



# Strengthening business opportunities and socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable youth, women, and persons with disabilities

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2022-2023

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM RWANDA

## CONTEXT

### The demographic dividend: A significant opportunity

Rwanda has made notable strides to empower youth in entrepreneurship, skills development, and job employment; and prioritizes them as critical in achieving its Vision 2050. 70% of the Rwandan population is under 30 years old and 75% of youth live in rural areas where subsistence agriculture is the dominant source of income. Over the past two decades a number of youth centric policies and interventions have been developed and implemented. In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi, the Government of Rwanda (GoR) established the National Youth Council, a platform to empower the youth to share their ideas and contribute to the national development. In 2013, the Ministry of Youth was established to streamline national efforts on youth empowerment and employment. Following the first National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1 2018 – 2024) that highlights youth employment as a pillar for national development, the Government of Rwanda established the National Employment Program (NES) focused on strengthening youth entrepreneurship, access to finance and skills development. Other initiatives such as YouthConnekt, and private sector youth chambers also serve as useful platforms for connecting youth to opportunities. As a result of such efforts among many others, annual average growth of youth participation in the labour force<sup>1</sup> stands at 2.6%, above Africa's average of 2.1%<sup>2</sup>. Youth unemployment also declined from 21.5% to 18% between 2016 and 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Rwanda is in a demographic transition from a high-fertility, high-mortality equilibrium to a low(er)-fertility, low(er)-mortality equilibrium, providing a greater need for youth empowerment within the economy and a potential dividend that can contribute to long-term economic growth and development. Termed a demographic dividend, this is the economic growth potential that results in a population's age structure. Very importantly for Rwanda, while children have been a large proportion of the population (an estimated 45% of the population in 2019 was under 18 years of age), a large proportion will be entering working age over the coming years and creating a larger and fast-growing dynamic around jobs for youth and tapping into their potential.

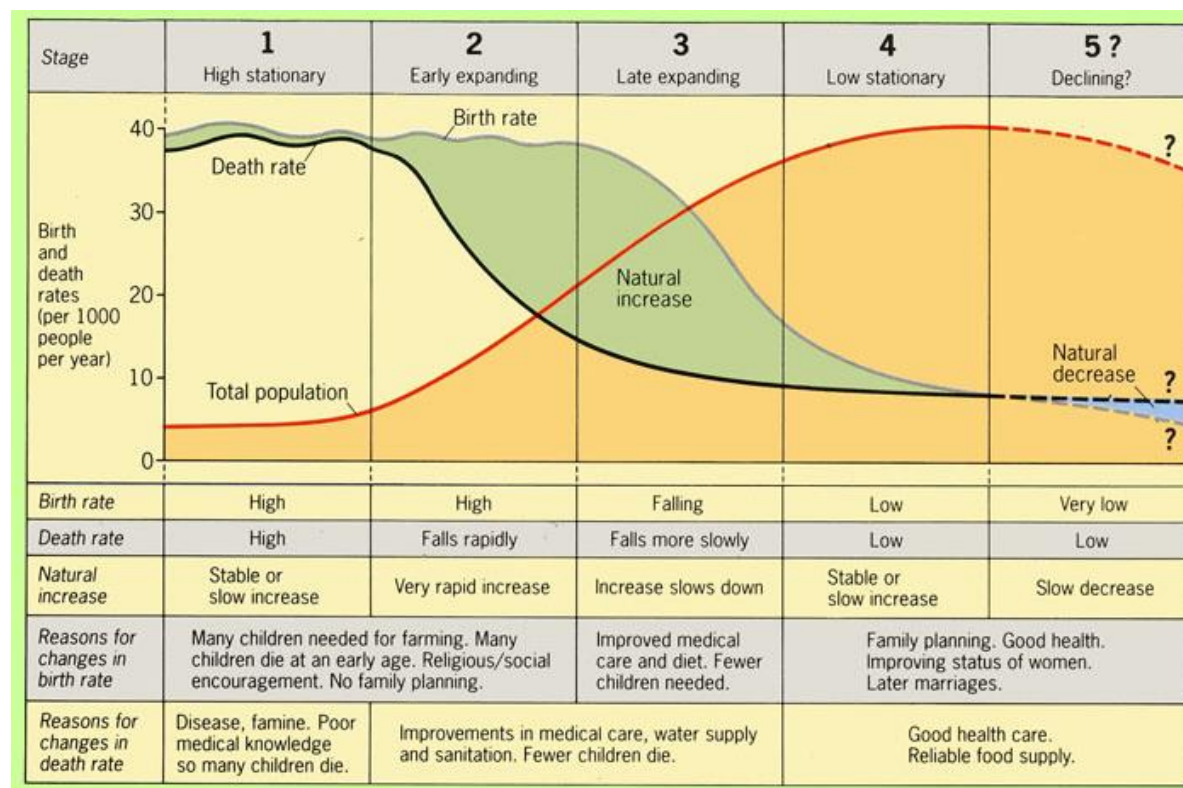
Although fertility rates are still relatively high at approximately 3.8 births per woman, this is a significant reduction and almost half of the fertility rates seen 15 years ago. This might be attributed to the Modern contraceptive use which increased from 10% in 2005 to 48% by 2015, leadership has been highly supportive of family planning, running communication campaigns, and investing in a network of Community Health Workers (CHWs) as an example. Coupled with sharp declines in infant mortality rates (from 119 per 1,000 live births in 1998 to 27.3 per 1,000 live births twenty years later), and slowing decline in death rates, the country is rapidly approaching an important point in its demographic transition. The figure below shows the demographic journey of Rwanda.

