# Time to Teach

Teacher attendance and time on task
in secondary schools

**Rwanda**

**Spogmai Akseer and Ximena Játiva**

October 2021

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# Acknowledgements

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# Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| CBC | Competence-based curriculum |
| DEO | District Education Official |
| EAC | East African Community |
| GoR | Government of Rwanda |
| GPE | Global Partnership for Education |
| ICT | Information communication and technology |
| MINEDUC | Ministry of Education |
| PLN | Professional Learning Networks |
| REB | Rwanda Education Board |
| SBM | School-based mentor |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SGAC | School General Assembly Council |
| SEI | Sector Education Inspector |
| SSL | School Subject Leader |
| TLM | Teaching and learning material |
| TTT | Time to Teach |
| VSO | Voluntary Service Overseas |

# Executive summary

Teachers play a significant role in the success of learners and are crucial to achieving learning goals. Lost teaching time can reduce pupil learning, hinder their overall academic achievement, and limit their opportunities in life. In the post-COVID-19 environment, learning losses are expected to be significant, with some estimations suggesting immediate effects on the acquisition of foundational skills.[1]

In Rwanda, over 3.5 million children were estimated to be out of school since mid-March 2020 when the country closed all schools as a safety measure against the spread of COVID-19. To help guide the provision of remote learning, the country quickly developed a national response plan immediately following the mid-March 2020 school closures. As of September 2020, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) had also started the process of hiring an additional 7,200 teachers, constructing 22,500 classrooms, and training in-service teachers in remote-learning pedagogies.

Despite these prompt measures, there is concern that the magnitude of COVID-19 repercussions will reverse previous gains and have severe long-term economic impacts. This is concerning for Rwanda where prior to the lockdown, schools were already experiencing challenges, including low attendance rates. Prior to the pandemic, a 2020 Time to Teach (TTT) study across 20 schools on primary teachers' attendance found that most teachers surveyed viewed low teacher attendance as a common problem at their school. Specifically, 9 per cent of male and female teachers reported absence from school to be a 'weekly' occurrence. Late arrival/early departure from school was also reported by 17 per cent of the teachers as occurring at least 'once a week'. In addition, 12 per cent of teachers – particularly female – experienced limited time on task and another 8 per cent, absence from the classroom, at least once a week. These practices appear to be twice as high in rural schools than in urban.

Such trends can be an important hindrance to the ministry's efforts to achieve its new competence-based curriculum (CBC) learning outcomes, especially as educational budgets are expected to shrink throughout sub-Saharan Africa in the aftermath of the global pandemic. This means that it will become increasingly important for the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to use its resources effectively, and to ensure that it meets national learning priorities and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 by 2030.

This TTT study seeks to support MINEDUC by providing a comprehensive understanding of teacher attendance in the country, which currently does not exist, particularly at the secondary level. This report builds on findings from the primary level study, to understand how attendance challenges may be similar or different across education levels, and more importantly, how these can help inform teacher policy design and implementation. Specifically, the study looks at four distinct forms of teacher attendance: (1) being in school; (2) being punctual (i.e., not arriving late/leaving early); (3) being in the classroom (while in school); and (4) spending sufficient time on task (while in the classroom). It also locates factors associated with teacher absenteeism at five different levels of the education system – national, subnational, community, school, and teacher. These are compared further with primary level results to see how they may differ across school levels.

TTT is a mixed methods project, employing both qualitative and quantitative research tools. The study draws from national, system wide, qualitative data collections and school observations, and a quantitative survey with 268 teachers working in 20 purposely selected secondary schools.[2]

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1    Albán Conto, et al., 2020

2    This study's findings are only representative of the 20 schools selected nationally and not the country as a whole. In addition, the sample size (although important) is small and may affect the accuracy of any population estimates and limit the disaggregation of the analysis. *See Annex 6* for a detailed explanation of this study's limitations.

# Main findings

## How frequently are secondary school teachers absent?

- **Absence from school** is the **least frequent form of absenteeism** at 2 per cent and is reported by urban and male teachers more frequently than by rural and female teachers, with no differences across school types. Regional variations were observed with lower occurrences in the southern province, and higher in Kigali. These findings are significantly lower than at the primary level, where 9 per cent of teachers reported weekly school absence.

- **Late arrival/early departure** is the **main form of teacher absence** at 12 per cent and teachers with fewer years of experience report higher frequencies than those with 16 years or more. Lack of punctuality appears higher in western parts of the country and in government-subsidized schools[3] than in public or private schools. Although low punctuality affects primary school teachers more at 17 per cent, this form of absenteeism is the most frequently reported.

- **Classroom absence** is also common, reported by 8 per cent of secondary school teachers, mainly at rural and government-subsidized schools. At the primary level, the same percentage of teachers reported weekly absenteeism, suggesting this type of absence is consistent across school levels.

- **Limited time on task** is reported by 10 per cent of teachers and appears higher among female teachers and those with over 15 years of teaching experience than in those with less than five years. Data from primary school teachers suggest that they experience this more, at 12 per cent.

## What are the main factors associated with secondary school teacher absenteeism?

- **National level factors** that influence attendance include the timing of training programs for teachers and head teachers as these often conflict with teaching times and, thus, result in school absence. In addition, teachers lack essential skills to implement CBC outcomes, as well as English and French language skills, which limit their time on task.

- **Subnational factors** include limited monitoring by district education officers (DEOs) and sector education inspectors (SEIs) mainly due to resource constraints and their limited sanctioning authority. Consequently, teachers are more frequently absent from school or the classroom. Data from primary school teachers suggest that education officers are more likely to visit primary than secondary schools.

- **At the community level,** climatic conditions (e.g., heavy rains) limit teachers' time on task. Inadequate infrastructure in the community, especially access to affordable and reliable transportation and housing, causes regular lateness; and for teachers living further, school absence. Also, teachers worry that parents' socio-economic conditions limit the schoolwork support they provide to their children, which affects how well-prepared pupils arrive to school, and consequently, requiring teachers to give pupils additional time to finish previous day's work. Survey data suggest that parental engagement is higher in primary than in secondary schools.

- **School level factors** include inconsistent monitoring by head teachers (who are regularly absent due to official meetings), resulting in higher occurrences of school and classroom absence, and limited time on task. Teachers also struggle with heavy workloads and limited availability of resources, forcing them to miss scheduled classes or shorten their time on task.

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3   The school sample includes rural and urban schools; public (government and government-subsidized) and non-government (private) schools; and special needs/refugee. Government-subsidized schools are privately managed schools that receive government funding for teacher salaries and other expenses.

■ Finally, at the **teacher level**, personal responsibilities (looking after family/social engagements) and health are common reasons why teachers may be absent from school. Their level of dedication towards their work (especially when salary is low) also causes regular absence from school (due to a second job) and limits punctuality and instructional time due to stress caused by lack of pay and/or low motivation.

## What are the policy implications of this study?

Findings from this study highlight several factors across the secondary education system that lower teacher attendance. This research also reveals that teachers across primary and secondary schools experience similar shortcomings in spending sufficient time on task. Therefore, to ensure that MINEDUC achieves its 2019/2019 – 2023/2024 strategic aims – especially in light of COVID-19 constraints – the following recommendations are worth exploring:

■ Strengthen system-wide and cross-sectoral implementation of existing teacher policies

- Provide monetary and non-monetary incentives to teachers on time through increased intra and inter-ministerial collaboration.

- Strengthen collaboration between local officials in enforcing incidental leave (health, maternal, annual) policies, which appears inconsistent across schools and may be further needed when schools reopen following COVID-19 closures.

- Increase School General Assembly Council (SGAC) engagement with schools and communities to support teachers – especially female teachers – as their workload might increase further due to COVID-19 constraints.

- Continue expediting the capitation grant for creating spaces conducive to learning post-COVID-19, especially in rural and remote areas.

■ Ensure teachers are on task while in class and well prepared to teach

- Improve collaboration between school-based mentors (SBMs) and head teachers to avoid scheduling conflict, using the Rwanda Education Board's (REB) e-learning platforms effectively.

- Minimize head teacher engagement in tasks that are not directly related to their daily management and supervision.

- Strengthen the role of SGACs in engaging parents and monitoring teacher engagement with learners.

- Enhance coordination between local education officials and head teachers in selecting content of training programs, especially when resources at school are limited.

■ Clarify and strengthen teacher management processes

- Increase the sanctioning authority of head teachers as part of MINEDUC's leadership training program that is already in place, to help provide a quick remedy for attendance violations so that time spent on learning activities is prioritized.

- Allocate additional resources to DEOs and SEIs for regular visits to schools in rural/hardship areas in their sector/district to ensure the teaching environment is conducive to learning.

# Section 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Context and study rationale

Teachers play an important role in the academic progress of learners and in achieving learning goals in the classroom (World Bank, 2018). Teacher attendance is considered a 'pre-requisite' to learning (Miller, 2008) and imperative for achieving national and regional education goals, and preventing exacerbation of existing inequalities (Guerrero et al., 2013). Lost teaching time can reduce pupil learning (World Bank, 2018), hinder their academic achievement (Kirk, Dembélé and Baxter, 2013), and limit their opportunities in life (Guerrero et al., 2013). This is especially concerning in Rwanda where learners' completion rates are low, both at the lower secondary (26 per cent) and upper secondary (16 per cent ) levels (UNESCO-UIS, 2020a, 2020b). This suggests that by 2030, the country may not be able to achieve its goal of universal secondary education if these trends continue (*see Box 1 for a brief overview of the country's secondary education system*).

The COVID-19 pandemic poses further risks to achieving these goals as its impact on education has already been profound; over 3.5 million Rwandan children were estimated to be out of school in mid-March 2020, when the country announced school closures as a safety measure against COVID-19 (MINEDUC, 2020a). While these measures were necessary for stopping the virus' spread, there is nonetheless worry that secondary school closures will exacerbate existing challenges and inequalities (Mastercard Foundation, 2021a).

While there are no comprehensive studies on the magnitude of and reasons for secondary school teacher absenteeism in Rwanda (*see Annex 1*), evidence from across the globe (*see Annex 2*) suggests that teacher absenteeism is pervasive in secondary schools in low-income countries. The TTT study seeks to fill this knowledge gap and support the Government of Rwanda (GoR) in its efforts to improve secondary school teacher attendance and time on task, as a means of improving pupil learning outcomes. This report builds on findings from the first TTT Rwanda study (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020), which looks at primary school teacher absenteeism, attempts to understand how attendance challenges may be similar or different across education levels, and more importantly, how these can help inform teacher policy design and implementation.

## 1.2. Secondary education and secondary school teachers in Rwanda

Prior to COVID-19 lockdowns, the GoR had taken some measures to help achieve SDG4 and improve teacher attendance. MINEDUC was in the midst of implementing its 2018/2019 – 2023/2024 strategic priorities, which included its commitment to meeting Education for All goals and Sustainable Development Goals. The country had already experienced important milestones, including being among the few countries in the region to achieve gender parity at primary and secondary levels (MINEDUC, 2019).

In its 2017–2024 national strategy for transformation and prosperity plan, the government had also expressed its desire to improve citizens' living conditions. Specifically, the GoR committed itself to transforming Rwanda from its low-income, agriculture-focused economy into a middle-class nation that is knowledge and service based. To achieve this aim, MINEDUC released the new CBC in 2016. Its key principles include a learner-centered and competence-based approach that is inclusive of all children's needs, including those with disabilities (MINEDUC, 2015). Several training initiatives have been developed for in-service teachers, including the leaders in teaching program, which is focused on training secondary school teachers in delivering high-quality and relevant education (Mastercard Foundation, 2021b).

**Box 1: Overview of secondary education in Rwanda**

Although secondary school enrolment improved following Rwanda's independence, increasing from 2.5 per cent to 16 per cent between 1973 and 1990, it is over the last two decades that the country experienced the most significant changes. Between 2005 and 2019, enrolment rates in secondary school more than doubled, from 16.7 to 44.3 per cent (*see Figure 15 in Annex 3*), due to a number of noteworthy changes introduced by GoR: universal, free and compulsory primary education was introduced in 2003, followed by universal access to lower secondary education in 2009, which was extended in 2012 to upper secondary.

In 2019, the number of secondary learners was estimated at 732,104: 53 per cent were female, and the vast majority enrolled in government-subsidized schools, followed by public and lastly, private (*see Table 1 in Annex 3*). There were 23,585 secondary school teachers teaching in 1,783 schools with an average of 37 pupils per classroom (higher in government-subsidized and public schools). 52 per cent of teachers teach at government-subsidized schools, followed by public and private schools. A significant number of them are male; only one out of four teachers across all school types is female.

Furthermore, over the last years MINEDUC has increased the number of training sessions for in-service teachers as part of the CBC implementation. As a result, the number of trained teaching staff has increased from 57.4 per cent in 2017 to 62.6 per cent in 2019. Despite these improvements, MINEDUC is still concerned that qualified and trained teachers do not necessarily result in effective learning in the classroom.

Prior to the pandemic, secondary level education reported some progress. Repetition rates dropped from 5.2 per cent in 2016/17 to 4.2 per cent in 2018/19. However, some challenges remain; promotion rates dropped from 90.4 per cent in 2016/17 to 87.6 per cent in 2018/19 and dropout rates significantly increased from 4.4 per cent in 2016/17 to 8.2 per cent in 2018/19 (*see Tables 3 to 5 in Annex 3*).

The ministry also introduced a new approach to continuous professional development that includes school-based training in English proficiency and related subject content so that teachers can implement CBC (MINEDUC, 2019). To improve teachers' time on task, MINEDUC prioritized strengthening existing teacher management practices (*see Box 2*). Likewise, to enhance school leadership and management, and to ensure individual school needs are efficiently addressed, MINEDUC has continued providing capitation grants to schools, which are the main mode of school financing.[4] A study found that 72 per cent of parents and 63 per cent of teachers identified these grants as reducing school absence (Transparency International Rwanda, 2012). Similarly, the establishment of Professional Learning Networks (PLN)[5] has helped to reduce teacher absenteeism and increase teachers' sense of responsibility and motivation.

While these are important developments, there is concern that teacher attendance may be an obstacle in achieving these goals and therefore limiting time devoted to learning. Recognizing the positive impact of housing on teacher attendance and punctuality (Muvunyi, 2016), MINEDUC has built more than 400 houses in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government so that teachers can arrive to school on time (The New Times, 2012). There are also plans to build at least one housing block for teachers per sector in rural/remote areas where lateness is more pervasive (Muvunyi, 2016). Finally, in the 2020 curriculum framework for teacher training colleges, MINEDUC centralizes the importance of maximizing instructional time as part of its national teaching standards (MINEDUC, 2020b).

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4   Capitation grants are disbursed to schools through district offices and allocated based on the number of children and are used for teaching and learning materials (TLMs), school infrastructure development and teacher facilitation (training).

5   PLNs were designed to bring together head teachers to share their experiences and support each other in strengthening learning achievements at their schools. This programme trained 120 SEIs in coaching and facilitating PLNs by providing them with skills and knowledge to conduct effective PLNs and strengthen leadership at the school level. Head teachers who participated in PLNs also strengthened their engagement with parents, which they described as another factor in decreasing school absences.

Despite these measures, the 2020 TTT study that was conducted in 20 Rwandan primary schools found that teacher attendance was still a challenge, especially absence from the school, classroom and limited instructional time use (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). However, since no studies are available on Rwandan secondary teachers' experiences, it is unclear what teacher attendance looks like at this level. Such insights are critical; *Annex 2* reveals that globally there are variations across levels, in the magnitude of teacher absenteeism and the factors leading to it.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, national lockdown and school closures have resulted in significant learning delays, and the implementation of MINEDUC's current strategic initiatives. Consequently, teachers' roles have changed as they have taken on new responsibilities to support learning. Some of these include: outreach support to learners and parents (Carter et al., 2020), helping school managers prepare for school reopening (UNICEF Rwanda, 2020), and supporting the ministry in developing lessons for radio and television-based learning (Houser, 2020). In-service training programs have also been revised to provide teachers with additional skills so they can continue teaching in this new environment (GPE, 2020).

Following COVID-19 school closures in mid-March 2020, Rwanda quickly developed a national response plan to help guide the provision of remote learning using digital and non-digital approaches and to ensure the country remains on track. A variety of lesson modalities have been used since then, including radio, television, and e-learning platforms (MINEDUC, 2020a). Nevertheless, there is concern that access to these may be limited and unequal (UNICEF, 2020), as only 27 per cent of households in the country have uninterrupted electricity, and 17 per cent have access to internet; most of these households live in urban areas (Ngabonzima, 2020). Thus, it is estimated that at least 16 per cent of secondary school learners from lower socio-economic households will not be able to benefit from radio or online learning platforms (United Nations Rwanda, 2020).

The ministry is focused on providing an inclusive platform, accessible to those who may be vulnerable due to gender, disability or from poorer households, as these groups are at a higher risk of dropping out. The plan also provides clear guidance for inter- and intra-sectoral coordination; mobilizing internal and external resources; strengthening national capacities for planning, implementation, and monitoring education; ensuring stakeholder engagement (parents); and protecting well-being of teachers and learners (MINEDUC, 2020a).

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**Box 2: Secondary teacher management policies**

**Recruitment:** To become a lower secondary school teacher, candidates must complete upper secondary schooling and secure admission into national Colleges of Education and must complete a two-year training program. Once completed, they are granted a Lower Secondary Teaching Diploma. Upper secondary school candidates are required to complete six years of secondary education and a four-year training program in a university (MINEDUC, 2007).

**Deployment:** Teacher deployment (and transfer) is guided by the Rwanda Education Board (REB) (which allocates the number of teachers per region) and carried out by the districts. Upon completion of a 12-month probationary period, teachers are eligible for permanent appointment, a status that allows them access to all terms of service as highlighted in Terms of Service for Teachers in the country.

**Leave of absence:** In-service teachers are granted three types of absence: incidental leave (maternity, health, annual leave), training and official mission leave.

