AKAZI KANOZE 2
Scale & Sustainability

External Evaluation of the Integration of the Work Readiness Curriculum and School to Work Transition Program into the Rwandan Education System

OCTOBER 2017

DESCRIPTION OF AKAZI KANOZE 2

Akazi Kanoze 2 (AK2) is a Mastercard Foundation funded project implemented by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). AK2 builds on the success of the previous USAID funded Akazi Kanoze (AK) program which tested the viability of providing youth, in and out of school, with work readiness skills. The AK program piloted several variations of work readiness interventions for youth adapted for different contexts and target audiences. One variation, a 2012 pilot program where the work readiness training was delivered in-school in TVET institutions showed that this program could successfully be delivered in school. This model was identified in the Scale & Sustainability evaluation of the first AK project1 as a prime candidate for scale-up, and this program became the model for AK2.

The main objective of AK2 was to institutionalize work readiness training and school to work transition (STWT) programming. AK2 aimed to integrate these trainings into the Rwandan education system in both General Secondary Schools (GSS) through the Rwandan Education Board (REB) and Technical and Vocational Training Schools (TVET) through the Workforce Development Agency (WDA). AK2 also aimed to build the capacity of the Rwandan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to sustain the delivery of these programs nationally.

During AK2, EDC and its implementing partner organizations trained District and Sector education officers, school managers, and teachers primarily in the Southern Province and Kigali to deliver STWT programming and work readiness training, based on the Work Ready Now!

TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>WDA is established under MINEDUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>AK program starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>AK begins as an urban program for out-of-school youth in Kigali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>AK pilots in-school model of WRN! in TVET schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>AK expands to work with rural out-of-school youth in the Southern &amp; Eastern Provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>EDC wins a two-year Innovation for Education grant from the UK Department for International Development to train young women in work-readiness and early childhood education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>AK Scale and Sustainability Study1 recommends scaling up in-school model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>AKazi Kanoze 2, funded by the Mastercard Foundation, starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>USAID grants a 2-year extension to AK to incubate a local NGO, AKA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Work readiness is embedded in the national TVET curriculum as complementary modules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Throughout the REB curriculum revision process EDC staff work with MINEDUC to embed WRN! in Entrepreneurship subject curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>AKA Founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Work readiness is embedded in the national curricula as core or required content in both GSS and TVET schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>AK2 expands to schools in North, East and Western Provinces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>Senegal APTE project starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2024</td>
<td>EDC begins a USAID funded project, Huguka Dukore to provide out of school youth with work readiness skills and technical training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025</td>
<td>AK extension ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>EDC pilots the WBL approach to STWT programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2027</td>
<td>EDC pilots the School Based In-service approach to teacher training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2028</td>
<td>Akazi Kanoze 2 ends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. JBS International. Scale and Sustainability Study: The Akazi Kanoze Youth Education and Livelihoods Project in Rwanda. April 2014. Published by USAID.
In addition to absorbing new entrants to the labour market and creating jobs for those currently un- or under-employed, the Rwandan employment and entrepreneurship program has been designed to address persistent unemployment and underemployment. According to the World Bank, the current overall unemployment rate in Rwanda is 13.2%, and an additional 21% of the population is considered underemployed. By 2050, forecasters predict that the population of working-age individuals in Rwanda will reach 16 million — more than twice the size in 2015. Between 2015 and 2020, it is estimated that each year, more than 125,000 youth will join the labor force.1

The School to Work Transition (STWT) program was developed and refined during AK2 to fit the needs of the school systems. In the current iteration of the program, Work Based Learning (WBL) students identify opportunities to visit or shadow various workplaces, and set up short work experiences such as internships. Students can then pursue an employment opportunity at one of those workplaces, or pursue a more entrepreneurial approach and establish their own business. EDC also partnered with Catholic Relief Services throughout AK2 to help establish Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC groups) in schools in the Southern province. These groups provide an opportunity for students to develop startup capital for their own businesses, and they serve as a complement to the entrepreneurship components of work readiness training.

SCALING UP

This evaluation applies a framework for scaling up development interventions developed by Hartmann and Linn of the Brookings Institute. Hartmann and Linn define scaling up as: “Expanding, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programs or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people.”2 Figure 1 below shows key components of a scaling up pathway and how they relate to each other.2

Scaling-up requires drivers of scale, such as an innovative model, a clear vision of scale, strong leadership, favorable external factors, and incentives or systems of accountability. Attaining and sustaining scale also requires creating space to grow in each of the following domains: financial, political, policy, institutional capacity, partnerships, and learning. Strong Monitoring and Evaluation that includes feedback loops between learning and program design is also a critical to effective scaling.

