reports, teachers have means of photocopying assessment reports in a timely and secure manner and students are given well-prepared assessment forms that are different.

We no longer experience delays in assessment because we have to photocopy documents outside the school.

As our academic performance continues to improve, we are confident that the image of our school in our community will also improve and our students will grow into responsible citizens who know how to find solutions to the challenges they face amongst themselves.

I can attribute these changes to the training I got from UR-CE/VVOB because after the course I understood that the challenges our school faced were not mine alone but rather collectively, as stakeholders in education, we can find solutions.

Previously, I never used to give value to the ideas of our stakeholders and partners but today we have a shared vision as school leaders, teachers, parents and students and full ownership of the process.

The training further reminded me that our number one objective is to improve learning outcomes and give our school a vision.





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VOICES OF CHANGE: SCHOOL-BASED MENTORS



“Learning is a continuous process” - Olive Mukarugwiza

Nobody is perfect- even teachers still have a lot more to learn, at least that is what Olive Mukarugwiza found out after attending the Continuous Professional Development Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching (CPD-CEMC) programme for School-Based Mentors (SBMs). Mukarugwiza, an SBM at Groupe Scolaire Vungu, located in Nyange Sector, Ngororero district, Western Province, participated in the professional course courtesy of UR-CE/VVOB.

Participating in the training helped me to realize that our teaching staff needed more support, including those we considered to be perfect and don't believe in gaining more knowledge from colleagues.

After the training, there was significant improvement in mentoring, coaching and induction of new teaching staff at our school. I was able to encourage fellow teachers to participate in Communities of Practice (CoPs) sessions.

There is always more to learn

Some of the teachers who considered themselves more knowledgeable found out that they could actually benefit from sharing experiences with others. They noticed that they could learn more from their colleagues even if they don't have the same level of education and that learning is a continuous process. Nobody is perfect.

During the CoP sessions, we share experiences and help one another to improve teaching and learning activities. Peer learning, micro teaching and mentoring are also carried out at our school regularly.

In the same light, new teachers are also supported during induction and this has improved collaboration among teachers.

I consider this the most significant change for me because there has been improvement in terms of how we execute our daily duties and the fact that we are able to share experiences with other teachers and in doing so we learn and develop our knowledge.



Olive Mukarugwiza

Before participating in the training programme, it was not easy to collaborate with fellow teachers. Some of us had a rigid mindset but after the training, teachers understood the importance of helping each other.

As an SBM, I try to help my colleagues as much as possible and I can say my approach to teaching and classroom management improved greatly.

“I am more organised in my work, thanks to the training” - Jean de la Croix Kuradusenge



Jean de la Croix Kuradusenge

I am Jean de la Croix Kuradusenge, a teacher and School-Based Mentor -SBM at GS Mugongo, located in Mudende Sector, Rubavu district. I got a chance to participate in the UR-CE/VVOB CPD programme for SBMs, from which I gained a number of skills and knowledge that has improved my personal life individually and at a professional level.

I can say that during the training, I acquired skills to plan and implement my own CPD activities by following the steps I learnt in Module 2 of the training, particularly on page 176 to 186, focussing on Teachers Professional development needs, smart goals and scheduling of CPD activities.

During the training I got to know how to do a report and have a copy of my activities to keep in my file. More importantly, I got to know how to organize my documents and when I conduct CPDs or Communities of Practice (CoPs) things go well, I don't face any challenges in terms of planning.

I am also able to evaluate myself to know how the activities went and I act according to the outcome, I am able to make some changes, through reflective practice, which wasn't the case before.

As we speak, even my fellow teachers appreciate how I changed my approach and when I call them for a CPD or CoP session, they attend. I can add that the attendance of these sessions improved compared to the past before I attended the UR-CE/VVOB training.

Helping new teachers

Before participating in the UR-CE/VVOB programme, I never paid attention to supporting new teachers with basics they needed to integrate well in their new jobs. I thought they would get information during a CPD or CoP session.

I later realised that I could change that. Now whenever there are new teachers, I show that I care and give them all necessary information that can help them to settle in.

This is the most significant change for me and my community. I can say that the UR-CE/VVOB CPD programme did great in terms of making me more organised in terms of executing my duties.

3/11 Define Email
by explaining advantages and disadvantages of using email

4/11 What is AJAX?
by give different ways in which it can be used to give different applications

5/11 Analyse search Engines
by list some examples of search engines

The world



*“Two heads are better than one” -
Dorothee Mukafeza on how working
together makes a difference*



Dorothee Mukafeza

I am Teacher Dorothee Mukafeza, a School Based Mentor (SBM) at Groupe Scolaire Byumba EAR located in Byumba Sector, Gicumbi District, Northern Province. I participated in the Continuous Professional Development Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching (CPD-CEMC) programme for SBMs.

rwanda.vvob.org

The training I was offered by University of Rwanda – College of Education in partnership with VVOB, as a teacher representing others, enlightened and impacted me in many ways, in terms of how I supported and mentored my colleagues. I can only say that the training made a huge difference in how I approached challenges that we faced in our school and how I worked with others to solve them.

Thanks to the training, I am now able to bring together my colleagues and we exchange ideas on how best we can tackle any challenge we have identified in our school community.

Among other things, we discuss and agree on the most effective way to support students who make mistakes and reward those who are performing well in all aspects. We are also able to follow through on the CPD plan in a bid to improve the quality of education in the country and specifically for our school.

Tackling late coming, absenteeism

The training was really important and timely for me because after that I was able to sit down with my colleagues through our Community of Practice (CoP) meeting to tackle some of the key challenges we faced, mainly late coming, increasing cases of absenteeism and dropping out.

Once we sat down together, in just an hour we were able to come up with solutions to these challenges. We came up with a concrete plan on how to follow up on these challenges. We assigned ourselves roles of compiling attendance lists as one of the ways to determine who came late, who missed school and who dropped out.

In our second meeting we discussed how we can remove barriers amongst ourselves and closely work together through sharing ideas on learning objectives, filling pedagogical documents, teaching in general, involving pupils and how to effectively address the challenges we encounter in our day-to-day work -something we call 'reflective practice'.

Positive changes

These for me were the most significant changes the training brought, not just for me but for my colleagues too and the school. We meet in our different groups and I also offer individual coaching to teachers. We sit together and deliberate on the challenges we face and it is only fair for me to say that the transformation in how I execute my duties after the training is visible for all to see.

As such, I believe the training I was offered by UR-CE/VVOB has enabled me to make my rightful contribution towards achieving the quality of education we are aspiring for as a country.

