

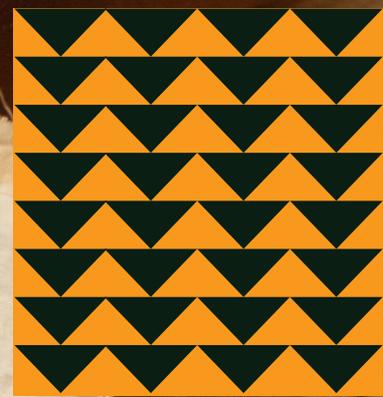


UNFPA Rwanda

Guharanira uburenganzira
n'amahitamo ya buri wese

REAFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO END TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN RWANDA

NEWSLETTER
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SEEING THE UNSEEN: END TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN RWANDA



Gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy remain one of the ongoing focuses for the Government of Rwanda as well as its development partners. Teenage pregnancy is a major health concern because of its association with higher morbidity and mortality for both the mother and the child.

The government of Rwanda and its partners working on reproductive health have done a lot to improve the access for adolescents and youth to accurate information and reproductive health services. However, the increase of teenage pregnancies is still observed in Rwandan Communities.

Whereas, the 2022 State of World Population report (SWOP)'s global theme is: **"Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy"**, in Rwanda, the SWOP report was launched under the theme: **"Addressing Teenage Pregnancy: The call for Action"**.

The official launch held in Kigali on 25th May was an opportunity to raise awareness of women's and girls' rights, with a focus on reducing gender-based violence and teenage pregnancies through collective action and commitments.

UNFPA called upon all stakeholders' commitment to take action for a comprehensive study on teenage pregnancy in Rwanda in order to understand the rise of teenage pregnancies despite efforts in SRHR and to orient decision-makers in making evidence-based policy, planning, and programming for ASRHR and specifically prevent unwanted pregnancy among adolescent girls and the related consequences.

Different stakeholders who attended the official launch including the Minister of Health, Minister of Gender and Family Planning, Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Ambassador of Sweden, Ambassador of the Republic of Congo & Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, representatives of civil society and NGOs pledged to stand up for the adolescent girls, who, through ignorance about their body or lack of choice or both are condemned to a life of poverty when unintended pregnancy ends her education, and prevent them from fulfilling their potential.





“We will continue to be close to young people and work with them. We need to change the policy and take action in order to find out more about reproductive health. Through partnerships, we plan to conduct joint deep research, in order to better assess and identify the root causes of teen pregnancy;”

Hon. Dr. Daniel Ngamiye, Minister of Health.



“The Ministry of Gender and family promotion assures you of its full commitment to Prevent unintended pregnancy including for teenagers”.

Hon. Prof. Bayisenge Jeannette, Minister of Gender and Family planning at the Launch of the 2022 SWOP.



“Various studies on different levels have been conducted but there is a need to conduct a comprehensive study on teenage pregnancies that is far-reaching to further understand the phenomena with data and evidence for policy, decision making, planning, and targeted interventions.”

Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA Representative

...SWOP LAUNCH IN KARONGI



The 2022 SWOP report was also launched at the community level through a one-day community campaign in Karongi district where the numbers of teenage pregnancies are high, compared to other UNFPA-supported districts in Rwanda.

The launch in Karongi brought together different stakeholders, local leaders, local supportive structures, CHWs, and community members including women, youth, and PWDs. The messages delivered through music, poems, sketches, and teen mothers' testimonies, focused on the consequences of teenage pregnancy and how the community can participate to end it.



“Teen pregnancy is a concern to all of us. The district, the partners, the parents and the youth in general. We should all join forces and work together to educate the youth. Together we will win this battle.”

Vestine MUKARUTESI, Mayor of Karongi District.



“We have all seen the effects of teenage pregnancy, not just on the girl, but on the family, the community and society at large. Let us come together to prevent teenage pregnancies. You can count on UNFPA's support and I believe we can count on you as we join hands”.

Mercy Mungai, UNFPA Deputy Representative.

