

**How to Live in Democracy in Burundi?**

***English Translation from Kirundi/French Booklet***

**National Democratic Institute for International Affairs**

*English Translation from Kirundi/French of :*

**Burundi Booklet  
How To Live in Democracy in Burundi?**

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## **How to Live in Democracy in Burundi?**

### Introduction

“Burundi is a unitary republic, independent and sovereign, secular and democratic. Its principle is the governing of the people, by the people and for the people.” [Article 1 (1-2) Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]

We have sought to develop this booklet in a democratic spirit. Its contents reflect the ideas borne out of hundreds of interviews with Burundian men and women from diverse backgrounds. They were asked how they perceived a democratic Burundi, and how their vision could become reality in their country.

From these numerous interviews we identified 26 fundamental themes. Each of these themes is presented in the form of short statements which summarize the essence of the responses. We have also added questions for discussion which serve to ground the themes in the Burundian reality. We gratefully thank all those who contributed to the development of this publication, and in this way became its co-authors.

This booklet is a reflection of the values and principles of the Burundian people, and we hope that it will be a source of inspiration for everyone. Burundi has followed the example of several nations in opting to integrate these fundamental values into its method of government. Unfortunately, recent history has shown how difficult it is to realize these values and how easily they can be flout. The path that returns to peace cannot be uncovered unless these democratic ideals come forth with conviction, as a rallying-point for the majority of the population who desire a Burundi with peace for all.

Note to readers:

The booklet *How to live in a Democracy in Burundi?* may be read in several different ways. It can be examined theme by theme or by choosing certain themes and focussing on those specific selections.

The contents may be discussed in small groups by theme. For example, “How does this theme or these statements apply to our everyday lives?” and, “What are some concrete examples?”.

Students may also illustrate the ideas presented or improvise short skits to incorporate the ideas into a scenario of everyday life.

Happy Reading!

## 1. THE RULE OF LAW

1. In rule of law, the law of the people reigns. This people's law applies equally to all people, regardless of their status, in the interest of the community as a whole.
2. The rule of law recognizes the supremacy of the law as resulting from the general will of the people, and creates institutions to develop it (Legislative Branch), to promote it (Executive Branch), and to ensure that it is respected (Judiciary Branch).

### Questions/ Answers (page 30)

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1. What is the name of the group of fundamental laws that define Burundi's form of government?
2. What is the name of the agreement reached by political parties in September 1994 and expiring on June 9, 1998?

### Subjects for discussion:

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What can and cannot be done in a situation where an individual disapproves of a certain law?

## 2. EXECUTIVE POWER

### a. *The President of the Republic*

1. “As head of state, the President of the Republic is committed to defending the superior interests of the nation; to assuring national unity, social peace, social justice, and the development of the country; to promote and defend human rights and to safeguard the integrity and independence of the Republic.” [Article 68(1) Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]

### b. *The Government*

2. “The government includes the Prime Minister, the Ministers and, if necessary, the Secretaries of State. It is formed in a spirit of national unity and manages the Nation’s policies based on decisions made in the council of ministers.” [Article 86 Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]

### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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1. What is the length of term for the President of the Republic? For how many terms may the President stay in office?

2. Who oversees the implementing actions when decisions are made in the Council of Ministers?

### Subjects for discussion:

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Compare the way in which democratic leaders and traditional tribal leaders manage their power.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE POWER

1. The democratically elected National Assembly reflects the economic, social and regional diversity of the citizens within that country.
2. The representatives of the people work towards the adoption of laws, while serving the interests of their electors, of their party and of the Nation as a whole.

#### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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1. What title do the members of the National Assembly hold ?
2. What is the title of the person who directs the National Assembly?

#### Subjects for discussion:

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If it is the Members of Parliament who vote on laws, how can you be assured that your deputy represents your interests?

#### 4. JUDICIARY

1. “The judiciary power, keeper of the laws and of the public liberties, provides for the respect of these laws in the conditions foreseen by the law.”

[Article 39 Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]

2. Because all people are equal before the law, a judge needs to address all those before him/her without discrimination and without particular preference.

#### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. Who can influence a judge’s decision?