“I encourage fellow teachers to be passionate about Teaching” - Vedaste Nduwayezu

They say teaching is not a profession but rather a passion- a calling which Vedaste Nduwayezu, a School-Based Mentor (SBM) at Group Scolaire Musheru, in Nyagatare district, understood so well. Nduwayezu participated in the Continuous Professional Development Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching (CPD-CEMC) programme for SBMs.

My participation in the UR-CE/VVOB CPD programme has considerably changed my life in terms of shaping my leadership skills.

Thanks to the training, I have been able to help my fellow teachers and citizens in my community to improve the quality of the services rendered to their beneficiaries. For instance, while conducting my coaching sessions I encouraged my fellow teachers to have passion for the teaching job regardless of the challenges they face in their daily activities. Education is one of the most important careers through which a person plays his/her role in nation building.

Bridging the gaps

Apart from coaching and mentoring activities, I conducted Community of Practice (CoP) sessions whose aim was to provide teachers with approaches to be used while solving problems.

I feel very happy and proud of being an SBM because I act as a link between the teaching staff and the administration. I play a big role in the progress of my school for the common interests.

My training as an SBM has not only impacted me as an individual but also my fellow teachers and school administrators at large.

The school is like a playground whereby different players have different roles even if they work as a team. However, the players need the referee to help them carry out their duties smoothly when they are in action.



Vedaste Nduwayezu

As an SBM, my role is to make sure the teaching and learning activities are done in a conducive environment. Therefore, I dare say that being a school-based mentor not only makes me proud but also blessed.

A new skill set

While pursuing the UR-CE/VVOB CPD training programme, I acquired new skills and knowledge that have been helpful in my teaching career. For example, the unit on Leadership gave me a lot of insights about class management and the hierarchy of school organization.

I made important use of this and put it in practice while doing my activities especially in classrooms.

Besides, the coaching and mentoring sessions have enabled me to live harmoniously with other people. Furthermore, the Community of Practice (CoP) sessions also played a big role in terms of improving the quality of education through sharing ideas with fellow teachers.

I would like to thank UR-CE/VVOB CPD for having done a good job of helping teachers to boost their talents and skills in order to improve the quality of education in Rwanda.





6

VOICES OF CHANGE: STEM SCHOOL SUBJECT LEADERS



“I support my colleagues to adapt through sharing experiences” - Wellars Mushumba



Wellars Mushumba

My name is Wellars Mushumba. I am a STEM School Subject Leader -SSL at Groupe Scolaire Saint Michel Nyamirama in Kamonyi district, Southern Province. I participated in the Continuous Professional Development Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching for STEM Teachers (CPD - CEMC) between July 2019 and November 2019.

During the training, I would say I gained important professional competences that have been helpful to me as a STEM SSL and for my school.

Key among the benefits I gained from the training include the ability and skills to support new teachers joining our school, especially those in STEM, to improve their competences and gain confidence in teaching as a profession.

Initially, before the training of headteachers, deputy headteachers and STEM SSL by UR-CE/VVOB, there were no such Community of Practice (CoP) activities conducted to support new teachers to smoothly adapt.

Previously, sharing experiences was done through mentorship programs but it was not effective in terms of helping new STEM teachers to easily transition into the teaching profession.

Tangible Change

After participating in the training, we started to organize and engage in CoP activities aimed at sharing experiences with new teachers within our school community, as a way of integrating them.

As of today, such sessions are organized and conducted in different departments or the entire school in general, depending on the challenge we have to deal with.

This, for me, is the most significant and tangible change the training I underwent has brought in my school community so far and I am thankful to the Ministry of Education, UR-CE and VVOB.

Important to mention is that my fellow teachers do actively participate in COP sessions and we are able handle the challenges, particularly those faced by new teachers.

Notably, among others things, I am able to guide new STEM teachers on effectively setting instructional objectives, completing pedagogical documents and putting in place an assessment method based on Bloom's Taxonomy model, which dwells on cognitive, affective and sensory domains to achieve better learning outcomes.

Empowering others is empowering a community

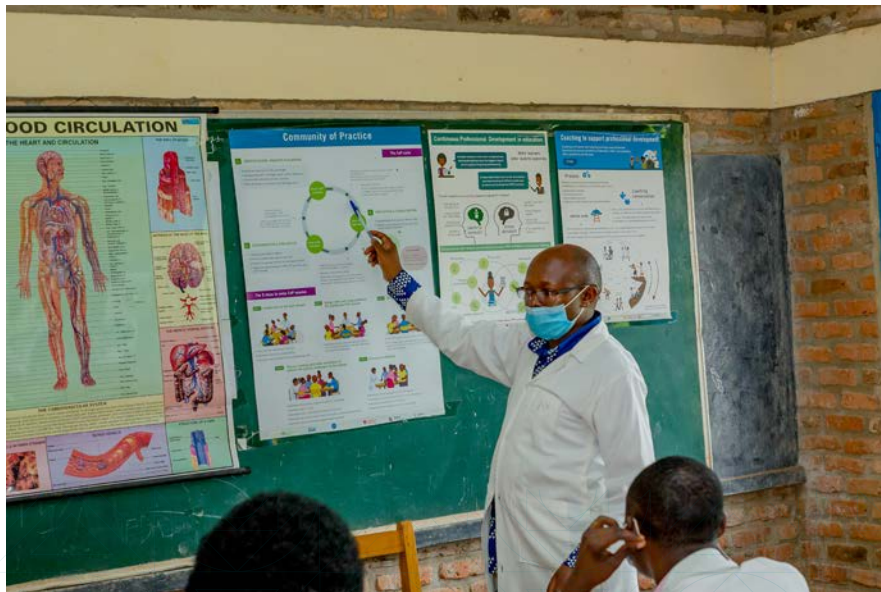
I can therefore say that conducting CoP sessions regularly has improved the professional development and growth of teachers in our school, simply because new teachers are able to learn and adapt through experiences shared by their more experienced peers, myself included.

They are even able to conduct effective CoP cycles themselves once they are fully integrated and this for me is one of the most significant changes the UR-CE/VVOB training brought about, not just for me as an individual, but for my school community as well, which directly benefits from the positive impact of the training.

Once again, I would like to thank UR-CE/VVOB for giving me the opportunity

to participate in the training which improved collaborative efforts within my school community by enabling me with skills to empower others in my community.

This contributes to the overall objective of improving the quality of education in Rwanda through Continuous Professional Development.