2022 SWOP REPORT LAUNCH WITNESSED PARTICIPATION OF AMBASSADORS



H.E. Jin-weon CHAE,
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea in Rwanda



H.E. Guy Nestor Itoua
Ambassador of the Republic of Congo and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Rwanda



Ms Johanna Teague,
Ambassador of Sweden in Rwanda



H.E. IMAI,
Ambassador of Japan in Rwanda

REDUCING MATERNAL MORTALITY



CELEBRATING THE MANY GIFTS OF LIFE AND HEALTH THAT MIDWIVES OFFER

According to the Rwanda Demographic Health Survey 2019-Rwanda has the goal to eliminate all preventable causes of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality by 2030. In order to achieve this goal, more effort is needed to improve health care quality including capacity building of maternal and newborn health providers, mostly midwifery education, as well as pre-service and in-service training.

On 5th May 2022, the Rwanda Association of Midwives (RAM) joined the rest of the world to celebrate the International Day of the Midwife (IDM), under the theme, "100 Years of Progress". This year's day of the midwife served as an opportunity to celebrate the progress made so far but also to advocate for investment in the midwifery profession.

In Rwanda UNFPA support to the Government focuses on the promotion of the midwifery profession by strengthening its pillars: education, regulation, associations, midwifery workforce, enabling environment for quality maternal and new-born care, and promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health Services provided by midwives.



"A number of quality improvement initiatives have been put in place, to effectively strengthen the quality of maternal and newborn care in midwifery, but these efforts must be broadened to contribute to improving quality care services."
Ms Josephine Murekezi, RAM Chair Person

"Much as the International Confederation of Midwives is celebrating 100 Years of Progress, RAM has existed and progressed for 12 years and we are happy to celebrate achievements made in these years." She added



"Midwives have been relentless in advocating for enhanced quality of midwifery services around the world, improving maternal, adolescent reproductive and child health. We stand by you and fully support that work that you are doing" Ms Johanna Teague, Ambassador of Sweden in Rwanda

COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO MAKE MENSTRUATION A NORMAL FACT OF LIFE BY 2030



Over the past decade, evidence has accrued worldwide about the many barriers girls face to safe, hygienic, and dignified menstruation.

Challenges include inadequate health education on menstruation and puberty; lack of social support from teachers and peers to manage menstruation in school, and from families; and insufficient access to water, sanitation, hygiene materials, and disposal facilities.

To address the needs of girls, the Government of Rwanda and its partners have taken positive strides toward ending menstrual health challenges.

These include the establishment of Girls Rooms at the school level; the waiving of Tax on menstrual health products, and the Safeguard Young People Programme which allows the youth to join forces on Menstrual Health education, alongside Adolescent and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy and strategies in place.

UNFPA Rwanda in partnership with Swiss Tropical, Public Health Initiative, and AfriYan held a two-day (23rd to 24th May) Menstrual Health management workshop in Kigali as part of the celebration of the 2022 Menstrual Hygiene Day under the theme: "Making menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030". During the workshop, young people called for the government and stakeholders to further mainstream menstrual health services, education, and access to information so as to improve Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHM).



"We use moments like this, to discuss how to amplify the voices of women and girls on the challenges they face related to menstruation and raise awareness in order to change negative social norms around Menstrual Health, and engage decision-makers to increase the political priority and catalyze action for Menstrual Health at all levels." Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA Rwanda Representative, opening the 2 days Menstrual Health management workshop.



"It is easy to find free or cheap condoms in a kiosk in Kigali and anywhere in the country but very hard to find free menstrual pads. We want the pads to be equally free and accessible as condoms," Marie Ange Raissa Uwamungu, one of the youth leaders who attended the workshop.

ENSURING YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS TO SRH INFORMATION AND SERVICES



CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH

Launched in December 2016 through Imbuto Foundation's Youth Empowerment Programme, iAccelerator is an initiative and model aiming at exploring new and engaging ways to tackle pressing population challenges in the region while promoting social entrepreneurship among young people.

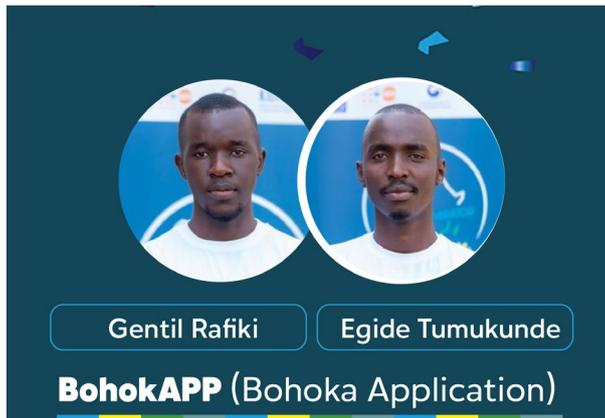
Implemented by Imbuto Foundation in partnership with UNFPA, the Ministry of Youth & Culture, and KOICA, iAccelerator Phase 4 seeks to generate innovative, youth-led solutions for youth in Rwanda, to have increased utilization of health services and adopt healthy attitudes.



