



Stephanie Harerimana sits in front of her new house in Gacaca Green Model village, her hair combed in the “Uruhanika” hair style, symbolising happiness and well-being.



Dear Friends,

Stephanie Harerimana, pictured above, lives in a Green Model Village, in a solid brick house, with biogas and a kitchen garden. Her children attend a solar-powered school nearby.

Not long ago, Harerimana lived on an isolated island in Ruhondo Lake, without access to electricity, clean water, or health care. School was a dangerous boat ride away. In her face I see her delight. I also see the magic of partnership.

A partnership between the Government of Rwanda, the United Nations Development Programme, and UN Environment launched the Green Village program in 2011. As it continues to grow, the program shows the deep connections between reducing poverty, protecting the environment, promoting green development, and strengthening justice.

This is a hallmark not only of the Green Villages, but of nearly all the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Rwanda. As you will see in the stories here, the challenges faced by the people of Rwanda cannot be approached in silos. Our lives do not change in silos.

The past several months have brought much change to our lives. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge us at every turn, demanding new solutions.

Yet, at UNDP in Rwanda one thing has remained constant: our focus on the most vulnerable.

Together, with the Government of Rwanda, partner organizations around the world, companies, civil society organizations, and citizens we are overcoming barriers and building a greener, more prosperous Rwanda.

I cannot thank you enough for your partnership as we continue this journey together.

Maxwell Gomera
Resident Representative
UNDP Rwanda

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Strategizing for Rwanda's green growth and climate resilience

13 CLIMATE ACTION



On 4 June 2021, the Government of Rwanda with the support United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Rwanda, organised a high-level policy dialogue to discuss Rwanda's Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy (GGCRS). Adopted in 2011, the GGCRS is under revision as the country debates the best strategies for attaining a climate-resilient, inclusive and carbon neutral economy by 2050; protecting biodiversity; and restoring degraded ecosystems.

Representatives of government, the UN, the private sector, civil society, academia and development partners at the high-level dialogue made several recommendations: Place greater priority on improving production, access and affordability to energy, especially in rural areas; concentrate on renewables such as solar power for off-grid connection; improve collaboration among development partners to catalyze results and avoid duplication.

"We are not competitors. Our mutual work makes us stronger, we need to share information," said Dorothea Groth, Head of Development Cooperation at the Embassy of the Republic of Germany to Rwanda.

The Rwandan government committed to mainstreaming environment into national policies, plans and budgets at local and national levels, and participants agreed to submit complete recommendations within two months.

The Resident Representative of UNDP in Rwanda, Mr. Maxwell Gomera urged that "Looking after the environment and nature is not a tax on our growth, it is an investment into the future of our children. Everyone has a role to play, everyone has a responsibility."

Green Model Villages stirring a rural transformation in Rwanda

Stephanie Harerimana, 71, has six children, too many grand-children to count, and two great grand-children. Today her family lives in Gacaca Green Model Village, Musanze District, one of 62 households that were resettled from dangerous and isolated islands on Ruhondo Lake.

The new place they call home is safer and more environmentally friendly than their old village—and full of low-carbon amenities.

"I believe that this village is a place that God has designed for me for my better retirement," says Harerimana.

Every family in the village has a solid brick house, biogas energy, a kitchen garden, water tanks and access to a new village health post. Children attend a nearby school. Youth have access to broadband, new technologies, and job opportunities.

Village services help community members address environmental problems such as soil erosion and deforestation. Biogas residue is used as fertilizer, and tree planting helps improve farm productivity.

Green Villages were piloted in 2011 by the Government of Rwanda, UNDP Rwanda and UN Environment through the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI). Between 2013 and 2018, UNDP Rwanda helped to establish several Green Villages, embracing more than 243 households.

The villages have proven especially valuable for vulnerable populations living on steep slopes prone to landslides, on small islands, and generally in poor economic conditions.

During a field visit to Gacaca Green Village, the Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP in Rwanda, Ms. Varsha Redkar-Palepu, said: "The Green Villages show we can improve people's livelihoods while protecting nature and restoring ecosystems. They make a big difference for sustainable development."

With the support of UNDP Rwanda and other partners, the Government of Rwanda has established 44 Green Villages. And we have a new goal: to build at least one Green Village in each of the country's 416 sectors by 2024.





The Government of Rwanda and UNDP launch a retrofit electric motorcycles project.