“Helping a new teacher to integrate is key” - Bellancille Nyirabutoragurwa



Bellancille Nyirabutoragurwa

I am Bellancille Nyirabutoragurwa a School Subject Leader (SSL) at Groupe Scolaire Gahengeri, located in Rugabano Sector, Karongi District, Western Province. I benefited from the UR-CE/VVOB Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training, earning a Certificate in Educational Mentorship and Coaching Programme.

As an SSL, I understand well the importance of supporting new teachers, particularly those in STEM, to settle in their new roles, by taking them through different induction programmes which helps them to fully integrate, thanks to the UR-CE/VVOB training.

Upon completion of the first module of the training, I realised how important it was for a new teacher to be supported in different aspects, including showing him or her around the school, since they are not well versed with the school environs.

A tour around the school, starting from classrooms to the libraries and administrative offices as well as sanitary rooms, is the first step to help new teachers adapt and be well conversant with the school set up.

Preparing new teachers for the task ahead

As an SSL, I take new STEM teachers through the process of preparing course materials, compiling attendance lists, which they have to do on a daily basis, as well as helping them to understand the curricula, all of which could be new and challenging to a teacher who is just starting out his or her career.

This is significant in the sense that after training, I was equipped with the skills to support in the induction of new teachers when they join the school, skills which I did not possess before.

For instance, in 2020, when Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) urgently recruited new teachers, including some who didn't necessarily study education courses. I took the initiative to support them, particularly on preparing pedagogical materials and instruments, as a way of helping them to understand their new responsibilities,”

Delivering more and better

The training I received has helped me to deliver better and more impactful outcomes in my work. Before this training, I never bothered about supporting new teachers who joined the school because I thought their induction was the responsibility of the school heads.

Before the training, I used to think that training new teachers how to prepare learning materials from the curriculum was the responsibility of the deputy head teacher. I assumed that they would learn more on the job as time goes by.

I also believed that I could only offer support whenever I am asked but today, I am able to intervene in all these areas, thanks to the training.

Overall, I would say the training was great not just for my growth as a teacher, but most importantly, equipping me with the skills to support fellow teachers who are new in the profession to integrate, which is my contribution towards improving the quality education.



RETURN DAYS WORKSHOP IN PHOTOS

From 20th to 21st November 2021, more than 2000 teachers, school leaders, district and sector education officials who completed UR-CE – VVOB CPD programmes in the 17 districts where the Leading Teaching Learning Together (LTLT) programme is implemented came together in 17 sites across Rwanda to share best practices with each other and the impact of the programmes through their Most Significant Change Stories. Dr. Nelson Mbarushimana, (in photos below), the Director General of Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), participated in the return days workshop at G.S Rosa Mystica Inclusive School in Kamonyi District, Southern Province.





The Power of collaborative learning in improving teaching outcomes



Anaclet Maniriho

Anaclet Maniriho, Teacher Groupe Scolaire Kageyo School Subject Leader (SSL)

I got the opportunity to be selected for the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme on Educational Mentorship and Coaching for STEM School Subject Leaders and I can say that after the training, there was an improvement in lesson planning in our school after we began focusing on 5Es and creating a discrepant event in class.

During the training, I observed, based on the second module of the UR-CE/VVOB educational development manual, that many science teachers do not consider the 5Es as an instructional model when they are planning the lesson.

The two aspects mostly left out among the 5Es are 'Engage' and 'Elaborate'. Upon completing the training, I organized the first staff meeting and encouraged the science teachers in my CoP to plan the lesson based on 5Es¹.

Today, all teachers focus on 5Es when they are preparing lessons and create an event in class which helps students to stay engaged in the lesson. The teachers noticed that they needed more support from their colleagues in the effective planning of a lesson.

I came up with a timetable for CoPs and everybody is strongly committed to attending. We share experiences and help each other to boost teaching and learning outcomes. As a result, lesson observation is also being carried out, with the school mentor coming in to help new teachers and there is improved collaboration among staff. We've been able to activate CPD activities in order to enhance the quality of education.

Being a Leader

After the training, I started taking a lead role in the induction of newly hired teachers using the knowledge from the second module of UR-CE/VVOB educational development programme on the induction of new teachers in order to improve teaching and learning. I observed that new science teachers faced a number of challenges especially when it came to understanding the pedagogical documents, limited cooperation with colleagues and administration and they needed more time to adapt to the system.

Other challenges included limited knowledge in lesson planning, integrating generic competences and several crosscutting issues which can generally be attributed to lack of experience.

After learning about the induction of new teachers, together with another SSL and SBM, I organized an induction exercise for new teachers, in collaboration with the Director of Studies and the Head teacher.

¹The 5E model is a science instruction model which provides a framework for a constructivist, guided-inquiry approach to learning science. The five phases are: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate.

The objective of the induction was to share good practices to improve teaching and learning outcomes and also how to overcome the aforementioned challenges faced by new teachers.

In no time, we started seeing an improvement in the teaching and learning process, with a focus on promoting effective collaborative efforts at our school, all of which I attribute to the skills and knowledge I got from the first module of the training.

Defying a Negative Mindset

In a short time, the majority of the teachers did away with the perceived mindset that there are no students in our school who can succeed in sciences and mathematics.

Today, our school boasts of many O' level students who have chosen to pursue science subjects and mathematics even up to A' level and later at university or other tertiary institutions.

Collaborative learning between teachers, coaching, mentoring and sharing experiences amongst each other as well as lesson observation have impacted our school performance.



Using a participatory approach in learning: the magical 5E's - my Personal Experience - Celestin Ndayambaje



Celestin Ndayambaje

I am Celestin Ndayambaje a teacher and school subject leader at GS Nyinawimana, based in Nyamiyaga Sector, here in Gicumbi district, Northern Province. I was lucky to be involved in the Continuous Professional Development Certificate

in Educational Mentoring and Coaching for STEM Teachers (CPD - EMC) training programme offered by UR-CE/VVOB.

I am happy to say that participating in the training programme brought immense changes in my school community because it laid the foundation of integrating the 5-Es in teaching a planned lesson.

As of today, we know that the lesson plan is composed of three parts: introduction, development and conclusion. During the UR-CE/VVOB CPD programme, especially in module 2, which looks at Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge and gender in STEM education, we learned how we can integrate the 5-Es in teaching a planned lesson¹. The 5-Es namely Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate are included in three parts of a normal lesson plan.

These are really important especially when it comes to improving teaching and learning activities and can lead to the improvement in the quality of STEM education.

Improved academic performance

After putting into practice, the new concept of planning a lesson, my colleagues and I noted a significant change in the manner in which content was delivered and improvement in student performance.

