How do we address youth unemployment in Rwanda?

Nearly 40% of Rwanda's population are youth between the ages of 14 - 30. This presents a tremendous opportunity for the country. However, with a growing, yet small formal sector, nearly 65% of these youth are unemployed. USAID Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze is helping to address this challenge by improving youth workforce readiness and employment opportunities for thousands of youth across Rwanda.

“I know that finding job opportunities for young people is what Rwandans want. It’s what your government wants, what your people want, and what your students want. And that’s a hard challenge.”

- US Ambassador Peter Vrooman
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— Through the HDAK program, vulnerable youth learn transferable soft skills and technical vocational skills, while gaining work experience through work-based learning (WBL) to help prepare them to successfully enter the labor market. Youth also learn important family planning, reproductive health, and social inclusion concepts.

— HDAK prepares male and female youth for viable self-employment options by delivering entrepreneurship training and identifying agriculture value chain opportunities and linkages to growth markets. Youth are also guided to access group saving and loan services and are offered information on loan products available through local financial service providers.

— HDAK supports the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and the Ministry of Youth (MINIYOUTH) to develop a more coordinated workforce development delivery system by strengthening networks between public and private workforce actors, leveraging investments with development partners, and improving the capacity of local implementing partners to provide high-quality youth employment services.

USAID Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze (HDAK) will provide 40,000 youth with market-relevant employability skills, leading to new or better employment by scaling up workforce development interventions that have proven successful across 25 districts nationwide.
USAID Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze Geographic Coverage

Year 1 Districts (8):
Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge, Bugesera, Ruhango, Kamonyi, Rwamagana, Nyanza

Year 2 Districts Added (12):
Huye, Rulindo, Bucero, Musanze, Nyabihu, Rubavu, Muhanga, Nyamagabe, Gicumbi, Ngoma, Kayonza, Gisagara

Year 3 Districts Added (3):
Gatsibo, Kirehe, Nyaruguru

23 Total Districts
(As of October 1, 2018)
Year 2 (Fiscal Year 2018) of HDAK saw rapid program expansion including increased youth access to skills training and strengthened delivery systems with the Government of Rwanda (GOR), private sector, and civil society partners.

By the close of Year 2, HDAK work readiness programs for vulnerable youth expanded from 3,428 youth enrolled in 8 initial districts to 15,850 youth enrolled across 23 of Rwanda’s 30 districts.

During Year 2, HDAK stepped up capacity building of partner institutions, leveraged resources from other development partners, and expanding networks of government, civil society and private sector actors to strengthen Rwanda’s workforce development delivery systems.

Strengthening local capacity and promoting local solutions has been emphasized by USAID as a “journey to self-reliance, defined as a country’s ability to plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve its own development challenges.”

HDAK has continued to promote self-reliance of implementing partners by strengthening their technical and organizational capacity. HDAK has also developed youth support networks among local government, private sector and development partners to ensure that high quality services are available and maintained on the community level.

While supporting Rwanda’s National Employment (NEP) Program to scale up and institutionalize HDAK project innovations, during the past year, HDAK trained 22 local organizations to assess and share local labor market data and deliver market-relevant employment preparation and job intermediation services as prerequisites to connecting vulnerable youth to stable work and self-employment.

In Year 3, HDAK will expand the delivery of capacity building to empower local organizations to implement and maintain high-quality, innovative workforce development programs that provide vulnerable youth with market-driven employability skills for new or better employment.
A main expected outcome of the HDAK program is to coordinate diverse stakeholders to provide youth with increased access to market relevant training and accompaniment support towards securing meaningful employment where youth can grow and contribute to the Rwandan economy and to their communities. This includes matching the supply of employment skills training programs with labor market demand based on regularly updated local labor market assessment data. Additionally, HDAK increases information for vulnerable youth about family planning and reproductive health services.
During Year 2 of HDAK, 12,422 new youth (4,481 M ; 7,941 F) enrolled in the foundational Work Ready Now! Training package as a result of rapid program expansion by 22 Implementing Partners. 15,850 cumulative youth (5,687 M ; 10,163 F) to date have enrolled in the HDAK program.

The soft skills covered in the Work Ready Now! curriculum are proven to transform youth knowledge, attitudes and behaviors, and thus are in high demand among private sector employers, government Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs and from youth themselves.
Technical Training

By the close of Year 2, 7,827 HDAK youth had participated in technical skills training. As displayed below, HDAK youth attended technical training courses in a variety of trades including agribusiness, construction, hairdressing, hospitality, and tourism. Different trades were offered per IP based on the local labor market assessments they conducted.

