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Eric, a young boy living with albinism, holds white canes at Hillside Hope, a school for the visually impaired in Musanze.  
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# TURI KUMWE

Newsletter | 2022 Quarter 3



# FOREWORD



**Mr. Ozonnia Ojielo**  
UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Esteemed Partners and Readers,

It is of great honour to have assumed my duties in the land of a thousand hills and join the United Nations team in Rwanda. Since my arrival, I have had the privilege to engage with counterparts from the Government of Rwanda (GoR), Development Partners, Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, Academia, and UN Agencies.

This has given me the opportunity to appreciate the excellent collective work that was already achieved under the leadership of my predecessor; Mr. Fodé Ndiaye and to strategize and build from where he left, for the benefit of the people of this country – leaving no one behind. On behalf of the UN Country Team (UNCT), I wish to thank Fode for his services to Rwanda and the UN in the past five years, and to wish him well in his retirement.

This UN Quarter 3 Newsletter (covering July, August, and September 2022) speaks to a number of achievements under the One UN in collaboration with Government, and other Partners. Together we have contributed to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, restoring hope for the refugees, empowering adolescents, and young people to make informed choices, building assets for sustainable food security, supporting local manufacturers in scaling up production of medicines and medical products, beginning the operationalization of the national response to climate change, and expanding digitalization and inclusion for the citizens. UN Rwanda had a productive discussion with the University of Rwanda to explore strategic partnerships and opportunities for engagement and collaboration, especially in developing policy responses to protracted development challenges.

The unfolding discussion and outcomes of this partnership will be shared in a subsequent Turi Kumwe publication. We also had several conversations with the Equity Group and Foundation (EGF) senior leadership, building on the existing collaboration of advancing the implementation of Agenda 2030 through scalable and sustainable programs. Six bankable projects have been prioritized for co-creation and/or reframing existing Joint Programmes.

Recognising the pivotal role of digital platforms and leveraging on Rwanda's advanced internet connectivity and its vision of becoming an international conference hub, the UNCT decided to establish its online TV and Radio to collectively tap into the visits, presence and expertise of thousands of practitioners, investors, financiers and entrepreneurs who visit Rwanda for conferences or business, to share and communicate the knowledge gained from these conversations, learn new approaches to development implementation and explore opportunities for partnership.

During this quarter we ran demos by capturing key highlights of the following regional meetings - IUCN Africa Protected and Conserved Areas Congress (APAC): <https://bit.ly/3DDa8rc>, <https://bit.ly/3t0xPVu> and <https://bit.ly/3sWNG7x>. AGRA Africa Forum, International Parliamentary Union (IPU) Annual Conference: <https://bit.ly/3fYlj62> and Gender Equality Seal recognition event among others: <https://bit.ly/3GaEjsX>. We also conducted video recordings of the SDG Lab training: <https://bit.ly/3tnkjvl>, <https://bit.ly/3trD6G6>, which was aimed at supporting the UNCT to unlock individual and collective leadership capacities for efficient and productive collaboration as a UN system to support the delivery of the National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. We are also happy to be telling our collective stories visually. Please visit our Flickr page at <https://rb.gy/bqkxbf> and Youtube channel at <https://bit.ly/3XpjIHj> for the compelling photos and videos that represent our journey and progress.

In recognition of our accountability obligation to the people of Rwanda, and to enhance the localization of the SDGs, the UNCT decided to host at least two monthly meetings in the field each year. The first such meeting will take place in October this year, and will be organized together with the Ministry of Youth and Culture in Huye district, Southern province. The next Turi Kumwe will report on the reflections from the visit.

In this edition, we bring you exciting voices from across various communities showcasing the impact of the UN's work.

More than the stories and numbers published quarterly in Turikumwe, there is a fundamental transformation happening in people's lives, communities, and institutions for the betterment of livelihoods and strengthening of institutional capacities. I commend you for playing your part; let us continue to do more!

Wishing you a good read.

Murakoze!





In an intergenerational dialogue held in Western province a Parent encouraging colleagues to talk to their children about SRH.



