

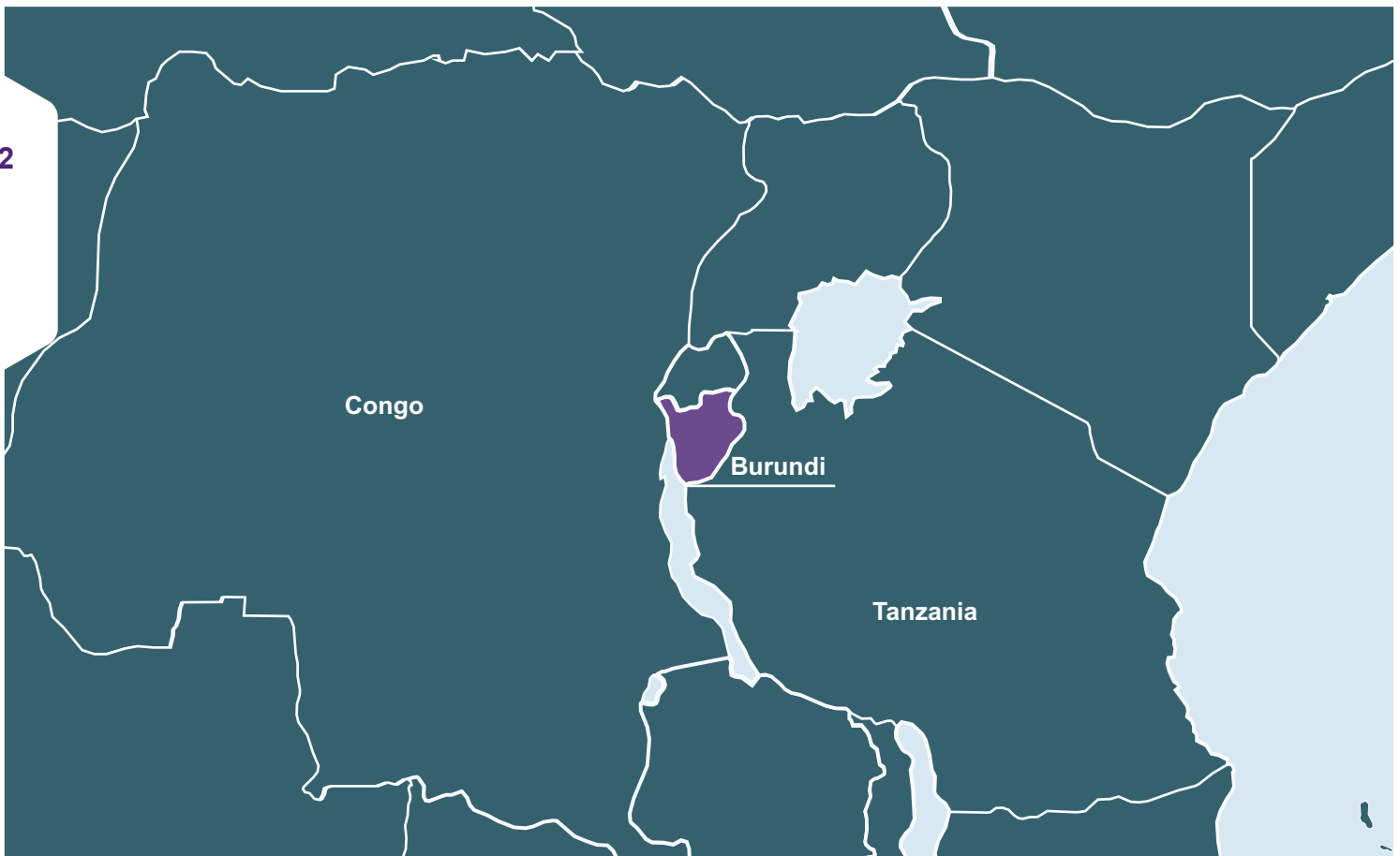
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**Burundi**

# Refugees Country Briefing

**ARENA aims to enable access to higher education for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation.**



## Burundi

**Official name:** Republic of Burundi

**Location:** In East-Central-Africa, neighboring Lake Tanganyika, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania

**Population:** 12.722.000 (2019 est.)

**Ethnic groups:** Hutu, Tutsi, Twa Pygmies and other

**Languages:** Kirundi and French

This country briefing – especially developed to help with the evaluation of credentials of refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation – should give orientation on the education system in Burundi in the light of recent political and economic developments in this country. It presents a systematised overview on its higher education system and links to the available information sources that are useful for evaluating for the evaluation of qualifications of refugees coming from Burundi, even in cases where candidates present insufficient or lack of documentation.

**Photo coverage:**  
View of the capital city  
Bujumbura in 2006  
**Photo:** SteveRwanda,  
Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0

**Source:** *Encyclopedia Britannica*

# Current situation

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The borders of Burundi were not determined by colonial rulers, but are based on those of a state that was ruled by the Burundian monarchy since the 16th century. After being part of the German protectorate in East-Africa since 1890 and being part of Belgian administered Ruanda-Urundi since 1924, Burundi became independent in 1962. However, ethnical tensions that had been magnified during the colonial period soon led to civil unrest that subsists until today.