<sup>1</sup> This accounts for young adults aged between 15 and 24 years of age

<sup>2</sup> ILO, Rwanda: Youth Labour Markets and the School-to-Work Transition, 2020

<sup>3</sup> NISR, Labor Force Survey, 2016-2019

Figure 1: Demographic Journey



Source:

Between the second and third stage of demographic transition, a golden opportunity colloquially referred to as the 'Goldilocks' period arises. This is a generation or two during which there is an exceptional bulge in the working age population. This bulge is rapidly approaching in Rwanda, with estimates of this demographic growing by 2 million people in 2022 and accounting for 60% of the population. The transition is projected to accelerate after 2025, when working age population will grow much faster than both the youth (younger than 15-years of age) and the elderly.

This provides both a challenge and an opportunity for Rwanda. Reaping the potential of a young, innovative workforce could set the country on an accelerated path for development, while failing to do so would not only be a missed opportunity but will have significant negative impact on human development and create economic and social challenges associated with masses of un- or under-employed youth.

### The gender dividend: Critical to achieving full potential

In the knowledge economy, human capital replaces natural resources as a basis for growth. Countries and businesses that will succeed in this century are those that will harness the full human capital of their people – in Rwanda, this will not be achieved if women, who constitute 52% of the population, and 45% of the total labour force, are not fully empowered and actively involved in public and private sector development. Gender diversity is also tightly linked to the growing role of women as consumers. Not only do individual homes or businesses stand to gain from fully capitalizing on the talents of women, but the whole country stands to benefit.

**Understanding the critical importance of women, Rwanda continues to prioritize inclusiveness to achieve economic transformation for all Rwandans.** Globally, Rwanda is a champion for women empowerment and currently ranks as the 9th best place to be a woman in terms of economic participation and opportunity, education attainment, health, survival, and political empowerment.<sup>4</sup> Female enrolment up until secondary school has been consistently higher than male enrolment (51% female vs 47 % male)<sup>5</sup> with more women enrolled in key fields of upper secondary (sciences, languages, humanities, and teacher education). Between 2016 and 2019, female unemployment also decreased from 22.7% to 17%.<sup>6</sup> As a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, this rate climbed back to 20% unemployment in 2020.

### Persons with Disabilities: A vulnerable group requiring targeted interventions.

**In the 2002 national census in Rwanda, persons with disabilities (PWDs) were defined as: “Persons who were born without physical, mental or psychological ability like that of others or who were deprived of it due to illness, accident, war or old age”.** The most common types of disability were categorized by statisticians as belonging to the “upper limb”, “lower limb”, “others”, “deaf/dumb”, “mental deficiency”, “blind”, and “trauma”. Using this concept of activity limitations to identify persons with disabilities, the outcome of this census was a national disability prevalence estimate of 4.7%. The next national census is planned for 2022 and is expected to provide more updated and accurate data for the disability prevalence in Rwanda.