SCALING UP WITHIN AKAZI KANOZE

This brief uses the Hartmann and Linn (2008) framework2 to reflect on how the AK2 program has scaled-up in Rwanda. The analysis presented here is based on information collected from key informant interviews, a thorough review of program documents, M&E data, and published literature on the AK and AK2 programs. EDC envisioned scaling up within AK2 as the institutionalization of work readiness training and school to work transition programming in general secondary schools and technical and vocational training schools nationwide in Rwanda. This includes integration of work readiness training into the national curriculum, adoption of school to work transition programming by MINEDUC and the increased capacity of MINEDUC to implement these programs. Scaling up within AK2 occurred in two dimensions:

- **Horizontal** – expansion from two initial provinces, the South and Kigali, to all five provinces in Rwanda.
- **Vertical** – expansion from a EDC-led intervention to a national program institutionalized within the Ministry of Education’s school curriculum.

SAVING EDC’S WORK READY NOW! CURRICULUM INTERNATIONALLY

APTE – Senegal (Projet de l’amélioration des performances de travail et d’entrepreneuriat)

In 2016, EDC with funding from the MasterCard Foundation, has taken on a new project to institutionalize the Work Ready Now! Curriculum into Senegal’s formal education system. The APTE program aims to train 30,000 youth and 1,575 teachers in 200 lower secondary schools and 50 TVET schools in work readiness skills.3

The AK project in Rwanda has served as a successful model of institutionalization of the Work Ready Now! Curriculum for the APTE Senegal project, and around the world. In addition to the projects in Senegal and Rwanda, EDC has implemented the Work Ready Now! Curriculum in over 20 countries. When the Work Ready Now! curriculum was being developed and piloted in the early years of AK, it was designed to fit in the Rwandan context, but with the flexibility to adapt to new cultural contexts. This flexibility in the program components, and the recognition that the need for work readiness training extends to many country settings, has created the space for the Work Ready Now! Curriculum to continue horizontally scaling into new countries.


YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE IN RWANDA

- Nearly 80% of Rwanda’s population is under the age of 35.1
- Between 2015 and 2020, it is estimated that each year, more than 125,000 youth will join the labor force.1
- By 2050, forecasters predict that the population of working-age individuals in Rwanda will reach 16 million – more than twice the size in 2014.1
- The current overall unemployment rate in Rwanda is 13.2%, and an additional 21% of the population is considered underemployed, measured by hours worked.2

In addition to absorbing new entrants to the labour market and creating jobs for those currently un- or under-employed, the Rwandan government, through the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2, aims to generate higher paying and more secure off-farm jobs for those already active in the labour force. It is critical that the young people currently entering the labor market be prepared to fill these jobs, or create their own. To achieve this, youth require technical specialties and possession of the soft skills critical to successful employment and entrepreneurship.
The AK and AK2 programs scaled up the delivery of work readiness training and STWT programming to youth throughout Rwanda. Figure 2, adapted from Cooley and Linn\(^1\), shows a theoretical framework of the impact of scaling a program over time. The impact of a program is the result of both the total number of individuals reached by the program, and the effect of the program on each individual. The effect size of a program is influenced by both the content, and the mode of delivery. Impact evaluations of both AK and AK2 showed a significant effect of the content of the programs, when delivery was controlled by EDC. While the content has not changed, the scaled mode of delivery has increased dramatically over time, but there is a risk that going forward, the effect on individuals might be diluted under the new mode of delivery.

Figure 2: Scaling up with successive projects

Impact

scale target

scaling up pathway

traditional project

Project 1

Project 2

Project 3

Innovation

Learning

Scaling up

Time

Implementing Partners

To extend the reach of AK2, EDC worked with implementing partner organizations who were familiar with each region to carry out different components of the program. Below is a summary of the role of each of the implementing partner organizations:

**Akazi Kanoze Access:** Originating from EDC and the AK program, this local NGO collaborated with EDC, REB, and WDA to integrate WRN! into the national curriculum. They also trained master trainers, teachers, and REB and WDA staff on the WRN! curriculum and WBL program. In addition, they function as the certification entity for youth and trainers in the WRN! curriculum, and maintain the AK network of partner organizations.

**Health Poverty Action:** They trained teachers on the WRN! curriculum, monitored implementation and quality of work readiness training, supported schools and school liaison officers in implementing the STWT/WBL programming, and convened District Steering Committees in the Huye, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, and Gisagara districts in the Southern Province.