Over the years, ethnical conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths. In 1966, the monarchy was overthrown, followed by three republics. When the president of the third republic was assassinated in 1993, this marked the beginning of a civil war that would continue to wreck the country years even after the signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement in 2000 and the subsequent instalment of a multinational security contingent.

In 2005, presidential elections were won by Pierre Nkurunziza, a Hutu of the CNDD-FDD-party. While he took steps to improve the Burundian economy, accusations quickly followed that journalists who were critical to his administration were persecuted. Nkurunziza was re-elected president in 2010 with 90% of the votes after all challengers withdrew their candidacy. Civil unrest and violence persisted, and the government continued to restrict media freedom.

When Nkurunziza indicated that he would run for a controversial third term in 2015, this led to protests and an attempted coup d'état. At the same time, indications increased that the Imbonerakure, the youth wing of the CNDD-FDD were terrorizing opposition members and Burundians who didn't support Nkurunziza. Nkurunziza and CNDD-FDD won the elections again, even though UN observers didn't consider the elections fair. Civil unrest continued during the third term of Nkurunziza, with security forces reacting forcefully and striking down any opposition. This led to calls for the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate. Burundi responded by being the first country to withdraw from the ICC in 2017. During the 2020 elections, Nkurunziza did not run for a fourth term. Although the results were disputed, the elections were won by Evariste Ndayishimiye, a former general also from the CNDD-FDD. Ndayishimiye would normally have been inaugurated in August, but due to Nkurunziza unexpectedly passing away, he was inaugurated on June 18, 2020.

## CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

The violence after the 2015 elections and the following repression have left the country suffering from civil unrest, poverty and international sanctions. A lot of those who are critical to the regime have fled the country. According to UNHCR, 300.000 Burundians have fled to neighbouring countries since April 2015. Most Burundian refugees in the region are hosted by Tanzania, followed by Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

By now, the CNDD-FDD has ruled the country for 15 years and will continue to do so under Ndayishimiye. Among the ruling party's higher echelons there's a strong presence of generals, some of whom were directly involved with violence and repression. It is not yet clear how much freedom the new president will have to determine his policies.

## IMPACT ON THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

The civil war in the 1990's caused a lot of problems for education. Ethnical killings took place on campus at the Université du Burundi in 1995, reducing the university to a shadow of its former self for several years. The war also left several schools and facilities destroyed and teachers killed.

Due to recent civil unrest and international sanctions, the education sector has been dealing with a lack of funding and infrastructure. A lot of students live in poverty and more than half of all children in Burundi suffer from chronic malnutrition. Some students are internally displaced and there are big differences in attendance between regions.

The system of double vacation, where two class groups alternatively share a classroom, is relatively common in primary education and causes a lot of class groups to reach substantially less contact hours than required. Another common problem is that a large percentage of students starts school at an advanced age. Additionally, a high number of students have to redo years or abandon their studies. Several national publications mention that the lack of available school textbooks is a problem. This lack of funding caused the educational authorities in Burundi to investigate how they can maximize their use of available resources. This was one of the major impulses for recent educational reforms.

# Education in Burundi

## RESPONSIBLE GOVERNING BODIES

In the past, primary and secondary education was supervised by the Ministère de l'Éducation, de la Formation Technique et Professionnelle and higher education was supervised by the Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique or MESRS.

Recent documents show that both ministries would have merged into the Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique.

## RECOGNISED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

A list of recognized institutions can be found on both <https://mesrs.gov.bi/institutions-d-enseignement-superieur> and <http://cnesburundi.org/index.php/fr/institutions-fr>

No detailed information is given regarding when institutions were recognized. The list of private institutions mentions several institutions that were closed down or that were forbidden to enroll new students due to disappointing results, bad infrastructure or other problems. 11 institutions that were either closed or have been forbidden to enroll new students in the academic year 2018-2019 are mentioned in the following article:

<https://www.cnesburundi.org/index.php/fr/actualites-et-evenements-fr/38-interdiction-d-enrolement-de-nouveaux-etudiants-dans-certaines-institutions-d-enseignement-superieur-pour-l-annee-academique-2018-2019>

## ACCREDITATION BODIES

Quality assurance in higher education, both public and private, is supervised by the Commission Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur or CNES (<http://cnesburundi.org>).

In order to be able to operate, private higher education institutions need to obtain an autorisation d'ouverture. These are issued as ministerial ordonnances by the MESRS after advice by the CNES. The validity of the authorisation is undetermined but it loses its value if the institution hasn't opened two years after the ministerial ordonnance was

issued. Institutions can also lose their authorisation after a disappointing institutional evaluation.

