

Kamisagara One Stop Youth Centre. © Emmanuel Bigenimana

GIVING YOUTH THEIR SPACE

A CASE STUDY OF THE KIMISAGARA ONE STOP
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVE CENTRE

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

“Instruction in youth is like engraving in stones.”

Berber Proverb, North Africa

Introduction

The Rwanda genocide in 1994 had a devastating impact on the socio-economic fabric of the country. It decimated families and skewed the age structure of the country. Even today, eighteen years later, it is considered insensitive to ask a 20-year-old about their parents and family. The survivors of the massacre had to find the spirit to look beyond death and destruction and rebuild their lives. Young men and women had no support – no shelter, no source of income, disrupted education and a lot of trauma. Rwanda’s economy had taken a heavy blow and the political strife destroyed the country’s ability to attract private and external investment.

The government took concerted steps to help its people reconcile and recover from the trauma, attract investment, and focus on providing basic services in health, education, water, and security. A key aspect of this was the spirit of Umuganda – a determined effort by every citizen to rebuild the country.

According to Rwanda’s national youth policy and the African Youth Charter, youth are defined between the ages 14-35. Youth aged 14-35 constitute 39% of the total population of Rwanda. While officially the youth unemployment rate is not high, statistics reveal that a high percentage of young people are under-employed. 65% of Rwandans aged 14 - 35 work less than 35 hours per week, and so should be

considered underemployed¹. 15% work less than 10 hours per week and 17% work for 51 hours or more per week. Strong measures are needed to promote youth empowerment for sustainable development, and employment promotion is a key pillar in the Economic Development and Recovery Strategic Plan (EDRSP). It is argued that investment in youth will yield greater economic growth and social wellbeing for generations to come. Missed investments in young people’s intellectual and human potential are a missed opportunity for generations and also costly to reverse, both for youth and for society.²

Youth Policy Development in Rwanda

From 2003 to 2005, the Government of Rwanda invested considerable resources in the development of a National Youth Policy using a participatory process that listened to youth voices from all levels. The specific objectives of the policy are:

¹ This data is sourced from the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, EICV3 Thematic Report: Youth

² AFRICAN YOUTH FORUM PRE- SUMMIT CONFERENCE AND COMY III BUREAU EXTRA ORDINARY MEETINGS REPORT. Rwanda Government Delegation Mission report.

- To encourage the harmonisation of education and training systems
- To contribute to strengthening social communication among youth
- To build capacities for the identification and promotion of opportunities for youth small scale projects
- To contribute to youth education and participation in environment protection
- To promote youth health and to educate youth on adolescents reproductive health
- To educate youth on drug abuse
- To foster and encourage artistic and cultural expression in youth
- To develop specific programmes that involve youth in gender issues
- To raise awareness among youth on their rights and obligations
- To contribute to integrating youth in new ICT and to encourage the establishment of youth media
- To encourage the youth in volunteering and community service.

Youth are represented through the National Youth Council (NYC), and the Assembly of Councillors. Across the country, 8 youth are elected at the village level, from which a further 8 are elected at the Cell level and 8 at the Sector level, and then the district level. Finally 8 are elected from the district level to the national to form the National Youth Council. The National Youth Assembly selects a National Committee, which in turn provides oversight to the Executive Secretary who is in charge of programmes and support officers.

Approximately 5% of the national budget is allocated to the Ministry of Youth and Information Communication Technology and the NYC. If the allocation of other Ministries' youth programmes is added, approximately 15% of the national budget is allocated to youth development. Youth are considered a key pillar for realising the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS). In line with the government policy, and current government focus on youth development, the Kigali City Council also has several programmes in support of young people.

A government retreat was held in early 2012 where, encouraged by the NYC lobby, the president moved youth from the social cluster (that sees them as beneficiaries) to the economic cluster (that sees them as contributors to economic development), thus empowering them for access to finance. *This has represented a significant improvement in the enabling policy environment for youth empowerment.*

This new focus has led to the formulation of new national strategy called the Youth Empowerment for Global Opportunities (YEGO). Building on the best practices in the area of youth employment, the YEGO strategy will tackle youth unemployment using existing infrastructures in different youth centres and working with the local government in the areas of Youth Entrepreneurship, Employability, Youth Placement, Talents Detection and Incubation and Youth Mobilisation.