This year, under the theme under the theme: **"Availing Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health information & services for youths with disabilities and increasing awareness and knowledge of mental health issues by adolescents and young adults"**, 490 applicants took part in the competition, among which, 40 were selected for pitching. 10 projects were then selected for the final stage, from which 4 emerged winners.

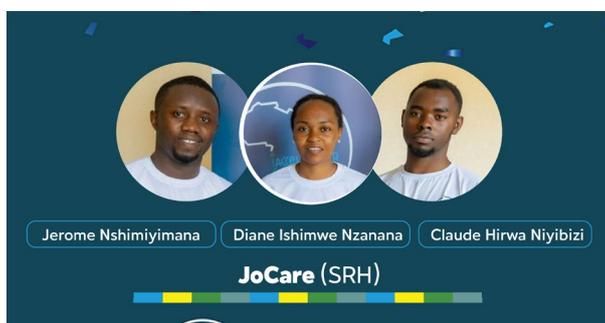
On the 13th May, after pitching innovative ideas that promote sexual reproductive health and mental health, the best projects were awarded a grand prize of 10,000 USD each, as seed capital to implement their projects.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AWARDED SOLUTIONS



BOHOKA APP

This is a Web/Mobile Application aimed at providing mental health services, by connecting its users to a Mental Health expert who will provide reliable information, creating a safe space for people to ask questions, seek support and have open conversations on Mental Health. This application will also have games that will help individuals with Mental Health issues, as a way to combat isolation associated with Mental Health.



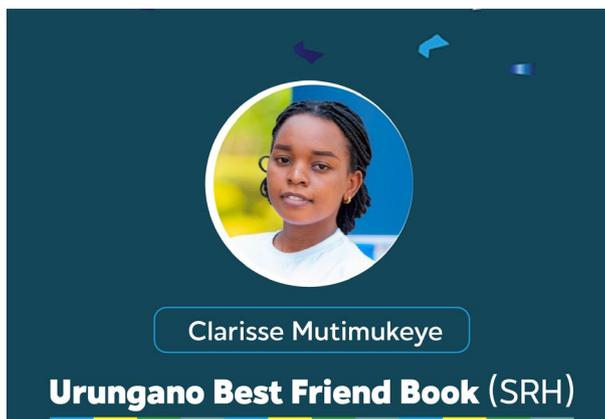
JOCARE - ONLINE/MOBILE PLATFORM

This is a friendly, educational Web App platform that will allow young people, including those with disabilities, to discuss sexual reproductive health information through the use of friendly, educational innovative tools like JoCare Learn Board, Girls' calculators, Games, blog, YouTube videos through a web application and mobile application.



TELE-MENTAL HEALTH APPLICATION

This is a mental health innovation that will be integrated into the universal health coverage system in Rwanda; giving every citizen access to affordable Mental Health education and services they need. A web & mobile application will connect patients to mental health professionals, pharmaceuticals, and companies offering alternative methods to help alleviate symptoms of mental health disorders.



URUNGANO BEST FRIEND BOOK

This is a storyboard book that will provide reliable information on sexual and reproductive health & rights, through a Podcasted storyboard book which provides SRHR information through played podcasted stories and written articles, as well as videos produced with sign language that will be designed for people with hearing and speaking impairment. This project will also have an online available on their website and android application, where young people.

IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS



INAUGURATION OF A NEW MATERNITY WARD IN MAHAMA REFUGEE CAMP

On 10th May 2022, Hon. Minister of Emergency Management, Marie-Solange Kayisire, the Ambassador of Japan in Rwanda H.E Masahiro Imai, and the UNFPA Representative Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah inaugurated the maternity ward constructed in Mahama refugee camp in Kirehe district, in collaboration with ALIGHT, with funds from the Government and the People of Japan.