Link to full story: <https://bit.ly/3yWPajh>

Young and Green: Youth Entrepreneurs making their mark in Rwanda

Two programs supported by UNDP Rwanda and our partners highlight the pioneering role of youth entrepreneurs in promoting innovative businesses and overcoming the economic impacts of COVID-19.

On 5 June 2021, UNDP Rwanda honoured Noel Nizeyimana, the CEO of Green Care Ltd., with the Youth Green Innovation and Investment Award—and a check for Rwf 6000.

The Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) and UNDP Rwanda launched the annual award in 2020 to recognize the best green businesses managed by young people.

Green Care, established in 2016, transformed a district landfill in Huye, Southern Province, into a waste management plant. It began by converting waste into organic fertilisers and later expanded to make construction pavers out of discarded plastic. It employs 25 workers and plans to expand to other districts.

The company addresses a big problem: the accumulation of untreated municipal waste. According to the World Bank, 2.01 billion tonnes of municipal solid waste are generated globally every year, with at least one-third managed in an environmentally unfriendly manner. Furthermore, greenhouse gasses from waste are a key contributor to climate change. In fast-growing regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, waste-generation is expected to more than triple by 2050, underscoring the need for sustainable solutions.

A second program, the Rwf 500 million Young Entrepreneurs Resilience Fund, launched by UNDP

Rwanda, Korea International Cooperation Agency and other partners is supporting young entrepreneurs through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clarisse Kayitesi, 26, is among more than 157 young entrepreneurs whose companies have benefitted. Her company, SAGA BLESSING, in Musanze district, Northern Province, processes maize flour. Before the pandemic hit, it employed 50 workers. COVID-19 restrictions led to a suspension of operations and layoffs of 40 workers. The Fund's Rwf 5,000,000 grant allowed SAGA BLESSING to resume operations and rehire workers once restrictions eased.

Both programs contribute to Rwanda's National Strategy for Transformation, which aims to create 1.5 million decent and productive jobs by 2022.

"Young entrepreneurs such as Nizeyimana and Kayitesi are at the forefront to environmental, climate, and food security solutions," said UNDP Resident Representative Maxwell Gomera. "We are proud to support them."

Find out more about the Resilience Fund here: <https://bit.ly/3r9EXxh>

About the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Rwanda

As part of the United Nations system, we work to eradicate poverty, strengthen resilience to crises, and accelerate structural transformations to achieve a more just society.

We focus on three main areas

END POVERTY



TRANSFORMATIONAL GOVERNANCE



ENVIRONMENT, CLEAN ENERGY



Remember, Unite, Renew: UN in Rwanda remembers its staff perished in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi

On 12th April 2021, the United Nations (UN) in Rwanda held an annual ceremony in commemoration of Kwibuka27, the 1994 Genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi, and in remembrance of the 64 UN employees who were killed.

UN staff stood side-by-side with the families of the staff members who perished and laid a wreath of flowers at the memorial site in the compound of UNDP offices in Kigali.



Kwibuka27's national theme was "Remember, Unite, Renew."

Dr. Eugene Bideri, the Principal Legal Advisor of the

National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide, said, "We commemorate for the 27th time the genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi. It is a moment of reflection which puts each one of us in front of his responsibilities, to prevent any such future genocides."

Dr. Fodé Ndiaye, the UN Resident Coordinator for Rwanda, added, "Let us take this occasion to reinvigorate our resolve to address the deeply ingrained root causes that undermine social cohesion, and which create conditions for hatred, discrimination, exclusion, intolerance and injustice that could lead to genocide."

Cooperative of ex-combatants defies odds

In 2007, in Muhanga District, a group of ex-combatants and civilians who shared a common challenge of making ends meet established a security guard cooperative "COPEVEMU." Today it employs 355 people whose work ranges from accounting to farming to retail sales.

COPEVEMU Chair Rurangwa Gaspard recalls their humble beginning: each member contributed Rwf 10,000 toward a common fund, which was later boosted by the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) and other well-wishers.

COPEVEMU started a savings initiative, ventured into piggery farming, and opened a shop that sells daily necessities, generating about Rwf50,000 profits. Dividends that go to shareholders have been life-changing, enabling members to pay tuition fees for their children and health insurance for their families. The collective supports members through health and financial emergencies, including from COVID-19.

