EMPOWERING GENERATIONS

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Foreword

Welcome to the inaugural edition of UNDP Rwanda’s newsletter, dubbed - Intambwe.

We will share the small steps we take with our valued partners in the communities we serve. From stories of change and transformation to community-led initiatives and innovative solutions, each edition will showcase the diverse range of programs and activities contributing to positive change in Rwanda.

You will get to know more about our work across various sectors, including environment, governance, youth empowerment, digital transformation, development financing, disability inclusion, gender equality, and much more.

Our partnerships with government agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, private sector and local communities play a pivotal role in driving our mandate forward. Together, we’re working towards building resilient communities, promoting inclusive growth, and addressing the most pressing challenges facing our society.

Join us as we empower generations, amplify voices, and inspire action towards a more sustainable and prosperous Rwanda.

Editorial Team

Intambwe
Rwanda becomes home to timbuktoo foundation

The timbuktoo Africa Innovation Foundation was officially incorporated in Kigali, Rwanda, on the 26th of March, marking a historic milestone. timbuktoo is UNDP’s bold, innovative and far-reaching initiative that aims to spark Africa’s start-up ecosystem. UNDP provides development advisory services to the timbuktoo Africa Innovation Foundation.

In partnership with African governments, and the private sector, timbuktoo powers university innovation pods (UniPods) to link African young creatives with the right tools to support their innovative ideas. So far, UniPods are set up in 13 African countries, including Benin, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Togo, Uganda, and Zambia, with many more to come. These pods serve as research and development centers, offering young innovators spaces to transform ideas into viable products and profitable ventures.

In addition, timbuktoo will be setting up thematic hubs across Africa as centers of excellence, providing a world-class one-stop-shop for ecosystem and venture building support in areas like FinTech, EdTech, AgriTech, Creatives, Smart Cities, TradeTech, GreenTech and HealthTech.

timbuktoo will offer early-stage risk capital to ventures founded by Africa’s youth through the Kigali-based Fund domiciled in the Kigali International Financial Centre, Africa’s third-best international financial center. This will enable young people to find innovative solutions to achieve their dreams. This way, they can create jobs and contribute efforts to accelerate sustainable and inclusive development in Africa.

Join us on this largest initiative in the world, timbuktoo, bringing catalytic and commercial capital together.

Innovation on a pan_African scale
INVESTING IN WOMEN

In March 2024, the world celebrated women and girls under the theme “Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress.” Throughout the month, with partners, we highlighted the invaluable contributions of women in various sectors and advocated for increased investment in their empowerment. It was a time to recognize their achievements, address challenges they face, and accelerate progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Equanomics addressing the massive cost of Gender Equality

UNDP is championing ‘Equanomics’ - a flagship initiative to dismantle economic structures that generate and perpetuate gender inequality. By building expertise and supporting partners who want to transform their economies to work better for everyone, Equanomics envisions a new path and is helping countries take it.

In Rwanda, UNDP has partnered with the Rwanda Revenue Authority and the Gender Monitoring Organization to mainstream gender equality within the country’s tax administration and tax reforms.

This will include breaking down barriers, increasing women’s participation, streamlining work life balance, addressing the gender paygap and reforming policies to ensure they are responsive to both genders as they contribute towards Rwanda’s economic growth.

Claudine’s Story of Hope

Claudine Uwimana’s journey was filled with uncertainty when she became a teenage mother and had to drop out of school. With her dreams seemingly shattered, the future looked bleak. But a ray of hope emerged when UNDP, in partnership with the Government of Rwanda and the Embassy of Belgium, supported Claudine and other young mothers like her, providing training, resources, and mentorship.
Before the support, our situation was hopeless, we had no clear path forward, and the weight of our challenges felt overwhelming.” Claudine recalls.

However, thanks to the support, a remarkable transformation took place.

Today, Claudine’s business is thriving, producing an impressive 10 jerry cans of liquid soap — a tenfold increase from their initial output of just one jerry can in an entire day. This remarkable growth has not only provided financial stability but has also instilled a sense of pride and self-sufficiency.

“We can now save and take care of our day-to-day challenges,” Claudine beams. “This support has given us a second chance at life, and we’re determined to make the most of it.”

Claudine’s story is a testament to the power of empowerment and the positive impact collective and deliberate efforts can have on vulnerable communities. By investing in their skills and providing the necessary tools, these young mothers have been given the opportunity to rewrite their narratives and pave the way for a brighter future.

Watch her inspiring story

Empowering Women’s Voices at UNDP Rwanda

To celebrate the International Women’s Day, Varsha Redkar-Palepu, the UNDP Rwanda Deputy Resident Representative, organized a women empowerment and mentoring session. It was a moment that celebrated the power of shared experiences and the collective journey towards gender equality.

