



UNITED NATIONS
RWANDA



FUND LEVEL CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2024





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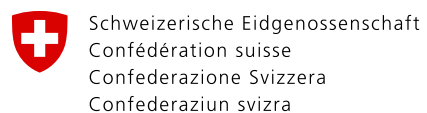
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rwanda SDG Fund, established in July 2018, operates under the strategic guidance of the Joint UN-Government Steering Committee, while operational decision-making is delegated to the UN Country Team, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. The Fund unites various UN entities and their partners to enhance planning and coordination, accelerate SDG progress, improve coherence, and reduce fragmentation and transaction costs. It also promotes the adoption of innovative financing mechanisms. Additionally, the fund mobilizes and allocates extra resources to support activities under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2018-2024), which aligns with and supports Rwanda's national sustainable development agenda.

In 2024, UN Rwanda received funding from various donors to support seven Joint Programmes (JPs), listed below. The annual progress reports/end of programme report of each of the Joint Programmes are available on the MPTF Office Gateway page on the Rwanda SDG Fund. (<https://mptf.undp.org/fund/rw200>).

(1) The Joint Programme Leveraging the Full Potential of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment to Achieve Rwanda's Transformation (JP on Gender): This programme translated gender policy into action through evidence-based strategies and strengthened accountability. Key outcomes included the adoption of the revised National Gender Policy (2021), the 2023 State of Gender Equality Report, and the UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan (2023–2027). It enhanced institutional mechanisms through tools like the Global Monitoring and Information System (GMIS) and Global Monitoring and Assessment System (GMAS), improved GBV prevention and response services, and promoted women's leadership, financial literacy, and access to markets. The "Men Engage" initiative and collaboration with civil society and local authorities contributed to shifting social norms and expanding women's roles in decision-making.

(2) The Joint Programme on Achieving Transformative Change in Rwanda through building sustainable and liveable cities for all in Rwanda (JP on Sustainable Cities): The Joint Programme promoted sustainable and inclusive urbanization aligned with Rwanda's Vision 2050 and Agenda 2030. It improved urban governance through strategy reviews and the City Prosperity Index and empowered communities to co-plan informal settlements. Environmental initiatives included Kigali's Low-Carbon Mobility Plan and reforestation in Rubavu. The programme advanced inclusive growth, climate resilience, and local economic opportunities.

(3) The UN Joint Nutrition Project Phase III: Effectively Fighting Stunting in Rwanda (JP on Nutrition): During the period from January to December 2024, the UN Joint Nutrition Programme Phase III In 2024, strengthened national coordination on nutrition through the NCDA and enhanced collaboration with civil society and the private sector. It improved systems for malnutrition monitoring, food safety, and public financing. Nutrition interventions focused on maternal and child health, and increased access to animal-source and fortified foods. Priorities moving forward include accelerating implementation in target districts and integrating lessons into national strategies to reduce stunting sustainably.

(4) The One UN support to National Institute Statistics of Rwanda for Data Generation and use of evidence-based planning (Joint Programme on Data): The Joint Programme delivered targeted, results-driven support to Rwanda's National Institute of Statistics (NISR), aligning with the UNSDCF (2018-2024) and national development goals. Key results include the successful implementation of the 2022 Population and Housing Census using digital tools, which improved data reliability and enabled real-time analysis. The publication of the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2019–2020 and the STEPwise Approach to NCD Risk Factor Surveillance (STEPS) 2022 provided actionable insights on health, family planning, gender-based violence, and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). A new data quality control system enhanced real-time monitoring and error detection across key surveys, including the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV7) and the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS-7). Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) systems were strengthened through training and field monitoring.