## TRANSFORMING PARENT-ADOLESCENT COMMUNICATION: FROM A TABOO TO OPEN DIALOGUE ON SRH.

*“When it comes to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, there is a big intergenerational gap: from different cultural norms, barriers to youth-friendly SRHR services, to a missing communication within different generations on SRHR. When we foster successful and equitable intergenerational relations and partnerships, we ensure Leaving no one behind.”* Said Therese Karugwiza, UNFPA Adolescent and Youth Team Leader.

This was reiterated by Nishyirembere Xaverine, a parent in Nyamasheke District. She recalls how she never had the right information on SRH because it was never discussed in her family or in the community, as some parents didn't think it was a necessity to have the conversation with their children, while others labelled it a taboo.

As someone who has, over the years, gained from the training and workshops on the subject, she lauded how the conversations with her children and other young people in her community gave her an opportunity to dispel the myths and misinformation they had about SRH.

*“I encourage all parents to integrate constructive talks about SRH with their children.”*

*It could help reduce some of the issues our young people are facing today, namely teenage pregnancies, HIV transmission, GBV, and other harmful practices.”* Urged Xaverine.

She shared her story at the dialogue that was organized by UNFPA in collaboration with the National Youth Council and local supportive structures to observe the 2022 International Day of Youth. Under the theme; “Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating a World for All Ages”, the dialogue between adults and young people built on the already recognizable progress made towards enhancing open communication on SRH. What was evidently obvious was the desire for both generations to explore ways to continue fostering a healthy and honest parent-adolescent relationship.

Transforming parent-adolescent communication and increasing open dialogue requires bold commitments and action across all generations and from all key players. It's the basis upon which we leverage our solidarity towards creating a world where our young people are able to make informed decisions.

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This story is under KOICA fund to the Health and Empowered Youth project







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Coding school classroom



## FACILITATING HOPE FOR REFUGEE YOUTH TO FIND TECHNOLOGY JOBS

Patrick, 28, fled the Democratic Republic of Congo over 15 years ago and he has known no other life but that of Nyabiheke refugee camp in the Eastern part of Rwanda in Gatsibo district. Patrick has a family of three and just like many refugees around the world, he struggles to fend for his loved ones.

Patrick is one of the refugee youths who have been undergoing a coding skills training for more than 2 years, since 2019. Organised by UNHCR in collaboration with its partner, Alight, an NGO working across Rwanda's refugee camps, the training aims to equip the refugee community with the knowledge and skills that would offer them a world of opportunities, to not only better their lives, but also make a huge contribution to their host communities and Rwanda's transformation journey in general.

In Nyabiheke refugee camp, with so much celebration, dance and jubilation, Patrick was one of the 10 refugee youths who graduated with a certificate in coding skills.

*"Coding has changed my life. I got an occupation, and I can earn some money to support my family"* said Patrick with a wide smile on his face.

Patrick is working on an idea dubbed "Health Center Management System," and it is meant to help record data at health facilities. Based on this passion and since completing the coding school, Patrick has been recruited by ALIGHT, who also run the health center in Nyabiheke refugee camp, as a volunteer to manage the platform used to record data at the camp-based health center.

In addition to refugees, the coding school was also opened to Rwandans who were living in villages bordering Nyabiheke refugee camp bringing the two communities closer.

After graduation, three out of the ten members of the first cohort have already secured jobs within the technology sector, Patrick included, while the rest already have a sense of hope to find work, as they build their portfolios.

The difference in salary that this opportunity will afford refugees like Patrick is substantial. On average, refugees could earn up to five times more than an average salary and are much more likely to find employment with such coding skills.







Consolette displays the potatoes harvested on the terraced land in Rutsiro district. The increased food production brings hope to the most vulnerable people as they have food for their families and earn some income from selling the surplus produce to the market.

©WFP/John Paul SESONGA



## BUILDING ASSETS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SECURITY IN RWANDA

As part of a holistic package of support under the United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection, WFP together with GoR supported the construction of terraces on 25 hectares of land in Nyamagabe and Rutsiro districts. The two districts are prone to regular landslides and soil erosion, which has often discouraged smallholder farmers from cultivating the land, resulting in a worsening household poverty and food insecurity.

After the terrace construction, the communities attested to increased harvests, which has in turn boosted their economic empowerment.

*“Potato harvests on the terraced land increased enormously. From less than 200kgs to 21 metric tonnes per hectare. We are now gaining so much from our produce; our livelihoods have improved as a result”.* Said Consolette Ahwishyize.