This for us is very significant because after integrating the 5-Es in planning lessons and teaching, we observed a number of positive changes. To mention but a few, learners are now more engaged with real materials and discrepant events.

Learners are also able to explore new concepts with experiments and during the lessons, explanations are given by the learners themselves and the teacher only serves as a facilitator.

Proactive learners

The approach also triggered the curiosity of learners and they now ask many intelligent questions and they are also able to relate the lesson to real life situations, which makes comprehension easier.

Generally, the integration of 5-Es in teaching a lesson has had a major impact on teaching and learning activities in our school, including motivating both learners and teachers to

¹The 5E model is a science instruction model which provides a framework for a constructivist, guided-inquiry approach to learning science. The five phases are: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate.

strive for success and progress. It also brought the gender aspect in education, among other significant changes.

That said, my participation in this training of UR-CE/VVOB training led to a change in my profession as a teacher.

I am now able to organize CoP sessions with my fellow teachers to discuss new methods of delivering a lesson and this led to academic excellence while the school provides favourable conditions for mutual support across the board.

Empowering others

The training also equipped me with skills to coach and mentor new teachers who are less experienced in the profession. Through coaching conversations, I am able to encourage them and boost their confidence to participate in school activities.

Last but not least I have the skills and knowledge to motivate learners to actively participate in teaching and learning activities, not just to acquire knowledge and skills and also to aim for success.



“Teamwork, supporting each other led to better results” – Jean Baptiste Sangwa



Sangwa Jean Baptiste

Hey there, I am Sangwa Jean Baptiste, a teacher and School Subject Leader (SSL) here at Groupe Scolaire Nyagasambu, located in Nyamirama Sector, Kayonza district, in Rwanda’s Eastern Province

I recently got the opportunity to be part of the UR-CE/VVOB CPD Programme Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching for School Subject Leaders.

Ever since I took part in the training, there has been a major change in how I go about my daily work and how I support my colleagues to accomplish our mission.

Upon completion of the training, I managed to build a Community of Practice (CoP) that is efficient and productive in my school community.

My key accomplishments so far include integrating ICT tools in teaching and supporting new teachers to transition into the teaching profession.

We have successfully conducted induction sessions for new teachers and my teaching has greatly improved using the new approaches we were taught during the UR-CE/VVOB programme.

Academic excellence

All the factors mentioned above contribute to the academic excellence of our school, partly because lesson planning improved with the deployment of the 5E’s and ensuring the full involvement of learners.

Unlike before, today our students contribute up to 70 percent during the learning process, which means that they are fully engaged and this directly improves comprehension and success rates.

After the training, I started to integrate ICT in each lesson. I prepare all lessons, reports and other pedagogical documents on the laptop and I am able to print and photocopy before sharing with my students.

Though we don’t have enough computers at school, I am able to improvise and use what is available so that the learners can also interact with ICT tools.

Teamwork pays

One of the most significant changes I brought in my school after participating in the UR-CE/VVOB is the fact that I am able to convene CoP sessions which fostered teamwork. CoPs have become an important aspect of our work.

The participatory approach has also ensured that students work hard on their studies because it elevates their confidence and ignites their abilities. Besides, the students are also happy to see ICT tools being used in teaching, especially in science subjects.

In conclusion, the UR-CE/VVOB training made me a different and more knowledgeable person. I am now capable of preparing an effective lesson based on the 5E's approach.

I am also able to work with other teachers especially in solving the challenges we face as teachers. This brought about teamwork amongst us and it has given us positive results. I am also proud that I can support new teachers to integrate.







7

VOICES OF CHANGE: DISTRICT AND SECTOR OFFICIALS

“School Improvement Plans improved performance in our district” - Petronille Musabyingabire



Petronille Musabyingabire

DEO, Ngororero District

One of the most significant changes I took note of in my district after undergoing the UR-CE/VVOB training was the importance of School Improvement Plans (SIPs), one of the tools we got from the training.

Before the training I did not know what SIPs were, let alone their importance. As a District Education Officer (DEO), I used to think my assignment was to visit schools and check if the teachers are teaching and following the lesson plan.

During the training, I learnt how to develop a SIP, its components, the role of each stakeholder and actual implementation. I got this skill from the UR-CE/VVOB training. I also observed that a school without a SIP is highly unlikely to perform well.

I noticed that most schools in my area of jurisdiction did not have SIPs and we embarked on a plan to support them to develop them. I was also able to apply the ‘5 standards’ we were taught during the training, to lead the process of changing how we approached issues. The 5 standards have been really helpful. We did not even know the difference between the school vision, school mission and school motto.

I managed to figure out the difference between these. Separating them is very key. We have been able to apply all the 5 standards which are; creating a strategic direction for the school, leading learning, leading teaching, managing the school as an organization, working with parents and local communities, and it has paid off.

Learning the 5 standards have been very helpful in my daily work and I will always be grateful to UR-CE/VVOB, who gave me the opportunity. I have been able to engage everyone, right from school heads, parents and even children, who I believe must know and understand the mission and vision of the school early on.

“Improved leadership skills, conflict resolution, two key take-homes for me” - Charles Mugabo



Charles Mugabo Namara

I am Charles Namara Mugabo, the District Education Officer (DEO) of Kayonza District, Eastern Province. Participating in the UR-CE/VVOB training had a significant impact on my leadership skills. My leadership style completely changed after undergoing the training.

Previously before I got the opportunity to participate in the UR-CE/VVOB training, I can admit that we did things in a less organized manner. We used to have regular meetings on education generally but they were not effective.

The training equipped me with the knowledge and skills to hold effective meetings with school leaders every term, during which we took minutes and came up with recommendations. We are now more organized in how we do things at the district level.

When you go down to the sector level, when it comes to school and teacher management, you notice that the training which was given to school leaders has been very key when it comes to achieving our goals. School leaders [Head teachers] who were trained by VVOB have made our work easier because they are more knowledgeable and leadership skilled to handle issues at their level.

Thirdly, the training equipped us with conflict resolution and management skills. Previously we had cases where school heads, deputy head teachers, directors of studies and maybe finance people and accountants used to have disagreements which it came to budgeting and allocating resources, which directly affected the schools.

Today this is no more. People have understood the importance of working together as a team. Before the training, people had no understanding of the aspect of prioritization when it came to budgeting, hence the differences. Thanks to the training, we now fully understand and agree on the priorities, which makes it easy when it comes to budget allocation.