- a) The President of the Republic
- b) The Government
- c) The National Assembly
- d) No one; judges must make their decision independent of any outside influence

2. Who are the people who are above the law?

#### Subjects for discussion:

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Compare the justice of the Magistrature with that of the traditional Burundian Bashingantahe.

## 5. CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Civil society, the foundation of a democratic society, helps the citizens to express their ideas and to work together for the overall well-being of their community.
2. A political party is a group of people who share the same vision of a democratic society for the well-being of all the citizens.

### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. Which of the following is included in civil society?

- a) shopkeepers
- b) all social, cultural and commercial organizations
- c) the government
- d) the unions
- e) the human rights leagues

2. Which political parties signed the Government Convention of Burundi in September 1994?

### Subjects for discussion:

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If you would like to better something in your neighborhood, how can you call upon civil society and political parties?

## 6. LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. Law enforcement officials uphold the direction of the state by enforcing the laws under the direction of the Executive Power.
2. Law enforcement officials show their professionalism by keeping public order, and assuring the physical safety of the citizens.

### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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1. Name the different bodies which constitute the law enforcement arm of the Ministry of National Defense.

*Choose the correct answer(s)*

2. In Burundi, guns are:
  - a) reserved for law enforcement officials
  - b) to be distributed to women and children
  - c) purchased by everyone who can afford them

### Subjects for discussion:

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Give concrete examples of how law enforcement officials make citizens respect the law.

## 7. MEDIA

1. An objective journalist is one who overlooks prejudices in order to honestly present the public with all sides of an issue.
2. By presenting unbiased information, the media helps the citizens to distinguish truth from destructive rumors.

### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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1. Which medium of communication is most frequently used in Burundi?

*Identify the incorrect item*

2. The Burundian Press Agency is:
  - a) a private press
  - b) a governmental press
  - c) a public agency that distributes news and information to other agencies, national and international, public and private

### Subjects for discussion:

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How does a journalist give an objective perspective?

## 8. ELECTIONS

1. To be elected is not a fight for one's life, but a competition of ideas in which the object is to represent and to serve the people as a whole.
2. In a democratic state, winning elections is characterized by transparency in the electoral process, without cheating.

### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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1. What was the date of the first democratic presidential and legislative elections in Burundi?
2. Identify which of the following statements are true:
  - a) Voting is a civic duty.
  - b) Elections give the people a chance to choose their leader.
  - c) The electoral process is the only characteristic of a democratic state.
  - d) Elections reflect the will of the people.

### Subjects for discussion:

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Explain how an election can characterize a democratic state.

## 9. TRANSPARENCY

1. A democratic state manages itself in a transparent manner, by following the law without anything to hide.
2. Democracy translates by the fact that people share their concerns and create together their communal destiny.

### Questions/Answers (page 30)

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*Which of the following statements correctly completes this statement*

1. In a democracy, to work in a transparent manner means to...
  - a) have those concerned participate in the decision making.
  - b) manage power while honestly respecting the law.
  - c) manage power by guaranteeing access by citizens and the media to public information
2. Which of the following is an example of transparency?
  - a) a teacher corrects student tests, grades them and hands the corrected tests back to the students along with an illustration of the previously established grading scale.
  - b) another teacher corrects students tests, grades them and posts the grades on a bulletin board. The teacher does not give back the tests or an illustration of the grading scale.

### Subjects for discussion:

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Give examples of how an authority can act with transparency.

## 10. EDUCATION

1. It is essential for the development of a democratic Burundi that the population as a whole have access to education.

[cf Article 32 (1) Constitution of the republic of Burundi]

2. The best education an adult can provide is through example.

Questions/Answers (page 30)

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1. What is the literacy rate in Burundi?

*Choose the correct answer*

2. What percentage of the national 1995 budget was allocated for the two Ministries of Education?

- a) 8.9%
- b) 12.6%
- c) 20.9%
- d) 35.4%

Subjects for discussion:

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What roles do the following people play in education:

- a) politicians
- b) parents
- c) teachers

## 11. EQUALITY

1. “All men are equal before the law and have the right, without exception, to a equal protection by law. [Article 15 (2) Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]
2. Preferential treatment before the law hurts human dignity; And engenders reciprocal injustices.