After this, private higher education institutions have to apply for an agrément for each of their programmes. These are also issued as ministerial ordonnances by the MESRS after advice by the CNES.

Strictly speaking, the 2011 law regarding the reorganization of higher education in Burundi states that the agrément on its own is not sufficient for the award of national degrees. For this, also an equivalence or an entérinement is required.

The équivalence is a process through which diplomas delivered by private (or foreign) institutions can be considered equivalent to national degrees. This equivalence was sometimes issued as a ministerial ordonnance for certain programmes of an institution, but usually it is issued to individual students after a personal application. This procedure applies to pre-BMD qualifications and is handled by the Commission d'Équivalence de Diplômes, Titres Scolaires et Universitaires of the MESRS.

After the BMD-reforms, diplomas from private institutions are subject to the process of entérinement (homologation) that was already used for public diplomas. This process involves the institution sending the diploma to a national commission that goes over the records and checks whether the diploma would be issued in accordance with all legal conditions before co-signing the diploma.

The legislation also states that there is to be an accreditation process (accréditation) that could give private institutions rights similar to public institutions. However, it is not sure whether this process has already been implemented.

## TYPES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Burundi currently has seven public higher education institutions, including the national university:

- Université du Burundi (UB)
- Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS)
- Institut Supérieur de Gestion des Entreprises (ISGE)
- Institut Supérieur de Police (ISP)
- Institut Supérieur des Cadres Militaires (ISCAM)
- Institut National de Santé Publique (INSP)
- Ecole Nationale d'administration (ENA)

The private higher education sector started growing rapidly after around 2000 and currently consists of more than 30 private higher education institutions.

## NATIONAL EDUCATION REFORMS

Burundi implemented multiple education reforms in recent years:

In 1999 there was a reform that replaced the previous secondary leaving qualification Certificat d'humanités complètes with the Diplôme d'Etat as the qualification that provides access to higher education. The Certificat d'humanités complètes was a diploma, homologated by the relevant ministry, that was issued to students who met the conditions to access higher education. The Diplôme d'Etat, on the other hand, is issued after students pass a state examination that takes place after the last year of secondary school.

Since 2012, access to both public and private higher education is limited to those who obtained the Diplôme d'Etat. Before, students with a Diplôme d'humanités générales who didn't pass the state examination could under some circumstances still be admitted to private higher education institutions.

The Loi N°1/22 du 30/12/2011 portant réorganisation de l'enseignement supérieur au Burundi stipulates the reorganization of higher education in Burundi. The previous Belgian inspired system of education was replaced with a new system that was inspired by the post Bologna French system of education. This new system is usually called système BMD (Baccalauréat-

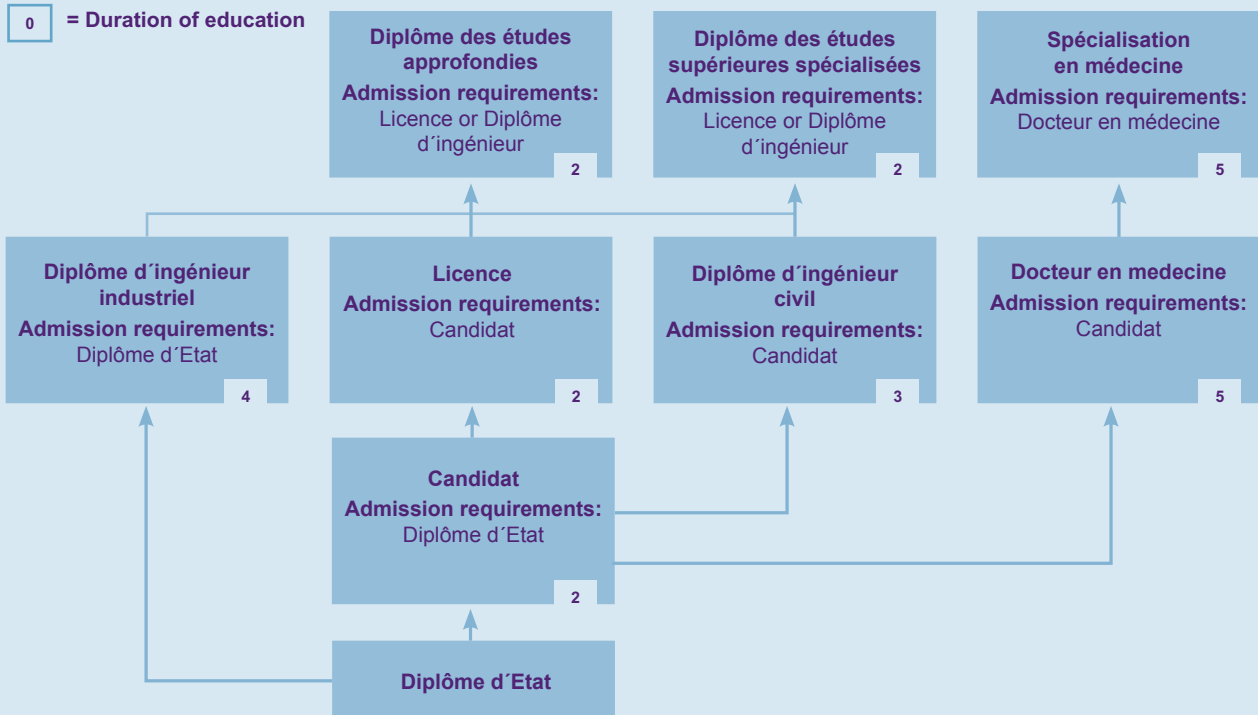
Mastère-Doctorat) and has 3+2+3-structure. The reorganization was implemented gradually with the first year of the Baccalauréat introduced in the academic year 2011-2012, the second year in 2012-2013 and so on. In 2017, the Université du Burundi opened its doctoral school. Before, doctoral programmes were only offered in collaboration with foreign universities.