**AVSI Foundation:** They trained teachers on the WRN! curriculum, monitored implementation and quality of work readiness training, supported schools and school liaison officers in implementing the STWT/WBL programming, and convened District Steering Committees in the Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhongo, and Nyanza districts in the Southern Province. In addition, they implemented the WRN! components of the program in the Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge districts.

**Frontiers Adventures Great Lakes:** They collaborated with EDC to develop the STWT programming, and supported schools and school liaison officers in implementing the STWT/WBL programming in the Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge Districts in Kigali Province.

**Catholic Relief Services:** They trained teachers and students on creating and conducting SILC groups, and monitored implementation of these groups in the Southern province.

---

\(^1\) Larry Cooley and Johannes F Linn. Taking innovations to scale: Methods, Applications and Lessons. Results for Development and Management Systems International. September 2014.
What was the innovation?
- For the STWT programming, there was not a clear vision at the beginning. Instead, AK2 was used as a learning opportunity to refine a model that could be institutionalized.
- AK2 benefited from strong leadership within EDC that drove forward institutionalization. Many of the leaders within EDC (and later, Akazi Kanoze Access) believed deeply in the value and impact of the program, understood what work readiness programming aligned with the nationally priorities, and could clearly communicate that vision to others.
- Throughout AK and AK2, EDC built awareness around the importance of soft skills training, particularly within MINEDUC. By training many of the staff at MINEDUC on the work readiness curriculum, continuously advocating for the need of this type of program, and showing the impact the program could have on youth livelihoods, they have helped develop buy-in to the importance of teaching soft skills.
- Officials in MINEDUC served as external champions of the program, when they saw the success of the AK program, they invited EDC to partner with them in scaling and integrating work readiness training into their structure. This government support was an essential driver of scale and critical to the ability of the AK and AK2 programs to achieve that scale.
- In both AK and AK2, graduates of the program and employers who have hosted AK or AK2 students often acted as advocates of the program by sharing their experiences. This created demand from other students, teachers, and employers to expand the reach of the programs.

What capacity is needed within Rwandan Ministry of Education to support sustained scaling?
- From the short time frame of the project, AK2 has not yet been able to build the independently functioning systems around these frameworks that are required to sustain the programs. For example, Steering Committees were established in each District by Implementing Partners to build public-private partnerships and networks and to identify bridging education experience for youth. While they were widely viewed as critical to getting buy-in from a variety of stakeholders in each community, there is no clear incentive or accountability structure in place to sustain them beyond the end of AK2.

What were the evaluation and monitoring structures in place to assess both impact and the scaling up process?
- The AK2 monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan included targets for measuring both impact and scaling of the work.

What was the evidence for its success?
- Several pilot programs took place during AK, developing an evidence base for the success of WRN! in a variety of contexts, including with in-school youth. The evidence from these pilot programs was critical to getting buy-in for the program as it scaled nationally for example.
- The pilot in the NGET schools in 2012 provided some evidence that an in-school model of work readiness training would work, which was the model then scaled in AK2.
- A pilot of the WBL program in 2016 provided evidence this model would be a successful adaptation of the STWT program.
- Both AK and AK2 included randomized control trial evaluations, which provided strong evidence that the WRN! curriculum in combination with STWT programming as delivered by EDC, were clearly associated with an improvement in work readiness skills and in employers' ratings among participating youth.
- However, there is a gap in the evidence of program impact around the effect of the change in format of delivery of the work readiness training that occurred during the institutionalization process – from a one-year extracurricular program to content spread across three years taught within the entrepreneurship course, and not necessarily accompanied by STWT programming.

Was there evidence for institutionalization?
- For the WRN! curriculum there was a clear vision for and path to institutionalization through integration into the national curriculum, and this goal was explicitly articulated at the program’s outset.
- For the STWT programming, there was not a clear vision at the beginning for how the program could be institutionalized, particularly within general secondary schools. Instead, AK2 was used as a learning opportunity to refine a model that could be institutionalized.

What was the innovation?
- AK2 benefited from strong leadership within EDC that drove forward institutionalization. Many of the leaders within EDC (and later, Akazi Kanoze Access) believed deeply in the value and impact of the program, understood what work readiness programming aligned with the nationally priorities, and could clearly communicate that vision to others.
- Throughout AK and AK2, EDC built awareness around the importance of soft skills training, particularly within MINEDUC. By training many of the staff at MINEDUC on the work readiness curriculum, continuously advocating for the need of this type of program, and showing the impact the program could have on youth livelihoods, they have helped develop buy-in to the importance of teaching soft skills.
- Officials in MINEDUC served as external champions of the program, when they saw the success of the AK program, they invited EDC to partner with them in scaling and integrating work readiness training into their structure. This government support was an essential driver of scale and critical to the ability of the AK and AK2 programs to achieve that scale.
- In both AK and AK2, graduates of the program and employers who have hosted AK or AK2 students often acted as advocates of the program by sharing their experiences. This created demand from other students, teachers, and employers to expand the reach of the programs.