Consolette, a 45-year-old mother of 5, in Gitwe village of Rutsiro district is one of the farmers that was always in distress, during rainy seasons, as the running water used to wash away the topsoil, crops, and fertilizer.

She commends the terraces for conserving the soil, preventing erosion and increasing the productivity of the land. The program also provided agriculture inputs, including pesticides, lime to improve soil fertility, and hybrid potato seeds worth nearly RWF 68 million.

The support has not only remedied challenges farmers faced, rather also enabled the farmers to respond to the increasing food demand in the area and beyond.

Today, the farmers have embraced modern techniques of farming and they are employing fellow community members on their farm lands, from which the positive ripple effects are felt especially among the vulnerable households.

The Joint Programme in line with the country’s efforts for integrated social protection to end poverty in all its forms while ensuring no one is left behind. It is implemented by the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the local governments in Rutsiro, Nyamagabe, Karongi, Kirehe and Burera districts.







## EMPOWERED TO SUPPORT: A RENEWED SENSE OF HOPE AND PURPOSE TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

For parents caring for a child with a disability, it can take an emotional and physical toll unlike anything they have experienced before. Hundreds of parents who have Children with Disabilities (CwD) are supported by UNICEF to access mainstream and disability-related services in education, healthcare, rehabilitation and social protection, and child protection.

This involves regular training for parents of Children with Disabilities, frontline social workers like IZUs<sup>1</sup> and Community Health Workers (CHWs), education officers, health officials, local leaders and community members on ways to properly care for CwD, how best to feed them, educate them, but most importantly, be keenly aware of – and accept their special needs.

*“We have really benefited from the training sessions we are given, and quality of life – for both our child and the family – has improved.”* Said Anastase, one of the parents who gained from the training.

<sup>1</sup> Inshuti z’Umuryango means friends of the family. It is a mechanism for child care and protection.

Parents have reported that this has led to many positive changes in themselves and most importantly in their children. The training has enabled parents to progressively adapt to the stressful experiences of raising their child and have put in place safe and healthy environments for their children to thrive.

The children are also able to access education that is responsive to their special needs, to improve their chances and opportunities for good health, to grow their intellectual abilities and advance their sense of hope for their life and dreams.

**The strive to include all children with disability in education, health, and social protection initiatives is a combined effort with all public and private entities.**

 [Read more](#)





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UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem and Vice Mayor in charge of Economic Development in Rubavu district, Ms. Deogratias Nzabonimpa handing over the tri-motor cycle to cooperative members.

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## TIME-SAVING EFFICIENT KITS TO REDUCE DOMESTIC CARE WORK FOR RURAL WOMEN

According to a recent **baseline study by UN Women Rwanda on unpaid care work** in eight districts, on average women work for around 4.1 hours per day compared to men who on average do approximately 1.7 hours on unpaid care and domestic work, particularly those in areas with limited access to regular basic services such as energy, water, and sanitation.

To reduce the care demands on women, UN Women through the UN Women’s 3R (Recognize, Reduce, and Redistribute) project on unpaid care work in partnership with Rwanda Development Organisation (RDO), and Institut Africain pour le Development Economique et Social (INADES), distributed energy-efficient kits to over 300 households in Musanze District and 472 households in Rubavu district. This is meant to empower women by removing impediments to their economic empowerment.

The kits included improved cooking stoves known as Save80, which saves up to 80% more energy than the normal charcoal stoves using small wood sticks as fuel for cooking. It will save cooking time for women who were already spending countless hours on household chores.

Other kits include heat retention cookers, sprayers, watertanks, harvesting crates, and tri-motor cycles.

Beneficiaries of the energy-saving kits include those living with disabilities in vegetable production in Rubavu district, of which, 80% are women in cross-border trade.

Marie Louise Mukamanzi, a mother of seven, was very happy to receive the energy-efficient stove which includes a heat retention flask known as a ‘wonderbox’ that keeps the food warm for her children when they return from school. *“I am happy to receive the stove because it will reduce my time to warm food and the long hours I spend looking for firewood and cooking,”* said Mukamanzi.