**Pre-service and in-service training:** MINEDUC's Teacher Development Management Department provides training to all in-service/pre-service teachers and collaborates with the Curriculum Pedagogical Materials Production & Distribution to provide in-service teacher training in the new CBC. School-based mentors (SBMs) and School Subject Leaders (SSLs) provide in-service teachers with training related to CBC as part of teachers' continuous professional development.

**Salary and benefits:** Pay for public and government-subsidized school teachers is determined nationally, and teachers have performance contracts, which include a 3 per cent raise for those who score between 70 and 79 per cent. Those who receive less than 70 per cent are not given an annual bonus, and below 60 per cent entails removal from teaching position. In 2019, secondary school teachers received a 10 per cent salary increase (UNIVERSALIA, 2019). Private school teachers' salaries are provided by the school, through pupil fees.

**Teacher sanctioning:** Each school is required to have a disciplinary committee that includes the head teacher, two elected teachers, and two parents (one male and one female). Absence for a non-specific period constitutes legal grounds for termination of contract (Republic of Rwanda, 2016). Head teachers, SEIs/DEOs and national inspectors can report teacher misconduct to the District Mayor who has the authority to suspend or terminate a teacher's contract (Honeyman, 2017). In the 2018/2019–2023/2024 strategic plan, MINEDUC plans to increase parental monitoring of schools as part of its efforts to strengthen oversight of schools across the education system. Additionally, in 2018, MINEDUC launched the initiative Quality Education Enhancement Awareness Campaigns, which aims to strengthen the accountability of education stakeholders (i.e., MINEDUC, DEOs, teachers and head teachers) and improve education quality. The campaign involves a combination of school visits, in-class inspections, sensitization activities, and feedback at the end of each school visit to enhance head teachers' supervisory and sanctioning role and teacher attendance, punctuality, planning and delivery of instruction (MINEDUC, n.d.; UNIVERSALIA, 2019).

In 2020, the Government increased MINEDUC's budget by 62 per cent to take prompt measures in preparation for school reopening, including scaling up school-feeding programs. The ministry also started the process of hiring an additional 7,200 teachers by September 2020, over 3,400 of whom will be for secondary schools (Buningwire, 2020b).

To improve the school environment by addressing critical issues such as overcrowding and long distances to schools, MINEDUC is building 22,500 additional classrooms, providing school materials, and training in-service teachers in remote-learning pedagogies (GPE, 2020; Ashimwe, 2020). With support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), an additional capitation grant (in addition to standard capitation grants) will be provided to the 11 poorest districts so that schools in these areas can implement health and safety measures when schools reopen (MINEDUC, 2020a).

There is a concern, however, that school closures will affect teacher retention as they look for work elsewhere (Dhar, 2020). Attrition might be especially a concern amongst the 14 per cent of private secondary school teachers who, unlike public and government-subsidized school teachers, did not receive pay when schools were closed (Ndereyehe, 2020). To alleviate their financial hurdles, the government provided a six-month tax exemption for private school teachers (Xinhua, 2020), and a loan program to help private school leaders in continuity of pay; these have not been used by most private schools (Ndereyehe, 2020).

MINEDUC is also working towards redressing the lack of ICT training among teachers through the current provision of ICT literacy training (MINEDUC, 2019). Efforts are ongoing to secure resources that can sustain remote learning, including free internet access to education materials online (MINEDUC, 2020a) and provide teaching devices to educators (Mugiraneza, 2021). These initiatives reveal that remote learning requires additional infrastructure and skills that many schools, communities and staff currently lack (UNICEF, 2020).

Despite these prompt measures, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the education sector (UNICEF, 2020) and there is concern that the magnitude of its economic impact will reverse previous gains (Dhar, 2020) and have a severe long-term economic impact on education (GPE, 2020).

This report seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of secondary school teacher attendance in Rwanda. While the report does not specifically address the impact of COVID-19 on teacher attendance (as data collection was completed before the pandemic), its aim is to provide valuable insights on how the pandemic may exacerbate existing education system challenges that may affect teacher attendance, motivation and time on task. This study is therefore informative for policy making in the current COVID-19 time and beyond.

## 1.3.  Research objectives

This study builds on previous primary school-level findings to understand how pervasive teacher absenteeism is across the education system and examines the associated factors.

More specifically, the study aims to:

- Understand the various forms of secondary school teacher absenteeism (i.e., absence from school, absence of punctuality, absence from the classroom and reduced time on task) and assess their prevalence in different regions, types of schools (public/private) and settings (rural/urban).

- Identify factors at different levels of the education system that affect secondary school teacher attendance, as well as teachers' capacity and motivation.

- Highlight commonalities and differences in primary and secondary school teacher attendance, and potentially provide clearer pathways for policy makers in their efforts to strengthen teacher attendance rates and time on task as a means of improving learners' academic performance.

## 1.4.  Definitions, data and methods

The TTT study introduces the concept of **multi-dimensional teacher absenteeism** (*see Annex 4*). This concept suggests that limited teacher attendance is a complex phenomenon that manifests in multiple ways, with each manifestation having a negative impact on teacher time on task and pupil learning. The concept moves beyond the traditional understanding of teacher absenteeism as merely school absence and distinguishes between four different types of teacher absence: (1) absence from school; (2) absence of punctuality (late arrival to and/ or early departure from school); (3) absence from the classroom (while in school); (4) absence from teaching (i.e., reduced time on task while in the classroom).

The study takes a system approach towards explaining teacher absenteeism, and therefore examines the relevance of factors at all levels of the education system including national, subnational, community, school and teacher levels (*see detailed exploratory framework in Annex 5*).

TTT is a mixed methods project, employing both qualitative and quantitative research tools. A total of 20 schools (*see Table 1*) were purposively selected based on the following criteria: **location** (district and sector), **type of school** (public, private, government-subsidized) and **community setting** (rural and urban).

## Table 1: TTT secondary school selection in Rwanda

| Province | District | Sector | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Kigali** | Nyarugenge | Rwezamenyo | Urban, Private, Inclusive |
| | | Magerere | Rural, Public |
| | Gasabo | Kacyiru | Urban, Public |
| | | Jali | Rural, Government-subsidized |
| **Northern** | Gicumbi | Byumba | Urban, Government-subsidized |
| | | Ruvune | Rural, Public |
| | Burera | Gahunga | Rural, Government-subsidized |
| | | Cyanika | Rural, Private |
| **Western** | Rusizi | Nkanka | Rural, Public |
| | | Kamembe | Urban, Government-subsidized |
| | Nyamasheke | Kanjongo | Urban, Government-subsidized |
| | | Macuba | Rural, Private |

| Province | District | Sector | Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eastern** | Rwamagana | Kigabiro | Urban, Private |
| | | Mwulire | Rural, Public |
| | Kirehe | Kirehe | Urban, Public |
| | | Gatore | Rural, Government-subsidized |
| **Southern** | Nyaruguru | Kibeho | Urban, Government-subsidized |

Qualitative data were collected through 127 semi-structured interviews with key education stakeholders (MINEDUC officials, subnational education officers, community representatives, head teachers and teachers); 20 focus group discussions with approximately 140 pupils; and 20 structured school observations (*see Table 2*).[6] Pupil respondents were selected on the basis of their age and gender. For teachers, selection criteria included age, gender, years of experience and education.

Quantitative data were collected through a census approach, whereby all teachers who were present at the selected schools during field visits were required to complete a close-ended survey.[7] Self-reported data were received from 268 teachers. It is important to note that these data were drawn from schools selected for qualitative collections, and therefore are only representative of the 20 schools selected nationally and not the country as a whole. In total, 475 individuals participated in the study.[8]

## Table 2: Number of study participants in Rwanda

| Respondent type and data collection method | Number of respondents |
|---|---|
| Head teachers (In-depth interviews - IDIs) | 20 |
| Teachers (Pen-and-Paper survey)* | 268 |
| Pupils (Focus group discussions) | 140 |
| Community representatives (IDIs) | 20 |
| One education officer per district (director level) (IDIs) | 20 |
| National representatives from the ministry and relevant national level agencies and institutes (IDIs) | 7 |
| **Total number of respondents** | **475** |

*At the school level, 60 teachers were selected for in-depth interviews.

Data collection, storage and management were in line with international best practice and the UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis (*see Annex 7*).

Thematic content analysis was employed to code and analyse over 2,000 pages of transcribed interviews and focus group discussions. Stata was used for the descriptive and statistical analysis of survey data.

## 1.5.  Chapter organization

The rest of the report is structured as follows: Section 2 presents findings of the frequency of teacher absenteeism based on data analysis from different stakeholders in the selected schools. Findings are reported by education system level, beginning with national factors, and combine both survey and qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions to examine how different factors affect teacher attendance. Section 3 presents a list of policy outlooks that can help address the main findings of this study.

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6  A structured observation tool was used to record enumerators' observations on teacher absences, teacher–pupil interactions, and teacher working relations during visits to selected schools. These were used in the research for understanding school context, and not included as part of total number of interviewees.

7  In Rwanda, the school year runs from January to November. Data for the TTT study was collected between June 26 and July 12, 2019, six months after the start of the school year.

8  Like all studies relying on self-reported data, TTT is not free of methodological limitations. *See Annex 6* for a detailed explanation of this study's methodological limitations.

# Section 2: Key findings

This section presents the findings of the TTT study for secondary schools in Rwanda, starting with a snapshot of the reported overall frequency of the four forms of teacher absenteeism (school absence, late arrival/early departure, classroom absence, and reduced time on task)[9] and of key differences in terms of school location, school type and teacher gender. It is followed by more in-depth discussions of the factors associated with teacher absence, combining survey information and qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

## How frequently are secondary school teachers absent?

According to teachers' responses, one out of five (19.9 per cent) secondary school teachers affirm to have been absent on a recurring basis, (i.e., at least once a week), in any of the four forms of teacher attendance.

Figure 1: Self-reported frequency of teacher absenteeism in secondary schools

**SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM**



Never    Less than once a week    Once a week or more

**LACK OF PUNCTUALITY**



Never    Less than once a week    Once a week or more

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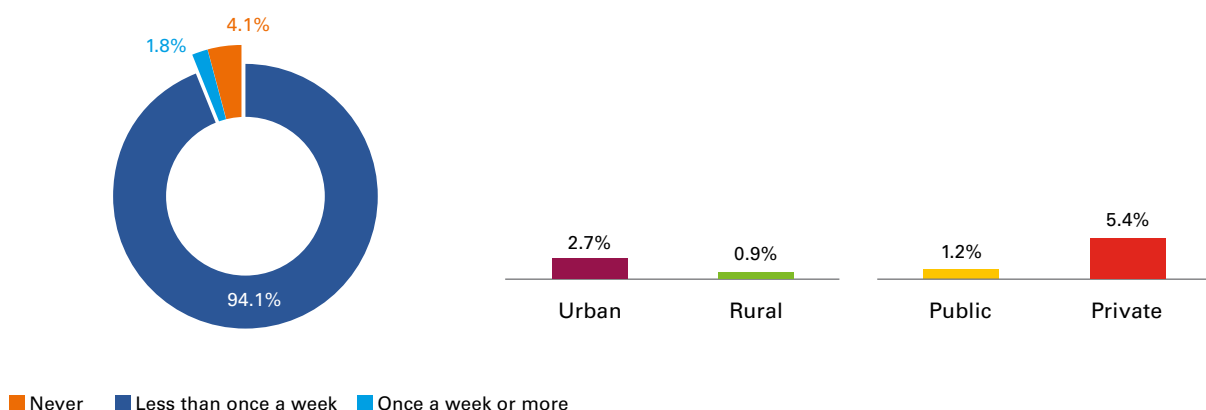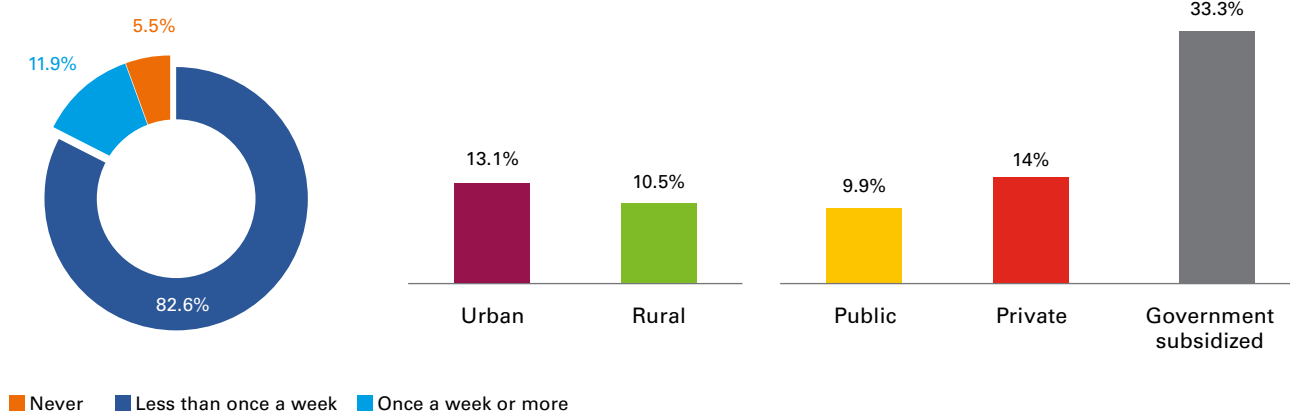
9   Teachers in the TTT study were queried on the frequency with which they have been absent since the start of the school year. They were asked to select one response from among the following: never; a few times (less than three times); less than once a week; once a week; and, more than once a week.

## ABSENCE FROM THE CLASSROOM



7.9%
3.9%
88.2%

7.1% Urban
8.5% Rural

6.9% Public
9.5% Private
16.7% Government subsidized

■ Never  ■ Less than once a week  ■ Once a week or more

## REDUCED TIME ON TASK



10.4%
9%
80.6%

12.3% Urban
8.3% Rural

10.5% Public
5% Private
27.3% Government subsidized

■ Never  ■ Less than once a week  ■ Once a week or more
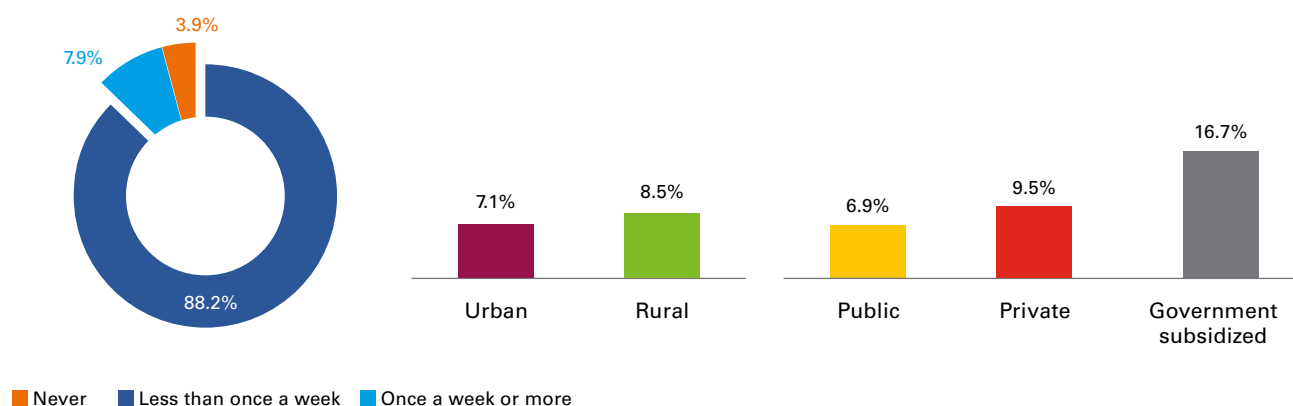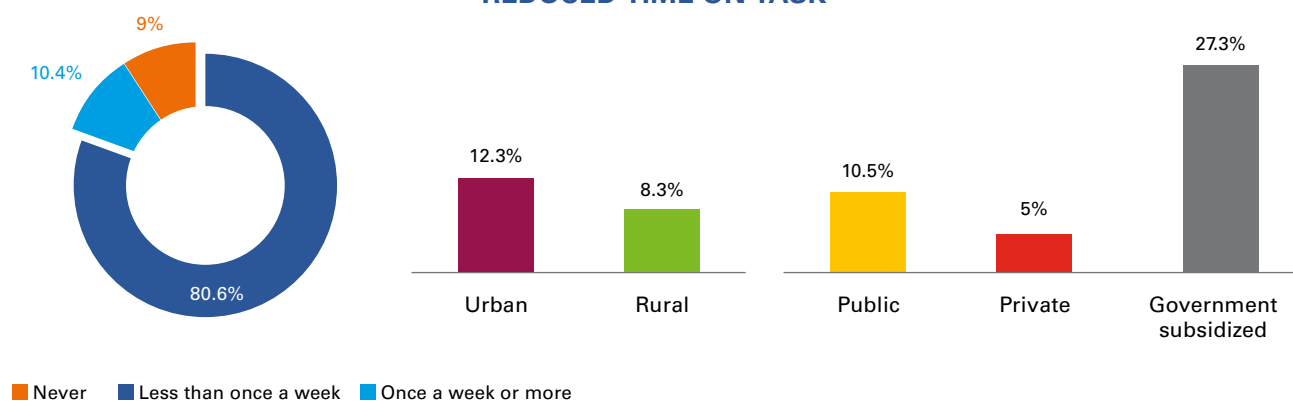
Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who report never being absent, being absent less than once a week, and at least once a week or more since the beginning of the school year on average. The pie charts represent the responses of all teachers surveyed. On the right, the bar graphs represent the percentage of teachers who claim to be absent at least once a week on average by sub-groups: rural or urban schools and type of schools (public, private, government-subsidized).