Primary education and lower secondary education, previously known as enseignement primaire and tronc commun or collège, were merged into the enseignement fondamental. The first cohort of students completed the enseignement fondamental in the academic year 2015-2016. Higher secondary education became also known as the enseignement postfondamental starting in 2016-2017 with the first students graduating in 2019.

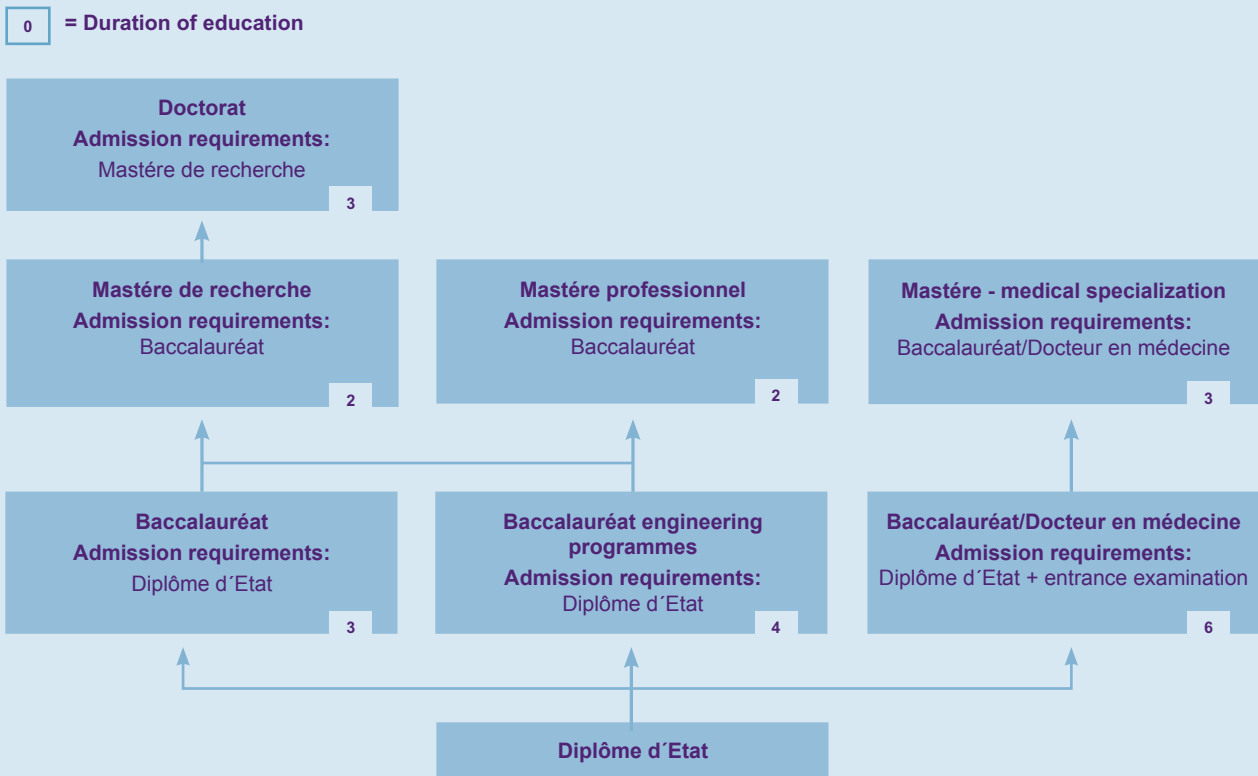
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# Education chart

## BEFORE THE REORGANIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION



## AFTER THE REORGANIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION



# Education system

During the colonial period, most education was organized by the church. The education sector before independence was very limited. The first higher education institution was only created in 1960. The civil war and other periods of unrest structurally and physically damaged the system of education. A lot of troubles that Burundi is currently facing can be traced back to these events.

## PRE-HIGHER EDUCATION

Pre-primary education in Burundi is called le préscolaire and is available at some primary schools. The number of students attending this cycle is still very limited.