**In recent years, the GoR strengthened its interventions towards supporting persons with disabilities (PWDs).** In 2011, the GoR established the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) to coordinate support efforts for persons with disabilities. More recently, in May 2021, Rwanda’s cabinet approved a new policy for inclusion of persons with disabilities in Rwanda, reaffirming Rwanda’s strong political will for disability inclusion. Through the NCPD and interventions by development partners, various milestones have been achieved particularly on streamlining policy frameworks to be disability inclusive. Rwanda’s organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) have been critical channels for advocacy and decentralizing implemented policies and initiatives. A recent situation analysis conducted by UNDP reveal that PWDs are still major challenges in terms of access to health, education and employment. Their inclusion in the private sector has also been very limited such that most people with disabilities who have business ambitions but fail to meet them due to the lack of financing or limited capital end up joining cooperatives as entry point of their active engagement with the private sector. The transport sector has also not yet managed to create disability inclusive public transportation means which cause a major barrier in terms of access to various services by persons with disabilities.

### Ongoing Challenges

**Despite the progress, key challenges remain and limit women, youth and persons with disabilities to participate in the economy and reach their full potential.** Women are more likely to be unemployed than men (20% vs. 15%)<sup>7</sup>. Female-headed households are more likely to be poor than their male-headed counterparts (39.5% vs 37.6 percent)<sup>8</sup> and adult women are more likely to be living in poverty than adult men (34.8% vs 31.6 percent for male). Further, the share of female TVET and university

<sup>4</sup> World Economic Forum, Global Gender Report Index, 2019

<sup>5</sup> MINEDUC, Education statistics, 2018

<sup>6</sup> NISR, Labour Force Survey, 2016-2019

<sup>7</sup> NISR, Labor Force Survey, 2020

<sup>8</sup> GoR, SDGs Voluntary national review report, 2019

students is lower than that of their male counterparts (45.8% and 42.7% respectively)<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, youth face higher unemployment (21% vs 13 for adults)<sup>10</sup>, and high level of poverty (29.5% of youth live in households below poverty line)<sup>11</sup>.

**Striking challenges particularly stand out for persons with disabilities given the incipient efforts to address their challenges.** Persons with disabilities still face an idiosyncratic exclusion from various services and their socioeconomic status and standards of living remain far below national average. A recent study by UNDP Rwanda indicates that persons with disabilities are socio-economically disadvantaged relative to those without disabilities. For example, while 25% of persons with disabilities had no access to financial services in 2020<sup>12</sup> (FinScope 2020), the corresponding rate of financial exclusion for persons without disabilities is only seven percent. Additionally, persons with disabilities have lower levels of education attainment, access to electricity and safe water relative to those without disabilities. Analysis of the EICV5 survey data collected by NISR in 2017, the labour force participation rate was lower among persons with disabilities (56%) than among persons without disabilities (75%). The study further indicates higher levels of poverty where 27% of persons with disabilities belonged to Rwanda's lowest socio-economic stratification category (Ubudehe category 1) compared to 12% of persons without disabilities. The unemployment rate among PWDs is highest among female youth living with disabilities aged between 16 and 24 and 25 and 34, standing at 22% and 21% respectively vs 17% and 12% among male youth within the same age groups.

As revealed in this proposal, poverty rate amongst districts remain uneven with most urban districts being very advanced while other districts have continuously featured amongst the poorest districts within the country, either due to the limited soil productivity, some parts of the country being very hilly and having limited transport means to facilitate exchange of goods and services from one place to the place. Moreover, the political situation within the region also affected bordering districts which were benefiting a lot from revenues collected thanks to cross border trade activities, but also local people lost their source of income as the closing of borders or limitations in transactions affected their capacity to transact with the population across the border. Moreover, local people had also to stop some of their cross-border activities due to the risk of violence, insecurity and aggression which could be fuelled by the political situation. It is also important that in some cases, poverty was caused by poor mindset as people were unable to seize existing local opportunities to transform them into source of income. This call for increased action by local leaders, civil society and the media to promote transformational and entrepreneurial mindset across the country.