Among the esteemed guests was Njeri Kamau, the Evaluation Advisor at UNDP Africa, whose inspiring story left a mark on the attendees. She shared about her personal and professional journey, which resonated with a profound sense of resilience and determination, reminding all the impact that women’s leadership can have on the world. Her message ignited a renewed sense of purpose and a collective commitment to empowering women leaders across the globe.
UNDP joined the UN in Rwanda to celebrate the International Women’s Day

The UN family in Rwanda held a joint celebration of International Women’s Day 2024, commemorating the remarkable partnership with the Rwandan government over the past 30 years in achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment. It was a stark reminder of the progress made and the ongoing commitment to elevating women’s crucial role in the country’s development.

During a panel discussion, Aimee Muziranenge, our Transformational Governance portfolio lead, eloquently expressed the essence of our collective pursuit:

“By dismantling barriers and fostering inclusivity, we lay the foundation for thriving communities and sustainable development pathways. We advocate for gender equality as a catalyst for progress.”

The voices of women, once silenced, now echoes with strength and conviction, inspiring us all to continue the path towards a more equitable and just world.

Participants commended the platform, the candid conversations about the challenges and opportunities available for women to accelerate their development as well as positioning for leadership. They committed to holding such sessions to increase mentorship among each other.

“An educated woman is the backbone of women’s empowerment. Until we achieve gender equality and equal opportunities for all, we all should remain frustrated. Women must confidently take their rightful place at the forefront, set clear boundaries, and seek mentorship to lead successful careers.” - Varsha Redkar Palepu, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative.

“Do not be afraid to take risks as women. Diversify your skill set. Intentionally create time for your families, and always have the AUDACITY to participate in the right spaces.” Njeri Kamau, RBM and Evaluation Advisor & Team Leader.
UNDP Rwanda plays a vital role in strengthening democratic governance in the country. Our work aims to increase civic engagement and ensure all Rwandan voices are heard, especially women, youth and marginalized groups, while contributing to building an inclusive and sustainable future.

**Mvura Nkuvure**

*A story of Psycho-social healing*

We partnered with the Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement and Prison Fellowship Rwanda for a psychosocial healing and peace-building program, which uses small groups as a therapeutic medium and an open environment for dialogue and reconciliation.

The program - Mvura Nkuvure convenes an average of ten to fifteen people, and these include both the survivors of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and the genocide perpetrators.

In one of the groups, there was a woman named Mukaremera, who survived the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. When she first attended the reconciliation program, she faced an incredibly difficult situation.

To her shock, she discovered that she had been seated next to a man who had confessed to murdering her own sister during the genocide. The emotional pain and trauma of this realization made Mukaremera’s initial participation in the program extremely challenging, as she had come face to face with the person responsible for such a profound personal loss.

Watch the video to understand the role Mvura Nkuvure in the path towards healing and reconciliation of Rwanda.
“The first time, it was so hard being in the same space with those who committed the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, that I just cried and left. However, the facilitators urged me to return for other sessions. In the third session, one of them confessed to having killed my sister, and I fainted at the news. But despite the shock, the news brought me closure and the internal peace that I needed.” Mukaremera Francoise.

“Mvura Nkuvure allowed me to share my personal story because I had never got the chance to talk about my tough encounters during the Genocide. In the past, I suffered chronic headaches and insomnia due to the heavy burden, but since joining the program, the headaches are gone, and I feel much lighter. My household is also happier, and we can now concentrate on developing ourselves,” said Mukaremera Francoise.

Civil Society Barometer: Advancing Inclusive Development

On February 28th, 2024, the fourth edition of the Rwanda Civil Society Barometer was launched. Crafted through the collaborative efforts of UNDP and the Rwanda Governance Board, this pivotal report offers a comprehensive analysis of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Rwanda, highlighting their roles, challenges, and contributions across various sectors.

More than just a report, the Barometer serves as a guiding compass for Rwanda’s development journey. It evaluates CSOs on multiple fronts, from participation and inclusiveness to governance and impact, providing invaluable insights for shaping policies and actions towards a more transparent, accountable, and participatory civil society.

Through collaborative efforts, with our partners including core partners, UNDP aims to continue strengthening CSOs, enhance their capacity, and amplify their voices for greater impact and participation in all facets of Agenda 2030 implementation.