What external factors influenced institutionalization?
- The timing of the REB national curricula review process created a clear mechanism through which institutionalization of WRN! into the national curriculum could occur.
- The private sector confirmed that AK2 developed the soft skills and work readiness skills critically needed in the labor market.
readiness curriculum and work based learning, as institutionalization of these components was a primary objective of the AK2 program.

- The information collected from monitoring and evaluation was used to improve program implementation. For example, information about the challenges in the STWT programming was used to create WBL. And, data from teacher observations during the program was used to inform future teacher training and school based in-service training.

LESSONS LEARNED

Innovation and experimentation are critical to successful scaling up: The implementation of the work readiness training in a variety of contexts and formats during AK provided valuable learning opportunities that were later used to refine the model that would be scaled during Akazi Kanoze 2. Some examples include:

- The innovations within the STWT programming allowed for the creation of a work-based learning model that worked more sustainably in the Rwandan context.
- When it became clear that teacher training on the work readiness content would be a limiting factor to the scaling of the program, EDC began working with other development partners to utilize the School Based In-Service model to deliver training.

Strong branding can facilitate program scaling: In their years of work in Rwanda, EDC excelled at branding the Akazi Kanoze program. In retaining the name in Akazi Kanoze 2, they were able to retain the goodwill, recognition, and understanding associated with AK throughout the second project.

It’s never too early to think about assessment: Assessing soft skills like work readiness that are taught using learner-centered methods requires a different set of tools than assessment of hard skills, and may require a paradigm shift in both the format of assessment and in the relationship between the learner and educator. Because this shift may take a long time to implement, it is critical to start developing assessment tools and capacity to create and conduct soft skills assessment early.

Engaging parents early is critical in programs for secondary school students: When parents were engaged early in the process in AK2, they understood how students could benefit and were not only able to support their children through the program, but were also often instrumental in connecting them with work-based learning opportunities. One method of engaging parents that was successful in many areas was working through the Parent Teacher Associations at each school.

Involving the Private Sector at the beginning will facilitate scale up: EDC began involving the private sector in the nascent stages of the project, to get their perspective on what skills and technical gaps exist in the workforce. They continued to involve the private sector throughout, during development of WRN! and the STWT programming, and when they were identifying employment or internship opportunities for students. Having their buy-in at all stages was critical. Private sector representatives as well as others have suggested they could have been engaged even more continuously, and farther in advance of providing work experiences for students.

Buy-in is needed at all levels: EDC was successful at getting buy-in from government officials whose approval is required, and from students, teachers, and employers who were participants in the programs. However, there was a gap at the beginning of AK2 in buy-in from the middle officials – District and Sector education officers and school managers. When these leaders were better integrated into the steering and advisory committees and understood the value of the AK2 programs to students, their schools, and their regions, they were better able and motivated to facilitate partnerships with the private sector, ensure time in the school and teacher schedules was available for the program, and monitor implementation of the program.

The work readiness curriculum speaks for itself: One of the most common methods EDC used to get buy in for the program was to train potential advocates in the WRN! curriculum. For example, to gain the buy-in of the members of the REB entrepreneurship subject curriculum review committee during revision process, EDC trained the entire committee, as well as other leaders in REB on the curriculum, so that they understood the concept and value of work readiness skills. While soft skills and “work readiness” may be a difficult concept to communicate, once people have gone through the modules and exercises, they understand the practical value. In addition, throughout AK and AK2, one of the biggest drivers of the program scale up has been the satisfied students and employers who share with others their experience as participants, or with graduates, of the program.

Are assessment systems in place going forward to ensure quality in delivery?

- EDC has worked with WDA to create assessment tools for the WRN! core models, but not for WBL. Currently, within REB no specific guidelines exist for assessment of work readiness skills, so assessment will likely follow their traditional format with questions on the work readiness content appearing in the national exam.
- Quality assurance of work readiness training will now follow the usual MINEDUC procedures for ensuring quality in delivery of curriculum. However, currently there are limited structures within MINEDUC to assess soft skills under the work readiness program and ensure high quality delivery of content across all schools.

This report was commissioned by EDC, funded by Mastercard Foundation and prepared by Laterite Ltd.