Percentage of Youth Enrolled in Technical Training by Trade

- Agribusiness 35%
- Hair Dressing 12%
- Construction (Masonry, Welding, Carpentry) 19%
- Tailoring 11%
- Other (Hospitality, Automechanics, Leather works) 16%
- Culinary Arts 7%

Why is it important to conduct regular local labor market assessments?

To re-emphasize the importance of market driven training, during year two HDAK developed a Local Labor Market Assessment (LLMA) tool and approach and trained all Implementing Partners (IPs) on its use. HDAK requires that each IP conduct an LLMA to ensure that the selection of technical training options is aligned with current market data on local employment opportunities available to youth. This approach helps guarantee that youth graduating from HDAK are not only work ready, they are equipped with the skills they need to enter high demand fields.

"Before I joined Huguka Dukore, I had many things I desired for my life, but I felt like I didn’t know how to reach those goals. But, my mindset changed so much after learning WRN! After learning financial fitness, I felt confident that I can start with a small amount of money, but still reach very far – which is something I didn’t know before. I decided to go for hairdressing technical training as I know that having those hard skills combined with my interest in entrepreneurship, I would be able to reach my goals of self-employment. After I complete my training in hairdressing, I plan to look for work and start saving up money. Then I ultimately dream of opening my own salon."

- Jacques, Kinyinya

"After doing WRN! I decided to join agribusiness technical training as I knew agriculture was an economic sector I could easily make money in. Previously I knew how to farm crops common to my area, but in the training I gained more specialized knowledge like how to choose the right type of seed. Most people in my area don’t grow tomatoes and eggplant because they are riskier crops. However, the results we found with the Holland Greentech seeds we used in the training was huge. With this knowledge I’ve already made income in the short-term and know my crops will continue to be much more competitive than others in the area. I now plan to join higher levels of the value chain and also save so I can start my own sewing business to supplement my agriculture income."

- Venantie, Kamonyi
Youth participating in pair activity during focus group discussion

"I gave birth to a child eight months ago because I didn't know I have a say in my own reproductive health. My next child will come when I say I am ready."

- Reflection from a female participant in an HDAK focus group discussion

8,220 ♂

youth received training on reproductive health and family planning as part of the WRN! training.

Focus group discussions conducted with youth revealed increased confidence among both male and female youth around sexual reproductive health messages.
Youth Accompaniment Strategy Developed

During Year 2, the HDAK program team developed a Youth Accompaniment methodology to provide peer-to-peer support and coaching. IP officers support youth not only during the WRNI training activities but also during the transition periods as youth find placement in employment or develop self-employment opportunities. This HDAK innovation is recognized as a Year 2 success that is now in demand by NEP and other development partner TVET programs.

Youth Leadership Program Launched

HDAK launched the innovative Youth Leadership Program during Year 2 of program implementation. Youth are empowered to serve as role models, to facilitate peer-to-peer accompaniment and employment support, and to coordinate youth-led civic engagement activities within their respective communities. Youth leadership is the centerpiece within the HDAK youth accompaniment methodology which is designed to provide support to thousands of youth as they seek to achieve the individual employment goals and personal development plans they set during their WRNI training.

Initial 10-Week Pilot of Youth Leadership Program

- **Coverage**: An initial 10-week pilot reached over 1,000 youth in 4 districts of Rwanda: Nyarugenge, Kamonyi, Ruhango, and Rubavu.
- **Youth Leaders**: 64 youth leaders were trained representing 45 youth groups each made up of 25 youth.
- **Group Activity**: 34 groups started income generating activities.
- **Employment**: 169 youth secured wage-employment.
- **Savings**: 45 SILC (Savings and Internal Lending Communities) groups were formed.
- **Community**: 49 community projects were completed.
6,149 youth reported new or better employment after completing HDAK employability skills training and accompaniment support.

Employment Outcomes

“...I am so proud of what my group has accomplished. Of our 47 members, each one of us has an income generating activity and some have already found paid work. We’ve saved together and started our own soybean processing factory. We’ve also built bathrooms for vulnerable families in our community. It feels good to give back to our community and move forward in our lives together.”

- Ruth, Ruhango, HDAK Youth Leader

I am now a shoemaker.