Looking back, I think there used to be challenges when it came to budget allocation because we essentially lacked the information or knowledge to figure out what our priorities are. The training also equipped us with human resource management skills and as I mentioned earlier, conflict resolution.

These for me were very significant changes in how we managed our school communities. In conclusion, the benefits of this training were cross-cutting, even going as far as improving hygiene but also most importantly, academic performance in our district. We are grateful for UR-CE and VVOB who came up with this training which I believe will go a long way in improving the quality of education in Rwanda.

*“We are more organized, more efficient in delivering” -
Jean Pierre Nteziyaremye*



Jean Pierre Nteziyaremye

DEO, Rusizi District

The opportunity I got to participate in the UR-CE/VVOB training has really been impactful not just for me individually but rather for the education sector as a whole thanks to the skills we got.

First of all, the most significant change for me was that after the training we became more organized in the way we do things, right from the district level, down to the school at the grassroots. I can ably say that today we have the tools to organize ourselves and agree on the priorities we must undertake in a more holistic manner.

There is a Kinyarwanda proverb which if loosely translated means that people who go to the forest to gather firewood for one purpose collect more firewood to achieve their goal compared to people who go to the same forest to collect firewood individually.

Today, we come together through our Community of Practice (CoP) and CPD sessions at district and school level to agree on which challenges we need to tackle and we set out to achieve the set target together.

As the DEO, I am charged with overseeing such activities and I have to apply leadership skills the ensure this unity needed to do things together. I can say I couldn't have done this had I not been equipped with leadership skills by the UR-CE/VVOB training programme.

I am now more confident in what I do. I know the kind of interventions I need to come up with to support school leaders, give counsel and guidance through coaching and mentorship, all because of the skills we got from the training.

“Collaborative efforts between schools have paid off” - Alexis Nsengiyumva



Alexis Nsengiyumva

I am Alexis Nsengiyumva, a Sector Education Inspector (SEI) in Nyanza Sector, Gisagara District in Southern Province. I participated in the University of Rwanda- College of Education (UR-CE) and VVOB’S Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for SEIs.

The training facilitated me with skills to significantly improve collaborative partnerships between schools, which never existed before. As a result, it has led to schools in Nyanza Sector lifting each other up, using means and resources available to them.

Looking back, I can say that I experienced the most significant change resulting from the training conducted by the UR-CE/ VVOB to promote effective school leadership. The major change so far has been the improvement of collaboration and partnerships between schools.

Stronger Together

After participating in the training, I realised I could strive to do more to address challenges faced by schools, especially new ones.

The first step was to identify the shortages and gaps and secondly, I approached schools with surplus resources to encourage them to share with schools with limited capacity. When I met head teachers, I noticed the newly established schools did not have materials such as computers, textbooks, curricula or even the hand-held thermometer used to measure body temperature, as part of Covid-19 preventive measures.

I also noticed that head teachers of the newly established schools lacked experience in school leadership and all schools were not at the same level of adhering to measures against Covid-19.

As the Sector Education Inspector, I had to come up with ways of solving this challenge through sharing opportunities and strengths at our disposal.

The approach paid off significantly, thanks to the skills and knowledge I obtained through the UR-CE/ VVOB training.

For me this was the most significant change because after the training I was now able to conduct Profession Learning Communities (PLCs) at sector level and monitor Communities of Practice (CoPs) at school. I felt self-confident to encourage the spirit of collaboration and partnership not only among head teachers, but also among teachers.

Collaborating better

As a result, I effectively conducted PLCs that resulted in an understanding of collaboration and partnership between head teachers to share some materials such as computers, textbooks and curricula from schools which had more than what is needed, to schools that lacked them,”

In conclusion, my participation in the training programme offered by UR-CE/

VVOB contributed a lot in terms of helping me to effectively execute and achieve my duties. I was equipped with knowledge and skills which improved my self-confidence and awareness.

I have been able to organise induction sessions for newly recruited head teachers and teachers, with the help of their more experienced peers. The PLCs and CoPs organised at sector and school levels greatly boosted collaboration among head teachers and teachers through sharing experiences.





8

VOICES OF CHANGE: TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE TUTORS

“The training empowered me to empower my colleagues and integrate ICT in Teaching” - Benjamin Nsanzumuhire



Benjamin Nsanzumuhire

Benjamin Nsanzumuhire, Tutor, TTC Gacuba II, Rubavu district

I can say that one of the most significant changes I registered from taking part in the UR-CE/VVOB CPD Programme Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching for TTC Tutors was integrating ICT in teaching.

After the training, I started using my computer very often to prepare my science classes with the help of fellow Tutors at the TTC. In that period, we welcomed three new teachers who we took through the induction process. I did my best to show them around and made them feel at home.

As we speak, they are now settled in the profession and I can attest that they have not encountered any problem whatsoever. I was able to help them thanks to the knowledge I got from the UR-CE/VVOB coaching and mentoring training programme.

During the same period, we arranged lesson observation sessions for science teachers, where we would go in classrooms to observe one of us delivering a lesson and we give our feedback based on our observations.

Positive results

The approach paid off because we were able to open up to each other and when one of us encountered a problem, we intervened as the teaching team to find a solution. I dare say that the training I received impacted me as a person and my colleagues too, who benefited from my knowledge and skills.

All the teachers, especially the new ones, now understand the importance of the CPD plan and they use it on a daily basis to take on the challenges they face in life.

This is very important for me because it helps me to utilize and tap into the knowledge I got from the training, aimed at improving my teaching skills.

As a result, I take time to listen to each student and understand the specific challenges he or she faces, even as I continue to prepare them to become future teachers as they learn best practices from me.

It is only fair for me to say that I also learn a lot from my colleagues when we meet in CPD activities.

Improved Teaching Outcomes

The training improved how I execute my duties at work. I have greatly benefited from the skills I received.

I can work closely with my fellow tutors without feeling embarrassed to ask for help whenever I need it and I always try to encourage my colleagues not to sit on their own problems but rather share with colleagues to get a solution.

I always remind them of the importance of CPD activities as the best source of knowledge.

In my daily work I use the Coaching and Mentoring approach whenever I am at school or any other gathering bringing teachers together.

After the training, I understood the importance of teaching using the instruction manual and I always make sure that whenever I am going to teach, I have all the necessary pedagogical materials that help my students to understand the lesson better.

I also try to help my students to find solutions to their problems. Whenever I am teaching, I make sure that I support my students in the development of generic competences and integration of cross-cutting issues -an approach I got from the UR-CE/VVOB training.