Results by type of absenteeism and subgroup:[10]

- **Absence from school** is the least frequent form at 2 per cent and is reported by urban and male teachers more frequently than by rural and female teachers. It is also more frequent among private school teachers[11] and much more likely among teachers with children. These findings are significantly lower than those at the primary level, where 9 per cent of teachers reported weekly school absence (*see Figure 18 in Annex 11*) (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020).

- **Late arrival/early departure** occurs much more frequently than other forms of absence: 12 per cent of teachers affirm they arrived late or left early on a recurring basis (i.e., at least once a week) since the start of the school year. It is also significantly more common in government-subsidized schools than in public or private settings, and in classrooms with large teacher–pupil ratios.[12] Low punctuality is also the most common form of teacher absenteeism (17 per cent) among primary school teachers (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020).

10  *See Table 6 in Annex 8* for results on reported differences in self-reported absenteeism by selected teacher characteristics.

11  There are no significant differences in terms of location, gender and school type.

12  Bigger classrooms are defined as those where the teacher has a pupil-teacher ratio above the median (49 pupils per teacher) in the sample. Teachers with a pupil teacher ratio above the median are significantly more likely to arrive late/leave early (17 per cent vs. 6 per cent).

- **Classroom absence** is reported by 8 per cent of secondary school teachers, especially in rural, as well as in government-subsidized schools.[13] At the primary level, 8 per cent teachers reported weekly absenteeism, suggesting that this form of absenteeism is consistent across school levels.

- **Limited time on task** is reported by 10 per cent of teachers and appears higher in urban, government-subsidized schools,[14] and among female teachers. Teachers with children are significantly more likely to report reduced time on task regardless of gender. Data from primary school teachers suggest they experience this more, at 12 per cent (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020).

Teachers were also queried in the TTT survey on the reasons behind each form of absenteeism and were asked to select up to three responses as to what factors affect their attendance (*see Figures 2 to 5*). These figures provide a useful snapshot of the most frequently reported reasons for absenteeism and will be referred to throughout Section 2. However, survey data capture only part of the picture. Interviews with head teachers, teachers, pupils and government officials complement this data with a contextual understanding of the determinants of low teacher attendance in Rwanda.

## Figure 2: Top five factors affecting teacher absence from school, by location, gender and school type



Legend: Health | Family reasons | Social/communal obligations | Weather | Official school business

| | Average n=222 | Rural n=108 | Urban n=114 | Male n=146 | Female n=76 | Public n=172 | Private n=37 | Government subsidized n=12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health | 64 | 62 | 66 | 63 | 67 | 67 | 51 | 67 |
| Family reasons | 50 | 48 | 51 | 55 | 40 | 50 | 47 | 50 |
| Social/communal obligations | 48 | 52 | 45 | 47 | 50 | 49 | 53 | 25 |
| Weather | 38 | 40 | 38 | 42 | 32 | 38 | 49 | 8 |
| Official school business | 33 | 39 | 27 | 30 | 39 | 35 | 20 | 42 |

13  Differences are not statistically different at the 10 per cent level.

14  Differences are not statistically different at the 10 per cent level among these dimensions.

## Figure 3: Top five factors affecting teacher punctuality, by location, gender and school type

■ Health  ■ Weather  ■ Family reasons  ■ Social/communal obligations  ■ Official school business



| | Average | Rural | Urban | Male | Female | Public | Private | Government subsidized |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health | 60 | 58 | 63 | 61 | 59 | 64 | 43 | 75 |
| Weather | 52 | 46 | 57 | 51 | 52 | 54 | 51 | 17 |
| Family reasons | 49 | 49 | 49 | 52 | 43 | 50 | 40 | 58 |
| Social/communal obligations | 28 | 29 | 28 | 28 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 17 |
| Official school business | 25 | 25 | 25 | 24 | 28 | 28 | 15 | 25 |
| | n=236 | n=114 | n=122 | n=155 | n=81 | n=181 | n=43 | n=12 |

## Figure 4: Top five factors affecting teacher classroom absenteeism, by location, gender and school type

■ Administrative reasons  ■ Health  ■ Official school business  ■ Weather  ■ Too many preparation tasks



| | Average | Rural | Urban | Male | Female | Public | Private | Government subsidized |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative reasons | 94 | 94 | 93 | 91 | 98 | 95 | 86 | 100 |
| Health | 58 | 57 | 59 | 56 | 62 | 61 | 43 | 83 |
| Official school business | 55 | 60 | 50 | 55 | 54 | 55 | 47 | 75 |
| Weather | 28 | 24 | 32 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 31 | 0 |
| Too many preparation tasks | 19 | 25 | 14 | 23 | 12 | 18 | 20 | 25 |
| | n=229 | n=117 | n=112 | n=152 | n=77 | n=175 | n=42 | n=12 |

21

## Figure 5: Top five factors limiting teacher time on task, by location, gender and type of school



Legend: Health | Pupils misbehave | Weather | Distraction by family/personal problems | Too many preparation tasks

| | Average n=222 | Rural n=108 | Urban n=114 | Male n=146 | Female n=76 | Public n=171 | Private n=40 | Government subsidized n=11 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health | 68 | 69 | 67 | 66 | 73 | 72 | 53 | 67 |
| Pupils misbehave | 46 | 42 | 50 | 46 | 48 | 46 | 49 | 33 |
| Weather | 24 | 24 | 24 | 27 | 18 | 27 | 17 | 8 |
| Distraction by family/personal problems | 22 | 27 | 18 | 23 | 21 | 26 | 9 | 25 |
| Too many preparation tasks | 19 | 22 | 16 | 22 | 12 | 18 | 21 | 17 |

Beginning with Section 2.1, analysis and findings are presented by education system levels, starting with the national level (2.1), followed by subnational (2.2), community (2.3), school (2.4), and finally, teacher level (2.5). Findings are presented in this order to align with the explanatory framework presented in Section 1, which considers how determinants of teacher absenteeism originate and/or manifest at various levels of the education system. Breaking down findings into discrete levels enables a detailed analysis, which allows to present potential policy recommendations for strengthening teacher attendance (Section 3).

# Why are secondary school teachers absent?

## 2.1.  National-level factors associated with teacher attendance

### 2.1.1.  In-service teacher training

Findings from the qualitative responses reveal that the timing **of in-service training frequently conflicts with scheduled lessons,** causing school and classroom absence. *Figures 2–4* also suggest that 'official school business', which includes training, is a key cause of low punctuality, school and classroom absence. While head teachers permit teachers to attend trainings, they typically do not have the staff to cover missed lessons. Likewise, head teachers are also required to attend

"In the first term, I failed to follow up on teachers, even though I had developed a plan prior to visiting the teacher. I usually leave the plan with them, but when it comes time to monitoring, I am usually away for training. As a result, I have to cancel that meeting with the teacher and plan another one for the following week: it is very challenging."

– Head teacher, urban public inclusive school, Nyarugenge district.

training programs during the school year, which limits their ability to carry out their school management responsibilities. Nonetheless, **respondents describe in-service training as 'essential'** especially in teaching the new CBC requirements. This is because, like primary school teachers (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020), secondary teachers also struggle with implementing CBC in the classroom.

Some head teachers worry that teachers also lack **the skills to plan lessons in advance or to manage their time** while at school. A head teacher from an urban public school pointed out: "I have found that there are some teachers who do not know how to manage their time. Instead of teaching, they talk about topics that are not related to the lesson. Sometimes a teacher enters the classroom without having prepared a lesson and this is another reason why they may shorten their lesson duration."

Surveyed teachers rate their knowledge and skills higher, regardless of school type (94 per cent public, 94 per cent private and 100 per cent government-subsidized), compared with when describing teachers more broadly (*see Figure 6*). A potential reason for this might be that teachers do not want to acknowledge they lack skills to teach as teaching is their main source of income.[15] However, by scoring their colleagues' knowledge and skills lower they are highlighting a gap in qualifications at their schools, indicating the **need for additional training.** On average only 46 per cent of teachers said they have access to training opportunities. They are significantly lower in government-subsidized schools (8 per cent). Findings from the primary level indicate that more teachers have access to such opportunities at 64 per cent average (*see Table 9 in Annex 12*).[16]

15  This may be also the result of social desirability bias, since teachers may be inclined to misreport their lack of skills.

16  There are no significant differences between primary and secondary schools in terms of valuation of their knowledge and skills and those of their colleagues.

## Figure 6: Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – knowledge/training
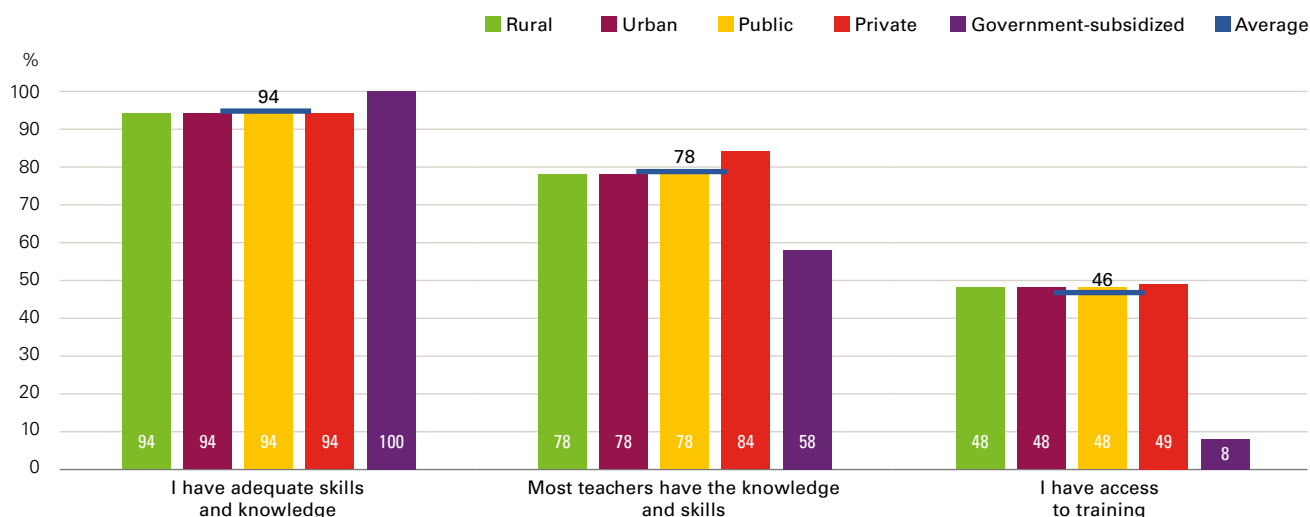


These figures suggest that in-service training is an ongoing need for secondary teachers. In the current MINEDUC strategic plan (MINEDUC, 2019), additional training opportunities are prioritized along with school-based training. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry has increased its efforts to provide training remotely and training materials online through the REB's existing e-learning platform (GPE, 2020). It is not clear, however, if these measures will be carried out only during the lockdown, or also when teachers return to schools.

### 2.1.2.  New CBC requirements

REB's switch to a competence-based curriculum has highlighted the need for additional skills, including the acquisition of English, Kinyarwanda and French (MINEDUC, 2015). Several respondents across the different school types clarified that teaching in the required official languages is often a challenge for both learners and pupils. Moreover, CBC has also reduced subject duration from 45 minutes to 40 minutes (MINEDUC, 2015). Throughout the

> "There are times when a teacher is teaching in French, and we need to ask them for help in translation to our local language. But they tell us that they must only teach in French, so you end up not understanding anything. Sometimes the course ends, and you don't get anything out of it."
>
> – Pupil, urban public school, Nyamasheke Region.

schools selected in this study, respondents point to teaching in French and English, as well as planning lessons within the newly allocated 40 minutes, as an obstacle in their way of completing learning tasks, especially when classrooms are overcrowded. Some teachers explain that due to the amount of work they are required to cover in a lesson, they sometimes do not pause to provide clarity or translation even though they are aware that the pupils might not be following. This was also confirmed through interviews with pupils, some of whom explained that they sometimes cannot keep up with the lessons because of language limitations. A teacher from an urban public and inclusive school explained: "some teachers are worried that the new curriculum is above the level of the pupil because pupils lack basic skills like responding to questions in English such as, 'what is your name?' or 'how old are you?' Thus, to ask them to read a text without even basic knowledge, it is very difficult."

Findings from the primary study also suggest that teachers struggle with English as an instructional language and completing lessons in the condensed subject duration (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). Teaching in English has been noted to be especially challenging in Rwanda where teachers and learners in marginalized communities – particularly those who are poor and living in rural areas – have very low levels of English

proficiency (Uwasw and Taylor, 2019). These findings support observations made in the current strategic plan, suggesting there is a need to provide teachers additional CBC-related training. Likewise, the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of ICT platforms to make training materials accessible to teachers. A recent report on the effects of school closures on secondary school teachers and head teachers found that only 42 per cent of head teachers and 33 per cent of teachers received guidance on how to maintain instruction during school closures (Carter et al., 2020). Limited access to the Internet was found to be a critical factor hindering teachers' opportunities and abilities to participate in virtual capacity development initiatives (Mugiraneza, 2021).

## 2.2. Subnational factors

### 2.2.1. School monitoring visits

Secondary school teachers view their engagement with local government officials positively, describing SEIs and DEOs visits as 'helpful' and 'encouraging'. This is similar to primary teachers' attitude towards these officials (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). Head teachers explain that they often benefit from regular engagement with these officials, especially when **they support their leadership** (i.e., when they agree with the head teacher's decision regarding a teacher's performance) in the school.

A head teacher at an urban private school in Rwamagana, for example, pointed out that a recent decision by district officials to make permission from school administration mandatory for all absences, has helped reduce school absence at their school. Other respondents pointed to a **performance agreement[17] between teachers and local education officials** and **awareness programs** in the community on the importance of teaching and learning, as additional measures led by local officials that have contributed positively towards improving attendance. An urban public school head teacher in Kirehe explains: "it is beneficial when teachers are evaluated by local officials, especially when they observe what teachers do in the classroom and what they put into action." In some schools, sector-level officials also **check up on head teachers' monitoring**, which teachers describe as essential for improving accountability. Surveyed responses confirm these findings as most teachers in public schools (80 per cent) and all teachers in government-subsidized schools (100 per cent)[18] feel these officials play a role in discouraging teacher absenteeism (*see Figure 7*), though less common in private schools (68 per cent) (*see Table 8 in Annex 10*).

> "We report teacher's attendance and absenteeism every month to the district. They also encourage our teachers to arrive on time and to respect time. They help us in making sure our teachers understand the importance of avoiding absenteeism and coming late to school."
>
> – Headteacher, rural community school, Burera region

> "SEIs do not visit our school often, so they do not take any decisions related to the problems that we identify in our meetings, related to how well our teachers are doing their job. Even when we report a specific teacher with poor behavior many times, SEIs do not help us."
>
> – Head teacher, rural private school, Nyamasheke region.

A possible explanation for why monitoring is lower in private schools might be that there is a general perception among respondents, including local officials, that teacher attendance is a larger issue in public schools than in private. National policies on private school management are also unclear as there is no unit within MINEDUC in charge of private education management, despite being required to follow the same curriculum implementation guidelines as public schools (MINEDUC, 1998). Some private school managers, however, worry that local officials may not be supporting them to the extent that is needed.

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17  This may be a reference to the pay-for-performance (P4P) contracts that REB has introduced to improve, at the primary level, teacher recruitment and improve learning outcomes in Rwanda. Evidence suggests these efforts have contributed positively to teacher attendance, particularly teacher presence in the school and classroom.

18  Differences are significant at the 10 per cent level between government-subsidized schools and the other types.

## Figure 7: Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – monitoring
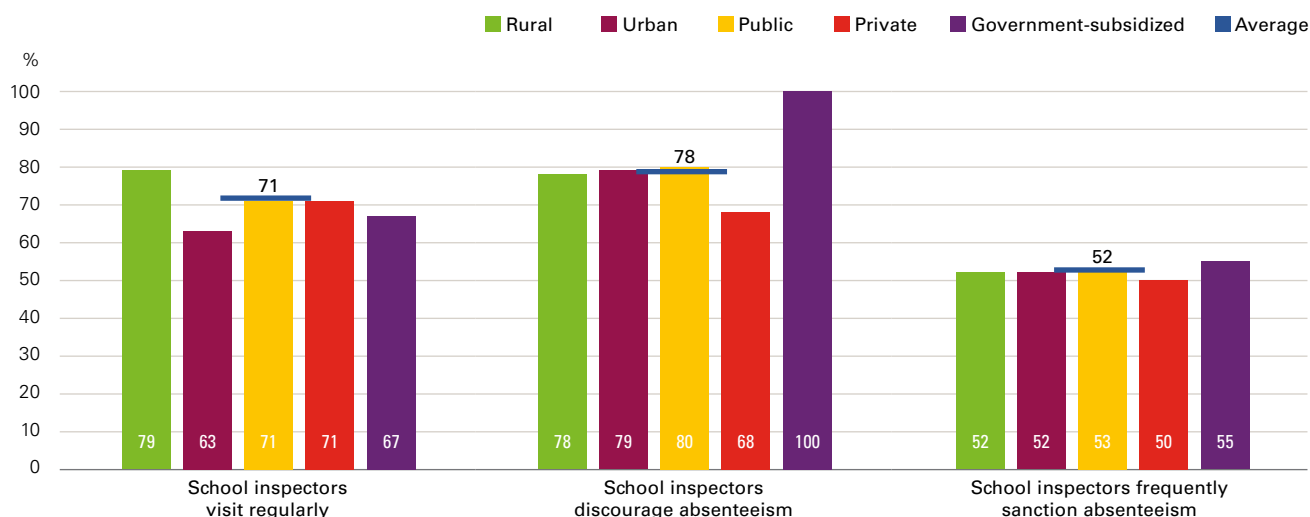


Likewise, some teachers point out that while they may receive visits from local education officials, they are often not sure of their purpose or outcome. This supports findings from the primary level which found that despite having significantly more visits,[19] officials' attitudes towards monitoring were sometimes lenient and teachers were not always held accountable for their absence (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020).