The inaugurated maternity ward is fully equipped, and will accommodate more maternal health care services; Antenatal Care, Postnatal Care, Family Planning (FP), Immunization service, and a room for Gender-Based Violence screening caseworkers, and will improve the quality of service delivery and save lives of Burundian and Congolese women and girls, refugees in Mahama camp.



"My appreciation goes to UNFPA and the Government and people of Japan for the generous cooperation and support in humanitarian settings especially in ensuring safe lives of mothers, and newborns as well as the sexual reproductive health and GBV prevention in the camp." Minister Kayisire. At the inauguration of the maternity ward in Mahama camp,

"I am pleased to see the solid outcomes of this Project, in Mahama refugee camp. UNFPA and the implementing partners are carrying out a great project, and it is our pleasure to have been able to enhance their activities through our contribution" Masahiro Imai, Ambassador of Japan in Rwanda

"One of the benefits of this health center is that the services we normally get from Kirehe Hospital will now be close to us. Kirehe Hospital is far away from the camp, making it difficult for a mother to access necessary health services, but this facility is in the camp, so we will be able to access it easily." Ndikumwenayo Concilli, a refugee from Mahama camp.

PREVENTING HIV TRANSMISSION



ACHIEVING GLOBAL TARGETS IN PREVENTING AND TREATING HIV: REMARKABLE EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE!

Despite progress made in prevention and treatment, millions of people are still vulnerable to HIV infection, and AIDS remains the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age and young adolescents. Stigma and discrimination continue to impede the realization of people's rights, including access to essential information and services to prevent and treat HIV.

The Government of Rwanda recognizes HIV-AIDS as a cross-cutting public health problem that needs to be addressed through joint efforts of all sectors and a multidisciplinary approach, from central to lower levels.

As a result, HIV prevalence among the general population in Rwanda has been stabilized and maintained at 3%, from HIV testing to treatment services, across the country, for both children and adults, the HIV services are free of charge and are accessible in all Hospitals and Health Centers.

In addition, various innovations are being implemented to reduce new HIV infections and ensure improved health outcomes for HIV-infected people. Several scientific research and assessments were conducted to evaluate the impact of ongoing HIV prevention programs.

"No matter how good and useful the statistics we generate, they lose their utility if we fail to disseminate and translate them into policies and interventions."

Prof. Dr. Claude M. Muvunyi,
Director General - RBC

Findings from these studies will help to improve the quality of service delivery and guide policymakers in designing targeted interventions based on current customized scientific evidence.



Vestine Mutarabayire Wibabara (middle), HIV Prevention and Humanitarian Response Officer at UNFPA attended the Dissemination of new HIV/AIDS evidences and launch of Condom strategic plan.

DECREASING UNMET NEED FOR FAMILY PLANNING



NEW COMMITMENTS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING

Access to safe, voluntary family planning is about an individual's human right. Family planning is central to gender equality and women's empowerment, and it is a key factor in reducing poverty. Since 2012, the Government of Rwanda has played a crucial role in the FP2020 partnership when the country joined as one of the commitment-making countries.

Family Planning results have been encouraging as the uptake has increased from 53% to 64% for those who used any Family Planning contraceptive methods between 2015 and 2020 and from 48% to 58% increase for those who used modern contraceptive methods, according to RDHS 2019/2020.

On 28 April 2022, the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Health in partnership with UNFPA and other partners launched the new National Family Planning commitments to expand access to family planning for women and girls throughout the country over the next ten years.



"These commitments are not far from the Rwanda political will in advancing sexual reproductive health including family planning. As per the Rwanda FP2030 commitments, we are planning to achieve more for the benefit of our people whereby we need to increase the uptake up to 65% for modern contraceptives by 2030."

Dr. Mpunga Tharcisse, Minister of State in Charge of Primary Health Care.