(5) The Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (Join Programme RWEE): The JP RWEE advanced its goal of strengthening rural women's livelihoods, rights, and resilience by delivering coordinated results across food security, income generation, leadership, and policy influence. The programme supported rural women through climate-resilient agriculture, savings groups, and improved market access. Women were trained in nutrition-sensitive farming and income generation, and GALS+ (gender action learning system) promoted gender equality and shared household decision-making. It strengthened women's leadership and informed national policies through gender-sensitive data and high-level advocacy.

(6) The One UN Joint Programme on Youth: The Joint Youth Programme (JYP) significantly contributed to the economic and health empowerment of young men and women, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. Over the four-year period, the programme created thousands of jobs, provided entrepreneurship support, and enhanced access to health services for youth across various sectors. The programme's success underscores the importance of continued investment in youth development to drive sustainable growth and resilience in the region.

(7) The Joint Programme on MSMEs: The joint programme, implemented across 14 districts in Rwanda, aimed to enhance financial inclusion for MSMEs, with a focus on women- and youth-led enterprises. The programme addressed key barriers such as limited access to finance, low financial literacy, and weak institutional linkages. Core objectives included improving access to finance, building business management skills, and increasing working capital through grants. Key activities involved MSME assessments, stakeholder workshops, capacity-building, and mentorship.

JOINT PROGRAMMES OVERVIEW AND DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS¹

Joint Programme	Total Funds Received (USD)	Reporting Status	Key Donors
Nutrition	4,369,872.82	2024 Narrative Progress Report	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Government of the Netherlands, and UN agencies contributions
MSMEs	133,019.82	End of Programme Report	
Gender	11,058,356.79	End of Programme Report	
Data	5,648, 550	End of Programme Report	
Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE)	6,035,000	2024 Narrative Progress Report	
Youth	12,753,540	End of Programme Report	
Sustainable Citites	1,505,420	End of Programme Report	

¹The amounts include contributions from both the Fund and parallel funding, including funding directly managed by PUNOs.

II. PURPOSE

All the seven Joint Programmes (JPs) are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2018-2024, contributing to the pillars of economic transformation, social transformation, and transformational governance. In line with the National Strategy for Transformation (NST1), these JPs support Rwanda's development priorities and play a key role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the country's broader transformation agenda.

III. KEY RESULTS



2,364

farmers strengthened their knowledge on climate resilient agriculture, nutrition, hygiene and gender



299

Village Savings and Loans Associations created (engaging 8,007 members - 78% are women)



\$71,000

of savings via Village Savings and Loan Associations

The UN in Rwanda which received funding through MPTF made significant strides in promoting gender equality and strengthened rural women's food security and nutrition. The Joint Programme on Rural's Economic Empowerment promoted avocado and poultry value chains, establishing 47 tree nurseries with over 71,000 seedlings and distributing over 20,000 chickens in malnutrition-prone districts. This improved access to nutritious foods and increased income opportunities. 2,212 beneficiaries improved their knowledge on land rights and land management against a target of 1,000. The Farmer Field and Life Schools (FFLS) and Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) were strategically integrated to build both technical capacity and gender equality, engaging 4,800 beneficiaries directly and indirectly, and introducing labor-saving technologies to reduce unpaid care work. Further, 150 rural women led group utilize climate smart technologies exceeding the target of 100.

Further, the fund focused on rural women's income and financial autonomy through the creation of Village and Loan Associations (VSLAs). These groups accessed over USD 46,000 in loans for micro-enterprises and household needs, strengthening resilience through local economic empowerment. Additionally, 299 women taking up leadership roles within VSLAs, with an additional 600 women selected for upcoming leadership capacity-building. These steps are enhancing rural women's voice and agency at household and community levels.

The fund influenced key national policy frameworks, including the gender mainstreaming of Rwanda's 5th Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA5) and the implementation of the revised National Gender Policy, through high-level dialogue with MINAGRI and MIGEPROF. Evidence generation, including a gender-sensitive value chain analysis, identified structural barriers such as limited input access and infrastructure gaps, reinforcing the need for targeted investments to unlock rural women's full economic potential.