In pre-higher education in Burundi, it is normal for a cycle to be concluded with both school examinations leading to a certificate that proves completion of the cycle and a state examination or concours to obtain access to the subsequent cycle.

Before the reforms, pre-higher education had a 6+4+3/4 structure. After the reforms, a 9+3/4 structure was implemented. Along with these reforms, the starting age was reduced from 7 to 6, although in reality the majority of students still start their studies at an advanced age.

Primary education became free of charge in 2005. The main languages of instruction in primary education are French and Kirundi. Since 2006, English- and Kiswahili courses were added to the curriculum. Since the implementation of the reforms, primary education and lower secondary education are considered to be one cycle called the enseignement fondamental that takes 9 years to complete.

Higher secondary education is offered at lycées and is known as the enseignement postfondamental. General higher secondary education has a duration of study of 3 years and is divided into three sections: scientifique, lettres modernes and économique. Students who complete general secondary education obtain a Certificat d'humanités générales or since 2019 a certificat de fin d'études post fondamentales générales. Pedagogical higher secondary education has a duration of study of 4 years (2+2) and leads to a Diplôme d'instituteur. Technical higher secondary education has a duration of study of 3 or 4 years depending on the programme and leads to a Diplôme A2.

After completing general, pedagogical or technical higher secondary education, students can take part in a yearly state examination to obtain the Diplôme d'Etat, which provides access to higher education.

## Primary Education and Lower Secondary Education

### *Certificat de fin d'études fondamentales*

- Theoretical age: 6-15
- Language of instruction: Kirundi and French
- Access requirements: none
- Access to further studies: students who complete the enseignement fondamental can participate in the concours to access higher secondary education. Every year, the cut-off point is decided following the results of the concours. Students with better results are orientated towards better higher secondary schools
- Official duration of studies: 9 years (2+2+2+3)
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the school exams at the end of the enseignement fondamental

## Primary Education and Lower Secondary Education – old system

### *Certificat de fin d'études primaires*

- Theoretical age: 7-13
- Language of instruction: Kirundi and French
- Access requirements: none
- Access to further studies: students who complete primary education can participate in the concours to be admitted to lower secondary education
- Official duration of studies: 6 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the school exams at the end of the last year of primary education

### *Certificat de fin de collège / Certificat du tronc commun*

- Theoretical age: 13-17
- Language of instruction: French
- Access requirements: passing the concours at the end of primary education
- Access to further studies: students who complete collège can participate in the concours to access higher secondary education. Every year, the cut-off point is decided following the results of the concours. Students with better results are orientated towards better higher secondary schools

- Official duration of studies: 4 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the school exams at the end of college

### Higher Secondary Education

#### *Certificat de fin d'études postfondamentales générales*

- Language of instruction: French
- Theoretical age: 15-18
- Access requirements: passing the concours at the end of the enseignement fondamental
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can participate in the state examination and obtain the Diplôme d'Etat which gives access to higher education. Holders of this qualification on its own only have access to non-higher post-secondary education
- Official duration of studies: 3 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the school examinations at the end of the last year of secondary education

#### *Diplôme A2 (technical secondary education)*

- Language of instruction: French
- Access requirements: Certificat de fin de collège or Diplôme A3
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can participate in the state examination and obtain the Diplôme d'Etat which gives access to higher education. Holders of this qualification on its own only have access to post-secondary education
- Official duration of studies: 3-4 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the school examinations at the end of the last year of secondary education

#### *Diplôme d'instituteur (pedagogical secondary education)*

- Gives right to teach in primary school
- Access requirements: Certificat de fin de collège
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can participate in the state examination and obtain the Diplôme d'Etat which gives access to higher education. Holders of this qualification on its own only have access to post-secondary education
- Official duration of studies: 4 years (2+2) after collège or 1 year after completing general secondary education
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the school examinations at the end of the final year

#### *Diplôme d'Etat*

- Language of instruction: French
- Theoretical age: 18
- Access requirements: having successfully completed upper secondary school either in the general, technical or pedagogical stream
- Access to further studies: provides access to higher education
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the state examination after the final year of upper secondary education

### Higher Secondary Education - old system

#### *Certificat d'humanités générales (since 2016) / Diplôme d'humanités générales*

- Theoretical age: 17-20
- Language of instruction: French
- Access requirements: passing the concours at the end of collège
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can participate in the state examination and obtain the Diplôme d'Etat which gives access to higher education. Holders of this qualification on its own only have access to post-secondary education
- Official duration of studies: 3 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the school examinations at the end of the last year of secondary education

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education in Burundi was initially strongly inspired by the old Belgian system of education. The first two cycles were the candidat and the licence. The third cycle consisted of the Diplôme des Etudes Supérieures (DESS) and the Diplôme des Etudes Approfondies (DEA). Third cycle qualifications were usually offered in collaboration with French or Belgian universities. Only in 2017 would the Université du Burundi open its first own doctoral school.

Separate qualifications existed for engineers (ingénieur industriel or industrial engineer and ingénieur civil or civil engineer), teachers (professeur de l'enseignement secondaire) and medical doctors (docteur en médecine).