UN Women Country Representative, Ms. Jennet Kem appreciated UN partners and the Government of Rwanda for their unwavering support. *“We hope the kits will be used to improve your wellbeing. I encourage you to work together, save, invest, and do awareness raising to encourage other community members to join cooperatives for collective gains,”* said Ms. Kem.

[Read more](#)



The unpaid care work is funded by the Global Affairs Canada and is implemented in eight Districts namely; Musanze, Muhanga, Rubavu, Kirehe, Ngoma, Gasabo, Nyaruguru, and Nyarugenge.







## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY BASED RESPONSES TO HIV SERVICES FOR KEY AND VULNERABLE POPULATION

There has been remarkable progress in the community based interventions and responses to HIV services in Rwanda. In collaboration with the GoR and UNAIDS, Ihorere Munyarwanda Organisation (IMRO-Rwanda), a local NGO has reached and linked key populations (KPs) namely; Female Sex workers (FSW), men who have sex with other men (MSM), their children and clients, with health facilities in Kigali (Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge), Muhanga, Ruhango, Nyamasheke and Rubavu Districts in Rwanda.

So far, 115,000 KPs and young people in the 7 Districts have been reached since 2018. They have been reached through awareness campaigns, linked to VCT, enrolled onto Anti-Retroviral Treatment and screened for STIs and treatment. In the same period, 360,000 condoms and lubricants have been distributed to KPs and their clients.

Also, 12,000 (7,591 FSWs, 1,001 clients of FSWs 3,000 children born to FSWs and 407 MSM) have been reached through peer education and services related to gender-based violence, stigma and discrimination. They have also benefitted from HIV prevention programs in line with the National strategic plan on HIV/AIDS. Both FSWs, children born to FSWs and MSMs and their clients were referred to 26 health Facilities to access health and HIV services through peer education programs, 320 beneficiaries from most vulnerable poor families were supported to access community health-based insurance to reduce financial barriers to adequate health care and services.

In addition, 360 FSWs were eligible and enrolled for PReP and 800 FSWs as well as 18 MSMs were vaccinated for Hepatitis. 9 SGBV cases in Rubavu, Muhanga, Ruhango & Nyamasheke Districts were also referred to Isange One Stop Centers under the IMRO program.

In Rusizi, Musanze, Nyarugenge, Muhanga and Rubavu 2,459 pregnant FSWs were supported to access SRH/Family Planning, PMTCT services. They were also given hygiene and SRHR commodities.

The support also reached local law enforcement authorities and health care providers, who learned about the comprehensive advocacy for the rights of KPs.

275 women and youth in Gasabo, Nyarugenge and Rubavu Districts were equipped and supported with Life Skills and 675 KPs (75 MSM and 600 FSWs) were supported with Economic Empowerment through the Group Saving and Loan Association (GSLA) Program.

All these interventions contribute to reducing their vulnerability to HIV and increases their power of negotiation for protected Sex. Such deliberate interventions are vital to continue advocating for a conducive and enabling environment to equitable and high quality health access to HIV services for Key and Vulnerable Population in Rwanda.





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## INTEGRATED FISH-RICE SYSTEMS BOOST HARVESTS IN RWAMAGANA DISTRICT

Joseph Nsekanabo, 54, has been farming rice for more than 36 years. He is one of 264 members of the cooperative of rice farmers in Rwamagana district, Eastern Province, Rwanda. In January 2022, FAO’s integrated fish-rice project was piloted in Rwanda, and his cooperative was chosen to establish a Farmer Field School (FFS) group to pilot the novel approach.

A few months down the road, Joseph and his fellow cooperative members are happy farmers after their harvests increased exponentially.

*“I have been farming rice for many years, but this new approach is the most fruitful. We are implementing it on 20 acres, and so far, it is very promising. We have already harvested one ton and 108 kilograms. But before we knew about this innovation, we used to harvest around 800 kilograms in the same area.”* He said.

The integrated fish-rice systems approach was one of the 22 projects that FAO showcased during the 15th National Agriculture Show (Agrishow). The Agrishow 2022 was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) from 06-14th July,

under the theme “Building resilience in Agriculture through modern technologies”. Hundreds of guests who attended the Agrishow could not resist their curiosity, asking about the model experimental plot installed on FAO’s stand. The plot is made of two blocks, the first with rice and fish planted only with animal manure and the second showing feed supplements added. In it, there are freshly planted rice and small fish swimming in the handmade farm.