Ernestine, Nyarugenge

I am now a patron at a secondary school.

Cylvine, Kamonyi

I am now a waitress.

Ingabire, Kayonza

I am now a carpenter.

Egide, Nyarugenge

I am now working at Irembo, a government service.

Chantal, Ruhango
Due to the challenges of securing stable employment for thousands of vulnerable youth with low education levels within Rwanda’s limited formal employment sector, HDAK continues to focus on increasing access to viable self-employment options for youth. The project is linking many rural youth to livelihood options across agriculture value chains and is involving youth in savings and lending groups that provide initial capital for small business start-ups.
Entrepreneurship Training

5,430 youth participated in entrepreneurship training

Be Your Own Boss

4,424 youth were trained in Be Your Own Boss (BYOB) which is EDC's foundational entrepreneurship curriculum.

Due to the high level of popularity, HDAK is now offering BYOB to all youth. The complementary entrepreneurship training is provided directly after youth complete the foundational WRN! curriculum.

GROW Your Own Business

1,006 Akazi Kanoze alumni were trained in this curriculum during Year 2.

GROW Course Outline

- Introduction to the GROW training
- Customer Service and Customer Management
- Increasing my Customer Base
- Business and Personal Finance
- Money In – Money Out
- Budgeting

GROW Your Own Business is a new curriculum designed as an advanced entrepreneurship program for youth who already have their own small businesses where there is potential for expansion.
3,596 youth started their own businesses during Year 2.

3,321 youth were linked to agriculture value chains and 1,404 youth received agriculture start-up kits.

"Youth can be the cornerstone - imagine if each one of you employed 5 people. Did you know that small enterprises employ 95% of people in Rwanda?"

- Rosemary Mbabazi, Minister of Youth and ICT, Speaking at an Esther’s Aid (an HDAK IP) graduation

I’m happy to be reaching my self-employment goals. I’m working in the upper end of the value chain selling produce between large sellers and small sellers. I also sell milk from the cow I’ve bought and am planning to open my own canteen very soon.

Eric, Nyarugenge

After learning financial management during my Work Ready Now! training, I started saving money from the bananas I used to grow and sell. Now I’m proud to say I have a flourishing pig business.

Anitha, Kayonza

I never knew I could turn animal rearing into an income earning business until I attended the HDAK trainings. I am now one of the best youth in bee production in my area and also have saved and bought chickens, pigs, and a cow. I’m excited about where my life is heading.

Alexander, Ruhango
HDAK youth across Rwanda are accessing financial services

Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) are an innovative group savings and lending approach developed by CRS and used to empower thousands of youth throughout Rwanda and other countries across Africa.

7,861 youth participated in 378 total SILC groups.

46,901,500 (approximately USD $53,602) SILC savings have been mobilized.

1,594 HDAK youth opened accounts with formal financial services providers (FSPs).

102 Youth received loans from FSPs.

4,594 youth have used mobile money systems as part of saving mobilization.

1,719 Income Generating Activities (IGAs) started with SILC Loans.

- Agriculture: 40%
- Small Businesses: 33%
- Livestock: 23%
- Handicrafts: 2%
What kind of business are you saving for?
A horticulture agribusiness. I’m going to start with carrots.
Wow!
How much does that cost?
I’d like to buy carrot seed.
I need to broadcast fertilizer at 132 kg/acre. The sowing depth should be the size of 2 seeds. I need to space 20 cm by 5 cm. Apply fertilizers in Week 2 & 4. Water after putting fertilizer. 3 months later…

Alice’s cost of production:
Congratulations on your loan! Now you can start. How big of an area will you plant?
1/8 ha. I want to start small and make sure I do everything right. Then I will expand later.

From my family. But I also attended a field day demo from Holland Greentech and they taught me some good practices.

Where did you learn to grow carrots?
Congratulations Alice! You have completed “Work Read Now! and Be Your Own Boss training!” And now that you have joined a saving group I think you are ready to start your own business.

Alice’s Carrot Production Business
First make uniform beds. The best time to sow carrots is in the late afternoon…

Holland Greentech
Of course! I’d recommend Sevia because it is high yield & disease resistant. You will also need fertilizers.

Market Linkages involve informing youth about potential livelihood opportunities within promising agriculture sectors and skills training opportunities to upgrade skills and quality of services related to agriculture value chains. These linkages have created jobs for HDAK youth as either direct employees of an agribusiness or within a buyer or seller relationship. The main employment outcomes have been youth loading and offloading services, youth serving as sales agents, and youth as transporters from farm to produce aggregation centers.

