



AK2 SUCCESS STORIES

A few of the student,
teacher, and
government faces
behind AK2's
success



AK2 CASE STUDY: PASCASIE, A YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR



Pascasie (center) with her parents and AK2 trainer

Pascasie is from Munyina, a rural town in southern Rwanda. She recently completed her secondary school studies in mathematics, chemistry, and biology at GS Munyina, a local public school. It was here, in her entrepreneurship classes, where she encountered the Akazi Kanoze 2 curriculum.

When she started learning the AK2 modules, she wasn't sure of its benefits. But looking back, she says those lessons were some of the most useful information she gained from her secondary studies.

After graduating, Pascasie decided to start a business venture in vegetable production and trading. Her parents agreed to give her a small plot of land where she began growing

vegetables like tomatoes and cabbage, which she sells at the local market.

With knowledge gained from AK2, she decided to expand and diversify her business, saving the revenue from her vegetable sales to use as capital in the future. That capital enabled her to travel to small markets in more rural areas and buy vegetables which she then brings to Muhanga, the largest urban center in her area, to sell at higher prices to make a profit. Pascasie is able to make a sustainable monthly income, which has allowed her to afford purchases such as health insurance for herself and her family.

Prior to participating in AK2, Pascasie said she was ashamed to go into farming, instead planning to look for a government or other formal sector job after graduation. But AK2 opened her mind to other possibilities. She began to see cultivation in a much different way and became interested in self-employment.

Now she wants to hone her entrepreneurial skills and she dreams of becoming a tailor. She is currently saving money from her vegetable business to enroll in tailoring training. Pascasie notes that this dream began with her AK2 classes where she learned how

to survey market demand. She foresees tailoring becoming very important to the local economy because of a recent government policy banning importation of second hand clothing. Pascasie dreams of becoming an innovative tailor, designing a variety of styles to meet the tastes of her generation

Pascasie's mom is impressed by the change she has seen in her daughter since joining AK2.

"Before AK2, we didn't see the motivation and drive in Pascasie that she now has. We can't believe that she is out there, on her own initiative, farming and selling vegetables. She is so determined and works really hard. We also see that she is different than other girls her age. She is determined to make her own money and build her own future. That means a lot to us."

"She is determined to make her own money and build her own future. That means a lot to us." - Pascasie's mom

Emmanuel Kabano: An AK2 Success Story



Teachers in Rwanda serve as the backbone of the Akazi Kanoze 2 project – working every day to ensure that students have access to quality work readiness training, mentoring, and work-based learning opportunities.

Emmanuel Kabano is one of these hero teachers.

Kabano teaches General Paper and History at Groupe Scolaire Gatenga I, a secondary school in Kigali. But he is also passionate about entrepreneurship. So, when he was nominated by his school to attend an AK2 work readiness training, he was eager to participate.

Upon completing the training, he became a work readiness teacher at his school, extensively involved in training students on Work Based Learning, and regularly engaging with them to make sure they were getting the right work exposure. He also mentors students in the School to Work Transition (STWT) component of AK2, helping students find internships and making sure they are learning, and things are going well.

Kabano says the time he has invested has been well worth it. He has seen students who completed the program change their attitude and behavior and become leaders. They become more confident in themselves and more adept at problem solving. They can set and achieve short and long-term goals like gradually saving money.

He warmly remembers one student, Julian, who was particularly inspired by the entrepreneurship lessons. She saved up a little capital and started a business selling popcorn in the evenings after school. After gaining some income, Julian became interested in sewing, starting a second business sewing and selling kitenge bags. Kabano remains a mentor for Julian and is excited by how far she has come.

Kabano has seen the impact of AK2 not only on his students, but also on his own teaching. It has transformed and improved, reinforcing the learner-centered approach he learned from the new competency-based Rwandan curriculum. He has learned new teaching methods like integrating interactive elements such as energizers and group work to make his teaching more engaging. The students are benefiting.

“[AK2] has increased their eagerness to learn, made them participate more in class, and succeed – both in my classes and in other classes,” says Kabano.

AK2 is transforming students and their futures, and only dedicated teachers like Emmanuel Kabano are making that possible.

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--Emmanuel Kabano

An AK2 Case Study: Gisèle Ntakirutimana



Gisèle Ntakirutimana is a bold, well-spoken, passionate woman who works for the Workforce Development Authority which oversees all vocational (TVET) and technical (TSS) schools in Rwanda. Gisèle has been involved since the beginning of the Akazi Kanoze 2 (AK2) project, which has quickly become a model for scale-up success.

Gisèle began as a master trainer in Work Readiness Training (WRT) and, in collaboration with EDC and its partners, she helped conduct the first AK2 orientation trainings with school managers in the Eastern, Western, and Northern provinces. She went on to be trained and train others in Work Based Learning and School Based In-Service Training. In addition, Gisèle also led efforts to validate the work readiness curriculum.

Gisèle is enthusiastic about the tangible impact of the AK2 project.

“This project had a lot - a lot, a lot - of impact,” says Gisèle, who cites as an example the embedding the AK2 program into the TVET curriculum. She remembers when the work readiness training under AK1 was still extra-curricular, meaning that not every student received it, a real loss.

“The skills that [AK2] covers are very important and needed for students and other people to perform well in their work and daily life,” says Gisèle

Gisèle knows how important so-called ‘soft skills’ are in the workplace, but notes they are not usually taught, especially in technical schools. The result is that many students graduate with strong hard skills, but may be stereotyped as lacking in discipline or time management or other skills. Soft skills training is critical.

If she were in charge of national education in Rwanda, Gisèle jokes, she would begin teaching some AK2 training modules as early as nursery school to begin reinforcing these key skills at a young age.

In addition to learning these skills, Gisèle also stresses the importance of Work Based Learning (WBL) which helps students learn new talents and discover their interests, often igniting career aspirations they didn’t know they had. She thinks WBL could have a long-term impact, developing employees who have selected their jobs based on their passions, in turn making them perform much better in their work.

“The skills that [AK2] covers are very important and needed for students and other people to perform well in their work and daily life.” - Gisèle Ntakirutimana

Gisèle is also a firm believer in the entrepreneurship skills that youth are gaining through AK2, skills that encourage creating a business, in addition to looking for jobs. Gisèle thinks this will have a direct impact on the number of unemployed youth in Rwanda.

With all that has been accomplished under AK2, Gisèle is optimistic about the long-term impact Rwanda will see in youth development and employment. She hopes its initiatives will be given more time to develop. She’d also love to see TSS teachers trained in addition to those in TVET schools, and see further training for District and Sector Education Officers who are responsible for tracking teachers who have been trained in the curriculum so far.

There is still much work to be done to ensure that all students in Rwanda are work-ready when they leave school. However, the success of the AK2 scale up is important to celebrate, and even more so – to celebrate the dedicated leaders like Gisèle who made the scale-up possible.