The overall objective of YEGO is *“To contribute to the reduction of youth unemployment rate to less than 5% by building and coordinating a network of youth centres for the promotion of entrepreneurship and employability.”* YEGO has four strategic objectives:

- To facilitate the creation of at least 100,000 new jobs for youth annually;
- To support at least 70% youth job seekers to acquire job skills and access to job information in each district;
- To set up youth talents detection and incubation programs in each Umurenge;
- To continuously mobilize youth.

YEGO involves an ambitious programme to roll-out youth centres across the country. The seminal model for this strategy has been provided by the Kimisagara One Stop Youth Centre, and KOSYC

Establishment of the One Stop Youth Centre

Since 2006 UN-Habitat's Partners and Youth Branch under the Norway funded Global Partnership Initiative (GPI) has been implementing establishment of One Stop Youth Centres in 5 cities across Africa – Dar-Es Salaam, Freetown, Kampala, Kigali and Nairobi. The model was to provide a neutral space for young people, especially from marginalised communities, where they can interact with one another and with youth serving agencies. The space would be managed in a manner that would enable young people to constructively explore their own potential, where mentorship and information, training and counselling could be easily accessed. A space where young people could express themselves, hear and be heard as well as engage in policy development in a constructive manner.

In November 2006 a mission to Kigali met with the city mayor and the then Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, among other stakeholders including youth, to discuss the concept and explore opportunities for the establishment of the one stop youth centre. This was in response to a request from the municipality of Kigali. At that time the Ministry had several centres in existence, a majority of which were managed by UNFPA and targeted at improved reproductive health. There was also a “We are the Future” (WAF) centre managed by the Italian NGO Glocal Forum and the City of Kigali in Kimisagara, a location in one of the city's poorest sections.

The team found two distinct components to the centre – one was the WAF centre which focused on providing a secure environment for children in post conflict situations, and the “Maison de Jeunes” supported by GTZ and EU which focused mainly on sports and cultural activities. Despite being in the same location, there was a clear divide between the WAF children-focused centre, and the youth focused Maison de Jeunes. The challenge was to manage the separation in light of the fact that the youth coming to the centre were from disturbed backgrounds. The Ministry was keen to focus on youth development, and while there was a youth policy in place, there wasn't a clear strategy to implement youth development.

The Government wanted to see a more integrated approach at the youth centres and the proposed One Stop Youth Centre (OSYC) model provided an opportunity. However, the agreements in place and lack of resources and know-how on how to implement an integrated approach proved a challenge.

In 2010, UN-Habitat signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Sports and Culture to provide support and information, and finally in January 2011 the Kimisagara Centre evolved from being a WAF centre to being the Kimisagara One Stop Youth Employment and Productive Centre.

Purpose of the Centre

- To Provide space for young people to interact with each other
- To Promote youth development through training (including ICT), skills building and developing latent talent
- To Enable youth empowerment through communication, confidence building and enabling participation in a diversity of development oriented initiatives
- To enhance employability by exploring employment opportunities and responsive skills building
- To Build the Community and contribute to nation-building – the community is made more stable by the activities and support from the centre

The team managing the centre describe it as follows:

The centre provides a safe, supportive and secure environment which is somewhere for youth of all backgrounds and abilities, regardless of gender, to feel able to learn and grow. In order to develop as individuals and create communities where people can achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations.

The Kimisagara centre is located a kilometre from Kigali City's main bus park. It operates from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily. While youth are defined as between the ages of 15 to 35, the centre serves the 14 – 40 year population of Kigali

to ensure inclusiveness. In fact, the centre makes every effort not to turn away anyone seeking assistance and it is not uncommon to see younger children playing in the fields.

“

“There are 22 centres all over the country, out of which Kimisagara is the best performing. The Ministry has been searching for a model to replicate, and the One Stop Youth Centre concept was found to be most inclusive. Now the Ministry is planning to replicate the One Stop Model in 450 locations including at District and sector levels across the country through the YEGO strategy.”