²13.3% (2021) to 22% (2024)

³48.1% (2021) to 39.9% (2024)



65.4%

increase of children's Minimum Acceptable Diet in Rutsiro District²



17.1%

reduction in stunting rates in Rutsiro District³



1,443

school stakeholders trained in food safety

Moreover, through the funds received, stunting in Rutsiro and Ngorero districts reduced, through a food systems approach that improved children's Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD), women's diet diversity (MDD-W), and household food consumption. Significant progress was made, as reflected in the 2024 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability and Nutrition Analysis Survey (CFSVA): MAD among children rose from 17.4% to 25.5% in Ngororero, while MDD-W improved from 10.9% to 43.3%, respectively. Stunting rates declined from 43.1% to 35.4% in Ngororero. The programme enhanced multi-sectoral coordination, with strengthened Government leadership, planning, and accountability through support to NCDA, MINECOFIN, LODA, and local governments. Over 3,500 local officials and para-social workers were trained on nutrition-sensitive savings groups, leading to the creation of 242 VSLAs with 7,190 members (68% women). National systems were also bolstered via updated DPEMs, SUN Business Network strategy, and development of national guidelines for chronic malnutrition and rickets. These coordinated interventions laid a strong foundation for sustained reductions in malnutrition and greater equity in nutritional outcomes.



92

MSME improved knowledge in financial systems and risk management



58.93%

increase in financial literacy through pre/post training assessments



43.75%

increase in business management proficiency through pre/post training assessments

The fund aimed to strengthen financial inclusion and the growth of MSMEs in Rwanda's food systems sector. A key outcome was the improved collaboration between financial institutions and MSMEs, achieved through a comprehensive needs assessment of 120 enterprises across 14 districts. This assessment provided vital data on business types, financial practices, and challenges faced by MSMEs most notably, limited access to capital, outdated business plans, and gender disparities in financial engagement. Insights were validated through a stakeholder workshop that fostered cross-sectoral dialogue and proposed actionable recommendations including the development of MSME-specific financial products, simplified regulatory frameworks, and improved access to advisory services.

In response to these insights, the programme developed and implemented a robust capacity-building programme targeting financial literacy, business management, and market linkages. A total of 92 MSMEs received targeted training and individualized coaching sessions, which significantly improved their understanding of financial systems and risk management. The capacity-building manual used for training was co-developed with government and UN partners, translated into Kinyarwanda, and tailored to MSMEs' operational realities.

To complement capacity-building efforts and enhance MSMEs' operational capabilities, a grant-based competition awarded ICT tools to 12 high-performing businesses. These in-kind grants—comprising computers, printers, and internet routers—supported the digital transformation of recipient enterprises and increased their competitiveness in local and regional markets. Mentorship and coaching were provided to guide proper grant utilization, and linkages with financial institutions were established to facilitate access to additional funding. These measures contributed to greater productivity, digital readiness, and long-term business sustainability among supported MSMEs.

Though the programme met key targets, it fell short of its 70% women-led MSME goal, achieving 33% due to scheduling conflicts. Still, coordination under the Delivering as One approach and partnerships with national bodies created a scalable, inclusive model for MSME support, highlighting the need for ongoing gender-responsive efforts and financial reform.



+ 3,200

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Sites operational nationwide



82%

of health related SDGs are now monitored at country level



100%

of 2,148 Cells are using the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System

In data and statistics, in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR), the UN delivered strategic, results-focused support to strengthen Rwanda's national statistical systems and advance the country's development agenda. A key milestone was the successful completion and dissemination of the 5th Population and Housing Census (PHC) in 2022 — the country's first digital census—. With UN support, the census process improved data quality, accelerated analysis, and highlighted key demographic shifts, including a population increase from 10.5 to 13.3 million and a decrease in the proportion of youth under 30 from 70.3% to 65.3%, alongside improvements in life expectancy and fertility rates.

