

Chapter 13

Innovations in Technology for Educational Marketing: Stakeholder Perceptions and Implications for Examinations System in Rwanda

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter highlights the importance of educational marketing through modern innovative technologies. It explores how teachers who mark Rwandan primary and secondary examinations perceive the Rwanda National Examinations Council and what the implications are for the effective management of the examinations system. The chapter highlights the Rwandan context in which before the 1994 genocide, the education system was characterized by nepotism, corruption, discrimination and victimization based on ethnicity, regionalism, and gender. Thus, after 1994, the task of the education system was to reverse the imbalance in favor of equity, transparency, accountability and responsiveness in public service. In terms of national examinations, this demanded, among other things, a vigorous marketing strategy through innovation and technology. In spite of the relative success, however, the chapter acknowledges challenges associated with post-conflict educational reconstruction focusing mainly on human resource capacity development and management, and highlights some lessons learned as Rwanda looks forward to the future.

ORGANISATION BACKGROUND

The Rwanda National Examinations Council (RNEC) referred to as the ‘Council’ throughout this chapter was established in 1998, and law No

19/2001 of 12.3.2001 outlines its major responsibilities as follows: (i) to be responsible for national examinations for primary and secondary school (ii) establish rules regulating the conduct of national primary and secondary school examinations (iii) uphold transparency and justice in examinations’

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administration and other related issues (iv) award certificates or diplomas to successful candidates (v) place successful candidates in different secondary schools and higher education institutions.

The education system in Rwanda before 1994 had been guilty of discrimination, injustice and sowing seeds of division based on ethnicity, sex, regionalism (home background) and religion; and this form of injustice was mainly implemented through examinations (Rutaisire, 2007). Before 1994, entry to all government and assisted schools and tertiary institutions was determined mainly by “Ethnic and Regional” quotas. The results of primary and secondary schools were never published. Also, students’ personal identification files known in French as *‘fiches signeletiques’* were used to identify them as ‘Tutsi, Hutu or Twa.’ The purpose was to identify individuals and, or groups for discrimination and victimization (Rutaisire, et al, 2004). Thus after 1994, there was urgent need to redress this imbalance for purposes of promoting national reconciliation and healing the nation. This entailed reforming the examinations system by considering performance standards which are considered to be the obvious measures of outcome (Gipps and Storbart (1993). As a result, ‘since its establishment, the Rwanda National Examinations Council has been improving transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the Rwandan public service’ (United Nations Public Service Awards, 2009:174). The establishment of the Council after the 1994 genocide was in line with international best practice. For example, West et al (2000) argue in favour of the importance of self management because of the possibility it offers eventually to increased control over policies and resources and expanded scope for leadership. This has implications for effective management of the examinations system in Rwanda.

Management Structure

The recently revised law number 36/2007 of 02/09/2007 determines responsibilities, organi-

zation, functioning and powers of the Rwanda National Examinations Council for primary and secondary education. The law designates the Council as an autonomous institution supervised by the Ministry in charge of primary and secondary education. The Council is composed of a Board of Directors (policy making) which has full powers and responsibilities to take all decisions; and an Executive Secretariat (management) which runs day today affairs of the institution. The responsibilities of the Board of Governors are to: adopt the internal rules and regulations of the Council which shall be approved by the Order of the Minister in charge of primary and secondary school; provide a strategic vision and programme of action for the Council; consider and approve the annual draft budget before it is transmitted to relevant authorizes; monitor the performance of the Council in accordance with the plan of action and the budget; approve the activity and financial reports of the previous year; offer advice to the Council management and staff; participate in determining an effective general policy relating to primary and secondary examinations; institute directives on how examinations are to be conducted and on those relating to similar issues; and take decisions on persons who act contrary to this law and those who do not respect the directives relating to examinations.

The Executive Secretariat (management) has five professional units/departments namely: (i) Preparation & Administration of Examinations (test development); (ii) Orientation, Selection, Training and Documentation; (iii) Planning and Research (iv) ICT; and (v) Administration and Finance. It is responsible for the management of daily operations of the Council and has 69 members of the professional staff. Its responsibilities are to: coordinate and conduct all daily activities of the Council; represent the Council in everyday activities and take administrative decisions; establish relations and cooperate with other national and international agencies carrying out similar responsibilities; allocate successful candidates in

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