*“This is really amazing. It is my first-time seeing fish integrated into a rice farm. I hope this project will be scaled up around the country. Our country is small and harvesting fish and rice from the same place is very beneficial and good land management,”* said Cyprien Sibobugingo, a guest at FAO’s stand.T

hroughout the Agrishow, Joseph was the first contact for guests who wanted to know more about the integrated fish-rice innovation. Standing before an experimental model plot full of paddy rice and fish fingerlings, he couldn’t hide his enthusiasm as he talked of how his cooperative has benefited from this approach. He is optimistic that the approach will keep boosting their harvest, which will better their social-economic status.

 [Read more](#)







## FIVE LOCAL MANUFACTURERS TO BE SUPPORTED IN SCALING UP PRODUCTION OF MEDICINES AND MEDICAL PRODUCTS

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and Partners held a 3-day Technical Review Panel Evaluation for its African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)-anchored Pharmaceutical Initiative in Kigali, Rwanda from the 13th –15th September 2022.

The workshop's objective was to review the Expression of Interest proposals submitted for the Local Pharmaceutical Production Pillar of the Initiative to produce Sexual, Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child Healthcare (SRMNCH) products in Africa. The Technical Review Panel whose membership is comprised of WHO-AFRO, UNIDO, UNICEF, AUC, AUDA-NEPAD, UNFPA, United States Pharmacopeia (USP) and UNAIDS was chaired by the WHO-AFRO.

The ECA Chief of Regional Integration Section, Mr. Francis Ikome highlighted the historic events which led to the formation of the Pharma Initiative. Mr Ikome took the meeting through a review of the global and regional frameworks based on the initiative's three pillars, namely Pooled-Procurement, localized production, and harmonized regulatory quality standards of medicines.

He emphasized that the ECA-led AfCFTA Pharma Initiative provides a validated and continentally anchored blueprint for scaling up Sexual Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (SRMNCH) products in Africa. The Initiative is also leveraging on the implementation of the African Medicines Agency (AMA) and AfCFTA.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Nyirimigabo Fatouma of the Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority, said the government strongly advocates for pooled procurement along with the pilot countries and as the host of the AMA Secretariat. He explained *"we are looking forward to engaging with all stakeholders to ensure that continental pharmaceutical production complies with WHO standards"*.

Mr. Moses Chisale, Chair of the Technical Review Panel and Technical Advisor, World Health Organization-Africa Region (WHO-AFRO) said the Pharma Initiative should be commended for the work it is doing especially regarding policy dialogue engagements. He added *"the AfCFTA-anchored Pharma Initiative represents lucrative private sector investment and innovation opportunities that will change lives, reduce poverty and contribute to Africa's inclusive and sustainable economic development"*.

After lengthy but productive deliberations, the Technical Review Panel selected five out of the eleven companies for further evaluation under the Pharma Initiative Guidelines. The selected companies will undergo further evaluation to ascertain the technical and financial support they need from the ECA and its collaborating partners to enable them to scale up production of quality assured SRMNCH products in Africa.





## ONCE A REFUGEE, NOW SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN REFUGEE COMMUNITIES AS A VOLUNTEER

Adson was once forced to flee his home, trekking long distances, wandering for food and safety. Having been a refugee, he derives joy from helping other refugees, especially the vulnerable children.

Back in his home country, in South Sudan, he worked for different NGOs in various capacities. Stirred with a desire to serve refugee communities, he decided to resign from his job and pursue a position as a UN volunteer with the UNHCR in Rwanda. It has been a learning curve!

*“Volunteering has changed me. I have learned a lot, gained self-confidence and it will forever remain a life experience”.* He said

As the Associate Child Protection Officer, his primary responsibilities include improving child protection information and management, as well as conducting

monitoring and evaluations to improve program performance and community-based interventions, in both child protection and education.

Within the camp setting and for the benefit of vulnerable children, he is also responsible for strategic leadership and organizing programs.

Adson has translated all his challenges into valuable lessons that have nurtured the empathy and solidarity that he will use not only in humanitarian but also development work in the future. He believes that everyone can make a difference in child protection.

*“Throughout my time as a UN Volunteer, I have noticed that every one’s contribution can make a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of children”.* Adson said.





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