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. In a democracy, all citizens must be treated:
  - a) unequally
  - b) well
  - c) in an equal manner
2. What word can be used to complete this sentence:  
“All men are ..... before the law”.

### Subjects for discussion:

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Give an example of when you were treated as equal among others, as inferior to others, and as superior to others. What were your reactions to those three situations?

## 12. FREEDOM

1. Freedom is the basis of our human rights, especially those rights which allow one to express one's self, to move around freely and to choose one's place of residence within the country.
2. "All persons may be deprived of their freedom under law; however even in this case, those people must be treated with humanity and with the respect of dignity inherent to the human being".  
[cf. Article 14 (3) Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Burundi]

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. What form(s) of freedom characterize a democratic society?
  - a) freedom of the birds
  - b) freedom of opinion
  - c) freedom to marry someone of another ethnic race
  - d) freedom of expression

*Choose the correct answer(s)*

2. Freedom means:
  - a) do whatever you want
  - b) do whatever you can
  - c) the capability to do anything as long as it is not against the law and it does not harm anyone.

### Subjects for discussion:

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Give an example of scenes in which you saw freedom of expression being used in a constructive manner, and in a destructive manner. Present the advantages and disadvantages of these examples.

### 13. NATIONAL UNITY

1. In a democracy, national unity occurs when differences are perceived as complementary.
2. To preserve the unity of the Burundian people is to preserve friendships with those from other groups, and to refuse to allow false divisions to develop between groups.

#### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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1. What two other words appear with “Unity” on Burundian motto?
2. One man alone cannot push a broken down car, but three men can; why?

#### Subjects for discussion:

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Give an example of a friend from whom you have been separated because of ethnic divisions.

## 14. WORK

1. No citizen should be disadvantaged in his/her work simply because of his or her ethnicity, opinions or religious beliefs.
2. Work is a social activity which puts to contribution all citizens: it reduces unemployment and delinquency, sources of crime and violence.
3. It is by creating work and respecting everyone's interests that workers will discover new ways to manage power, in a democratic fashion.

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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1. What is the percentage of Burundian exports received by the following countries?
  - a) Europe
  - b) Asia
  - c) Africa
  - d) America
2. What are the four major exports of Burundi?

### Subjects for discussion:

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Give an example of an employer who inspires his or her employees by using democratic principles.  
What makes this boss different from others?

## 15. PROGRESS

1. A society that progresses is a society that is autonomous and that defines itself.
2. The progress of a society is translated by openness, the respect of differences and the quest for the well-being of its citizens.

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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1. What two other words appear with “Progress” on Burundian motto?

### *True or False?*

2.
  - a) A society that progresses closes its eyes on impunity and perceives differences as a reason for division.
  - b) A society that progresses cultivates mutual respect between people and betters their living conditions.
  - c) A country which progresses is indifferent towards its neighbors

### Subjects for discussion:

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Describe how you see Burundi progressing and developing. How can you contribute to these changes?

## 16. RESPECT OF HUMAN LIFE

1. “The human being is sacred and inviolable. The state has the absolute obligation to respect and protect him/her.”

[Article 11 Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]

2. The constant affirmation of human dignity begins with the respect of one’s neighbor and his/her possessions.

3. “Whatever the reason, all murder or other attempt on a person’s life is a crime against humanity.”  
*(Mahatma Gandhi)*

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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1. Which civil right leader used non-violence during the 1960s to gain equal rights for black Americans?

2. Which of the following respects the dignity of the human being:

- a) slavery
- b) torture
- c) feudalism
- d) abolishing the preceding practices

### Subjects for discussion:

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Give an example of an experience where you received respect, and another example of an experience where you received the opposite.

## 17. NON-VIOLENCE

1. A true democracy helps us to live together peacefully in the respect and recognition of different ethnicities and different opinions.
2. “The only way to truly conquer one’s enemy is to help him/her to become something other than an enemy.’

*(Mahatma Gandhi)*

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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1. Who led India to its independence by using non-violence?
2. What strategy is the opposite of non-violence and ultimately leads to self-destruction?

### Subjects for discussion:

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How can one deliver an enemy from being anything other than an enemy?

## 18. SOCIAL PEACE

1. “Without pardon there is no future for ourselves. Without reconciliation, what future is there for a people?”