Jean Philbert Nsengimana,
Minister of Youth and ICT
12 June 2012

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Activities

Youth employment promotion

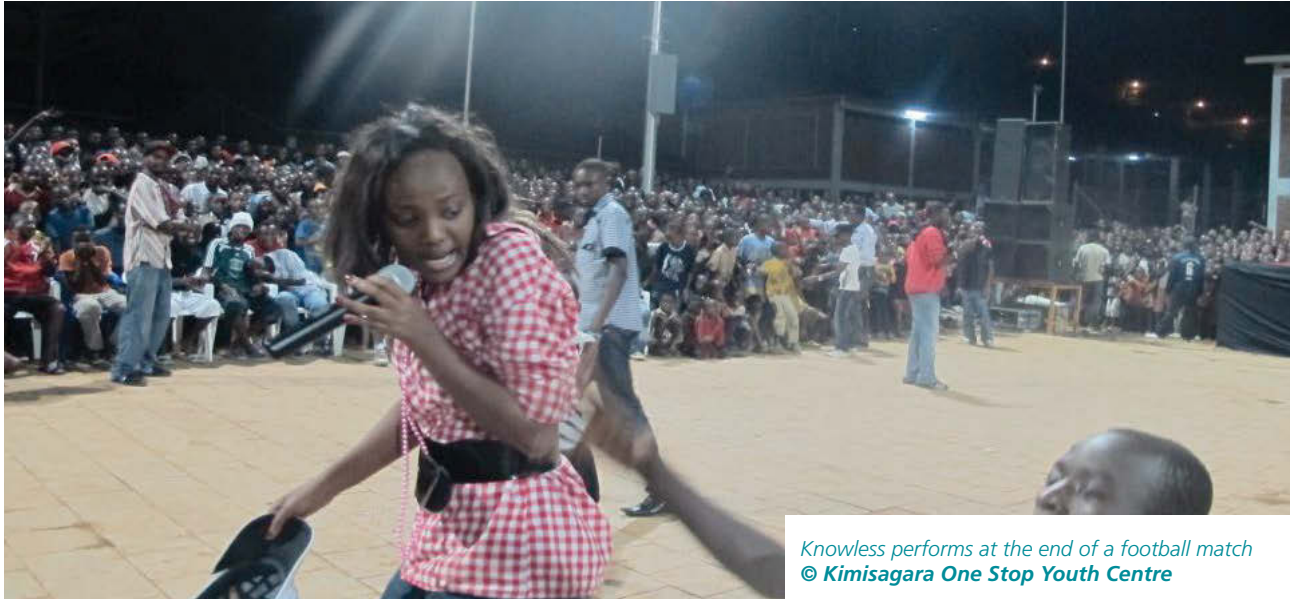
Entrepreneurship Training: programmes on entrepreneurial training with partners such as Start Your Own Business and Digital Opportunity Trust.

Employable skills training: These are 3 month courses targeted at young men and women to diversify their skill base – in the last year courses have been provided in beauty and aesthetics and driving and tour guides.

ICT: The demand far exceeds supply. The centre currently runs training for 6 groups of 25 – 30 individuals.

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*Knowless performs at the end of a football match
© Kimisagara One Stop Youth Centre*

Youth Mobilization, Education and Cooperation

Civic Education, Youth mentoring and community service: Youth, within and through the different associations that they belong to, are engaged in civic education, undertaking community level services such as clean-ups in line with the national policy on *Umuganda*, which calls for all citizens to contribute towards rebuilding the country.

Sports: The centre provides extensive playing grounds that have flood lights for activities at night, over weekends and public holidays. Sports include roller skating, handball, football, basket ball, karate, kung fu and boxing.

Entertainment: The centre provides young people with space to meet other young people. Youth can also access a library at the centre. Special matches are screened, and other activities are organised for young people including music concerts and performances.

Health: Currently a health centre opens provides Voluntary Counselling and Testing services. The buildings for an onsite health and VCT facility have been completed with the assistance of the Global Fund, and the Ministry of Youth and ICT is mobilising resources to enable it become functional.

Culture and Modern Music/Dance:

Various concerts have been organised where youth have had the opportunity to display and share their talent.