This period also saw dissemination of the 2019–2020 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and preparation for the 2024–2025 round, reinforcing national capacity in survey methodology, tools, and stakeholder engagement. The STEPS 2022 survey provided crucial data on non-communicable disease risk factors, while the first WASH Index Report expanded insights in water, sanitation, and hygiene services. A new data quality control system was deployed to strengthen real-time validation and improve survey accuracy, benefiting key exercises such as EICV7 (Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey), the Labor Force Survey, and RDHS-7 (Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey). The Rwanda Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) System was also strengthened, incorporating verbal autopsy and medical certification tools to improve mortality data.





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1,635

of women entrepreneurs with improved business development and management skills.⁴



300

women gained financial access through 10 Voluntary Savings and Loans Groups

In climate resilience, significant progress has been made in advancing climate resilience and sustainable economic growth in Rwanda. The programme surpassed its job creation target by generating 620 new jobs, exceeding the target of 500. Additionally, 697 individuals, primarily women and persons with disabilities, benefited from training and support aimed at economic empowerment and financial inclusion. Although the target was 950, the trained individuals are expected to pass on their skills to others in their communities.

Among the key achievements, informal tailors received training in business planning, digital marketing, and e-commerce, while tailors from 20 cooperatives enhanced their online sales through advanced business and financial literacy. In entrepreneurship, 193 women received vocational and financial literacy training, and 27 women were successfully linked to regional and international markets through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Institutionally, the programme on Sustainable Cities contributed to the review of Rwanda's Urban and Rural Settlement Sector Strategic Plan and supported the development of Kigali's participatory neighbourhood plan. The programme also introduced the City Prosperity Index (CPI), which tracks urban performance through 71 indicators. The programme further supported gender-based violence (GBV) prevention by training men in Nyarugenge District to promote a culture of protection for women and girls. In transport, the programme developed the Kigali Low-Carbon Mobility Action Plan and advanced the Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) Master Plan. It also introduced air quality monitoring systems with the Ministry of Environment (MoE), REMA, and MININFRA to address urban pollution.

⁴Target: 950

⁵Target: 10,000



12,315

individuals trained in gender budgeting, mainstreaming and result-based management⁵



+12,336

stakeholder engaged through Gender Accountability Dialogues and Gender Responsive Villages.



+30,000

entrepreneurs accessed finance and market opportunities.

In advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, more than 7,500 women have been empowered across key sectors, including governance, political parties, media, civil society, and the private sector. It strengthened women's leadership capacities, leading to notable political gains, including increased representation in district councils, the Chamber of Deputies (63.75%), and the Senate (53.8%). The establishment of women's wings in all political parties and the launch of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) Rwanda chapter further amplified advocacy efforts.

However, despite progress, cultural barriers continue to limit women's full participation in leadership across sectors. Institutional reforms, including restructuring the National Gender Cluster and revising critical legal frameworks like the Family Law, strengthened gender accountability mechanisms. Nonetheless, challenges persist in gender-budget tracking, necessitating dedicated monitoring tools. Community awareness campaigns also expanded, with 265 individuals from media and cooperative sectors trained to promote positive gender narratives, leading to the adoption of gender-sensitive policies across 40 media houses.

The Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment facilitated more inclusive governance processes, engaging stakeholders through platforms like Gender Accountability Dialogues and Gender-Responsive Villages. These interventions improved gender-responsive local planning, enhanced service delivery for GBV survivors, and strengthened monitoring of gender commitments across 27 districts through tools like the Gender Management Information System (GMIS). Media campaigns and national advocacy initiatives further supported evidence-based planning and increased institutional oversight, consolidating a shift from awareness to action on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Initiatives to inclusive and sustainable growth included startup grants, vocational training, and financial literacy programmes, fostering women's economic independence and formal financial engagement. Through the Gender Equality Seal (GES) initiative, 30 institutions improved workplace gender equality practices. Finally, resilience to violence and shocks was strengthened through GBV prevention campaigns, survivor support services across 48 Isange One-Stop Centres, and youth engagement activities, although persistent harmful norms and economic dependence continue to challenge progress.