*(Brother Roger de Taizé)*

2. “To truly love is to love those who hate you. It is to love your neighbor even if you do not trust him/her”.

*(Mahatma Gandhi)*

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. Peace in Burundi is obtainable by:

- a) having a party
- b) reconciling differences
- c) dividing into groups

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- a) By pardoning others, you contribute to social peace
- b) The reconciliation of differences contributes to ethnic hatred.

### Subjects for discussion:

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How do you envision a peaceful Burundi?

## 19. RELIGIOUS WORSHIP

1. “All persons have the right to freedom of thought, of conscience, of religion and of worship within the limitations of the public order and the law.”

[Article 25 (1) Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]

2. Religious worship help the citizens to strengthen their relationship with God and to live this reality in their daily lives.

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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1. What are the principal religions in Burundi?

*Choose the correct answer(s)*

2. What does *freedom of religion* mean?

- a) the freedom to force a religion on other people
- b) to choose a religion and to practice it freely
- c) freedom to create a place of worship

### Subjects for discussion:

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In your opinion, how does religious worship contribute to social peace?

## 20. PARTICIPATION

1. Each Burundian citizen has the right to participate, directly or indirectly through representatives, in the management and administration of the affairs of the state provided he/she abides by the appropriate legal conditions, especially those regarding age and capabilities.  
[Article 29 (1) Constitution of the Republic of Burundi]

2. In a democracy, the administration of the state is undertaken by the authorities with the effective participation of all levels of society.

### Questions/Answers (page 31)

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1. What term describes the act of not associating a social class to the governing of a country?

*Complete the following sentence:*

2. In a democratic Burundi, all citizens have the right to ..... in the governing/management of state matters”.

### Subjects for discussion:

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Give an example of when you participated in the democratic management of Burundi.

## 21. TOLERANCE

1. Tolerance means listening and respecting the opinions of others, even if they differ, of others. It is means not being afraid to express one's own opinion.

2. Democracy is not simply the rule of the majority; it is the rule which results from a basic consensus between the majority and the minority.

### Questions/Answers (page 32)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. Which of the following reflects tolerance:

- a) not punishing guilty people
- b) recompensating victims
- c) listening to and respecting other people's opinions

2. Between the majority and the minority, which needs more to prove its tolerance?

### Subjects for discussion:

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In your daily life, how could tolerance contribute to social peace?

## 22. SOLIDARITY

1. Solidarity means coming to the help of another without consideration of their ethnicity or any other defining characteristic.
2. Solidarity also is the firm and constant determination to work towards the good of all, because everyone needs each other.

### Questions/Answers (page 32)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. Which of the following acts demonstrates positive solidarity:
  - a) on the bus, giving one's seat to an elderly woman
  - b) hiding a murderer in your home
  - c) helping only one's friends

*Choose the correct answer(s)*

2. Solidarity is expressed when:
  - a) a person loves his or her country
  - b) many people die for their country
  - c) we mutually depend on one another
  - d) everyone loves the same person

### Subjects for discussion:

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Tell about a time when you did someone a favor, or vice versa, and experienced solidarity.

### 23. LEADERSHIP

1. A representative of the people is a leader who does not let the population become divided, but who struggles to keep it unified while at the same time helping it to meet its needs through nonviolence.
2. “The educated class cannot justify its existence unless it is ready to sacrifice itself for the masses.”  
(*Mahatma Gandhi*)

#### Questions/Answers (page 32)

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*Choose the correct answer*

1. A leader is:
  - a) a champion
  - b) a star
  - c) a guide acting in service of the population
  - d) a chief who acts only in his or her self-interest
2. Who is Burundi’s leader of independence?

#### Subjects for discussion:

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What are the qualities of a democratic leader?

## 24. CULTURE

1. A democracy that reflects the culture and history of our country should be traceable to our values of mutual assistance, of sharing and of hospitality.
2. The introduction of a democratic system that calls for participation and consensus requires patience, since it can only be built slowly.

### Questions/Answers (page 32)

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1. What is the kirundi word for the wise man who oversees matters of justice in Burundian culture?
2. On what date is Burundi's national holiday?