### 2.2.2. Resource constraints

In most secondary schools, SEIs and DEOs are described as lacking the resources to carry out their monitoring responsibilities, **especially transportation funds**. Since education is decentralized in Rwanda, almost half of its budget is allocated to district councils.[20] Most of these funds are designated for teacher salaries and incentives (i.e., capitation grants) and distributed equally across the various districts (UNICEF, 2019). Thus, while MINEDUC recognizes the important role that DEOs and SEIs play in implementing national directives, it appears the provision of resources needed to carry out these responsibilities is lacking.

Evidence also points to variations across and within districts, which suggest that using the current equitable approach might not meet district-level needs of education officials. Only 71 per cent of surveyed teachers declared that school inspectors visit regularly, and visits are significantly lower in urban than in rural areas (*see Table 7 in Annex 9*). Mainly, schools located closer to local education officials' offices receive regular visits and follow-ups, as well as additional support in the form of training, while those further away do not. A head teacher from a rural public school in Rusizi pointed out: "The SEI visits us frequently because we are located close to their office. They prepare and coordinate training whether at the school level or sector and comes every Tuesday to check on the attendance of teachers, and how the school is doing." Variations across and within districts in the primary school results were also evident as schools located in remote or rainy districts received fewer visits than others (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020).

Local education officials are described as **lacking the time, due to heavy workloads, to carry out their monitoring** responsibilities. Some interviewed SEIs and DEOs indicated their managers **often assigned additional administrative tasks** that interfere with their planning of school visits. Also, since COVID-19 school closures, monitoring efforts have shifted towards measuring remote learning effectiveness through feedback

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19  *Table 9 in Annex 12* reflects that school monitoring is significantly higher in primary schools.

20  Between 2016/2017 and 2019/2020, there was a decrease in allocated funds to district councils from 55 to 52 per cent.

from learners and parents (MINEDUC, 2020a). Though the Global Partnership for Education will support the ministry in strengthening the monitoring of teaching and learning, it is not clear what this will entail or how local officials will be impacted (GPE, 2020).

### 2.2.3. Authority to sanction

For teachers and head teachers, support from SEIs and DEOs in managing teacher absenteeism at their school is important, and as noted in section 2.2.1, it is perceived as effective in improving attendance. It does appear, however, that SEIs and DEOs are not always able to provide this support in a timely manner due to **internal bureaucracies** and **limitations in sanctioning authority**. A head teacher at a rural public school explains: "I worked at a school where a teacher could be away for multiple days without permission and

> "I can follow up with a school and produce a report on an issue, but when I send it to my supervisor (since I cannot send it directly to the district), they might refuse to sign it due to their relationship with the teacher. As SEIs, we do not have the power to take a decision, not even to send the report directly to the district."
>
> – Sector Education Official

even though I submitted a report as required, no measures were taken against that teacher. These reports are sent to the administration and often they remain in a 'pending' state." These sentiments echo **those expressed by primary level head teachers who are concerned about local officials' lack of sanctioning authority** (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020).

SEIs and some DEOs point out that they do not receive enough support from their managers to carry out their monitoring responsibilities, especially to provide feedback or follow up on reports they may prepare regarding a teacher's attendance. They also find it difficult to carry out effective inspections due to limited capacity to enforce action at the school level. A DEO explained: "There was one instance where it took four months to fire such a teacher, and you could tell from the pupils' notebooks that they were at a great loss, considering how frequently their teacher was absent and how long it took to fire them." In the surveyed responses, teachers also appear to be **dissatisfied with the education officials' authority to implement sanctioning measures** across all levels. Only half of the surveyed teachers declared that school inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism (*see Figure 7*) and data from the primary level reflects that this share is significantly higher in primary school settings (*see Table 9 in Annex 12*).

Likewise, head teachers explained that while they prepare the required teacher attendance reports and submit them on time to their SEIs, they are usually not followed up at the higher levels (i.e., DEOs, district mayor). Findings from this study also suggest that school managers are often frustrated because this leaves them feeling powerless in enforcing measures against absentee teachers at their schools. Primary school head teachers expressed similar sentiments (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020), illustrating that **lack of feedback and authority is a challenge across primary and secondary school levels**.

In the 2018/2019–2023/2024 strategic plan, MINEDUC recognizes the important administrative role of head teachers at the school level and plans to provide them with greater decision-making power. However, it is not clear if these changes will also include transferring sanctioning authority from school inspectors. The new teacher statute's Article 107 (Republic of Rwanda, 2016), however, recognizes head teachers as the authority to impose disciplinary sanctions even for one-day absences, in the form of a warning or reprimand upon request from the school disciplinary committee. Since the pandemic, the government developed a toolkit for school leaders that includes monitoring as a key component of safe school reopening (VVOB, 2020). This kit raises the potential for head teachers to be recognized as leaders and the authority over their schools' overall management.

## 2.3.   Community factors

### 2.3.1.   Climate

Rain is a common cause of school and classroom absence, late arrival in the morning and limited instructional time in the classroom. Teachers and head teachers explain that **during rainy seasons, attendance is lower for teachers and pupils.** *Figure 8* shows how weather is especially a challenge in Kigali (66 per cent), in the Southern (63 per cent) and in the Western (60 per cent) provinces. In districts such as Burera and Nyarugenge, rain sometimes causes flooding, which limits travel to school. In Gasabo, Muhanga, Gicumbi and Rwamagna, heavy rains sometimes last for hours, and cause both pupils and teachers to miss school. At the primary level, rain was also found to be a key cause of low punctuality, followed by school absence and limited time on task across the different schools.

## Figure 8: Primary reasons for late arrival/early departure, by province
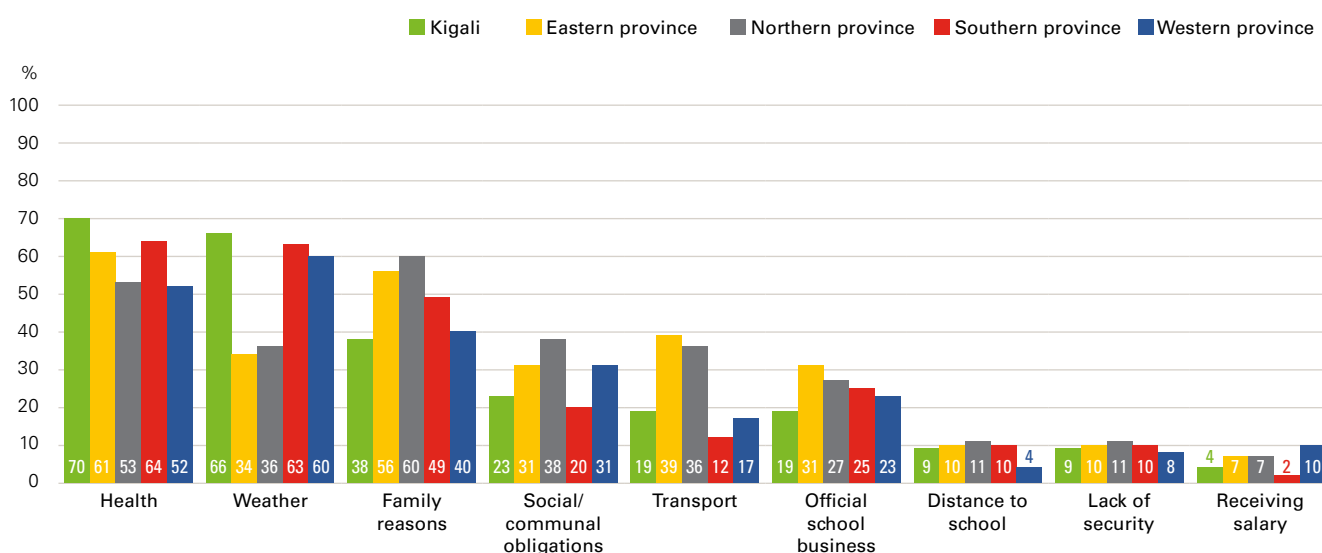


Teachers in this study pointed out that when it rains, they sometimes limit their instructional time because of limited brightness and additional noise from rooftops made of iron sheets. In rural areas, poor quality of roads poses additional constraints as almost 80 per cent of teachers across all school types walk to school during the dry and rainy seasons (*see Figure 9*). Though rain may be an expected and common occurrence in these regions, it appears that it affects all forms of teacher attendance (*see Figures 2 to 5*), especially when community infrastructure is under-developed (including unpaved roads, and as discussed further below, availability of transportation and school location). In addition, climatic reasons are more frequently mentioned by secondary than by primary school teachers as a motivation for school and classroom absenteeism (s*ee Figure 19 in Annex 11*).

## Figure 9: How teachers get to school during the rainy and dry seasons
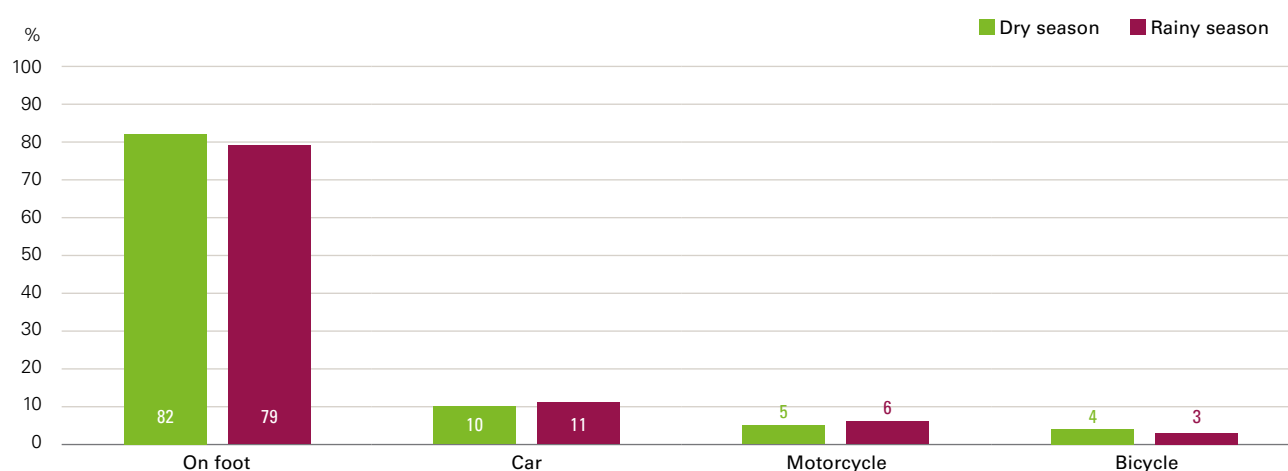


### 2.3.2. School distance and transportation

Teachers at many of the selected schools appear to face daily challenges in ensuring that they arrive to school on time, especially when they **live further away from school or cannot secure transportation easily** in the morning. While it may seem less surprising that transportation-related challenges exist in rural areas given the limitation of resources and infrastructure, findings reveal that even in urban schools, teachers find transport unreliable and difficult to secure, resulting in frequent late arrivals. Teachers point to frequent **traffic jams, late or limited availability of public transport** hindering their travels to and from school on a daily basis. In addition, teachers who live in different towns depend on public transportation to visit their homes during weekends and, consequently, are not always able to make it back to school on Mondays because of lack of transport availability.

> "Some teachers use up to 20,000 RWFs for the morning transportation, and when this budgeted amount finishes, they must come on foot. This might cause them to be late."
>
> – Teacher, rural public school, Rusizi region.

Teachers also explain that the **cost of transportation** is another reason why they may not arrive at school on time. Primary school teachers experience similar challenges[21] with teachers at both levels pointing to **lack of housing availability as further exacerbating** these problems (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). To improve punctuality, MINEDUC has already constructed more than 400 houses for teachers, and plans to build a housing block per sector, targeting rural and remote areas in particular (Muvunyi, 2016).

Teachers explain that sometimes pupils who travel long distances, arrive to school tired and struggle to focus in class. This limits teachers' time on task as they **sometimes have to stop teaching to repeat lessons, or to help a learner who might not be feeling well**. Pupils who are poor struggle the most as they often lack the relevant TLMs, arrive to school hungry, or are tired due to home responsibilities or environment.[22] Teachers point out that these conditions often cause learners discomfort, as highlighted by a teacher from a rural private school in Burera: "Sometimes you find that a pupil is not following lessons properly because they are distressed since the school has asked them to pay their school fees. Sometimes they are sent home from school to look for school fees."

One reason why teacher's instructional time use is hindered by pupil's health might be that learners at this level are required to work more independently than those at the primary level. Therefore, their ability to keep up with their lessons is important to the teachers, especially for upper secondary school learners, who must also prepare for national examinations. In the ministry's COVID-19 response plan, there are plans to

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21  Lack of punctuality due to transportation issues seems to be significantly higher for secondary school teachers than for those in primary schools (*see Figure 19 in Annex 11*).

22  This is especially evident if the pupil works or if they do not have a stable home environment with supportive parents/caregivers.

provide psychosocial support to vulnerable learners by strengthening links between their health and education (MINEDUC, 2020a). The findings from this study suggest that prior to COVID-19, health was also a factor that limited a teacher's time dedicated to learning tasks. Though the focus in the response plan is mainly on monitoring health related to the virus, there is a need to expand this focus so that learners' overall health and well-being is prioritized. This has the potential to enable learners to engage with their teachers and have sufficient time for processing information.

### 2.3.3. Parental engagement

Both qualitative and quantitative evidence highlight the **need for stronger parental support**. It appears that learners are perceived by teachers and head teachers as not receiving encouragement with their schoolwork. Often this is justified as a consequence of parents' low socio-economic background, and their own limited formal education, which is seen as hindering their capacity to recognize and support their child. Most teachers, regardless of their location (59 per cent in rural and 54 per cent in urban areas) or type of school (59 per cent in public, 38 per cent in private and 92 per cent in government-subsidized schools)[23] consider **parental engagement as insufficient** (*see Figure 10*). Data shows that parents who pay school fees are more likely to follow up on their child's learning, and consequently to monitor their teacher's performance. These revelations are similar to those raised by primary school teachers (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020), who also indicated that parent engagement was low, especially in public schools. *Table 9 in Annex 12*, however, reveals that parental engagement is significantly higher in primary than in secondary schools.

## Figure 10: Opinions of teachers on select statements related to absenteeism – parental engagement
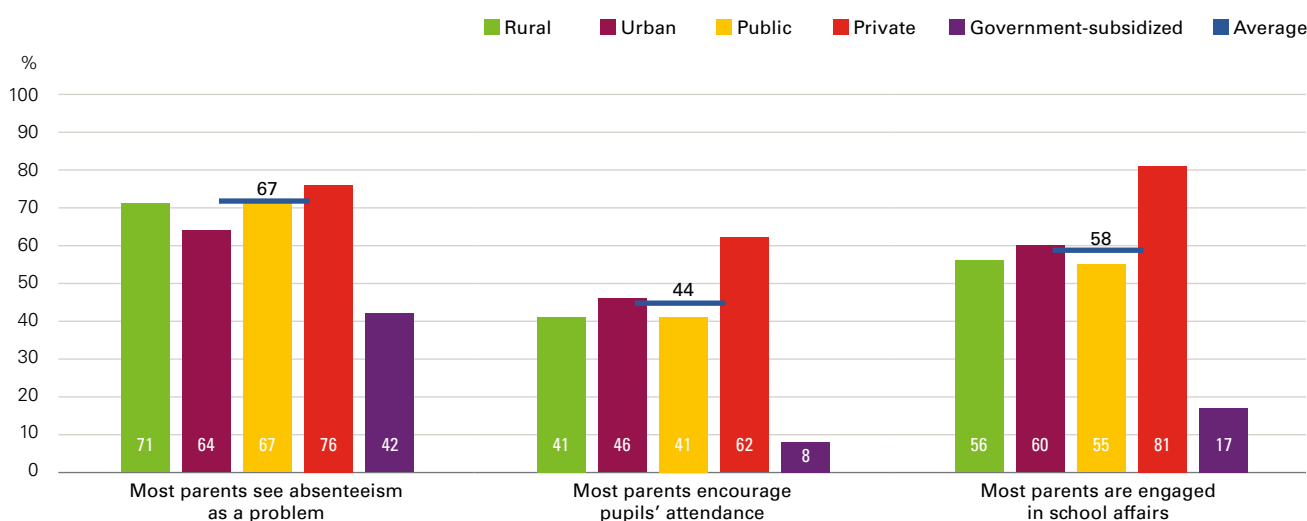


There is also variation in parental support across provinces, especially encouragement of pupil attendance and in their perception of absenteeism as an issue.[24]

This study supports other calls for increasing parental involvement in children's learning – especially those from low-income households – to provide learners with a home environment that supports and nurtures (MINEDUC and UNICEF, 2017). Since the pandemic, MINEDUC has also prioritized the engagement of parents in learning and, with the support of the Global Partnership for Education (Dhar, 2020), will develop a helpline and an SMS system to keep parents informed about remote learning (MINEDUC, 2020a). Though the focus is mainly on preparing parents to support their child's remote learning, this measure presents additional opportunities for strengthening parental support.

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23  Government-subsidized school teachers are significantly more likely to report lack of parental commitment than public and private school teachers. There are no significant differences with regards to school location (urban/rural) (*see Table 7 in Annex 9 and Table 8 in Annex 10*).

24  Surveyed teachers are significantly less likely to report that most parents encourage pupils' attendance in Northern and Southern provinces (compared with Kigali). They are significantly more likely to declare that parents engage in school affairs in the Western province and to affirm that "most parents see absenteeism as a problem" in all regions, compared with Kigali.

## 2.4. School factors

### 2.4.1. Role of head teachers

Respondents describe **head teachers' management as central to good attendance**. Teachers explain that when school managers are 'strict' or 'serious' about monitoring, teachers take measures to avoid school absence or late arrival (*see Box 3*).