In 2011, the reorganization of higher education was announced with a system of education that is modelled after the French post-Bologna system (Système BMD). After the first cycle of 3 years or 180 credits (4 years for engineering and 6



years for medicine), students obtain a diplôme du baccalauréat. After the second cycle of 2 years or 120 credits (3 years in medicine), students obtain a diplôme du mastère. After the third cycle that requires 3 years or 180 credits, students obtain a diplôme du doctorat.

### First Cycle (Bachelor level)

#### *Baccalauréat*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'Etat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at Master level
- Official duration of studies: 3 years or 180 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

### First Cycle (Bachelor level) – old system

#### *Candidat*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'humanités complètes (before 1999) or Diplôme d'Etat (after 1999)
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at the Licence level
- Official duration of studies: 2 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

#### *Licence*

- Access requirements: Candidat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at the DESS or the DEA level
- Official duration of studies: 2 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

### Second Cycle (Master level)

#### *Mastère de recherche*

- Access requirements: Baccalauréat, licence or diplôme d'ingénieur. Obtaining a certain result during the previous cycle or passing an admission test can be required for admission
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at the Doctorate level
- Official duration of studies: 2 years or 120 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

#### *Mastère professionnel*

- Access requirements: Baccalauréat, Licence or Diplôme d'ingénieur. Obtaining a certain result during the previous cycle or passing an admission test can be required for admission
- Official duration of studies: 2 years or 120 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

### Second Cycle (Master level) – old system

#### *DESS or Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées*

- Access requirements: Licence or Diplôme d'ingénieur
- Official duration of studies: 2 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

#### *DEA or Diplôme d'études approfondies*

- Access requirements: Licence or Diplôme d'ingénieur
- Official duration of studies: 2 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

### Third Cycle (Doctorate level)

#### *Doctorat*

- Access requirements: Mastère de recherche. Obtaining a certain result during the previous cycle is usually required for admission
- Official duration of studies: 3 years or 180 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: writing and defending a doctoral thesis

### Teacher Education

#### *Baccalauréat (teaching programmes)*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'Etat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at Master level
- Official duration of studies: 3 years or 180 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year, completing a training period during the last semester and writing a training report

*Mastère en didactique des sciences*

- Access requirements: Baccalauréat, Licence or Diplôme d'ingénieur. Obtaining a certain result during the previous cycle or passing an admission test can be required for admission
- Official duration of studies: 2 years or 120 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year, completing a training period during the last semester and writing a thesis

**Teacher Education – old system***Diplôme de professeur de l'enseignement secondaire*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'Etat
- Access to further studies: holders of this historical qualification can complete additional courses in order to obtain a Baccalauréat
- Official duration of studies: 3 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year, completing a training period during the last year and writing a training report

*Licence agrégé*

- Access requirements: Candidat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at the DESS or the DEA level
- Official duration of studies: (2+)2 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year

**Medicine and Health Sciences***Baccalauréat/docteur en médecine*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'Etat + passing an entrance examination
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their studies to obtain a medical specialization
- Official duration of studies: 6 years (360 credits)
- Requirements for completion of studies: in the 6th year, students are required to pass clinical examinations, submit a thesis and complete their medical internship
- In the fourth and fifth year, training periods (stages d'externat) are part of the programme. The sixth year consists entirely out of an internship (stage d'internat) in internal medicine, surgery, gynaecology and paediatrics and the writing of a thesis

*Mastère en ... (name of the medical specialization)*

- Access requirements: Docteur en médecine or Baccalauréat en médecine
- Official duration of studies: 3 years (180 credits)
- Requirements for completion of studies: students are required to submit a dissertation during the last year of study
- About half of the programme consists of training periods

*Baccalauréat en soins de la santé – soins infirmiers*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'Etat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification could continue their education at the Master level
- Official duration of studies: 3 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year and completing the required training periods

**Medicine and Health Sciences (old system)***Docteur en médecine*

- Access requirements: Candidat en médecine
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their studies to obtain a medical specialization
- Official duration of studies: (2+) 5 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: in the 7th year, students were required to pass clinical examinations, submit a thesis and complete their medical internship
- In the fourth and fifth year, training periods (stages d'externat) were included in the programme. In the sixth year and seventh year, students had to do an internship (stage d'internat) that included 4 months of training in internal medicine, 4 months in surgery, 4 months in paediatrics, 4 months in gynaecology, 2 months in emergency medicine and 2 months in a hospital

*Diplôme de spécialisation en médecine*

- Access requirements: Docteur en médecine
- Official duration of studies: 5 years of which the 3rd and 4th year took place at a cooperating university outside of Burundi
- Requirements for completion of studies: students are required to submit a dissertation during the last year of study

*Licence en soins de la santé – soins infirmiers*

- Access requirements: Candidat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification could continue their education at the Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (DESS) or the Diplôme des études approfondies (DEA) level
- Official duration of studies: (2+)2 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year and completing the required training periods