### Subjects for discussion:

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In your opinion, what are the values and traditions on which a democratic Burundi may be built?

## 25. SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. When the people's respect of the laws declines and no one is accountable to anyone except themselves, the State will collapse into an abyss.
2. "Those who stay silent in the face of injustice become accomplices to this injustice."  
*(Martin Luther King)*

### Questions/Answers (page 32)

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*True or false?*

1. Social justice is
  - a) justice rendered by the society as a whole
  - b) equality among all members of society

*Choose the correct answer(s)*

2. To be objective in recruiting for state employment, it is necessary to:
  - a) consider the qualifications of the candidate in question
  - b) choose someone from one's own family
  - c) choose only on the basis of academic qualifications

Subjects for discussion:

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Is material wealth a source of social justice?

## 26. CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY

1. A democracy is not only the power of the people exercised through politics, but the extension of a sense of responsibility to all citizens.
2. To be a citizen means to have rights and also responsibilities; it is to realize that one's development comes from working for the development of others.

### Questions/Answers (page 32)

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*Choose the correct answer(s)*

1. In a democratic state, a citizen acting responsibly:
  - a) fights for his/her rights while respecting those of the collectivity
  - b) works for development in respecting the laws and public institutions
  - c) initiates change by intervention in laws and public institutions
  - d) all of the above

*Choose the correct answer(s)*

2. A responsible citizen:
  - a) lives only for him- or herself
  - b) lives only for others
  - c) Both a. and b.

### Subjects for discussion:

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Compare the qualities that characterize a responsible citizen, and an irresponsible citizen.

## Answers

### 1. THE STATE OF LAW

1. The Constitution
2. The Government Convention

### 2. EXECUTIVE POWER

1. Five years per term with a maximum of two terms
2. Prime Minister

### 3. LEGISLATIVE POWER

1. Deputies
2. The President of the National Assembly

### 4. JUDICIARY POWER

1. d) Judges must decide independently according to the law
2. No one

### 5. CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL PARTIES

1. All except for c) the government
2. UPRONA, PRP, PP, FRODEBU, RPB, RADDES, PIT, ANADDE, INKINZO, PL ABASA, PSD

### 6. LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. The army and the police force
2. a) reserved for law enforcement officials

### 7. MEDIA

1. Radio
2. a) a private press

### 8. ELECTIONS

1. June 1, 1993 and June 29, 1993, respectively
2. a) True b) True c) False d) True

### 9. TRANSPARENCY

1. a) Yes b) Yes c) Yes
2. a) A professor who corrects and gives back the tests

### 10. EDUCATION

1. 30%
2. c) 20.9%

11. EQUALITY

1. c) in an equal manner
2. equal

12. FREEDOM

- 1.b) freedom of opinion
- c) freedom to marry someone from a different ethnic group
- d) freedom of expression

2. c) The capability to do anything as long as it is not against the law and it does not hurt anyone.

13. NATIONAL UNITY

1. Work and Progress
2. Strength through unity

14. WORK

1. Europe (50.5%), Asia (20.8%), Africa (16.4%), America (3.1%)
2. Coffee, cotton, tea and animal skins

15. PROGRESS

1. Unity and Work
2. a) False b) True c)False

16. RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

1. Martin Luther King
2. d) abolishing the preceding practices

17. NON-VIOLENCE

1. Mahatma Gandhi
2. Violence

18. SOCIAL PEACE

1. by reconciling differences
2. a) Yes b) No

19. RELIGIOUS WORSHIP

1. Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam
2. b) to choose a religion and to practice it freely
- c) freedom to create a place of worship

20. PARTICIPATION

1. exclusion

2. to participate

21. TOLERANCE

1. c) to listen to and respect the opinions of others
2. Both answers

22. SOLIDARITY

1. a) on a bus, to give one's seat to an elderly woman
2. c) we mutually depend on one another

23. LEADERSHIP

1. c) a guide acting in the service of the population
2. Prince Louis Rwagasore

24. CULTURE

1. Umushingantahe
2. July 1

25. SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. a) False b) True
2. a) consider the qualifications of the candidate in question

26. CITIZEN RESPONSIBILITY

1. d) all of the above
2. c) both answers