> **Box 3: A head teacher's efforts to improve attendance at their school**
>
> At a rural private school in Nyaruguru district, a teacher who was repeatedly absent without authorization was requested by the head teacher to write an apology letter that included reasons for their absence. This letter not only prevented teachers from being absent again, but also served as a warning to other teachers. The head teacher explained that after that incident, he has not had any cases of teachers missing school or lessons. The head teacher also explained that they provide advice on the importance of attendance and remind them of their responsibilities, which appears to be a reason why some teachers point to the importance of commitment towards their job as a factor in preventing absenteeism. The teachers in this school describe this head teacher as a strong leader who is serious about attendance and does not tolerate any form of absence. The community also appears to support the head teacher's strict approach as a local representative describes being absent as a mistake that requires punishment.

**Positive measures taken by head teachers** include: checking and giving regular feedback on their scheme of work and their teaching methods in the classroom; allowing teachers to select subjects they are interested in teaching; encouraging learners to report absent teachers; and discussing attendance at staff meetings. Additionally, some schools are using a biometric fingerprint system which respondents describe has helped improve attendance.

However, some head teachers do not follow up with teachers, especially while they are in the classroom, which explains why **most respondents consider classroom absenteeism a consequence of lack of head teacher monitoring** or engagement.[25] Findings from the primary level study also point to classroom attendance as commonly neglected during routine monitoring by head teachers (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). **Secondary head teachers are also regularly absent due to meetings with local education officials**, and therefore, find it difficult to follow up on attendance. When this happens, the rate of classroom absence appears to increase. Head teachers are also aware that teachers might be limiting their instructional time or not attending to their pupils while they (head teachers) are away, yet they feel a sense of obligation to attend local official meetings. Some **DEOs have taken measures to ensure that head teachers remain at school during teaching hours**. A district level government official explains: "We have stopped scheduling meetings or trainings on working days, and instead have moved these to holiday periods or the weekend. This will help us reduce teacher absenteeism." This practice, however, did not appear consistent across all surveyed schools.

> "In the beginning, some teachers were absent and make excuses that they were at school when they weren't. However, since we installed the fingerprint device for attendance, they no longer do this, because we can report those who are absent."
>
> – Head teacher, urban public school, Gasabo. Region

During COVID-19 school closures, the ministry has coordinated with partners to help provide additional training and resources to school leaders so that their leadership and management role is further strengthened, especially in meeting post-COVID-19 school needs. These have the potential to strengthen head teachers' monitoring capacities, especially if REB avoids overlap or timing conflict in their training programs.

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25  Survey data from primary schools also suggest that primary school head teachers are significantly more likely to regularly record teacher absences (*see Table 9 in Annex 12*).

### 2.4.2. Teacher's workload

Qualitative evidence suggests that teachers are **engaged extensively in non-teaching tasks** while at school, including administrative responsibilities assigned by the head teacher, preparation of lessons, staff meetings and visits from local government officials or community members. Sometimes, teachers are also **required by local government officials to attend meetings outside of the school** during teaching time. Survey data echoes these findings, as three of the top five reasons for classroom absence are related to these tasks (*see Figure 4*), and often missed lessons cannot be recovered due to a shortage of time and staff. The study also shows that classroom absence due to heavy workload seems to be significantly more prevalent among secondary school teachers than in primary schools (*see Table 9 in Annex 12*).

Implementing the CBC has also increased teachers' workload across the school levels, as they explain they need to do more planning and grading. There is some indication also that larger classroom sizes and inadequate training in lesson planning further limit teachers' ability to achieve CBC goals. Teachers describe feeling stressed and exhausted, especially when they are teaching in overcrowded classes, which is also a dilemma that primary teachers appear to face (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). Moreover, **workload seems especially heavy during examination periods**, as teachers miss school to help with exam preparations at the district. Likewise, teachers in larger classrooms arrive to school late or leave early significantly more often[26] so they can finish their teaching-related activities, including grading pupil work, lesson planning and securing TLMs.

Teachers describe working overtime as stressful and difficult to manage as they often **neglect their family responsibilities** to keep up with teaching demands. Some teachers feel the **amount of work they are required to do is not reflected in their salaries** and this sometimes affects their motivation. As *Figure 12* shows, most teachers describe their colleagues' job satisfaction as low (57 per cent on average).[27] Low levels of job satisfaction among these teachers may be a result of their unhappiness with their own salary[28] and the administrative hurdles of collecting it.[29]

## Figure 11: Opinions of teachers on select statements related to absenteeism – job and salary satisfaction



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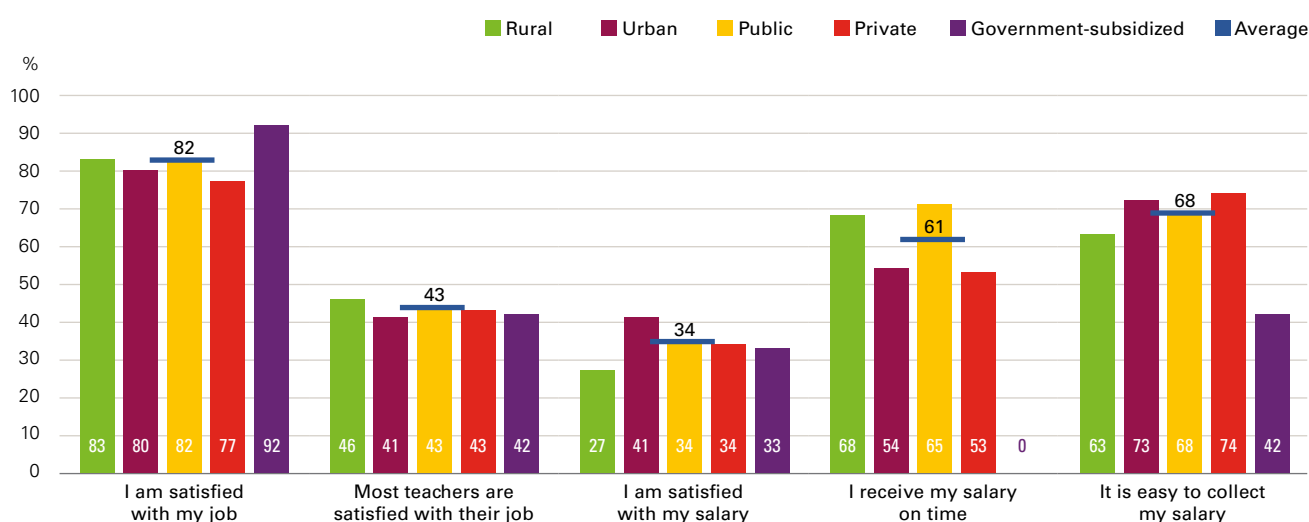
26  Teachers with classrooms above the median in the sample are 11 per cent more likely than those below the median to arrive late or leave early (*see Table 6 in Annex 8*).

27  When asked about their own satisfaction; however, a vast majority declare to be happy with their job. It is possible that the indirect question is a better reflection of their own satisfaction, due to response bias issues.

28  On average only 34 per cent of all teachers are satisfied with their own salary and those working in rural areas are significantly less likely to be satisfied with their salary compared with urban school teachers (*see Table 7 in Annex 9*).

29  Government-subsidized school teachers declare never receiving their salary on time. Difficulties receiving timely salaries and with collecting them seem to be significantly more likely among secondary school teachers (*see Table 9 in Annex 12*).

In the REB's 2017–2022 school-based mentor program framework (REB, 2016), there is an acknowledgement that fulfilling CBC requirements might increase teachers' workload and hence, lower their satisfaction. As a remedy, the framework encourages head teachers to cover teachers' lessons in their absence but does not clarify if this suggestion can be materialized, given that head teachers are often busy with their regular teaching responsibilities.

During the pandemic lockdown, MINEDUC indicated it would hire an additional 7,200 teachers, of which 3,417 will be allocated to secondary schools as part of its post-COVID-19 school reopening plans (Kamanzi, 2020). These measures are in addition to other strategies currently underway, including building over 22,000 classrooms to help improve teacher–pupil ratios and avoid overcrowded classrooms (Buningwire, 2020a). Thus, it is possible that when schools reopen, the school environment will be more conducive to teachers' needs. However, in addition to these resources, teachers will also require explicit measures that advocate for increasing their presence and classroom instructional time.

### 2.4.3. Limited school infrastructure and TLM availability

**Low quality of classroom infrastructure hinders teacher capacity to remain on task**, especially when classrooms do not offer protection against hot/cold weather or heavy rains (as highlighted in Section 2.3.1). In some schools, shortage of space means **classrooms are sometimes used for non-teaching purposes**, which delays teachers' lessons as they have to spend time preparing classrooms for teaching (rearranging desks, cleaning). Likewise, many schools lack sufficient desks and chairs, forcing children to sit in cramped conditions that make it difficult to write or focus on their lessons. The building of additional classrooms by the ministry and other partners by the end of 2020 will help redress this challenge, though it is not clear if these will ensure learners have a space that is conducive to learning.

Teachers' classroom attendance and instructional time use are also limited when there is a **shortage of TLMs**, including subject-specific teaching aids (for science, math, physics and geography classes). Teachers who lack TLMs explain that they sometimes shorten lessons or avoid going to class because they cannot explain the lesson without the required materials. Notably, **TLMs related to the CBC are in short supply across primary** (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020) **and secondary public schools**, though survey data suggest that it is significantly more prevalent at

> "Some of the subjects require specific materials such as a laboratory for science class. So, I teach pupils in theory, and sometimes I show them YouTube videos, but it is difficult to explain without equipment. Sometimes even finding a relevant video can make you lose teaching time."
>
> – Teacher, urban public refugee school, Gicumbi region.

the secondary level.[30] *Figure 13* illustrates that in secondary schools lack of TLMs does not affect private schools as much as public and government-subsidized schools. This may be because for public and government-subsidized schools, it is MINEDUC that provides TLMs and this is often a time-consuming process, whereas in private schools, the head teachers ensure that teachers have access to these resources, which they can provide easily using funds from pupil fees. There is also significant variation among regions.[31]

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30  Only 17 per cent of teachers in secondary schools report reducing instructional time due to lack of TLMs, compared with 10 per cent of primary school teachers. Additionally, 6 per cent of secondary school teachers report lack of TLMs as a factor affecting classroom attendance, compared with 3 per cent at the primary level. Teachers' responses to the statement "school has the materials needed for class" go alongside these findings and are available in Table 9 in Annex 12.

31  Differences between public, government-subsidized and private schools, and between the Eastern province and Kigali are statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

## Figure 12: Opinions of teachers on select statements related to absenteeism – teaching materials
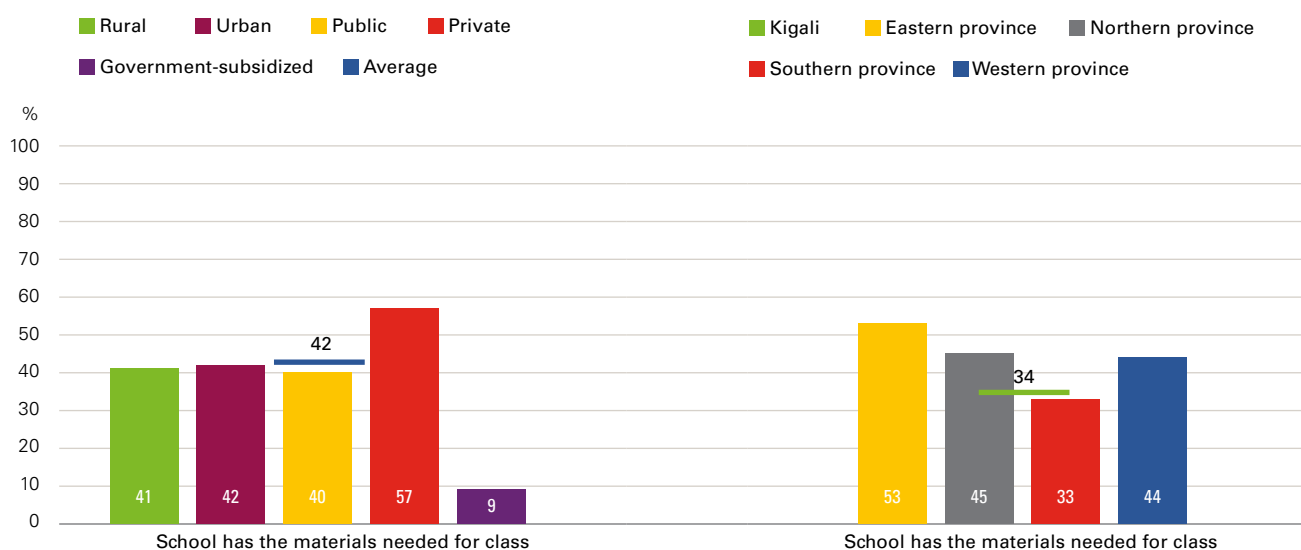


Although the REB has provided some textbooks to secondary schools, teachers described them as insufficient. During school closures, Rwanda made a swift decision to move teaching resources to its e-learning platform in time for schools reopening; currently lessons are available for all examinable core subjects (GPE, 2020). Additionally, teachers received training in ICT literacy and some development partners distributed electronic devices (e.g., computers and mobile phones) to teachers in schools (Mugiraneza, 2021), both of which help them use online platforms to teach. However, as noted in MINEDUC's response plan, only 17.2 per cent of households in Rwanda have access to online technology (MINEDUC, 2020b). This means that **rural and remote teachers may not have benefited from these opportunities**, which is a concern as findings from this study reveal that teachers in these contexts often face greater resource constraints.

Finally, some DEOs and head teachers point out that another reason why teachers may miss scheduled lessons or arrive late to school is due to hunger. Some schools and community members saw the **provision of lunch as a measure to avoid teacher absence**. Results from the primary school study indicate that it is mainly public school teachers who experience food scarcity due to low income (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). Secondary teachers at government-subsidized and public schools appear to be affected most; schools that provide lunch include public and private, though it is not clear if teachers at private schools also struggle with securing lunch. These limited findings suggest for further study of programs that focus on secondary level teachers' hunger and its impact on attendance, particularly in the post-COVID environment, as feeding programs will need to be scaled up due to increasing demand from learners, and thus, jeopardizing the capacity of schools to provide for teachers as well.

## 2.5. Teacher factors

### 2.5.1. Personal responsibilities

Results from this study reveal that **looking after family and social engagements in the community** are key reasons why secondary school teachers are absent from school or arrive late. *Figure 2* shows that social and communal obligations and family responsibilities are among the top three reasons why teachers miss school. These findings are similar to the primary school data where these responsibilities also resulted in frequent school absences, although significantly less frequently (*see Figure 19 in Annex 11*) (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). Many interview respondents indicated that family-related obligations affect female teachers more than males. However, this is not evident in the teacher survey data (*see Figure 2*) where more male teachers (55 per cent) select family as cause of school absence, than female teachers (40 per cent). Likewise, there is an assumption among some head teachers, SEIs and teachers that female teachers are late in the morning more frequently than male teachers due to household responsibilities. However, *Figure 3* shows that more male teachers (52 per cent) than female (43 per cent) selected 'family reasons' as a factor for lack of punctuality, suggesting that this is a pervasive challenge affecting attendance of both male and female teachers.[32] There is fear that COVID-19 will further increase teachers' household responsibilities (and ultimately stress), particularly for females who usually bear a significantly higher proportion of family duty and responsibilities (United Nations, 2020).

Several respondents, particularly pupils, also point out that **using phones in the classroom or engaging in discussions not related to lessons**, are additional reasons why a teacher's time on task might be limited. The survey data shows that distractions due to family/personal problems are among the top five factors that limit time on task (*see Figure 5*). This is also a challenge that head teachers and local education officials are aware of, and in some instances, have taken measures to address. A head teacher from a rural public school in Rawamagna illustrates: "teachers use their phones for personal chats, rather than teaching. We have discussed this issue with them and made it clear that we will not tolerate the use of phones in the classroom."

### 2.5.2. Teachers' health

**Health** is described as the most common reason why teachers may be absent from school, the classroom, or why they might be shortening lesson durations. *Figures 2 to 5* show that across the different school types, health is selected as a main cause for all forms of school absenteeism particularly among public and government-subsidized school teachers. Health issues, however, seem to affect significantly more secondary teachers' punctuality (*see Figure 19 in Annex 11*).

Health-related absences are often described as 'valid' and 'justifiable' by head teachers. Yet school managers also point out that while they approve such requests, **missed lessons are difficult to make up** due to teacher shortages. Illness can also affect classroom attendance and limit time on task when teachers suddenly feel ill while at school. *Figure 4* indicates that for both men (56 per cent) and women (62 per cent), **health is the second most common factor in classroom absence**, though more common among female teachers. This was **also found to be the case among primary school female** teachers (Guidorzi and Karamperidou, 2020). There is a concern that **teachers' attendance will be hindered further by COVID-19** due to teachers' need for psychological support (United Nations, 2020). At the moment, it is not clear if the government plans to provide psychosocial support to teachers, though it has indicated in the response plan that their health and well-being will be ensured (MINEDUC, 2020a). Some partner organizations, however, have included psychosocial support for teachers in their training scheduled to be delivered in time for school reopenings (Kotonya, 2020). It is not clear, however, if these will be needs-based.

Female teachers are described as facing additional barriers, including how their school managers oversee their leave. During pregnancy, for instance, school managers do not find temporary replacements as required by the

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32  There are no significant differences with respect to gender in any form of absenteeism. Regardless of gender, teachers with children are significantly more likely to be absent from the school than those without children.

teachers statute.[33] Instead, teachers who leave their jobs to give birth or nurse a newborn risk unemployment, especially at private schools. A teacher from an urban private school in Muhanga explained: "there was a teacher at our school who was pregnant, and she would come to school, but she was not well enough to teach. The school administration advised her to not come to school anymore, and instead, they hired a replacement teacher." Important to note is that **finding a substitute teacher is often a lengthy process** that does not help the school secure a teacher within the timeframe they need to teach pupils.