“My child has earned 3 medals in Karate due to training and sponsorship from the centre. He has increased his confidence, and his academic performance has improved. Our family is seen with respect by the neighbours as a result of these achievements”

Angelique Mukantazinda,
 parent



There are various Clubs around issues such as Drug Abuse, social responsibility, citizenry and other life skills. A programme is being developed around improved language skills to improve English language proficiency. The management is focusing on building partnerships with other stakeholders to further increase the breadth of services. Two VSO volunteers came on board to assist in strengthening the strategic component. The centre is proving to be a prototype for other centres sponsored by the Ministry across the country.

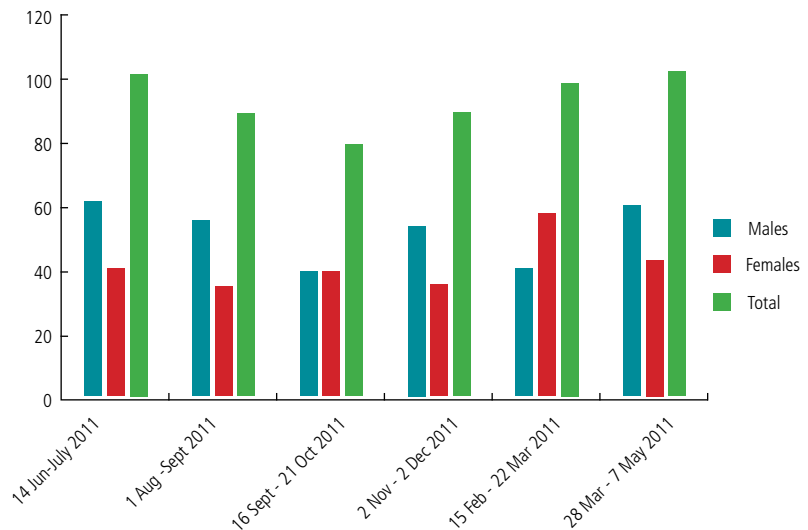
Achievements

The centre has been operating as a One Stop Youth Centre since January 2011, and since then has made great strides in providing a space focused on youth development and empowerment. The following are some highlights of the achievements from January 2011 to June 2012.

Entrepreneurial training: 65 young people have started businesses as a result of the Start Your Business training, and 140 as a result of the Digital Opportunity Training (DOT). Several cooperatives have been established by graduates of the training to facilitate business development and provide other support to members. The following figure displays a breakdown of the training held in entrepreneurship from June 2011 to May 2012.



FIGURE 1: Entrepreneurship Training Provided by DOT



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As can be seen in the Figure 1 above, the number of young women taking entrepreneurial training has increased over time, and in the course that ran from February 15th to March 22 2012, the number of young women was significantly higher than young men. Young women generally find it more difficult to leave home for training or extracurricular activities. Additionally, cultural norms, issues of security and ease of access influence the participation of young women in communal activities. The centre needs to monitor the changes in gender composition to enable it ensure that it creates an enabling and inclusive environment for young men and women alike.

“

“Even if I have nothing, there is something in me, and I can dream”

Nkuruziza Muhamed
25 yr business owner and recipient of DOT training

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For the training conducted by Start Your Own Business programme and UN-HABITAT each session lasted for three weeks and was conducted for batches of 20 students. See Figure 2.

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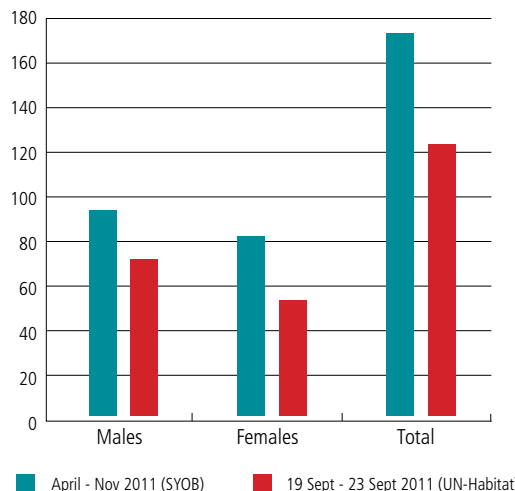
“I was a street boy; I was dirty in every way. Now I have self respect, I have confidence, I am clean” Celestine Hagenimana, 29 yr old ex-drug addict and beneficiary of apprenticeship training

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Apprenticeship training: 100 youth undertook the driving and tour guide training. 85 of them got their provisional permit and 15 failed. 35 got the full licence and 93 completed their tour guide training to certificate level. 60 young men and women enrolled for the beauty and aesthetics course of which 48 graduated. The following graphic demonstrates the breakdown of this training. See Figure 3.