**Engineering Education***Baccalauréat (engineering programmes)*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'Etat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at Master level
- Official duration of studies: 4 years or 240 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year, completing a project and doing an internship in a company

*Mastère (engineering programmes)*

- Access requirements: Baccalauréat, Licence or Diplôme d'ingénieur. Obtaining a certain result during the previous cycle or passing an admission test can be required for admission
- Official duration of studies: 2 years or 120 credits
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year and completing a final project

**Engineering Education (old system)***Diplôme d'ingénieur civil*

- Access requirements: Candidat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at the Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (DESS) or the Diplôme des études approfondies (DEA) level
- Official duration of studies: (2+)3 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year and completing a project

*Diplôme d'ingénieur industriel*

- Access requirements: Diplôme d'Etat
- Access to further studies: holders of this qualification can continue their education at the Diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées (DESS) or the Diplôme des études approfondies (DEA) level
- Official duration of studies: 4 years
- Requirements for completion of studies: passing the examinations at the end of the final year and completing a project

## Grading system

**SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Students need to obtain a final result of at least 50% in order to obtain the Diplôme d'Etat. The school examinations account for 30% of the result and the state examination accounts for 70% of the result.

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

After each semester, a jury deliberates on the results of students. The jury decides which credits were obtained and whether any exams have to be repeated in the second session. A student passes a

year in its entirety when the final percentage is over 50% and all credits are obtained (réussi). When not all credits are obtained, students have to retake the courses for which the credits were not obtained (ajourné).

After the last deliberation of every year, a mention is calculated based on the results that were obtained during the year. The requirements to obtain these mentions can differ between higher education institutions and are mentioned in each institution's academic regulations. The following table shows the mentions as they are implemented by the Université du Burundi.

### Grading system – Université du Burundi

Percentage	Description
0%–50%	Failure
50%–60%	Passable
60%–70%	Satisfaction
70%–80%	Distinction
80%–90%	Grande distinction
90%–100%	La plus grande distinction

Some higher education institutions use completely different grading systems. For example, the Université d'Espoir d'Afrique uses a GPA-based system with letter grades.

## The Toolkit projects

ARENA is the third cycle Refugees and Recognition - Toolkit project. The two previous are:

### TOOLKIT

The first project took place between 2016–2018. The overall goal was to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees. The main outcome of the project was the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications, representing a first-aid kit for staff working with the assessment of inadequately documented qualifications.

For further information, visit: <https://www.nokut.no/en/Refugees-and-Recognition/toolkit>

### REACT

The follow-up project REACT took place between 2018–2020. Here the Toolkit methodology was successfully tested as a supplement to ordinary admission procedures in cooperation with several European higher education institutions. The main outcome was the REACT Q-Card for Admission Officers, providing recommendations for action at higher education institutions working towards enabling access to further studies for refugees.

For further information, visit: <https://www.nokut.no/en/react/refugees-and-recognition>



As part of the previous projects, refugees country briefings were developed for Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Iran, Ethiopia, Venezuela, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

# Information Resources, Recommendations and Best Practices

## DATABASES AND NATIONAL BODIES

### ENIC-NARIC Network

Information regarding national authorities in charge of higher education issues in Burundi: <https://www.enic-naric.net/africa.aspx?country=Burundi&c=108>

### Existing Country Databases

- UK-NARIC. (2020). Burundi.
- France Diplomatie – Fiche Curie. (2014).
- UNESCO. (2010). International Bureau of Education – World Data on Education: Seventh edition 2010-11.

### National Education Bodies

- Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique: [www.mesrs.gov.bi](http://www.mesrs.gov.bi)
- Commission Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur: [www.cnesburundi.org](http://www.cnesburundi.org)

## EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### Documentation

Documents are issued in the French language. Pre-higher education diplomas and certificates, including the documents issued by schools, follow a standardized format. These are documents that seem to be pre-produced by a print house and distributed throughout the country. Details are filled in with a pen.

The same document issuing practices seem to be true for public higher education. Here, documents are produced by a print house as well and distributed to the institutions who complete the documents either by pen or by typewriter. Private higher education institutions usually print their own documents using digital printers.

Homologation (entérinement) of higher education diplomas can lead to serious delays. This process could take up to 10 years in the past, but even now news articles claim that some diplomas take 3 years or more to be homologated. This seems to be the reasons why final diplomas according to the BMD-system are still very rare. There is a possibility for students who wish to continue their studies to ask the homologation

commission for an attestation in attendance of their homologated diploma. According to news articles, some private institutions did already award some non-homologated diplomas according to the BMD-system. These articles also mention that the MESRS asked these institutions to stop this practice and didn't consider these diplomas to be official.

Students who don't have their final diploma or certificate yet, normally have a proof that they completed the programme (attestation de réussite). Next to this, yearly transcripts (bulletins) are issued to students as well.