Youth have also been linked to private sector partners offering technical training on aspects of agricultural production, post harvesting technologies, and marketing within different segments of agriculture value chains.

Consortium member Connexus signed MOUs with five private agribusinesses -- Balton, Holland Greentech, PEBEC, Garden Fresh, and New Extension Technology – aimed a expanding agribusiness opportunities for HDAK youth.
STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The third key outcome of the USAID Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze project is working to develop a higher quality, more coordinated workforce development service delivery system. HDAK’s stepped up commitment to systems building during Year 2 included strengthening existing strategic partnerships with Government of Rwanda (GOR) Institutions, Private Sector Companies, Youth Serving Organizations, and other development partners, which resulted in leveraged investments, strengthened networks, and information sharing between public and private workforce development actors.
**Partnering with Other Youth Employment Programs**

A major focus during Year 2 of HDAK has been integrating HDAK youth employment strategies and methodologies into large-scale GOR youth employment programs.

One success area has been the provision of HDAK technical assistance to the GOR’s **National Employment Program** (NEP) to enable Work Ready Now!, Be Your Own Boss, and Work Based Learning to be rolled out to 1,077 youth supported by NEP.

Another success for the program was the Workforce Development Authority’s (WDA) request that HDAK lead a process to develop curricula, trainer’s manuals, and assessment tools for the **new Rwanda Technical Quality Framework (RTQF)** **Level 2 TVET curriculum**. This included coordinating the efforts of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Hanga Ahazaza Program to develop a Hotel & Tourism (H&T) training to be included in the Level 2 TVET curriculum.

"It’s really important that we are now filling in the Level 2 TVET curriculum. Previously this slot was empty and it was a big gap. There are a huge number of youth who don’t have the education requirements to access level 3. Now someone with a P6 education can join level 2 and be welcome to have an occupation and choose a trade. This will help us decrease unemployment rates."

Aimable, Curriculum Development Officer from Rwanda Polytechnic
Serving on Government of Rwanda Youth Panels

HDAK had the opportunity to serve on GOR youth panels, providing strategic positioning and high visibility for USAID within the TVET work space.

During Year 2, HDAK was elected to co-chair the Minister of Youth’s Economic Growth cluster, alongside UNFPA who was selected to co-chair the Social Well Being cluster.

In addition, HDAK served as co-chair for competence-based training (CBT) within the WDA TVET sub sector working group.

Partnering with Private Sector Companies

Year two also provided an opportunity to extend HDAK training content and approaches to private sector companies. HDAK trained 89 private sector companies on how to deliver Work Ready Now! and Work Based Learning programs to their employees – 84 companies at the request of the Belgian organization Association for the Promotion of Education and Training Abroad (APEFE) and Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) and 5 additional private companies in garment manufacturing under the NEP Rapid Response Training program.
Capacity Building for 22 Local Implementing Partners

During Year 2 HDAK provided intensive capacity building for its 22 local implementing partners. The focus was on youth employment training program delivery, M&E and reporting, quality assurance, and finance and grants management. Follow up support was provided to implementing partners during monthly coordination meetings and weekly field visits.

Akazi Kanoze Access (AKA) Capacity Building

Year 2 AKA capacity building support was aligned to the results of a participatory AKA Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) conducted by EDC during quarter one of FY18. The four dimensions of the OCA were based on the four universal elements of management – planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. The main objectives of the OCA, and subsequent action plan, were a) to further investigate capacity gaps observed within these four areas during the first 14 months of Huguka Dukore implementation, and b) to produce actionable results.

During the first quarter of Year 2, nine new IPs were provided 12-month grants and scopes of work by EDC to implement HDAK programs. Four additional IPs were provided similar implementation grants by CRS during quarter three. These 13 Year 2 IPs worked to roll out HDAK programming alongside the original nine Year 1 IPs. Ongoing capacity building was provided to all 22 IPs throughout Year 2.
GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

HDAK made significant strides during the year to enroll youth with disabilities into employment preparation programs. Under a project grant, Umbrella of Organizations of People with Disabilities in the Fight against HIV and AIDS and in Health promotion (UPHLS) continues to serve as a main resource partner for HDAK’s other 22 IPs. To date, over 500 youth with disabilities have been enrolled in HDAK work readiness training programs. Additionally, working closely with all the IPs to promote gender equality through training and other awareness raising activities, HDAK continued to enroll female youth in trades that are traditionally dominated by males.
Christian’s Story

Christian is an USAID HDAK youth from Rulindo who has recently completed WRN!, BYOB, and technical training.