“Problem solving and constructive feedback: two key take-homes I gained from the UR-CE/VVOB CPD programmes” - Jean de Dieu Rubangisa



Jean de Dieu Rubangisa

My name is Jean de Dieu Rubangisa, I am a Teacher Training Centre (TTC) tutor at Zaza TTC located in Zaza Sector, Ngoma district in Eastern Province.

Before I joined the CPD Programme Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching for TTC Tutors, I did not understand the importance of helping students to solve their problems, nor did I value the notion of giving constructive feedback.

I was lucky to be selected to participate in the UR-CE/VVOB programme from which I was equipped with the skills and knowledge to improve my capacity as a teacher.

After the training, I realised that I had what it takes to help students to find solutions to the challenges they faced, through candid conversations with them.

Not just that. I am also capable of helping my fellow teachers to solve some of the problems they face in their profession through CPD activities such as lesson observation, coaching, CoPs, etc.

One of the key aspects I gained from the training course focused on providing constructive feedback to our students who are looking to join the teaching profession.

A more stable & confident educator

The changes I mentioned above are significant for me in the sense that they help me to become a stable and confident educator by improving my teaching skills, enabling me to equip future educators as well with the right skills. I am a more valuable member of my cohort of tutors and my community. Whenever I encounter a challenge in my profession, I approach my colleagues and ask for support to help me find a solution to the problem I am facing.

As a Tutor, I learned how to give constructive feedback every time I give different assignments to my students. Whenever I am going to look at a student's work or that of a fellow teacher, I use a method that follows three steps.

The first step is pre-lesson observation conversation and the second step, lesson observation while the third step is post-lesson observation conversation. Sometimes I use conference calls to help new teachers who teach in primary schools.

These for me were some of the most significant changes I realized after the training and I am grateful to UR-CE/VVOB for giving me the opportunity.



CPD ACTIVITIES

The Central Nervous System

Good teachers practice reflection



9

CROSS-CUTTING CHANGE STORIES

Breaking gender norms early through equal responsibilities - the Story of Groupe Scolaire Nyarubuye



Father Theophile Harerimana

I am Father Theophile Harerimana, the Head teacher of Groupe Scolaire Nyarubuye and the coordinator of Family of Hope, St. Claire, based in Kageyo Sector, Gatsibo District, Eastern Province.

I was lucky to be chosen to participate in the UR-CE/VVOB CPD training programme on Effective School Leadership, which I can say opened up my mind and eyes to gender norms and stereotypes which I had never paid attention to in the past.

I would say the biggest change I experienced personally after the training was that I learned how to listen to and pay attention to the needs of girls as one of the ways to support them to perform well and achieve their goals.

First of all, it came to my notice that every time it came to cleaning classrooms and washing utensils after lunch, only girls participated, yet in another class of Math, Physics and Geography, which had only boys, they maintained the cleanest classroom in the school.

I asked myself why this class was cleaner than all the other classes despite having no girls. I also noticed that in other classes, boys and girls don't work together to clean their classes.

Having taken note of all that, I came to the conclusion that if boys can clean their own class as was the case with the S6 MPG class, they can as well work with girls to jointly clean their classes.

It was possible for boys to share equal cleaning responsibilities with girls, contrary to gender norms that only girls can do the cleaning. As of today, at our school, boys and girls share equal cleaning responsibilities. Boys help wash dishes and mop their classrooms.

Encouraging Girls to do better

After the UR-CE/VVOB training, I took the initiative to start encouraging girls to perform well, especially in science subjects. I also started listening to their specific issues to understand how they can be supported.

I realised that many face a number of problems, some relating to family, poverty and other issues that helped me to understand why some girls were always late for school.

During the conversations with the female students, we understood the different barriers girls face at home, which directly affect their studies and we found ways of encouraging them to improve their performance.

Thanks to the knowledge I acquired from the training, I was able to revisit my leadership skills and started applying gender lenses, factoring in the needs of girls. As a result, we have achieved gender balance and equality, where boys and girls



have agreed to share responsibilities and be equal in whatever they do, including in our school feeding program, where boys and girls share tasks equally, unlike in the past.

The boys and girls work together to serve food, share the food equally and together they wash the dishes and clean the dining room after the meals.

Mindset change

Before undergoing the UR-CE/VVOB training, I had not recognized that it was only girls who took care of cleaning responsibilities. Today, I have been able to train my staff and students to understand that everyone is equal in our school. We now understand the importance of gender balance and work together to ensure equality.

We've been able to break the gender norms at the school. In fact, the issue transcended beyond students because you would find that it was only female teachers who would prepare and serve lunch to other teachers.

This too has had to change as the responsibility is shared between teachers regardless of whether they are female or male.

We have also incorporated empowering messages on the walls of our school, encouraging the mindset that girls are strong and capable. Today, we work to help them avoid teenage pregnancies and Gender-Based Violence.

Through the English club at our school known as 'Tuseme Club', we are able

to empower female students and we also have a group of female teachers who focus on supporting female students who they meet with regularly in the 'Girls Room' at the school.

Supporting my community

As the Priest of the area, I would say the UR-CE/VVOB training helped me to understand how to work with my community. I have been able to invite all single mothers in my parish to come over in order to listen to their needs in order to provide support.

Some of these girls were my students before they got pregnant. I try to work with my staff and their families to encourage all girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy to return to school.

Their babies are admitted in our nursery section while the mother's study. As of today, we have 20 children in our nursery section from our single mothers.

We have so far brought 15 single mothers back into our classrooms. Our aim is to provide capacity building by supporting them to return to school.

The girls who cannot return to school have since created a tailoring cooperative which currently has 150 members -all single mothers.

We have teachers who volunteer to teach them English, give them guidance and counselling and also equip them with tailoring skills.

We also have a team of local nurses who provide training to the single mothers in nutrition, women's health as well as sexual health and reproductive education. I am grateful to the UR-CE/VVOB training because it taught me how to look for stakeholders and partners to support our projects to promote the empowerment of girls and women.

Thanks to the UR-CE/VVOB training, today I have personally learned the skills and knowledge necessary to empower our women and girls. I was also able to figure out how to work together with the community, students, parents, and staff to promote gender equality.

Promoting inclusive education, creating a positive Learning Environment, my New Calling: Head teacher Nzeyimana

Hello there, my name is Emile Nzeyimana, the head teacher of Groupe Scolaire Kagina, located in Runda Sector, Kamonyi district in the Southern Province. I would like to share with you the most significant changes I introduced in my community as a result of the training opportunity I was offered by UR-CE/VVOB after I was selected among the school leaders to benefit from the programme

Before I underwent the aforementioned training, my understanding for inclusive education was limited. It was not just me but also the entire school, teachers and also students were not enlightened about the importance of inclusive education, gender in education, equity and equality, which all lead to a lower school attendance rate of girls. We had no idea that lack of appropriate infrastructure for girls and insufficient equipment can actually result in dropping out of school.