23,919

(56% women; 44% men)
have increased
entrepreneurship skills⁶



1,084,650

youth have increased
awareness of available
health services⁷



45,800

jobs created through
YouthConnekt
(cumulative)⁸

Between 2019 and 2024, the Joint Youth Programme (JYP) significantly contributed to economic empowerment through initiatives such as YouthConnekt, Eco-brigade, and entrepreneurship support. Technical and financial assistance was provided to 142 youth-led SMEs through YouthConnekt and the Youth Resilience Fund, generating 2,599 jobs. Additionally, Generation Unlimited supported 7,600 young people with career guidance, job readiness training, and school-to-work transition, empowering them to build better futures.

In the area of health empowerment, the iAccelerator Initiative supported over 75 youth-led sexual and reproductive health (SRH) solutions, providing seed funding and technical support to scale their impact. The programme also reached over 800,000 adolescents with HIV prevention and testing education via peer-led communication, community radio, and digital platforms. Healthcare providers and teachers were trained in SRH education and service provision, strengthening the capacity to address the health needs of young people.

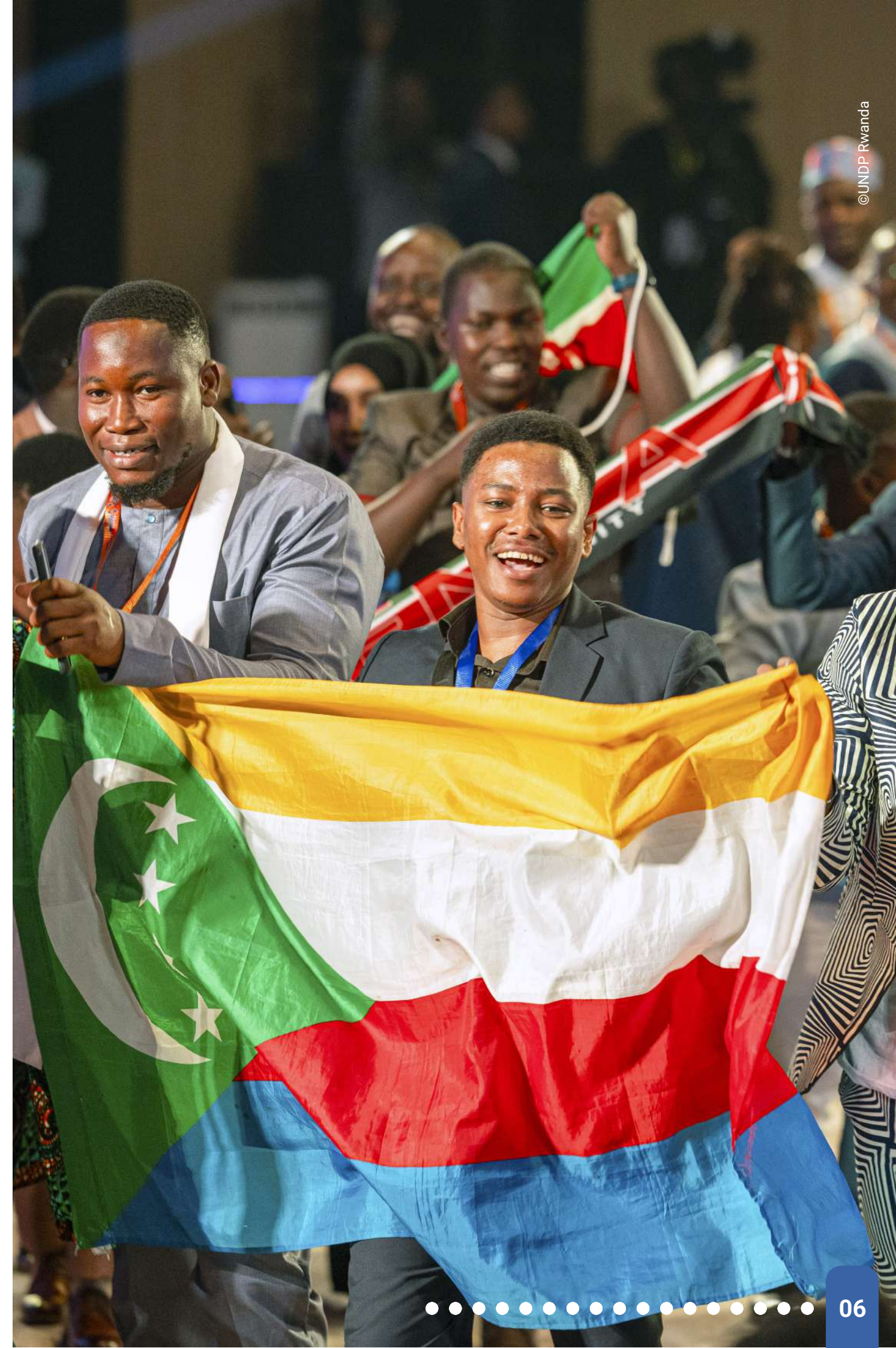
During the COVID-19 pandemic, the JYP facilitated national awareness campaigns that encouraged youth to adhere to health guidelines and stay productive. Handwashing stations were established at national youth centers, contributing to the promotion of public health. Moreover, the programme supported over 150 young innovators and entrepreneurs, helping them develop resilience and create COVID-19 response solutions.