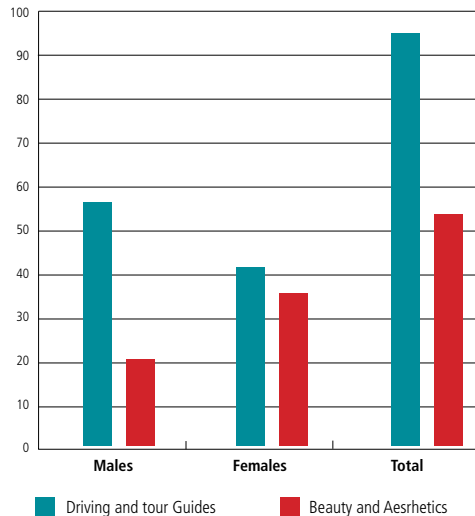


FIGURE 2: Entrepreneurship Training (SYOB & UN-Habitat)



■ April - Nov 2011 (SYOB) ■ 19 Sept - 23 Sept 2011 (UN-Habitat)

FIGURE 3 : Apprenticeship Training (July to December 2011)



The traditional perception of driving and guiding tours being a male domain is reflected in the above gender disaggregated data on trainees in the field. What came as a pleasant surprise was the number of young men interested in beauty and aesthetics training. On further probing, young people revealed that this was due to the fact that women have shown preference for male therapists. Some felt that there was also a hitherto untapped market of men seeking these services.



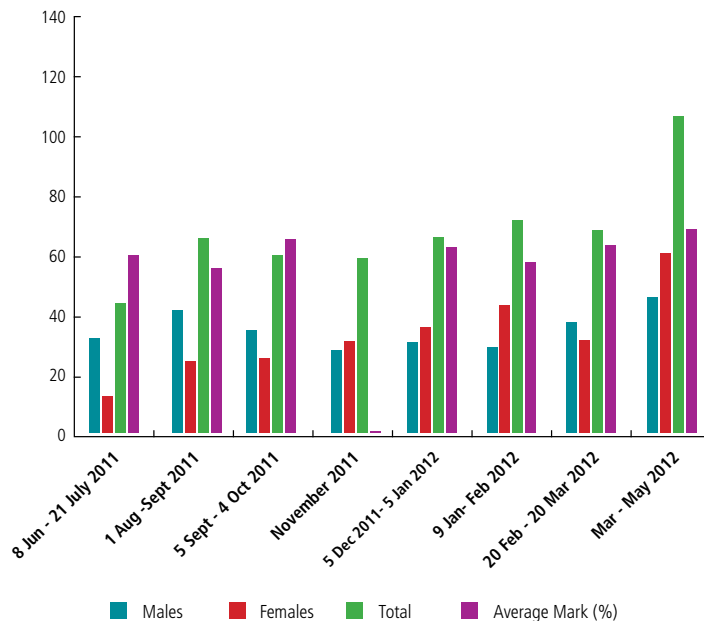
Young football players taking a group photo at the centre © Kimisagara One Stop Youth Centre

ICT: The Government of Rwanda sees ICT as a key driver of development. Its rapidly evolving nature combined with the enthusiasm of youth in keeping up with changing trends made this a natural coupling for development planners in the Rwandan government. This led to the establishment of the Ministry of Youth and ICT. 716 people have been trained in computer use at the centre since March 2011. Approximately 50 young people have reported getting at least a temporary job, and that certification from the centre improved their credentials. A cyber cafe is being established – youth will be allowed to access the internet for an hour at a time for no fee. This will enable youth to better undertake research and report writing.

The Figure 4 below indicates the number of students (disaggregated by gender) that undertook training in ICT at the centre. It also provides data on the average mark of the students, which is being monitored as a quality control indicator. Currently the average mark is in the range of 65 to 80% indicating that students are able to absorb and reproduce most of the information they receive during training.