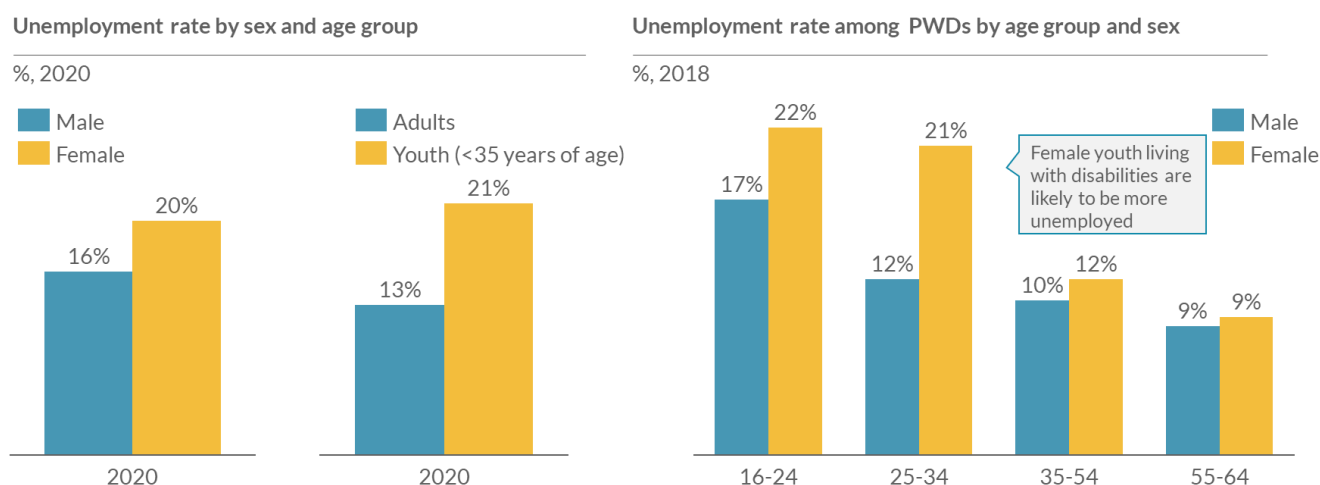
<sup>9</sup> MINEDUC, Education Statistics, 2018

<sup>10</sup> NISR, Labor Force Survey, 2020

<sup>11</sup> GoR, SDGs Voluntary national review report, 2019

<sup>12</sup> Finiscope, 2020

Figure 2: Unemployment rates among women, youth and PWDs



Sources: NISR, Labour Force Survey, 2018 & 2020; Dalberg Analysis, 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected these groups on various fronts including health, learning employment and civic engagement, showing their vulnerability to external shocks. The most vulnerable youth, women, and persons with disabilities mainly working in the informal economy were likely to face unemployment, given the high disruptions of the informal sector. The female unemployed population grew by 26% while the male unemployed population only grew by 6%.<sup>13</sup> This is mainly because women, especially in lower segments, left their jobs to do subsistence farming in order to support their families. Similarly, unemployment among youth aged 16 to 24 increased by 42%.<sup>14</sup> A nation-wide rapid impact assessment among 2,600 youth showed that 40% of them experienced temporary suspension of jobs, while 20% and 12% experienced a salary decrease and possible termination of contract, respectively.<sup>15</sup> Further, COVID-19 lockdown measures excluded persons with disabilities from needed support and left the majority unemployed given the disruptions in the informal sector. Beyond unemployment, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated gender-based violence and decreased these vulnerable groups' mental and physical wellness. Therefore, the COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly increased socio-economic exclusion of vulnerable groups.

## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES: APPROACH

Harnessing the full potential provided by Rwanda's unique demographic shift and the economic growth that can be spurred by innovative youth, and fully realising the social and economic potential of women and persons with disabilities as economic actors will place Rwanda on an accelerated and inclusive growth trajectory, but will require further strategic interventions.