Regionally, the JYP played a pivotal role in organizing the YouthConnekt Africa Summit, supporting five editions of the event and engaging over 30,000 young people from across the continent, fostering cross-border collaboration and empowerment.

⁶Target: 3,600

⁷Target: 1,000,000

⁸Target: 24,209



IV. CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNT & BEST PRACTICES.



1. Data and Evidence Systems

Challenges in data quality, such as maternal mortality estimates, undermined evidence-based planning and resulted in missed opportunities for policy impact. COVID-19 disrupted survey timelines, and limited technical capacity, alongside declining UN agency funding, further constrained progress.

Lessons learned include the value of South-South cooperation, which improved the quality and speed of census work, and the strategic use of digital technologies, which accelerated data processing and release. Gap analyses helped refine program focus, and national ownership—through institutions like NISR and participation in The Third National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS3) coordination—proved critical for sustainability.

2. Gender Equality and Social Norms

Persistent gender disparities in food security, economic participation, and decision-making were exacerbated by cultural norms and fears related to gender-based violence. Women's unpaid care burdens reduced their engagement in productive work, and women-led MSMEs faced structural and social constraints.

Key lessons included the importance of gender-transformative approaches (like Gender Action Learning Systems, Farmer Field and Life Schools, Village Savings and Loan Associations) that actively shift social norms and promote agency. Community-driven strategies amplified women's voices and impact. Programs that integrated gender equality from the outset—and worked closely with institutions such as MIGEPROF and MINAGRI—were more likely to foster ownership and long-term change.

3. Economic Empowerment and MSME Development

MSMEs faced structural barriers such as limited access to credit, weak financial literacy, and low capacity to develop viable business plans. Market and digital access gaps further limited resilience and growth, especially for women-led enterprises.

In response, the programme facilitated targeted capacity building, improved MSME-finance collaboration, and introduced tailored advisory support. Lessons highlight the need for inclusive, gender-sensitive support, digital literacy training, and policy advocacy for MSME-friendly financial products. Building these foundations was essential for long-term sustainability and economic inclusion.

4. Youth Employment and Innovation

Weak coordination among sectors and insufficient private sector engagement slowed youth employment initiatives. Efforts to integrate Arts and Creative Industries into job creation faced systemic challenges, and resource mobilization remained limited.