For this indicator to be used in a meaningful manner, however, it will need to be measured against the average mark at other institutions, along with a comparative assessment of the level of difficulty of the examinations set and administered both at the centres and the institutions it compares itself with.

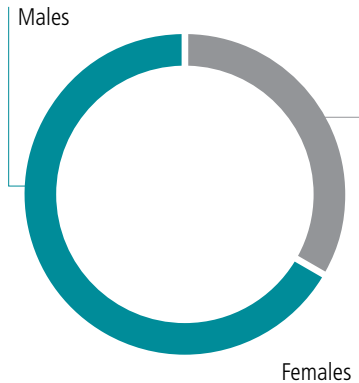
FIGURE 4 : Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training



Health:

From June 2011 to June 2012, the Centre provided VCT services to a total of 2006 people between the ages of 14 and 35. The following pie chart shows the portion of males and females served:

FIGURE 5 : VCT Services June 2011 to June 2012



Sports:

The centre has two large playing fields, two large halls and a number of smaller rooms that are used for various sporting and cultural purposes. 2 football tournaments have been organised within the year in 3 categories – 20-25yrs, 14-17 yrs and 18-19 yrs. During the EUCA and ACN matches have been screened at the centre. There are approximately 500 viewers per match. Also, there have been 2 karate competitions, and 3 of the boxers from Kimisagara have been promoted to the national team, and the national Basket Ball has trained 18 under 18s.

The centre is working to explore and bring to surface the talents and potential in the youth coming to the centre.

43 different Associations have been formed to enable coordination and organisation of various activities. The associations include sports (17 football, 5 karate, 1 boxing, 5 kung fu and 2 skating – they are now in the process of forming associations around board games such as Chess, and Scrabble), business and community service associations.

The centre facilitated the formation of and houses the Rwanda Youth Alliance for Climate Action. The Alliance organised a youth workshop at the centre involving 35 young people on green entrepreneurship and business. The centre management ensured that the workshop was attended by key government representatives. The youth came up with the Kigali Youth Declaration aimed at the RIO +20 process. President Kagame heard of this initiative, and his office asked for this input for it to contribute to the Rwanda position at Rio +20.

The centre is visited by youth from all over Kigali and its environs. Some come to the centre from as far as 30 – 40 km.

The *Umuganda* spirit in Rwanda encourages and coordinates volunteerism for community service catalyses and promotes a sense of social responsibility among the young people. The centre provides context and resources to harness and guide youth energies.

At a recent government high level retreat in early 2012, youth successfully lobbied the President to recognise youth as development agents. This saw a shift in perception and therefore planning, from youth as a social issue to youth as an economic issue. Youth Development in Rwanda is one of the 4 pillars of the current Economic Development and Recovery Strategic Plan (EDRSP).

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Youth attending a training at the Kamisagara Centre © Julius Mwelu/UN-Habitat

Challenges

Staffing: The centre is running huge programmes, but out of the 6 staff at the centre 3 are volunteers. Each individual is working very hard, and they all work as a team, but they are over-stretched, and have little time for reporting, monitoring and evaluating their activities. Joint planning is also difficult and they tend to operate in “silos”.

Internal Capacity Building: Not all management staff has the skills to provide youth-friendly services. They have been hired more for their availability than their abilities to work with youth. However, given the workload and time constraints, the opportunities for internal capacity building are limited, and people are forced to learn as they go along and this sometimes causes problems.

Programme Quality Control: Currently, the centre’s management does not have any control over the quality of services provided. The courses provided are on the basis of availability of partners and resources, and are not informed by any intelligence on the employment market needs. In fact the centre currently does not have the capacity to monitor the market to ensure that the training or capacity building interventions provided respond and are relevant to the market. The danger in this is that young people trained at the centre may not find employment as the skills they acquire are not those required, which will result in disillusionment and despondence.

High Cost of Training Programmes: Currently, all the courses offered apart from some ICT courses are outsourced and financed by the organisations providing the training or by the government. When assessed, the government subsidy gives an apparent fee rate that is lower than any other offered on the market. However, the actual cost of the courses is high and may prove difficult to sustain, especially as recipients of the training do not pay for anything at all, and in some cases, they receive a transportation allowance in addition

to the training. The centre envisions recruiting a team of trainers housed at the centre, which will bring down the cost of the training.

