

Education leaders have marked the International Teachers' Day with renewed calls to strengthen the teaching profession, as educators and stakeholders gathered in Kirehe District to recognise outstanding performance across the country.

The national celebration, presided over by the Ministry for Education, brought together teachers, school leaders, parents and education stakeholders from different districts. Awards were presented to top-performing teachers, schools and districts for excellence during the 2024/2025 academic year.

Although International Teachers' Day is officially observed on 5 October, organisers said this year's event was held later to align with the end of the school calendar.

"This day is meant to recognise teachers and give value to the teaching profession," the Minister of Education Joseph Nsengimana said, thanking educators, parents and partners for their role in improving learning outcomes.

This year's theme, "Recasting teaching as a collaborative profession," highlighted teamwork, shared responsibility and cooperation between teachers, school leaders, parents and local authorities.

Kirehe District was selected to host the celebration despite having fewer resources than some other districts. Education officials said the district stood out because of strong student attendance and consistent performance in national examinations.

"Kirehe does not necessarily have better infrastructure than other districts, but it performs exceptionally well," the minister said. "That success comes from the commitment of teachers, district authorities and parents working together."

The minister described teachers as a foundation pillar of the education system and urged continued support for their welfare and professional development, while reminding educators to always put learners first.

Speaking on behalf of teachers, Edward Ndicunguye, Deputy Head Teacher in charge of Studies at Rusumo High School, called on authorities to address persistent challenges in schools.

He cited congested classrooms, limited access to computers for teachers and the absence of school canteens as key issues affecting teachers' welfare and performance.

“Teachers continue to face difficulties in their daily work,” he said. “Addressing these challenges will help improve both teaching and learning outcomes.”

Minister of State for Education Claudette Irere highlighted concerns over student retention, noting that while primary school enrolment stands at about 746,000, numbers decline sharply at higher levels, with only 88,149 students reaching Senior Six.

She said more effort was needed to improve teaching quality and student promotion to increase transition rates.

On teachers’ welfare, Ms Irere said the teachers’ savings and credit cooperative, Umwalimu SACCO, currently holds Rwf119 billion in savings, with Rwf1.18 trillion disbursed in loans since 2008. About Rwf220 billion was issued this year alone.

“We will continue working on teachers’ needs to ensure financial stability,” she said.

Ms Irere encouraged women in education to pursue higher qualifications, noting that women account for 26% of education leaders and perform strongly in administrative roles.

However, she pointed to qualification gaps, with 69% of teachers holding certificate-level qualifications, 10% diplomas and 21% university degrees. Women dominate the lowest qualification level, while men are more represented at higher levels.

English proficiency was also flagged as a challenge. Of the 15,000 teachers registered for language training programmes, only about 2,000 are actively participating.

“We cannot keep investing in training without commitment,” she said, urging teachers to make full use of the opportunities provided.

Among the schools recognised was Gahini High School in Kayonza District. Its head teacher, Luke Karimagingo, said six out of ten students from the school ranked among the top performers nationally, particularly in A-Level Associated Nursing.

He attributed the success to close student follow-up, teacher motivation and strong parental involvement.

At primary level, Mukamugenzi Vererie, head teacher of G.S Payasant LD, said

collaboration with stakeholders and the use of education technology had driven strong performance.

“Each teacher has a laptop, and we use iPads to reduce preparation time and improve lesson delivery,” she said.

The ministry also honoured the top 10 teachers in the English learning programme, awarding medals to educators from schools across the country.

Several institutions were recognised as best performers in general education and TVET categories, covering fields such as agriculture, ICT, construction, hospitality and energy.

Kirehe District emerged as the best-performing district nationwide, recording a 97% pass rate in primary schools, 93% in lower secondary, and ranking second in upper secondary education.



The Minister of Education presented the district trophy to Kirehe Mayor Bruno Rangira, closing a ceremony that highlighted both progress and ongoing challenges

in the education sector