Given the notable steps already taken, the ambition of leaving no one behind and the profound untapped economic opportunity – an essential starting point is with the most excluded and vulnerable. To this end, the proposed programme is focused on eight of the poorest districts in the country as a starting point; these districts have consecutively emerged as so in Rwanda's last two Integrated Household Living Conditions Surveys. Poverty rates in these districts are particularly high

<sup>13</sup> NISR, Labor Force Survey, 2019-2020

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> MINYOUTH, Youth rapid assessment on impact of COVID-19, 2020



and persistent: Gicumbi (~55% in 2013/14 and 35% in 2016/17), Burera (~50% in 2013/14 and 49% in 2016/17), Ngororero (~49% in 2013/14 and 48% in 2016/17), Nyamasheke (~62% in 2013/14 and 68% in 2016/17), Nyaruguru (48% in 2013/14 and 52% in 2016/17), Rutsiro (~51% in 2013/14 and 49% in 2016/17), Gisagara (~52% in 2013/14 and 55% in 2016/17) and Huye (32% in 2013 and 40% in 2016/17). As explained in the section covering the challenges here below, the variances in poverty rates. Particularly over the past five years was also due to prevailing political tensions within the great Lakes Region and the political tensions between Government particularly vis-à-vis Burundi and Uganda. The population in the bordering districts was greatly benefiting from cross border trade activities at small and large scale. The closing of borders or measures limiting movements between the country as well as the insecurity, reported violence and aggressions affected the exchange of goods and services from which local population could gain some income. Rwanda having an agriculture-based economy, it is important to highlight that the impact of climate change on agriculture productivity is high and, in some cases, local people report the inability to increase production due to limited access to improved seeds and fertilisers. Cooperatives have been helpful in helping local population to gather their comparative advantage to promote massive agriculture production and expand their markets. But these cooperatives still need capacities for institutional development and business development. The recently conducted assessment on rural district potentialities identified key economic opportunities rural districts could focus on. Most opportunities are in the agriculture, mining, trade and tourism sectors. This project will focus on identified opportunities and empower local leaders to work closely with the local population and stakeholders to fast-track socio-economic transformation.

**This will leverage UNDP's existing interventions in addressing socio-economic barriers, accelerating local development and empowering vulnerable groups.** Although Rwanda has gone through two decades of decentralization, the development level amongst districts is disproportional with some urban districts having experienced substantive socio-economic development while most rural districts still face high poverty rates and lag behind in terms of socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable groups. To address the rural-urban inequalities, UNDP has been implementing a project with the aim of accelerating development of the eight poorest districts by fast-tracking development initiatives in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

**UNDP's project to fast-track development in the 8 poorest districts, in coordination with the Ministry of Local Government, is already having impact in the COVID 19 pandemic.** With the need to build back better, UNDP has been supporting local initiatives aiming at accelerating community socio-economic development within these districts through CSOs and cooperatives. The current support focuses on promoting inclusive and community-based development through the empowerment of women, young people, and persons with disabilities in these districts for inclusive and sustainable local development. Following the COVID 19 outbreak in 2020, this initiative was scaled up to ensure that the level of vulnerability within these districts is not deepened while also sustaining and fast-tracking some of the development initiatives these districts were pioneering.

**Since 2013, UNDP has also been supporting the government of Rwanda through the Youth Joint programme to develop and strengthen entrepreneurship skills amongst youth and create and manage innovative businesses.** The programme has covered from ideation to pre-incubation, incubation and post-incubation. Through the Youth Joint programme UNDP supported the Government of Rwanda to launch YouthConnekt, a multifaceted initiative which combines elements of skills development, entrepreneurship, access to jobs and finance, awareness raising on issues related to youth development (through TV Shows, radio shows and monthly dialogues), social inclusion and promotion of youth citizenship. The initiative focuses on the most vulnerable with an objective of tackling the several challenges they face. Through YouthConnekt, approximately 4 million

hands-on activists were reached; over 8,300 decent jobs were created in various sectors, and more than 770 new innovative youth led business were trained and sustained. In addition, more than 260 innovative businesses were awarded with start-up toolkits, grants and equipment after trainings and boot camps, and 2,400 business policy formulation activities were implemented. UNDP further mobilized other partners including the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Rwanda through the International Cooperation of Korea (KOICA), Imbutu Foundation, Girl Effect, Smart Africa, and UNFPA, UNWOMEN, UNICEF among other development partners to jointly work on addressing key barriers to youth empowerment.