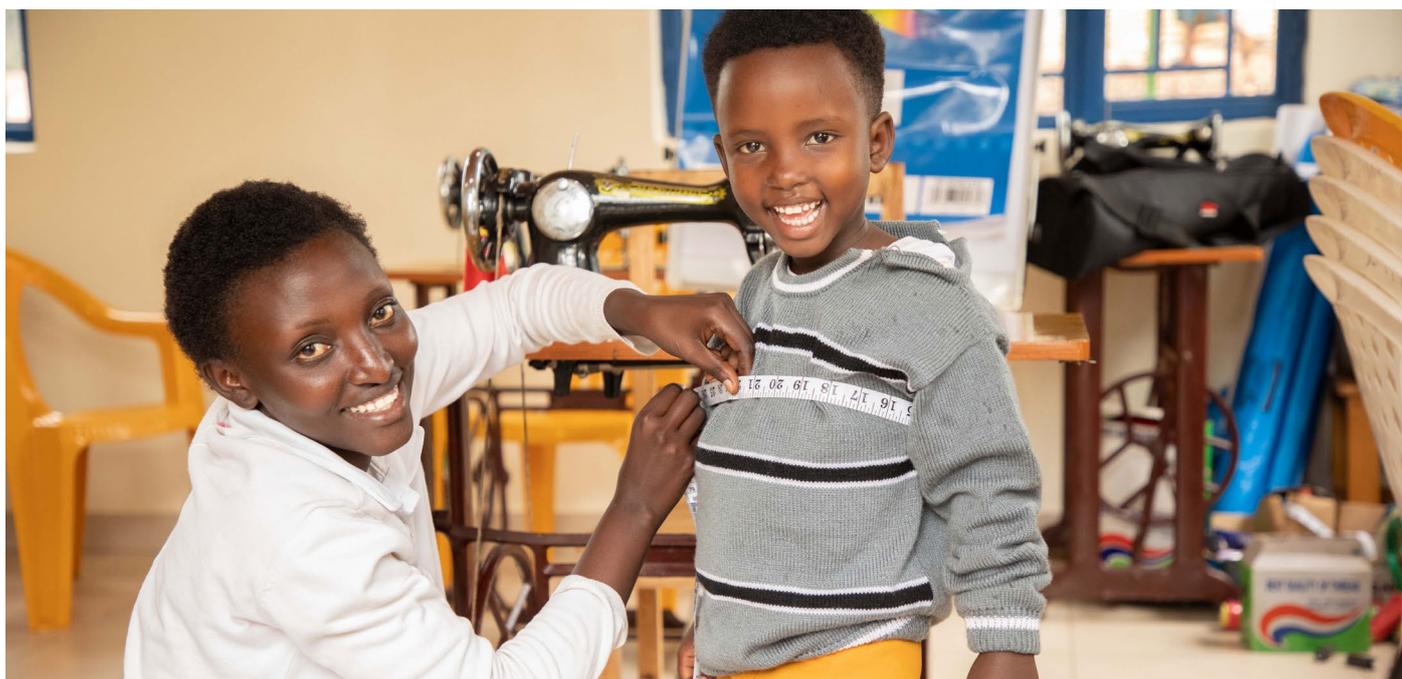
In making this commitment, Rwanda joins the FP2030 partnership, a global partnership that is working together to advance family planning around the world.



"Building on the successes of the FP2020 partnership, we are ready to embark on the next decade of progress through the FP2030 to reduce maternal mortality and move forward the ICPD25 agenda to achieve the SDGs and Agenda 2063"

Kwabena Asante-Ntiamoah, UNFPA Rwanda Representative, at the Launch of Rwanda FP2030 commitments.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT TO ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT



VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

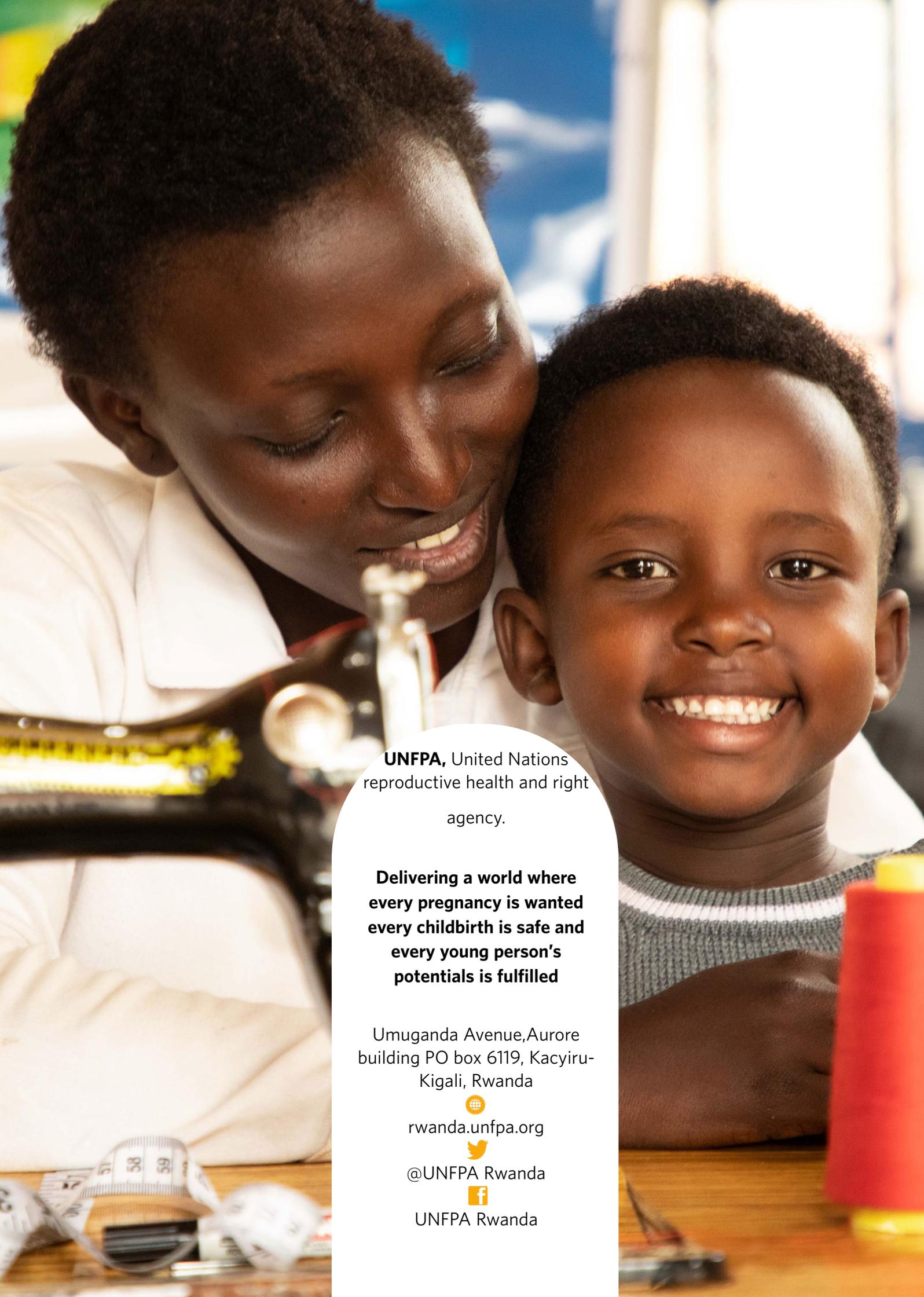
Since mid-2020, UNFPA with funding support from KOICA has been tirelessly implementing the **“Healthy and empowered youth project”** through different implementing partners. The main objective is to increase demand, to supply Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) services for adolescents and youth in Rwanda as well as to empower the most vulnerable adolescents and young people to access education and socio-economic opportunities. Activities are being implemented in 3 districts of Karongi, Rusizi, and Nyamasheke as well as in the refugee camps of Mahama, Kigeme, Mugombwa, Kiziba, Nyabiheke, and their host communities.

In regards to enabling first time young mothers’ access to social-economic opportunities, in Kigeme and Mugombwa refugee camps and its host communities, 60 FTYMs are so far enrolled in Kigeme Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) school following tailoring courses.

On 13 th May 2022, the first cohort of the tailoring class, made up of 30 FTYMs graduated after six months, given certificates of completion as well as startup tool kits. Currently, they are integrated into the community, benefiting from the skills given.



“At the age of 16, I got pregnant and dropped out of school from senior three. I did not have hope that I would be able to go to school again or even achieve my dreams. Having graduated from this tailoring program, I joined an existing tailoring cooperative in Nyamagabe City. Together with my colleagues we receive orders from different clients and share the income equally. Now I am able to satisfy my basic needs like food, and clothes, or even pay medical insurance (mutuelle de santé) for my own and my 3-year-old child. I believe my future is going to be bright.” MUKANYANDWI Laurence, a young mother from Kigeme refugee camp.



UNFPA, United Nations
reproductive health and right
agency.

**Delivering a world where
every pregnancy is wanted
every childbirth is safe and
every young person's
potentials is fulfilled**

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