Identifying the Problem, Finding a Solution

Once we identified the challenge, we decided to come up with a project to construct a girls' room – an exclusive space in the school where they can go and access their basic needs as girls and also receive advice from female teachers.

We were confident that the girls' room would improve their learning conditions. Luckily, the project was presented to one of the stakeholders who agreed to fund it. Today we have a well-equipped girls' room.

Currently, the attendance rate of girls has greatly improved while dropout rates have also declined. As a result, the performance of our school has also improved.

All teachers have been trained about the importance of the room while girls too have been fully involved, where each girl chooses a friend of their choice to help each other.

A safe space for Girls

Inside the room, girls learn about hygiene, sexual and reproductive health with the help of the school matron and other female teachers.



Emile Nzeyimana

Today, we have formed a club known as 'Good Sisters', where they come together and learn about personal hygiene during menstruation and how to improvise with their own affordable hygiene materials.

This project has greatly contributed to the betterment of our community, particularly the households and students, who are now able to save money which they would otherwise be spending on basic hygiene materials such as sanitary pads.

As a result, the number of unplanned pregnancies has also declined due to advice and awareness the girls get through the 'Good Sisters' Club

Similarly, school stakeholders, especially teachers, also appreciate the project for improving teaching and learning conditions which in turn improved the academic performance of girls.

A timely intervention

I consider the project a significant one because it gave an opportunity to those in a disadvantaged position to also benefit from inclusive education. It means that those with little or nothing cannot miss school because they lack basic hygiene needs.

It has been proved that such a facility is a key tool when it comes to removing barriers and empowering girls to fully participate in all activities without being

side-lined because of who they are.

In conclusion, I can comfortably say that my participation in the UR-CE/VVOB training has contributed to gender equity in education as well as gender responsive pedagogy in my community.

Today girls have equal opportunity to access education as boys and are able to get counselling and guidance that is specific to their needs.



Problem solving, self-confidence and mentoring others, three things Bahigirande gained from the UR-CE/VVOB Training



Jean d'Amour Bahigirande

My name is Jean d'Amour Bahigirande. I am a school subject leader at Groupe Scolaire Muhororo, located in Gatumba Sector, Ngororero District. Recently I got an opportunity to participate in the UR-CE/VVOB Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training programme for School Subject

Leaders, earning a Certificate in Educational Mentorship and Coaching (CEMC).

I gained a lot from this training at a personal and professional level. As of today, I have a better understanding of how to mentor and guide new teachers who join our school.

Through coaching conversations, I am also able to help anyone who comes to me seeking a solution to a certain problem they are facing, as a way of finding solutions from within.

Through the training, I gained knowledge and skills of planning and preparing lessons based on the 5Es - Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. I no longer encounter difficulties when it comes to this ¹.

In addition to that, I am able to use the Community of Practice (CoP) method to bring together teachers to discuss the challenges we face. It is no longer a burden of the school administration to find a solution to every problem.

Basically, I am able to convene science teachers in my school and together we discuss the different issues we have to tackle and the possible solutions. The school administration only comes in when we need extra support.

Gaining ICT skills, Supporting Girls

After the training, I gained ICT skills which have been helpful in executing my duties. I have been able to integrate ICT in teaching thanks to the UR-CE/VVOB training.

Among other things, I have taken a personal initiative to allocate more time towards supporting the girl child in education, particularly encouraging them to pick interest in mathematics and sciences through practical works.

As such, the training resulted in significant changes because it did not only improve my knowledge but it totally upgraded everything I knew.

Today I am an able teacher who can fit and work in any environment because I am self-confident, especially when it comes to having the knowledge and passing it on to others in the best way possible, using modern technology.

That said, this was the most significant change for me because I am able to practice my profession without any challenges or fears because I am confident that what I am doing today is what was needed. As a result, I am able to grow myself and contribute to the development of Rwandan society in general.

¹The 5E model is a science instruction model which provides a framework for a constructivist, guided-inquiry approach to learning science. The five phases are: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate.

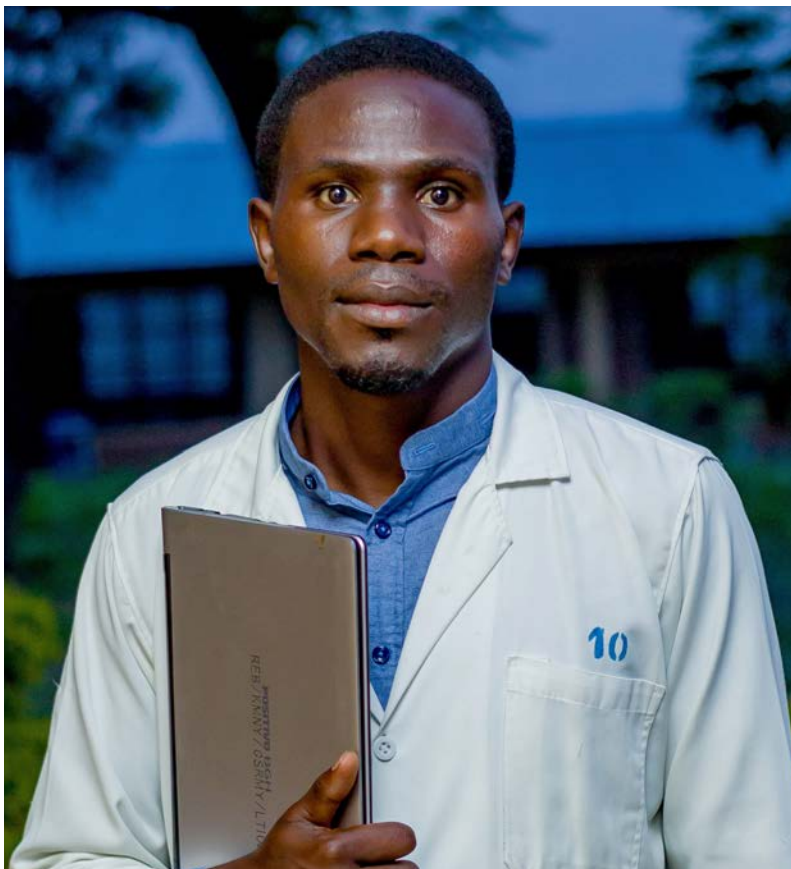


Overcoming personal fears

After the training, I was able to overcome my personal fears and got the courage to bring people together through CoPs. Moreover, the different tasks we engaged in opened up my mind and I was able to gain skills to express myself in public or through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Moodle.