Ex-combatant Julie Nyiramwiza explains the impact on her life: "We work together, we share challenges and achievements. It supported me to finalize my high school to get a university degree".

And as a female member I am treated equally. It has built my confidence because I am consulted in every decision-making process."

COPEVEMU is one of many ex-combatant initiatives supported by the UNDP Rwanda and UN WOMEN, in partnership with RDRC through the "Phase 65" project.



Ex-combatant Julie Nyiramwiza speaks at a COPEVEMU meeting.

Ex-combatants and families strive for peaceful co-existence in community

The 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi left Rwanda devastated. After the Rwanda Patriotic Front seized power, the former government army and militia fled to what today is the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Tens of thousands of ex-combatants and their families spent decades struggling to survive.

In the genocide's aftermath, the Government of Rwanda worked to consolidate peace and stability and to improve the living standards for all Rwandans. A key component was the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of armed groups, including the former government army.

The Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC), established in 1997, has since demobilized and offered reintegration support to more than 70,000 ex-combatants and their families.

The effort continues to this day, by both the Rwandan government and its development partners.

The latest group to be repatriated from the DRC arrived in 2018: 1,635 persons—554 Ex-combatants, 249 women and 832 children.

Subsequently, in line with the Cooperation Framework between

the UN and Government of Rwanda, the "Phase 65" project was launched to respond to the returnees' immediate needs for emergency support towards social and economic reintegration.

The UNDP and UN Women provide the project's financial and technical support.

Phase 65 was launched on 28 January 2020 and ended in June 2021. It was tailored to address the specific needs of male and female ex-combatants and dependents, paying particular attention to the disabled; the chronically ill; those confronting psycho-social traumas, including from sexual and gender-based violence; and those having to leave behind violence learned while with armed groups.

Ex-combatants and their dependents went through a short orientation program to facilitate reintegration into the community. Each ex-combatant received a tailored package of services ranging from medical and psycho-social support, basic literacy, and life skill training and financial assistance.

Socioeconomic support to returnees and the hosting communities was designed to promote social cohesion, economic revitalization, and peace.

Ayinkamiye Beata, 56 years, is the wife of an ex-combatant and participates in the Phase 65 program. She recalls her mixed emotions as repatriation became an option. (continued on page 6).



Ayinkamiye Beata is the wife of an ex-combatant.

Smart tech supporting learners with disabilities

Nearly two-in-five students at HVP Gatagara schools have a physical disability. Without appropriate infrastructure, technology and support they struggle to keep up with other students.

But now, there's something new in the classrooms: 11 smart boards and free Internet. The smart boards can be programmed to support students with different kinds of disabilities. For students who are blind, audio programming is available. For students who cannot

write or type with their fingers, improved technology makes it easier to type with their toes.

Funded by the UNDP Rwanda in partnership with the United Nations (UN) and the company Liquid Telecom, the initiative aims at strengthening the disability inclusion initiative. It delivers on a promise made last November in celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. To learn more, go here: <https://bit.ly/2V602N3>

(“Continued from page 5”).

“On one hand we longed to come back to our home country. On the other hand we were fearful to come back owing to the negative propaganda. We were always told that we will be prosecuted and even get killed once we step on Rwanda soil.

“But life in the bush was very difficult. You were not sure about the next day... and there was no hope for the future.”

Upon their return to Rwanda, Beatha’s husband was jailed due to suspected crimes. She attended a civic education course at Nyarushishi Transit Center. At the discharge ceremony, she received Rwf60,000, and soon after together with other family members of ex-combatants attended a business training workshop from which she received another Rwf60,000.

The experience revived her business mind, and she started a small business.

Beatha is seeing her crop and livestock farming project gradually grow and she is now part of two women’s savings associations. One is a saving and credit association in which she saves Rwf2 000 per month, and the other is an emergency fund in which she also saves Rwf 2 000 per month, respectively.

Beatha was grateful for the warm reception from both the government and local residents. As she reintegrates into the community of her childhood, decades of fear and hardship are slowly fading. Beatha says that for the first time in a very

long time, she is optimistic for the future.

The Phase 65 project aligned with the UNDP’s 2018-2021 Strategic Plan and its Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) which, among other things, sought to strengthen national capacities for reintegration, reconciliation, and peaceful management of conflict in response to national policies and priorities.

COPEVEMU Chairperson speaks at a meeting.



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