### Fraudulent Documents and Diploma Mills

If you have any questions concerning the authenticity of a document or the accreditation of an institution, we recommend that you contact your national ENIC-NARIC centre.

### Additional Information

When evaluating higher secondary qualifications, it can be useful to be specific about document requirements. When asked to provide their final secondary education document, a lot of Burundians will provide you with their certificat d'humanités générales, diplôme A2, diplôme d'instituteur or certificat de fin d'études post fondamentales générales. After all, this is the document that proves completion of upper secondary education at the school level. However, those who passed the state examination after the final year of secondary education will also have a Diplôme d'Etat that provides access to higher education. Therefore, it is recommended to communicate to applicants that they should provide both the school documents and the Diplôme d'Etat if they passed the state examination.

**EXISTING BEST PRACTICES****European Area of Recognition Manual**

[http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear\\_manual\\_v\\_1.0.pdf](http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear_manual_v_1.0.pdf)

**Recommendation on the Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications under the Lisbon Recognition Convention and Explanatory Memorandum**

<https://rm.coe.int/recommendation-on-recognition-of-qualifications-held-by-refugees-displ/16807688a8>

**European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)**

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications>

**Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications**

[https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/utenlandsk\\_utdanning/veiledere/toolkit\\_for\\_recognition\\_of\\_refugees\\_qualifications.pdf](https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/utenlandsk_utdanning/veiledere/toolkit_for_recognition_of_refugees_qualifications.pdf)

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# What is ARENA?

**ARENA (Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit 3) is an Erasmus+ supported project, which aims to contribute towards more transparent and professional procedures for the recognition of refugees' qualifications in Europe. The project builds on the completed Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit project, where a common methodological approach to the recognition of refugees' qualifications was developed with the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications.**

## Goal

The overall goal of the ARENA project is to enhance the mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, including those without official documentation of their educational background.

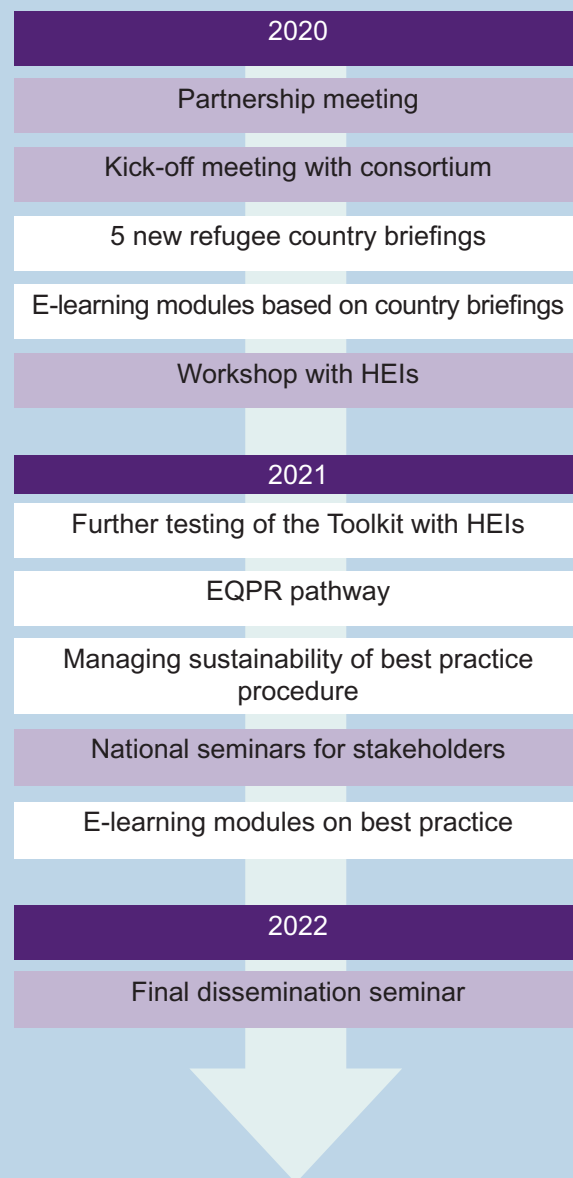
## Activities

The activities are structured around three main focus areas concerning the further testing of the Toolkit in major refugee receiving countries, managing sustainability of identified best practice procedures and assessment schemes, and addressing the need for updated and relevant information resources.

### MAIN PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Further testing of the Toolkit in cooperation with NARICs and HEIs from Greece and Malta
- Mapping of how HEIs in Italy view the EQPR as a supplementary document for admission to further studies
- Managing sustainability of best practice procedure identified in the REACT project
- Development of five new refugee country briefings on the educational systems of Yemen, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan and Palestine
- Development of e-learning modules

### TIMELINE



## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

To enable the accessibility and transparency of the project's work, the results will be made available on the project's website on a continuous basis.

### Websites:

<https://www.nokut.no/en/arena-toolkit-3>

### Email:

[project-arena@nokut.no](mailto:project-arena@nokut.no)

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