“The Barometer is a guiding compass for an inclusive society. CSOs should pivot towards citizen-centered initiatives to foster greater equity and empowerment, encapsulating a vision for a collaborative society where every stakeholder plays a significant role in national progression.” Dr. Nkurunziza Joseph Ryarasa, Chairperson of the Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)

The Civil Society Barometer was based on 4 domains

- Domain 1: PARTIPATION AND INCLUSIVENESS
- Domain 2: CSOs ENVIRONEMENT
- Domain 3: GOVERNANCE AND VALUES IN CSOs
- Domain 4: IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CSOs
Voices of young entrepreneurs.

**Play fostering a culture of conservation and tourism**

Out of her love for playing games, Grace Iradukunda created Huuza games. The purpose of creating the games is in the name, “Huuza,” which literally means to connect. She created Huuza games to boost tourism, make culture exploration easier, and address the creeping potential-pandemic that is mental health.

Huuza is a fun and interactive game, like playing cards that can be played by two or more players seated together around a table or chair. It fosters togetherness and discovery and can be played by all.

Grace advises young people to ensure that they sell to the right audience, stick to the right problem but solve it in different ways.

Watch the full video.

**A world where no one feels alone**

Imagine a world where no one feels alone! A world where orphans and displaced children are reconnected to family. A world where DNA is no longer a destructive tool that separates families due to infidelity, but one that reunites people and connects family trees.

It is through this, that Deexon Muhizi bore the idea of reuniting such families through a phone app, called igitree, where people can find each other and reconnect, through a DNA test and a family tree.

The name ‘igitree’, originates from the Rwandan word “igiti” that means a tree.

Igitree is a phone application genealogy platform, that can be used by everyone, with a smartphone, whether Android or iOS and the app is free to download and free to build a family tree and reconnect with one’s relatives.

Watch the full video.
Introducing the Youth Café: a new UNDP intimate gathering where young Rwandan entrepreneurs share their inspiring journeys, unfiltered and authentic. In a cozy setting, the café will encourage using the power of storytelling to motivate their peers. This will be organised by the Ministry of Youth and Arts and other partners through the Aguka program.

**The what**: A platform where youth who are already indulged in entrepreneurship will inspire other youth through telling their stories about the good, but especially the bad and the ugly.

**The why**: Even though Rwanda has several budding entrepreneurs, only few have been bold enough to approach the initiatives run by the youth portfolio such as Hanga, Art Ubuhanzi, Aguka, and many more. The youth must share their successes and failures to encourage the rest of the youth to take advantage of the programs.

**The how**: The “Youth Café will be held in a location that encourages authenticity of the speakers. A floor sitting arrangement is preferred to encourage ease, genuineness, and depth.

**The When**: June, July and August.

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YouthConnekt Africa Summit 2024

Drumrolls! Get ready for an extraordinary event that will revolutionize youth empowerment and employment! In a rapidly evolving job market, adaptability and strong soft skills are essential. This summit will explore innovative approaches to upskill youth for success. Join us in discussing the future of youth employment!

**SAVE THE DATE**

8-10 Nov, 2024  
Kigali - Rwanda

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Gratitude to the partners

A big thank you to all our partners for journeying with us as we invest in the #Rwandan youth as they create solutions for challenges in the community!
Our children have big dreams, but unfortunately, bigger worries too! The climate chaos boiling around us isn't receding anytime soon, and the children can't help but wonder what kind of world we'll be living in by 2050!

Isheja, a 9-year-old Rwandan #WeatherKid invites you to act NOW and rewrite the forecast for the future, making it less scary for her and her peers across the globe. Take the first step by signing the UNDP’s climate pledge at www.weatherkids.org.

Weather Kids

The new digital payment system for environmental fees & fines.

UNDP has joined forces with the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) and Irembo to launch an innovative digital payment system tailored for environmental fees and fines. This system will play a crucial role in supporting conservation and environmental protection efforts in Rwanda by streamlining the collection of funds that can be directed towards these initiatives.

The digital payment platform will make it easier for individuals and businesses to pay fees and fines related to activities that impact the environment, such as mining, logging, or pollution. These funds can then be allocated towards protecting Rwanda’s rich biodiversity, maintaining national parks and protected areas, and promoting sustainable development practices.

Supported by the Rwanda Green Fund and crafted by Irembo, this forward-thinking initiative aligns with our commitment to the planet through Biodiversity Finance (BioFin). By leveraging technology to improve revenue collection for environmental causes, Rwanda is taking a proactive step towards safeguarding its natural resources and ensuring a greener future for generations to come.
Appreciation to all our government, civil society, private sector, development and partners at core.

Partners at core

Flexible (core) funding from our partners provides the backbone of UNDP’s work.
See the list here: https://www.undp.org/funding/regular-resources-contributors

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