The instructors who trained us gave us great practical examples and closely supported us throughout the training and they ensured that I understood everything they taught us. I can confidently pass on what they taught us to others and be able to help however approaches with a problem.

Aaron Imaniraruta on how ICT became the game-changer



Aaron Imaniraruta

My name is Aaron Imaniraruta, the School Subject Leader for STEM at Group Scolaire Rosa Mystica, in Gacurabwenge Sector, Kamonyi District. I had the opportunity to attend the UR-CE/VVOB CPD training programme in Educational Mentorship and Coaching, which enabled me to make a significant difference in my school community.

After the training I noticed a tremendous change in my teaching skills thanks to a change in approach I learned from the training. I understood the importance of interactive teaching which involves the students.

Together with my workmates, we agreed to try and put in place a positive learning atmosphere by incorporating and promoting the integration of ICT in teaching and learning processes.

To overcome some issues which are a hindrance in teaching and learning activities, we did come up with tangible solutions using the knowledge I acquired from the training.

Among other things, I started teaching learners how to use ICT tools, such as doing research on internet and deep learning light lessons, discoveries and they were totally excited to learn due to the good environment we put in place which encouraged the use of ICT.

As we speak, they can't wait to return to school on a regular because they want to stay in touch with ICT and make it part of their lives.

A website for visibility

Together with my workmates we agreed to set up a school website where we upload all information about the school. It has really helped us because it is currently making a positive impact in terms of giving our school visibility.

We have developed good relations with other schools within the country and abroad. For example, we have a strong bond with a school abroad where learners from both schools communicate and share fascinating stories and lessons.

During the Covid-19 period, we used the website to regularly share information about the pandemic and a platform to exchange ideas on how to protect ourselves from the pandemic and the guidelines we had to follow.

I can say that currently the use of ICT in our school has registered good progress and it is at a good level. After completing the training, I started bringing together my colleagues to discuss how we can integrate ICT in our daily work.

To cut the long story short, UR-CE/VVOB training has shaped who I am and changed a lot in my teaching career.

In conclusion, I can say that tremendous change has been achieved so far and I am expecting to keep moving forward to help communities around me.

“With online tools, communication became easier” - Daniel Musabyimana



Daniel Musabyimana

I am Daniel Musabyimana, a Tutor at TTC Bicumbi, located in Rwamagana district, Eastern Province.

I was lucky to be picked to participate in the UR-CE/VVOB Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training for a Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching for TTC Tutors.

When I do a self-assessment, I am happy to say that since I took part in the training, there are several key skills that I gained at a professional level, whereby I am now able to take responsibility as a tutor.

After the training, I convened CoP sessions with Head teachers, Deputy Head teachers, School-Based Mentors, School Subject Leaders and new teachers in my schools to discuss several issues that we faced and come up with solutions.

However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, we could not meet physically, so this task was mainly done online through videoconference or via phone calls.

I can say that this was my first time to lead these kinds of meetings digitally using ICT tools, thanks to the basic guidelines to hold online conversations successfully, which we were given during the UR-CE/VVOB training.

From what I observed, during online meetings people are very expressive and they feel free to table the challenges with much ease. For example, there was a day that one participant asked me “do you really do what you are telling us to do?” I quickly replied in affirmative but after the conversation, I did a self-reflection based on the second standard on planning and assessing learning and I changed a few things.

It requires you to answer certain questions like: Do you communicate outcomes and objectives? Do you record useful ideas and /or common errors? Do you assess student knowledge and skills before, during and after activities?

From then on, I took a decision to make my own CPD plan so as to improve my competences vis à vis the aforementioned standard. Since the beginning of the year, I have been working on this and I am now feeling confident towards making regular and personalized assessments.

I can confidently say that though it is a continuous journey with challenges along the way, it is always possible to improve our way of working or doing things.

For me this was the most significant change because I can now help my colleagues using ICT tools which have made it easier to communicate.

I also understand that we should always be role models and practice what we preach especially before new teachers for them to learn from our experiences.

I believe teaching and learning can easily be effective since one's life reflects the reality that others need to see or learn from. This change improved my competencies and automatically improved teaching and learning positively.

It is a continuous process which requires you to keep working and identifying new issues or challenges if we are to attain the quality of education that we want.

Being exposed to online sessions has highly improved my teaching and learning skills in my TTC classes during the Covid-19 pandemic. As we speak, I am the best performing teacher in Rwamagana District and the 2nd in the Eastern Province.

As I conclude, the knowledge I gained from the training has also enabled me to work with different SBMs and New Teachers, specifically in Kayonza District, who I coach and mentor. This wouldn't have been possible without the UR-CE/VVOB training.





“How integrating ICT tools in teaching saved the day” - Gerard Niyomugabo

Teacher Gerard Niyomugabo,

School Subject Leader, GS Gitoma

Before I got a chance to take part in the UR-CE/VVOB CPD Programme Certificate in Educational Mentoring and Coaching for School Subject Leaders I used to believe the students in my school would never pass science courses because we lacked a laboratory

However, I later came to realise that one can use various ICT tools in teaching and learning, such as videos and simulations on a laptop, without necessarily having a lab and the students would really understand and enjoy the lesson.

Integrating ICT in education, particularly in science and mathematics, was one of the key significant changes I made in my school upon completing the UR-CE/VVOB training programme.

Prior to attending the training, I didn't know that there is a lot more a teacher can learn from a fellow teacher but thanks to the different Community of Practice (CoP) sessions I participated in, I was able to ask for support on a particular subject I was not well conversant with- such as stoichiometric calculations in Chemistry.

As a result, I was not able to teach that particular topic well but during the CoP sessions I was given explanations which led to my understanding of the subject and I was now able to explain to my students on the topic which previously gave me a hard time.

During the training, I learned about how you can talk to someone with a problem and help them to solve it.

Through this practice known as coaching conversation, I managed to convince some of the students who had dropped out of school due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to go back to school and they did and even performed well academically. I can therefore say that the training I received from UR-CE/VVOB on how to integrate ICT in teaching made me realize that there are courses I can teach with the help



Gerard Niyomugabo

of technology, even though we do not have laboratory equipment, and students are able to understand the subject better than they did before.



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