Weak M&E System: While the centre management understand the need for proactive management with a robust M&E system at its core, the tools and skills required to effectively monitor progress are lacking and have not as yet been addressed.

Lack strategy for targeting and inclusivity: While most activities are attended by both girls and boys, there is no strategy in place to target those not able to participate such as young women. There needs to be a strategy in place to ensure that the centre is inclusive of all marginalised persons in the Kigali community.

Strengths

The Centre has a clear vision: ***“To empower youth for global opportunities”***. It serves the largest target group as youth form a substantive part of the Rwanda population. Apart from some sporting activities, the activities are gender inclusive, and the space is accessible to all. There are no barriers such as fees, prior skills, gender, or economic back-

ground. The centre provides an open, free, safe space to all and is blessed with a well developed infrastructure. It enjoys government support and its vision complements government policy. The management is supported by results oriented partners offering a diversity of services and activities.

Conclusion:

The Kimisagara One Stop Youth Employment and Productive Centre demonstrates a well executed government-led strategy targeted at youth development and empowerment. The Government of Rwanda has clearly articulated the need and mechanism for youth development, and laudably invested it with significant resources. The seminal role played by the KOSYC model in inspiring and catalyzing such progressive government policy is attested by all key stakeholders. It can be said, therefore, that UN-Habitat’s initiative and design of the model through its Global Partnership Initiative has been successful in encouraging and building the capacity of local authorities and national governments to take measures to improve the livelihoods of marginalized youth.

The centre has provided a mechanism to harness and consolidate youth-serving resources and channel them to a constituency of young people who come not only from the environs of the centre but from distances as far as 30 – 40 kms. The freedom to access services – regardless of financial position, prior skills, gender or other barriers faced in traditional training institutions – is much appreciated by the young people coming to the centre. Having a secure environment where youth can simply be themselves and interact with their peers and mentors has created a vibrant, youth-owned space. This welcoming spirit has in turn spread to the surrounding community.

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“Before the centre became a One Stop Centre, we could have about 50 or more young people in the cells per day, arrested to various vagrancies. Nowadays we have at the most 10 per week”

**Uwamahoro Claudine and
Rwabuhungu Faustin –**
*Acting Post Commandant,
Kimisagara Police Station*

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Key outcomes that the centre is able to claim include:

1. Increased income and economic empowerment for young men and women - youth have increased opportunities to access financial and non financial services for self employment.
2. Youth are facilitated to participate and undertake cultural, civic educational, sports, leisure and language skill development activities. Youth have an increased knowledge about Rwandan culture through civic education; in exploring their own potential through other activities they are building their self-confidence and self esteem, and also cultivating civic responsibility.
3. The centre has provided space for cohesive youth action. Youth have been able to form various associations that respond to their own and their communities' needs.
4. The centre has contributed to improving community security. The principles by which it runs its activities have cultivated a strong sense of social responsibility among young people coming to the centre. There are anecdotal reports of

youth who have given up drugs and turned their lives around from being street youth to being support not only to themselves but their families and community as well.

5. Young women and men participate in all aspects of the socio-economic development of Rwanda. Policies, strategies and programmes to guide the youth sector are in place and being implemented.
6. Capacity of youth networks to mobilize and advocate for youth issues has also been strengthened as is evidenced by the Rwandan Youth Alliance for Climate Change.

Sustaining the momentum and remaining relevant and responsive is going to be one of the key challenges facing the current management of the centre. The centre needs to build a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism for all activities to ensure that the services continue to be responsive. So, while the training currently provided is a very good beginning, to ensure that the training and skills building efforts translate into employment and increased income, the centre with the government needs to establish a mechanism to monitor market trends and opportunities.

Also, it is important that the quality of training provided at the centre is at least at par with other private and public sector institutions. Promotion of culture and sports is especially important for the people of Rwanda in their recovery process. The centre has excellent facilities, and should ensure that they are used to an optimum and provide the space and human resource to expand Rwanda's talent base in all existing and emerging fields.

Youth development is a core focus of the government's development agenda, and it has employed substantial resources towards this. Providing a dedicated space for youth is proving to be a powerful move, and seeing its success, the government is seeking to replicate the Kimisagara model across the country.



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