Prior to joining HDAK, Christian was interested in learning shoemaking but faced barriers in reaching his dream because of the discrimination he faced due to his physical disability.

"The hardest thing since I developed this disability is that people started to look at me and think that I wasn’t capable. In their minds, having a disability stopped me from being able to do anything. I used to fix broken shoes as an odd job, but no one saw my potential in being able to work well or even make my own shoes."

Christian was excited when he heard that USAID HDAK would be specifically targeting youth with disabilities.

"I didn’t think that there were people who would include me. I could attend WRN! classes and share my ideas during group discussions and have people actually listen to me. It was really encouraging to interact with my peers in this way."

Now Christian has completed his leather work training and is now confidently self-employed making shoes and belts.

“In Work Ready Now! I learned that all people have different talents and skills no matter their ability or disability. Now I see that mine is making shoes.”
Making WRN! More Inclusive

Dr. Yolande and Laura interacted with two HDAK disability partners UPHLS and Uwezo and also visited a training site where HDAK youth were receiving on the site training from an experienced shoe maker. This visit was an important part of HDAK’s continued commitment to gender and social inclusion.

With the help of UPHLS, the Work Ready Now! curriculum has been translated into braille. Blind youth are now included in HDAK training and are independently accessing the WRN! written materials. Sign language interpreters have been hired so that deaf students can also equitably participate in WRN! classes.

Top WRN! Student: Janette

"I was so happy to arrive at the training and see others who have disabilities learning alongside those who don’t. I felt so welcomed and included. It was like for the first time, people actually understand the disability I have. (Janette is partially deaf) Now I have hope that I can find a way forward and build a better future for myself."
- Janette (center) from Musanze, is partially deaf

Empowering Females to Join Traditionally Male-Dominated Trades

“I saw that no girls were signing up for welding and I asked myself - if a boy can do this, why can’t I? So I signed up. And now I’m employed as welder and am doing great at my job. It feels good to be working in a trade I am passionate about.”
- Jeanine, Nyarugenge (left)

“I’ve always been interested in cars and secretly dreamed of becoming a taxi or bus driver, but I never imagined I would have the opportunity to learn a trade like auto-mechanics. I know many people think auto-mechanics is for boys, but I’m good at it and it doesn’t bother me if others don’t get it.”
- Diane, Nyarugenge (right)

Visit From USAID Washington Senior Education and Gender Advisor, Yolande Miller-Grandvaux and Senior Communications Advisor Laura Lartigue

Dr. Yolande and Laura interacted with two HDAK disability partners UPHLS and Uwezo and also visited a training site where HDAK youth were receiving on the site training from an experienced shoe maker. This visit was an important part of HDAK’s continued commitment to gender and social inclusion.
HDAK will build on successful Year 2 achievements to further strengthen a well-coordinated workforce development delivery system, equipped to provide relevant, demand-driven employment preparation and job placements for thousands more vulnerable youth during the coming year.

During Year 3, HDAK plans to enroll at least 16,590 new youth beneficiaries in employment preparation programs which will bring the cumulative youth enrollment figure (Years 1-3 combined) to approximately 32,000 youth enrolled by the end of FY19. Progress towards performance indicators is presented within HDAK’s sample data dashboard: [https://go.edc.org/hdak](https://go.edc.org/hdak)

HDAK will expand working relationships and capacity building efforts with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth, Workforce Development Authority, Rwanda Polytechnic, National Employment Program, foreign donor Technical Vocational Education and Training programs, private sector companies, and local implementing partners. This will include leveraging resources with a growing network of workforce development actors to integrate HDAK youth employment strategies and methodologies into large scale GOR youth employment programs.
Year 3 HDAK Youth Enrollment Roadmap

- **Q4**: 32,440 Total youth
- **Q3**: 28,440 Total youth
- **Q2**: 4,795 New youth enrolled
- **Q1**: 18,295 Total youth
- **Q2**: 4,000 New youth enrolled
- **Q3**: 5,350 New youth enrolled
- **Q4**: 2,445 New youth enrolled
- **Q1**: 15,850 Total youth
With special thanks

To our consortium members:

And to our implementing partners:

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