### 2.5.3.  Teacher commitment

Analysis shows that it is common among secondary school teachers, particularly male and those working in public schools, to miss school or arrive late or leave early due to **additional income-generating activities**. Some school managers and SEIs/DEOs explain that **teachers might feel obligated to look for additional work due to the high cost of living** and inadequate salaries. This is not surprising as other studies have also suggested that secondary school teachers are engaged in additional employment due to high levels of training and qualifications (Taylor and Robinson, 2019). On the other hand, teachers may be present at school, but **absent from the classroom due to lack of commitment**, especially when teachers feel they work more than they are paid for.

Some education managers believe teachers are acting 'lazy' or 'lacking professionalism' (i.e., teaching while intoxicated, socializing with colleagues), which causes them to be absent from the classroom or to be off task. *Figure 14* shows that 91 per cent of respondents describe feeling upset when they are absent from school or from teaching,[34] though they rate their colleagues' attitudes lower at 54 per cent. Similar patterns are evident across regions and school types, suggesting that low motivation and attitude towards teaching, are factors that hinder teacher attendance; qualitative responses reveal these attitudes impact their classroom presence in particular.

## Figure 13: Teachers' attitudes towards absenteeism



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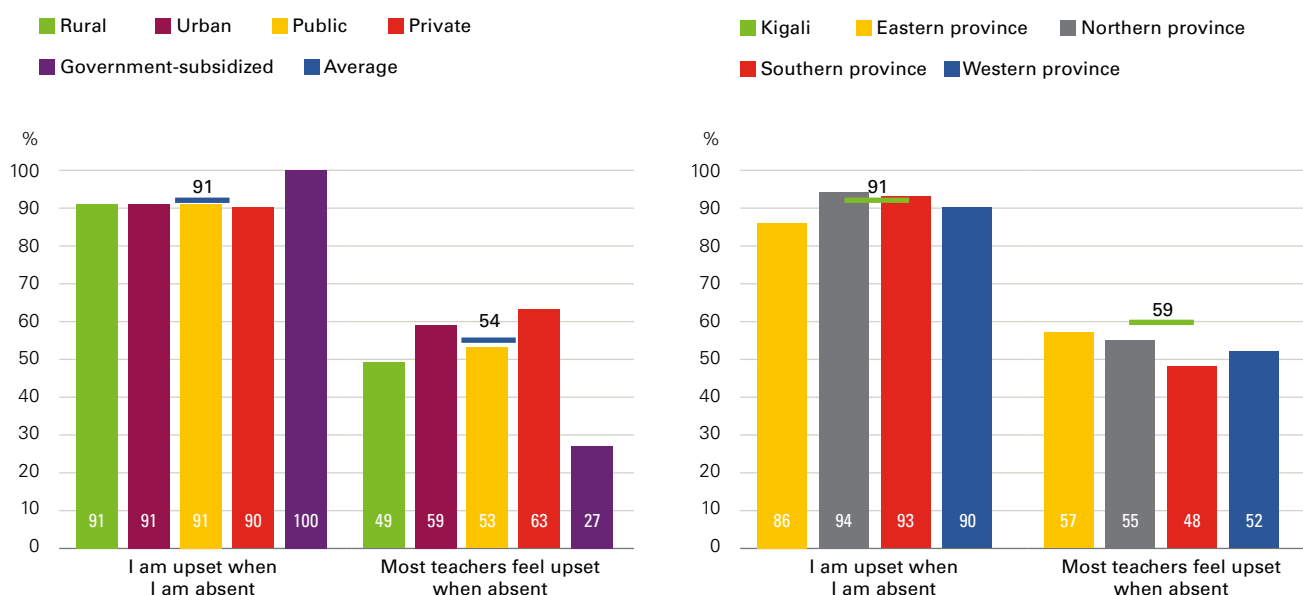
33  In 2016, Rwanda passed a new maternity law that allows teachers to have up to 12 weeks paid leave after giving birth (Tabaro, 2016). It appears however, that this may not be enforced as findings suggest teachers who leave during pregnancy are sometimes replaced and/or required to look after newborns whilst at work.

34  A significantly higher share of teachers in primary schools declare they "feel upset" when they are absent. There are no significant differences on how they rate their colleagues' discomfort about being absent from school (*see Table 9 in Annex 12*).

# Section 3: Strengthening teacher attendance and time on task

The TTT study's multi-dimensional approach to teacher attendance highlights factors influencing attendance at various levels of the education system. This approach recognizes that challenges at specific levels often intersect, resulting in new constraints or further exacerbating existing ones. Thus, addressing factors at specific system level may not necessarily result in improved attendance. Instead, a system-wide approach is needed to address barriers to teacher attendance.

In addition, findings from this study reveal that many of the challenges that hinder primary school teacher attendance are similar to those experienced by secondary school teachers. However, issues such as resource constraints, monitoring capacity and delays in salary collection are significantly more prevalent in secondary schools.

Existing evidence from policy documents suggest that MINEDUC is committed to improving teacher working conditions and attendance in order to improve learning outcomes. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, the country was quick in developing a national response plan to help guide the provision of remote learning initiatives. Yet, as findings from this study highlight, pervasive challenges continue to limit teacher's time on task and that may be further exacerbated by COVID-19. For instance, there is concern that access to new and existing initiatives may be limited and unequal, especially in resource-constrained areas where learning losses are expected to be significant. There is also concern that COVID-19 will hinder teacher attendance further due to teachers' need for psychological support, increased workload, and issues with timely payments, among others.

This section summarizes some of the key factors from this study and builds on findings from the primary school level study, in order to provide potential recommendations that may help MINEDUC achieve its educational aims in the country during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3.1. Strengthen system-wide and cross-sector implementation of existing teacher policies

- As highlighted in the primary school report, inter-ministry coordination is needed to ensure learning goals are achieved. In the COVID-19 response plan, the government will facilitate inter- and intra-sectoral organization for the adaptation of current strategic priorities to COVID-19 realities. MINEDUC is already working on strengthening links between the health and education sectors and should consider extending this to other ministries that impact teachers' professional lives. The ministry should work closely with the Teacher's Social Welfare and Development Department to ensure non-monetary incentives reach teachers on time, particularly those working in impoverished contexts. It should also consider coordinating with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning so that salaries can be accessible during non-teaching hours, and with the Ministry of Infrastructure's Transport Division, to ensure public transportation is reliable and affordable.

- Collaboration between DEOs, SEIs and school officials in enforcing current incidental leave policies (health, maternity and annual leave) should be strengthened to ensure consistent and efficient implementation, which currently does not appear to be the case. The new teachers statute makes clearer rules related to incidental leave and thus, it should be included in COVID-19 training initiatives for teachers and head teachers, since requests for such leave may increase in light of the pandemic's direct and indirect effects on health.

- SGAC should expand its focus so that it works closely with the community and school in supporting teachers' health and well-being and consider working closely with the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion to support female teachers. Moreover, as a result of the pandemic, teachers seem to require additional support in order to balance home and teaching responsibilities; as their obligations have increased and will continue to add to their workload; therefore, such assistance can help them manage their new tasks and remain in the workforce.

- Continue expediting the capitation grant to support a teaching environment conducive to learning in the post-COVID-19 setting, especially in rural and remote areas. The grant will help equip teachers in secondary schools with the necessary resources to teach and protect the health of teachers and pupils so that learning activities can be completed.

## 3.2.  Ensure teachers are on task while in class and well prepared to teach

- SBMs should continue working closely with head teachers in scheduling in-service training to avoid conflict with learning time. In the long-term, the language of teacher training manuals should mandate this practice across all regions, as currently this is not the case.[35] This will ensure teachers are on task at the secondary and primary education levels as currently teacher time on task is limited due to their participation in training programs. The REB's move to use e-learning platforms for training is a positive step in making access during non-teaching times possible and avoiding content overlap. It is also helpful if the technical working group's advice to REB on coordinating timing of training is given additional attention as this can help immensely in improving teacher time on task.

- District officials should continue to minimize head teachers' engagement in non-school-related activities, especially during teaching times. COVID-19 has already increased the need for education officials to coordinate with school managers; however, these efforts should not interfere with their daily school management tasks. This will help both primary and secondary school head teachers as they often struggle with their responsibilities due to heavy workloads.

- COVID-19 school closures present an opportunity to further strengthen SGAC's monitoring role as MINEDUC sees parental engagement as essential to the success of remote learning and has already implemented measures to increase their involvement. SGACs are in an ideal position to understand and support community needs and therefore, it can play an important role in increasing communication and engagement between schools and parents, which this study revealed was currently low.

- SBMs and school subject leaders (SSLs) should coordinate with head teachers to identify additional teacher training needs that reflect their classroom realities, especially in schools where resources are limited. Initiatives such as the English language testing planned by REB during COVID-19 school closures (Buningwire, 2020c) could help identify teachers' English proficiency levels and training needs in response to the introduction of the new CBC. Monitoring training programs for consistency and effectiveness, can also help minimize existing overlaps and address schools' context-specific needs, which is needed at the secondary level, especially in implementing the CBC.

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35  The current Teacher Training Manual Phase II does not make it mandatory for SBMs and SEIs to avoid scheduling conflicts with lessons, and instead encourages head teachers to take on the responsibilities of teachers, though this may not be feasible given that head teachers also have heavy workloads.

## 3.3.  Clarify and strengthen teacher management processes

- MINEDUC should consider strengthening head teachers' sanctioning authority, as part of MINEDUC's goals to improve their management and leadership role. The additional training school managers will receive in preparation for schools reopening also provides opportunities for local officials to further clarify monitoring practices so that attendance-related challenges can be dealt with quickly and efficiently at the school level. These discussions should also consider prioritizing teachers' time on task and presence in the classroom as these forms of teacher attendance are currently overlooked in the surveyed primary and secondary schools. Likewise, remote teaching and learning have also presented a need for local officials to reconceptualize attendance monitoring and consider focusing on how much time teachers should devote to learning tasks, as remote learning might continue for a while.

- Finally, SEIs/DEOs should be provided with adequate resources (particularly for travel to schools) and support so they can engage in regular school follow-ups and engagement. Their work may be further constrained due to COVID-19 when schools reopen and school visits become a necessity to ensure compliance with national health and safety standards as highlighted in the response plan. Local government officials' regular school visits (especially those located in rural and remote areas) also have the potential to increase teacher motivation, sense of commitment and accountability, as findings from this study reveal that teachers perceive local officials' visits and support positively.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1: Existing literature on teacher attendance in secondary schools in Rwanda

■ A 2003 survey of 150 primary and 50 secondary schools found that 20 per cent of head teachers reported absenteeism as 'a problem', and 56 per cent reported it to be an occasional problem. Absenteeism was more pervasive at the primary than secondary level (24 versus 13 per cent). The most common causes raised by the authors were illness, family matters and funerals (Kinghorn et al., 2003).

■ In 2003, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) found that teachers in primary and secondary schools who face personal problems may be absent from school more frequently, and struggle to concentrate on lesson objectives while in the classroom. The study also points out that secondary school teachers may be absent more often due to participation in training programs and other official duties (VSO Rwanda, 2003).[36]

■ In 2008, a study exploring teachers' perceptions of attendance found that at the secondary level 43 per cent of teachers at private schools, 44 per cent in government and 40 per cent in government-subsidized schools considered school absence to be a problem at their school. It also found the percentage of teachers absent in the month previous to the survey date included 13.3 per cent from government schools, 9.1 per cent from government-subsidized, and 7.4 per cent from private (Bennell and Ntagaramba, 2008).

■ In 2016, MINEDUC and UNICEF Rwanda found absenteeism (as reported by pupils) ranged between 18 to 49 per cent across primary levels. While secondary levels are not included in the study, the existing declining trend suggests that that absenteeism may be less than 20 per cent, as only 18 per cent of Primary-6 pupils reported regular absence, compared to 49 per cent of pupils in Primary-1 (MINEDUC and UNICEF, 2017).

## Annex 2: Magnitude and drivers of secondary teacher absenteeism globally

While there are several studies that measure the magnitude and impact of teacher attendance in primary schools in sub-Saharan Africa (Bold et al., 2017; Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; Alcázar et al., 2006; Chaudhury et al., 2006), there are very few that report on secondary school teacher attendance, or separately for primary and secondary school levels. This is concerning since secondary school teachers often follow different policies and procedures for recruitment, training, deployment and supervision (Taylor and Robinson, 2019).

Globally, the limited number of studies that do include secondary teacher attendance point to contradicting results, suggesting that in some contexts, teacher absence is lower in secondary schools than in primary schools, and in others, higher. For instance, a study from Bangladesh found that school absence is higher among secondary school teachers (17.6 per cent), particularly in remote schools, than primary school teachers (15.5 per cent) (Chaudhury et al., 2004). Findings from Lao PDR (Benveniste, Marshall, and Santibañez[[1]] and Cambodia (Benveniste, Marshall, and Araujo, 2008) also reveal that teacher absence rate was lower among lower secondary school teachers from the Lao People's Democratic Republic at 7.3 per cent compared to Cambodia at 16 per cent. Moreover, in Cambodia, self-reported findings from primary teachers suggested that teacher absenteeism may be significantly lower at the primary level (7.1 per cent) than secondary. Similar findings were also affirmed by a study on teacher attendance in Botswana, Malawi and Uganda with teacher absence at primary level ranging between 3–6 per cent, compared to 3–11 per cent at the secondary level (Guerrero et al., 2013). There were variations across the countries; however, as Uganda showed significantly higher rates of teacher absence at the secondary level (12.6 per cent female, 9.1 per cent male) than at the primary level (4.3 per cent female, and 4.6 per cent male) (Bennell, Hyde and Swainson, 2002). Likewise, in Senegal, teacher absenteeism was found to be higher (over 30 per cent) at the secondary level (Abadzi, 2007). These variations suggest that teacher attendance is a challenge not only at the primary level, but also at the secondary level.

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36  A total of 95 teachers and teacher trainees in primary and secondary schools participated in focus group discussions.

## Annex 3: Key secondary education statistics in Rwanda

## Figure 14: Secondary school enrolment in Rwanda, 1971-2019
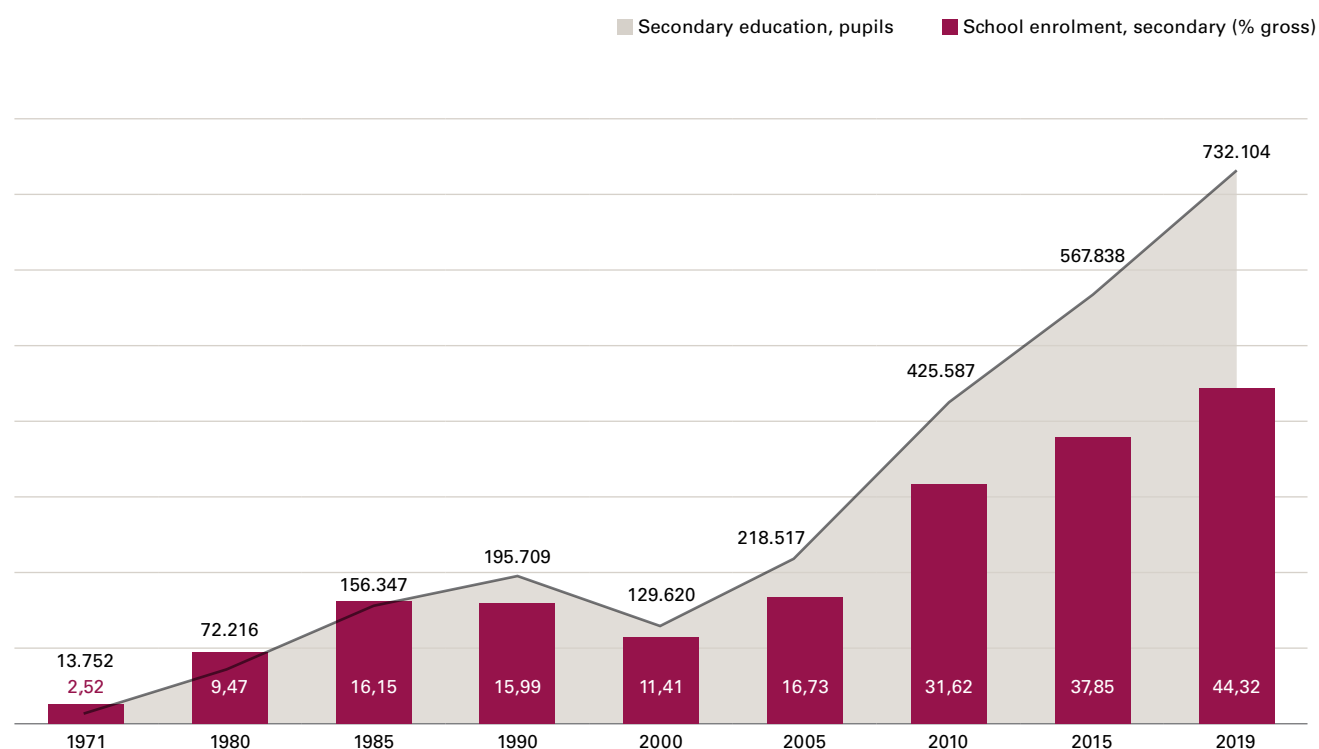


Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics

## Table 3: Number of enrolled secondary pupils and average by school and classroom in 2019

| # of pupils | Male | Female | Total | Total # of Schools | Avg. per school | Avg. per classroom |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public | 116,902 | 123,686 | 240,588 | 547 | 432 | 40 |
| Government-subsidized | 181,395 | 227,039 | 408,534 | 912 | 448 | 42 |
| Private | 43,294 | 39,688 | 82,982 | 324 | 257 | 29 |

Source: Ministry of Education, 2019 Education Statistics (NISR, 2019)

## Table 4: Secondary school repetition, dropout and promotion rates, 2016-2019

| Indicator/year | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Repetition rate (%) | 5.2 | 5.0 | 4.2 |
| Dropout rate (%) | 4.4 | 5.8 | 8.2 |
| Promotion rate (%) | 90.4 | 89.2 | 87.6 |

Source: Ministry of Education, 2019 Education Statistics (NISR, 2019)

## Table 5: Number of secondary school teachers in 2019, by gender

| # of Teachers | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Public | 5,363 | 2,187 | 7,550 |
| Government-subsidized | 8,646 | 3,734 | 12,380 |
| Private | 2,894 | 761 | 3,655 |

Source: Ministry of Education, 2019 Education Statistics (NISR, 2019)

## Annex 4: The concept of teacher absenteeism in the TTT study

In order for learning to occur, a number of minimal conditions relating to the role of teachers in the learning process, need to be fulfilled. Specifically, teachers have to be in school; in the classroom; actively teaching; and teaching with appropriate pedagogical and content knowledge. Based on this assumption, the TTT study moves beyond the conventional definition of teacher attendance, which focuses mainly on presence at the school, and instead introduces a multi-dimensional concept of teacher absenteeism that recognizes four distinct forms of teacher absence:

(1) absence from school;

(2) absence of punctuality (late arrival and/or early departure from school);

(3) absence from the classroom (while in school); and

(4) absence from teaching (reduced time on task while in the classroom).