Key takeaways included the need for a holistic approach to youth entrepreneurship, blending health, education, and economic strategies. Strong partnerships with ministries, foundations, and private actors enabled impactful training and mentorship. Large-scale platforms like the YouthConnekt Africa Summit showcased how policy dialogue and investment commitments can catalyze systemic change.

5. Urbanization and Sustainable Cities

Delays in coordination, high staff turnover, and potential policy misalignment posed risks to urban resilience programming. Funding uncertainties also challenged the continuity of infrastructure and climate initiatives.

The programme adapted through flexible management and recruitment of additional expertise. Lessons learned emphasized the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships, community engagement, and adaptive planning to improve resilience, efficiency, and long-term urban sustainability.

6. Nutrition and Multisectoral Programming

Initial implementation delays required no-cost extensions and tighter alignment with Rwanda's national stunting and nutrition strategy. Fragmentation early on limited coherence and slowed delivery.

However, integrated and complementary interventions targeting the same populations proved highly effective. District-level ownership, combined with coordinated planning and gap analyses, strengthened program efficiency and long-term sustainability under the Delivering as One approach.

V. HUMAN INTEREST STORIES



YOUTH HAVE INCREASED ACCESS TO HEALTH INFORMATION AND SERVICES.

At the age of 16, Laëtitia Iradukunda, Kirehe District faced a reality no child should endure. Raped and impregnated by a man she considered a friend, she gave birth to a baby boy, Aldo, who is now four years old.

Teenage pregnancy is an unacceptable norm, so when the news reached home, it sparked a wave of disappointment and relentless blame from her parents and siblings which compounded the ill effects of her trauma, causing emotional distress, social isolation, and low self-esteem issues. She was left utterly distraught and dropped out of school, battling mental health issues amidst the turmoil.

Through an integrated community-based programme supported by UNICEF, RBC, and local CSOs, Laëtitia received support from Peer Support Volunteers (PSVs) who facilitated discussions on mental health struggles and related areas such as SRH, HIV, nutrition, abuse, poverty, conflict, but also on how to improve her life by teaching her about money, job skills, and how to start a business.

Laëtitia found healing, support, valuable learning experiences, and an improved livelihood through this initiative.

680 peer support volunteers (390 female, 290 male) were trained through the programme in soft skills, SRH, HIV awareness, nutrition, abuse, etc. to support youth like Laëtitia.

"My parents eventually let me go back to school. I finished high school and learned about a programme that helps teenage mothers and adolescents, so I decided to join this small group of teenage mothers like me in our district. PSVs helped us learn about mental health, sexual and reproductive health, how to take care of myself and my child. They counseled us on our mental health and provided information, including orientation on available adolescent-friendly health services. I can now provide for my son, and I participate regularly in saving groups."



FROM THE STREETS TO BECOMING AN AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN

Twenty-year-old Akimana Yvonne, formerly a street child from Muhanga district, is defying gender stereotypes by pursuing a career in automotive mechanics at Gahogo Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Supported through the Turashoboye project, funded by the Joint Programme on Gender and implemented by the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) Rwanda, Akimana transitioned from selling fruits on the streets to becoming a mechanic. The program, which enhances livelihoods for vulnerable women such as teen mothers, street children, and female sex workers, has empowered over 512 individuals—including 150 young women transitioning to formal, stable businesses.

Despite societal discouragement, Akimana followed her passion for cars and now earns 3,000 Rwf daily working in a garage. "I've gotten remarks like, 'You're not going to be able to cut it,' but I didn't let that stop me," she shared. Her story reflects the transformative impact of the program, which also provides training in SRHR, financial literacy, and business management. District officer Nyiratunga Ephigenie commended Joint Programme on Gender's and YWCA Rwanda's efforts in reducing youth unemployment and alleviating economic distress.



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