Figure 15: Teacher absenteeism as a multi-dimensional concept
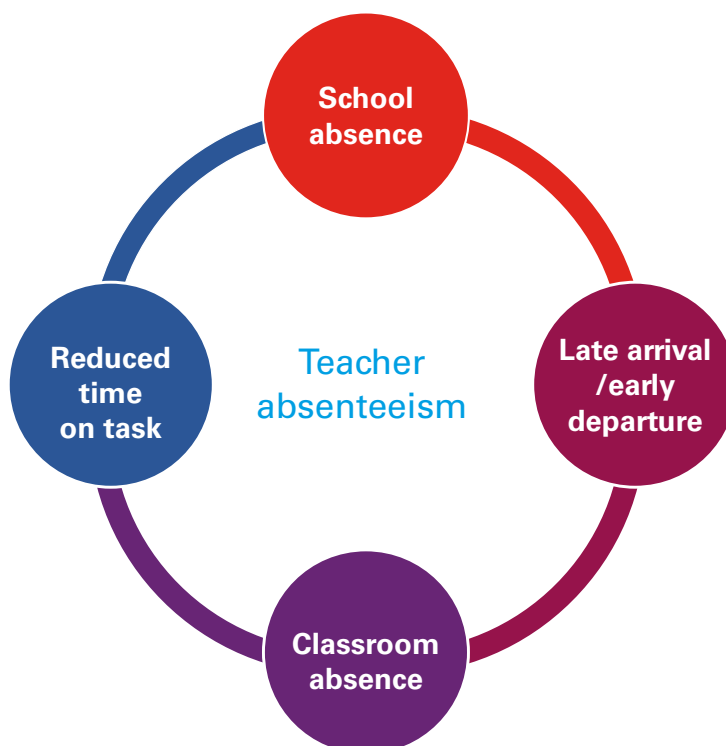
## Annex 5: Explanatory framework

As the teacher absenteeism determinants are likely to be located at various levels of the education system, TTT adopts a systemic analytical framework. In particular, the study follows the work of Guerrero et al. (2012), who suggested three sets of factors affecting teacher attendance: (i) teacher-level variables, (ii) school-level variables, and (iii) community-level variables. Expanding this framework, the TTT study also looks at national and subnational level factors affecting different types of teacher absenteeism, as illustrated below (*see Figure 17*).

### Figure 16: Proposed Explanatory Framework



**National level**
- National teacher management policies
- Policy implementation and teacher monitoring capacity

**Subnational level**
- Policy implementation and teacher monitoring capacity

**Community level**
- Rurality/remoteness
- Socio-economic development
- Community infrastructure
- Climatic conditions
- Conflict/insecurity
- School-community partnership
- Parental engagement and monitoring capacity

**School level**
- School infrastructure
- Availability of teaching and learning materials
- School management
- Head teacher's leadership style and monitoring capacity
- Work environment and norms
- Pupil behaviour/absenteeism

**Teacher level**
- Age, gender, level of education and training, years of experience, employment status
- Intrinsic motivation, work ethic and professionalism, health, family/personal issues, social/community obligations, alternative employment

**Teacher absenteeism**
- School absence
- Late arrival /early departure
- Classroom absence
- Reduced time on task

Source: Adaptation of the work of Guerrero et al. (2012)

# Annex 6: Study limitations

Like all studies relying on self-reported data, TTT is not free of methodological limitations.

**Response bias** may have been a challenge, as absenteeism is generally a taboo subject and it is unclear how truthfully teachers responded to questions around the nature and frequency of their absences, even though the principles of anonymity and confidentiality were highlighted during data collection.

**Selection bias** may also have been an issue, as the teacher survey was administered only to teachers who were present at school on the day of the school visit. This means that some of the frequently absent teachers may not have been surveyed. To pre-empt this problem, all school visits were announced, and teachers were informed about them well in advance.

Finally, the research team recognizes the **small size** of the TTT survey sample. For this reason, all findings reported here have been thoroughly triangulated through qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with key education stakeholders.

# Annex 7: Note on research ethics

The UNICEF Office of Research-Innocenti applied for ethical clearance for the TTT study to the Health Media Lab (HML) and to the Institutional Review Board of the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, both located in Washington, D.C. Ethical clearance was granted in July 2018.

Study implementation was preceded by extensive consultation with MINEDUC and key education stakeholders on research tool design, sampling, and instrument administration. Tools were also shared with the Rwanda Education Board (REB) for review and feedback and were refined accordingly.

All contracted partners were extensively trained in research ethics and abided by the UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis.

# Annex 8: Absenteeism and selected teacher characteristics

## Table 6: Absenteeism and selected teacher characteristics

| | | Absence from school | Lack of punctuality | Absence from the classroom | Reduced time on task | Any form absenteeism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Proportion (%, except the p-values) | | | | |
| **Location** | Urban | 3 | 13 | 7 | 12 | 22 |
| | Rural | 1 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 17 |
| | **Diff** | **2** | **3** | **-1** | **4** | **5** |
| | **p-value** | **0.32** | **0.54** | **0.69** | **0.33** | **0.32** |
| **Type of school** | Public | 1 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 19 |
| | Private | 5 | 14 | 10 | 5 | 18 |
| | **Diff private-public** | **4** | **4** | **3** | **-6** | **-1** |
| | **p-value** | **0.27** | **0.49** | **0.59** | **0.19** | **0.93** |
| | Community | 0 | 33 | 17 | 27 | 50 |
| | **Diff community–public** | **-1** | **23** | **10** | **17** | **31** |
| | **p-value** | **0.16** | **0.09** | **0.37** | **0.22** | **0.03** |
| **Province** | Kigali | 7 | 12 | 8 | 11 | 20 |
| | Eastern Province | 0 | 13 | 0 | 8 | 17 |
| | **Diff Kigali-Eastern** | **-7** | **1** | **-8** | **-3** | **-3** |
| | **p-value** | **0.08** | **0.90** | **0.08** | **0.66** | **0.67** |
| | Northern | 0 | 14 | 10 | 15 | 26 |
| | **Diff Northern-Kigali** | **-7** | **2** | **2** | **4** | **6** |
| | **p-value** | **0.08** | **0.75** | **0.75** | **0.59** | **0.53** |
| | Southern | 2 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 11 |
| | **Diff Southern-Kigali** | **-6** | **-10** | **1** | **-3** | **-9** |
| | **p-value** | **0.22** | **0.06** | **0.83** | **0.63** | **0.24** |
| | Western | 0 | 20 | 13 | 12 | 29 |
| | **Diff Western-Kigali** | **-7** | **9** | **5** | **1** | **9** |
| | **p-value** | **0.08** | **0.28** | **0.44** | **0.91** | **0.33** |
| **Gender** | Female | 1 | 10 | 9 | 14 | 21 |
| | Male | 2 | 13 | 7 | 8 | 19 |
| | **Diff** | **-1** | **-3** | **2** | **6** | **2** |
| | **p-value** | **0.67** | **0.48** | **0.64** | **0.18** | **0.67** |
| **University degree** | Yes | 2 | 13 | 8 | 11 | 21 |
| | No | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 |
| | **Diff** | **2** | **13** | **8** | **4** | **15** |
| | **p-value** | **0.05** | **0.00** | **0.00** | **0.55** | **0.01** |

| | | Absence from school | Lack of punctuality | Absence from the classroom | Reduced time on task | Any form absenteeism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Proportion (%, except the p-values) | | | | |
| **Age above median (33)** | Yes | 2 | 13 | 4 | 10 | 22 |
| | No | 2 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 19 |
| | Diff | 0 | 3 | -7 | 0 | 3 |
| | p-value | 0.96 | 0.52 | 0.07 | 0.96 | 0.55 |
| **Has children** | Children | 3 | 12 | 9 | 12 | 21 |
| | No children | 0 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 15 |
| | Diff | 3 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 6 |
| | p-value | 0.04 | 0.79 | 0.27 | 0.08 | 0.28 |
| **Years of experience school** | Above median | 2 | 13 | 6 | 12 | 23 |
| | Below median | 2 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 18 |
| | Diff | 0 | 1 | -3 | 3 | 5 |
| | p-value | 0.99 | 0.81 | 0.42 | 0.40 | 0.35 |
| **Teacher-student ratio** | Above median | 1 | 17 | 8 | 11 | 24 |
| | Below median | 3 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 14 |
| | Diff | -2 | 11 | 0 | 3 | 10 |
| | p-value | 0.36 | 0.01 | 1.00 | 0.44 | 0.05 |
| **Studying/ training** | Training | 2 | 10 | 4 | 14 | 20 |
| | No training | 2 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 20 |
| | Diff | 1 | -2 | -5 | 5 | 0 |
| | p-value | 0.81 | 0.69 | 0.18 | 0.40 | 0.97 |
| **Receives any allowances** | Yes | 0 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 19 |
| | No | 2 | 14 | 4 | 12 | 23 |
| | Diff | -2 | -3 | 8 | -1 | -4 |
| | p-value | 0.16 | 0.50 | 0.06 | 0.82 | 0.49 |

Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who report recurrent absences (once a week or more) based on each characteristic. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors.

# Annex 9: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by location and gender

## Table 7: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by location and gender

|  | Urban | Rural | Diff |  | Female | Male | Diff |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Proportion (%) | | | p-value | Proportion (%) | | | p-value |
| School inspectors visit regularly | 63 | 79 | -17 | 0.00 | 63 | 75 | -11 | 0.06 |
| School inspectors motivate staff | 58 | 74 | -16 | 0.01 | 64 | 66 | -2 | 0.77 |
| School inspectors prioritize infrastructure | 41 | 43 | -2 | 0.70 | 38 | 44 | -6 | 0.33 |
| School inspectors discourage absenteeism | 79 | 78 | 1 | 0.87 | 76 | 79 | -4 | 0.52 |
| School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism | 52 | 52 | 0 | 0.99 | 55 | 51 | 4 | 0.51 |
| In this community teachers are respected | 31 | 34 | -3 | 0.67 | 41 | 28 | 13 | 0.04 |
| Most parents encourage pupils' attendance | 46 | 41 | 5 | 0.44 | 47 | 42 | 6 | 0.39 |
| Most parents are engaged in school affairs | 60 | 56 | 4 | 0.51 | 54 | 60 | -6 | 0.36 |
| Most parents see absenteeism as a problem | 64 | 71 | -7 | 0.24 | 61 | 70 | -10 | 0.13 |
| Most students are motivated to learn | 43 | 45 | -2 | 0.79 | 47 | 42 | 4 | 0.50 |
| Most pupils have high aspirations | 44 | 46 | -2 | 0.73 | 47 | 44 | 3 | 0.62 |
| School has the materials needed for class | 42 | 41 | 1 | 0.89 | 44 | 41 | 3 | 0.64 |
| School has a good work environment | 84 | 77 | 7 | 0.14 | 81 | 81 | 0 | 0.95 |
| Most teachers work well with one another | 87 | 84 | 3 | 0.44 | 84 | 86 | -2 | 0.75 |
| Head teacher is always at school | 80 | 66 | 13 | 0.02 | 72 | 74 | -2 | 0.73 |
| Satisfied with head teacher's feedback | 91 | 89 | 2 | 0.59 | 87 | 92 | -5 | 0.20 |
| Head teacher encourages teacher training | 85 | 72 | 14 | 0.01 | 71 | 82 | -11 | 0.04 |
| Head teacher supports teacher involvement | 87 | 71 | 16 | 0.00 | 74 | 81 | -7 | 0.23 |
| Head teacher discourages teacher absences | 90 | 85 | 4 | 0.31 | 86 | 89 | -3 | 0.51 |
| Head teacher always records teacher absences | 89 | 78 | 12 | 0.01 | 77 | 87 | -11 | 0.04 |
| Head teacher manages well the school and teachers | 85 | 78 | 8 | 0.16 | 85 | 79 | 6 | 0.29 |
| I am satisfied with my job | 80 | 83 | -3 | 0.52 | 87 | 79 | 8 | 0.09 |
| I am satisfied with my salary | 41 | 27 | 14 | 0.02 | 37 | 32 | 4 | 0.49 |
| I receive my salary on time | 54 | 68 | -14 | 0.02 | 59 | 61 | -2 | 0.72 |
| It is easy to collect my salary | 73 | 63 | 10 | 0.08 | 75 | 65 | 10 | 0.09 |
| I have access to training | 48 | 44 | 4 | 0.55 | 40 | 49 | -8 | 0.19 |

| | Urban | Rural | Diff | | Female | Male | Diff | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Proportion (%) | | | p-value | Proportion (%) | | | p-value |
| I have adequate skills and knowledge | 94 | 94 | 0 | 0.90 | 95 | 94 | 1 | 0.81 |
| I am upset when I am absent | 91 | 91 | 0 | 0.92 | 89 | 92 | -3 | 0.44 |
| Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well | 78 | 78 | 1 | 0.88 | 78 | 78 | 0 | 0.97 |
| Most teachers are satisfied with their job | 41 | 46 | -5 | 0.41 | 47 | 41 | 6 | 0.35 |
| Most teachers are always present | 80 | 81 | -1 | 0.78 | 77 | 83 | -6 | 0.27 |
| Most teachers feel upset when absent | 59 | 49 | 10 | 0.10 | 64 | 49 | 15 | 0.02 |
| Most teachers come late and/or leave early | 13 | 13 | 0 | 0.96 | 13 | 13 | 0 | 0.97 |
| When in school, teachers always attend classes | 86 | 81 | 4 | 0.33 | 83 | 84 | 0 | 0.92 |

Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who attribute any form of absenteeism to each motivation. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors.

# Annex 10: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by school type

## Table 8: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by school type

| | Public | Private | Diff private-public | | Government subsidized | Diff Gov subsidized - public | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Proportion (%) | | | p-value | Proportion (%) | | p-value |
| School inspectors visit regularly | 71 | 71 | 0 | 0.95 | 67 | -4 | 0.76 |
| School inspectors motivate staff | 68 | 55 | -13 | 0.10 | 67 | -1 | 0.92 |
| School inspectors prioritize infrastructure | 43 | 43 | 0 | 0.98 | 25 | -18 | 0.18 |
| School inspectors discourage absenteeism | 80 | 68 | -11 | 0.13 | 100 | 21 | 0.00 |
| School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism | 53 | 50 | -3 | 0.73 | 55 | 2 | 0.91 |
| In this community teachers are respected | 31 | 44 | 13 | 0.10 | 17 | -14 | 0.21 |
| Most parents encourage pupils' attendance | 41 | 62 | 20 | 0.01 | 8 | -33 | 0.00 |
| Most parents are engaged in school affairs | 55 | 81 | 26 | 0.00 | 17 | -38 | 0.00 |
| Most parents see absenteeism as a problem | 67 | 76 | 9 | 0.20 | 42 | -25 | 0.09 |
| Most students are motivated to learn | 39 | 67 | 29 | 0.00 | 33 | -5 | 0.70 |
| Most pupils have high aspirations | 40 | 69 | 29 | 0.00 | 42 | 2 | 0.89 |
| School has the materials needed for class | 40 | 57 | 17 | 0.03 | 9 | -31 | 0.00 |
| School has a good work environment | 81 | 83 | 3 | 0.68 | 73 | -8 | 0.56 |
| Most teachers work well with one another | 86 | 88 | 2 | 0.75 | 64 | -22 | 0.13 |
| Head teacher is always at school | 75 | 78 | 4 | 0.58 | 27 | -47 | 0.00 |
| Satisfied with head teacher's feedback | 90 | 88 | -2 | 0.64 | 100 | 10 | 0.00 |
| Head teacher encourages teacher training | 79 | 82 | 2 | 0.71 | 50 | -29 | 0.05 |
| Head teacher supports teacher involvement | 79 | 86 | 7 | 0.24 | 50 | -29 | 0.05 |
| Head teacher discourages teacher absences | 87 | 90 | 2 | 0.64 | 83 | -4 | 0.72 |
| Head teacher always records teacher absences | 83 | 85 | 2 | 0.71 | 83 | 0 | 0.99 |
| Head teacher manages well the school and teachers | 81 | 86 | 5 | 0.41 | 75 | -6 | 0.72 |
| I am satisfied with my job | 82 | 77 | -5 | 0.47 | 92 | 10 | 0.25 |

| | Public | Private | Diff private-public | | Government subsidized | Diff Gov subsidized - public | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Proportion (%) | | | p-value | Proportion (%) | | p-value |
| I am satisfied with my salary | 34 | 34 | 0 | 0.98 | 33 | 0 | 0.97 |
| I receive my salary on time | 65 | 53 | -12 | 0.13 | 0 | -65 | 0.00 |
| It is easy to collect my salary | 68 | 74 | 6 | 0.42 | 42 | -27 | 0.07 |
| I have access to training | 48 | 49 | 1 | 0.86 | 8 | -39 | 0.00 |
| I have adequate skills and knowledge | 94 | 94 | 0 | 0.93 | 100 | 6 | 0.00 |
| I am upset when I am absent | 91 | 90 | -1 | 0.86 | 100 | 9 | 0.00 |
| Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well | 78 | 84 | 6 | 0.28 | 58 | -19 | 0.19 |
| Most teachers are satisfied with their job | 43 | 43 | 0 | 0.95 | 42 | -2 | 0.91 |
| Most teachers are always present | 83 | 86 | 3 | 0.59 | 18 | -64 | 0.00 |
| Most teachers feel upset when absent | 53 | 63 | 10 | 0.20 | 27 | -26 | 0.06 |
| Most teachers come late and/or leave early | 14 | 6 | -8 | 0.06 | 10 | -4 | 0.66 |
| When in school, teachers always attend classes | 84 | 92 | 8 | 0.10 | 45 | -38 | 0.01 |

Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who attribute any form of absenteeism to each motivation. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors.

## Annex 11: Self-reported frequency of teacher absenteeism in primary and secondary schools

## Figure 17: Self-reported frequency of teacher absenteeism, by school level
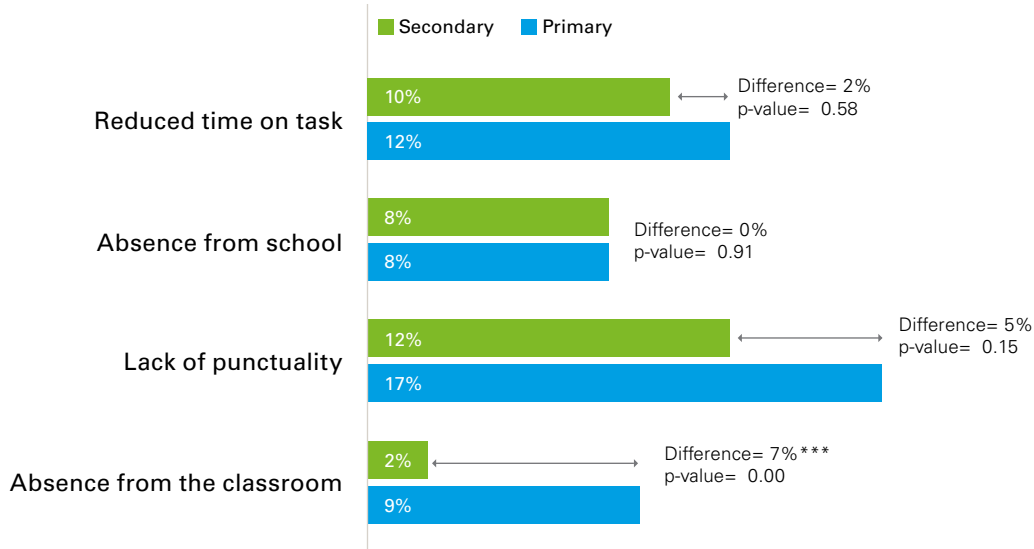


Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who attribute any form of absenteeism to each motivation. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors. Stars indicate confidence levels at *10%, **5%, and *** 1%.

## Figure 18: Top six factors affecting teacher absenteeism, by school level



Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who attribute any form of absenteeism to each motivation. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors. Stars indicate confidence levels at *10%, **5%, and *** 1%.
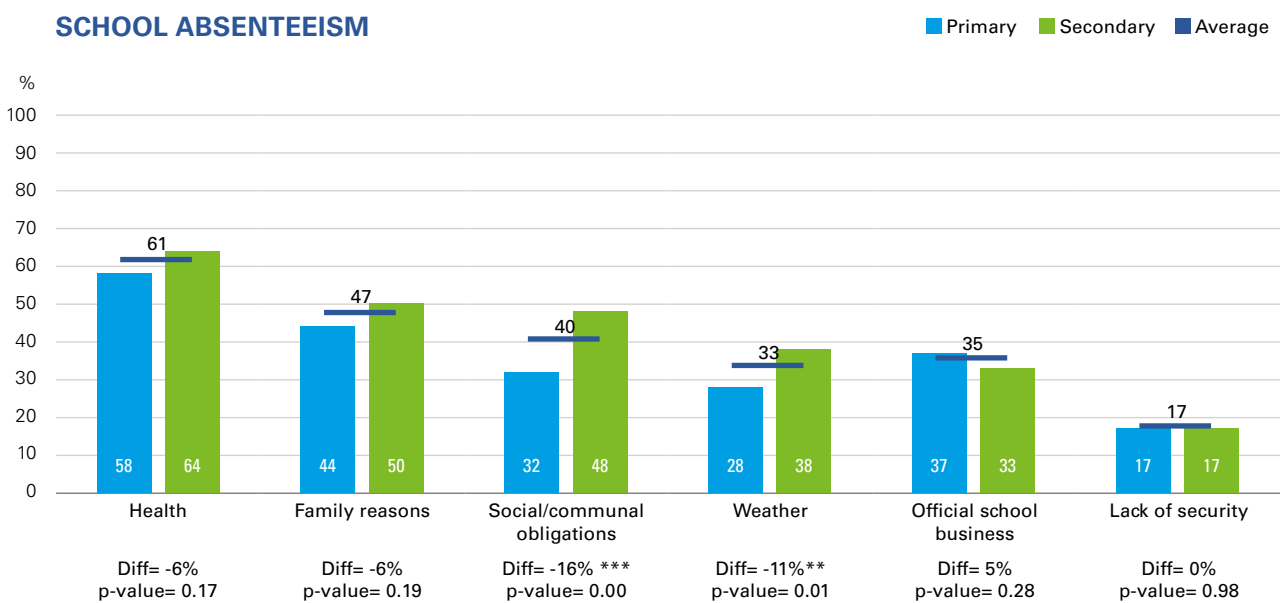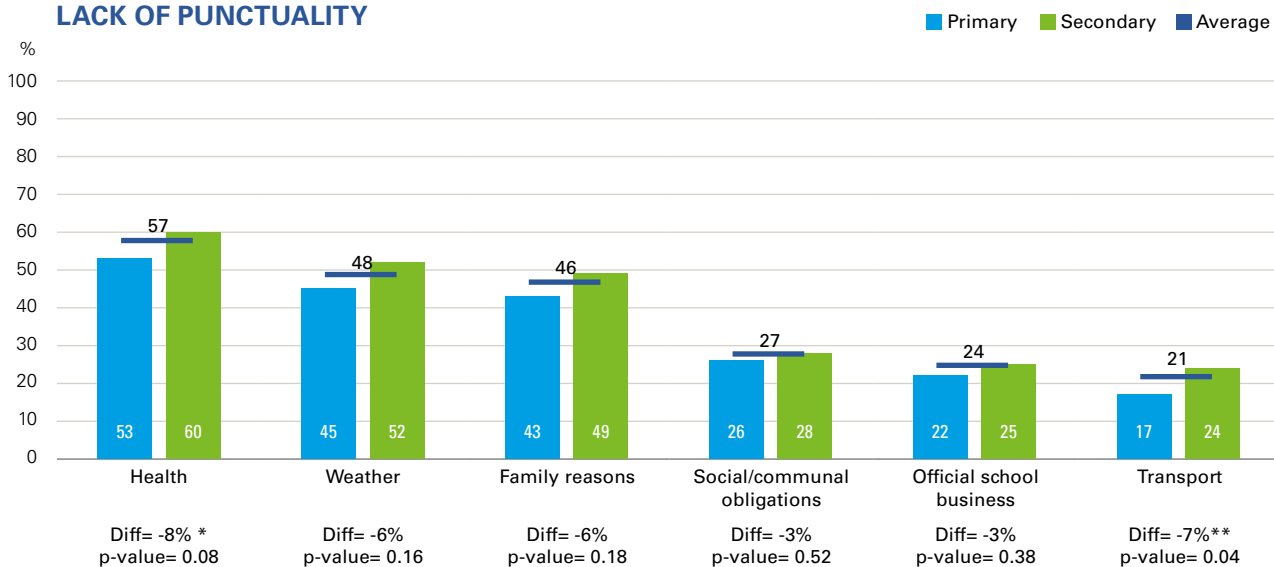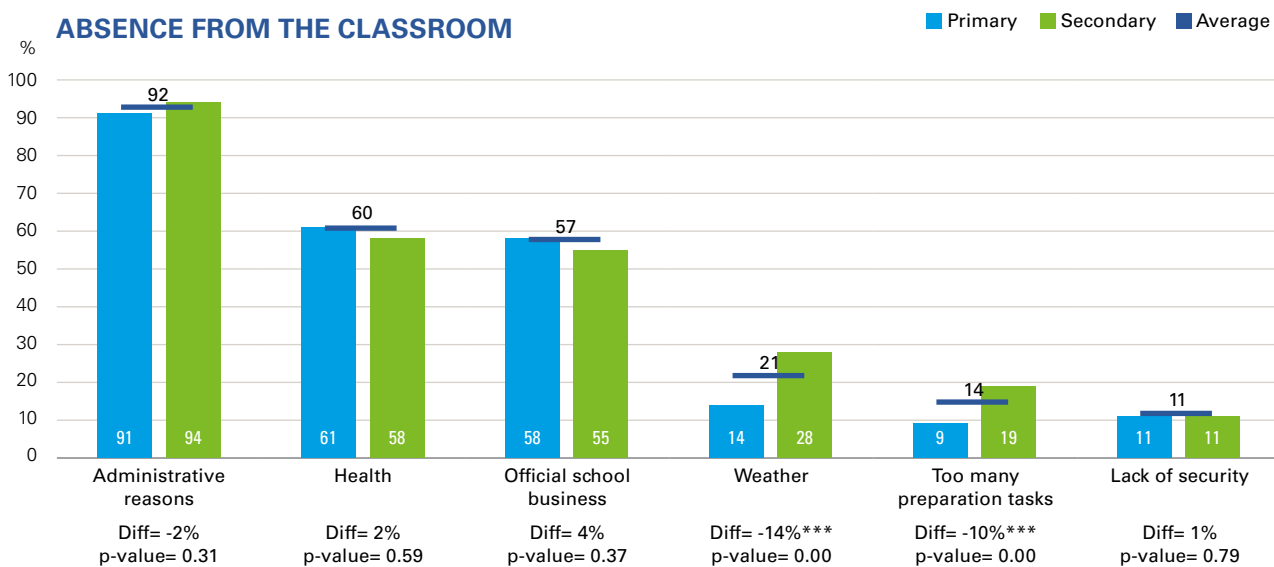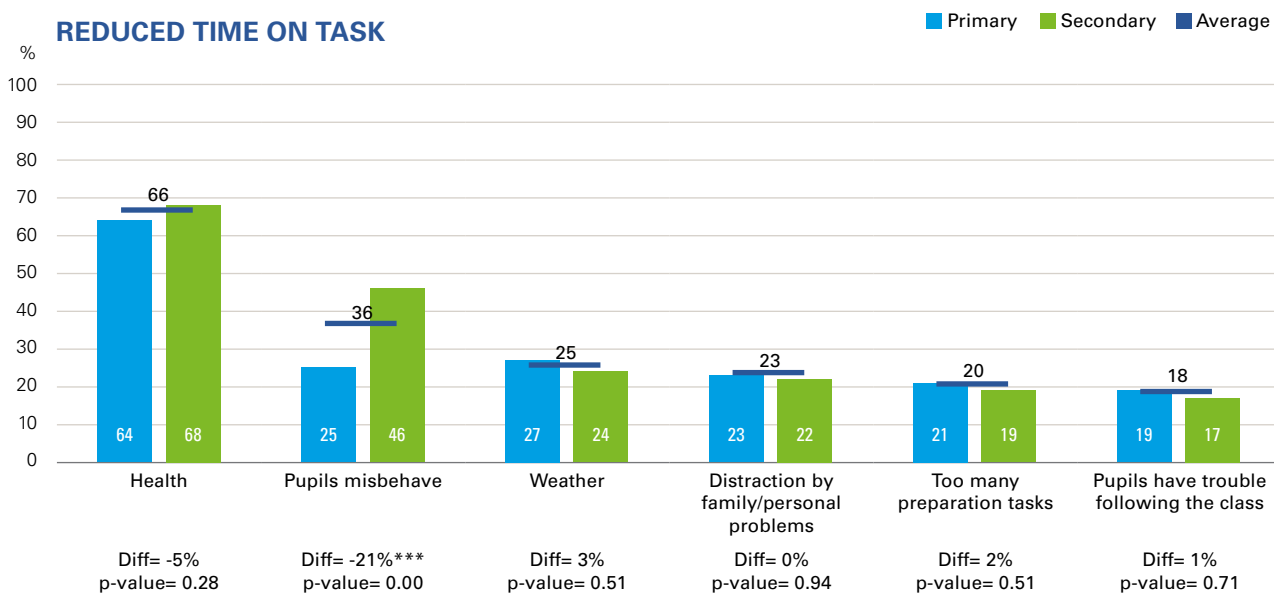
## LACK OF PUNCTUALITY

Primary ■ Secondary ■ Average ■

| | Health | Weather | Family reasons | Social/communal obligations | Official school business | Transport |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 53 | 45 | 43 | 26 | 22 | 17 |
| Secondary | 60 | 52 | 49 | 28 | 25 | 24 |
| Average | 57 | 48 | 46 | 27 | 24 | 21 |
| | Diff= -8% * | Diff= -6% | Diff= -6% | Diff= -3% | Diff= -3% | Diff= -7%** |
| | p-value= 0.08 | p-value= 0.16 | p-value= 0.18 | p-value= 0.52 | p-value= 0.38 | p-value= 0.04 |

## ABSENCE FROM THE CLASSROOM

Primary ■ Secondary ■ Average ■

| | Administrative reasons | Health | Official school business | Weather | Too many preparation tasks | Lack of security |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 91 | 61 | 58 | 14 | 9 | 11 |
| Secondary | 94 | 58 | 55 | 28 | 19 | 11 |
| Average | 92 | 60 | 57 | 21 | 14 | 11 |
| | Diff= -2% | Diff= 2% | Diff= 4% | Diff= -14%*** | Diff= -10%*** | Diff= 1% |
| | p-value= 0.31 | p-value= 0.59 | p-value= 0.37 | p-value= 0.00 | p-value= 0.00 | p-value= 0.79 |

## REDUCED TIME ON TASK

Primary ■ Secondary ■ Average ■

| | Health | Pupils misbehave | Weather | Distraction by family/personal problems | Too many preparation tasks | Pupils have trouble following the class |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 64 | 25 | 27 | 23 | 21 | 19 |
| Secondary | 68 | 46 | 24 | 22 | 19 | 17 |
| Average | 66 | 36 | 25 | 23 | 20 | 18 |
| | Diff= -5% | Diff= -21%*** | Diff= 3% | Diff= 0% | Diff= 2% | Diff= 1% |
| | p-value= 0.28 | p-value= 0.00 | p-value= 0.51 | p-value= 0.94 | p-value= 0.51 | p-value= 0.71 |

# Annex 12: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by school level

## Table 9: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by school level

| | Primary | Secondary | Diff | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Proportion (%) | | | p-value |
| School inspectors visit regularly | 78 | 71 | 7 | 0.06 |
| School inspectors motivate staff | 79 | 66 | 14 | 0.00 |
| School inspectors prioritize infrastructure | 37 | 42 | -5 | 0.21 |
| School inspectors discourage absenteeism | 88 | 78 | 10 | 0.00 |
| School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism | 59 | 52 | 7 | 0.10 |
| In this community teachers are respected | 45 | 33 | 12 | 0.00 |
| Most parents encourage pupils' attendance | 58 | 44 | 15 | 0.00 |
| Most parents are engaged in school affairs | 68 | 58 | 10 | 0.01 |
| Most parents see absenteeism as a problem | 73 | 67 | 5 | 0.16 |
| Most students are motivated to learn | 67 | 44 | 23 | 0.00 |
| Most pupils have high aspirations | 64 | 45 | 19 | 0.00 |
| School has the materials needed for class | 59 | 42 | 17 | 0.00 |
| School has a good work environment | 81 | 81 | 0 | 0.89 |
| Most teachers work well with one another | 90 | 85 | 4 | 0.12 |
| Head teacher is always at school | 84 | 73 | 11 | 0.00 |
| Satisfied with head teacher's feedback | 90 | 90 | 0 | 0.99 |
| Head teacher encourages teacher training | 84 | 78 | 5 | 0.10 |
| Head teacher supports teacher involvement | 79 | 79 | 0 | 1.00 |
| Head teacher discourages teacher absences | 92 | 88 | 4 | 0.11 |
| Head teacher always records teacher absences | 92 | 84 | 8 | 0.00 |
| Head teacher manages well the school and teachers | 89 | 81 | 7 | 0.02 |
| I am satisfied with my job | 86 | 82 | 5 | 0.13 |
| I am satisfied with my salary | 32 | 34 | -2 | 0.66 |
| I receive my salary on time | 51 | 61 | -9 | 0.03 |
| It is easy to collect my salary | 61 | 68 | -7 | 0.07 |
| I have access to training | 64 | 46 | 18 | 0.00 |
| I have adequate skills and knowledge | 95 | 94 | 1 | 0.47 |
| I am upset when I am absent | 95 | 91 | 4 | 0.09 |
| Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well | 73 | 78 | -5 | 0.16 |
| Most teachers are satisfied with their job | 50 | 43 | 7 | 0.10 |
| Most teachers are always present | 69 | 81 | -12 | 0.00 |
| Most teachers feel upset when absent | 54 | 54 | 0 | 0.95 |
| Most teachers come late and/or leave early | 10 | 13 | -3 | 0.35 |
| When in school, teachers always attend classes | 54 | 84 | -29 | 0.00 |

**Note**: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who attribute any form of absenteeism to each motivation. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors.

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