Since 2018, as part of the Leave No-one Behind principle of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, UNDP Rwanda has been investing efforts in creating a multi-partner disability inclusion platform to significantly transform the lives of persons with disabilities and ensure greater engagement of persons with disabilities in local and national development processes. The platform brings different partners together and attempts to make use of networks of private sector, public sector, civil society and academic partners to understand the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and co-create solutions to better protect and promote their rights. In the framework of these efforts, multi-partner consultations, technical working meetings, and high-level meetings have been held. The priorities emanating from these meetings have informed UNDP and partners' planning and programming, and UNDP has been directly supporting multiple interventions based on these consultations. Efforts include capacity building of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), increasing inclusive access to justice, finance and information, advocacy to address stigma and discrimination, grassroots empowerment of persons with disabilities through CSOs and cooperatives.

**Amplifying this work and assisting youth, women-owned and disability inclusive CSOs, organizations of persons with disabilities and cooperatives in these areas that already have some traction will help to accelerate their development, increase impact, and serve as case studies for others.**

The planned programme interventions are split across four workstreams:

- Scaling cooperatives' initiatives to empower women, youth and persons with disabilities
- Advocacy and awareness raising on the challenges and specific needs of vulnerable groups
- Promoting the economic potential of persons with disabilities
- Strengthen capacity of civil society organizations to empower their communities with a focus on the most vulnerable

## Workstream 1: Scaling post incubation initiatives

**Output 1: Businesses and cooperatives of vulnerable women, youth and persons with disabilities are empowered for increased economic inclusion**

**This intervention will focus on scaling economic inclusion and empowerment of businesses and cooperatives that are focused on vulnerable women, youth and persons with disabilities across Rwanda.** The programme will seek to build their resilience, their capacity to scale their innovative business and increase their access to markets and financial institutions. The programme will target 10,000 beneficiaries and work closely with local governments and 16 cooperatives in the above mentioned 8 districts. The paths of intervention will cover: i) Providing grants to cooperatives, and ii) Providing entrepreneurship capacities and start-up toolkits for teen mothers and vulnerable women, youth and PWDs in the community to increase productivity for market access and creation of decent jobs.



Key activities will include:

- Identifying and screening potential beneficiaries whose businesses are in post incubation phase, with a focus on those with a clear path to scale, greatest impact for vulnerable groups and tangible traction
- Developing beneficiary specific support packages to address their most pressing challenges and opportunities to sustain and scale up their business,
- Providing capacity and start-up toolkits for vulnerable women and youth e.g. teen mothers, vulnerable women, persons with disabilities in the community to increase productivity for market access and job creation with focus to 8 poorest districts
- Providing grants to the best innovative green businesses led by youth and women through the YouthConnekt programme
- Providing business advisory services and coaching to teenage women, youth and persons with disabilities

**Key outcome:** Increased access to employment and income for youth, women and persons with disabilities

## Workstream 2: Advocacy and awareness raising

**Output 2:** Media houses and media practitioners have strengthened technical and financial capacities to address stigma and discrimination and advocate for the most vulnerable

**Advocacy and awareness raising are a critical step towards addressing discrimination and supporting socio-economic inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities.** This requires strengthening the capacities of media houses and media practitioners to advocate for the most vulnerable and creating strong advocacy campaigns.

Key activities will include:

- Building capacity of media practitioners on addressing stigma and discrimination and inclusive community development
- Designing awareness campaigns, outreach, and community engagement programs covering media channels i.e., TV, radio and online platforms.
- Engaging the media to stimulate public private partnership in inclusive development including through cooperatives, CSOs and micro businesses owned by women, youth and PWDs.

**Key outcome:** Increased awareness and mindset change on current discrimination and stigma against women, girls, youth, and persons with disabilities and attract investment and partnership for the empowerment of these groups.

## Workstream 3: Promoting the economic potential of persons with disabilities

**Output 3:** Persons with disabilities have increased access to employment opportunities

Persons with disabilities remain the most excluded from employment, and thus require targeted support to access employment opportunities, both formal and informal.

Key activities will include:

- Strengthening the capacity of the private sector to mainstream, promote and advocate for disability inclusion in businesses. This includes also designing guidance on reasonable accommodation in the workplace
- Initiating a trainee/internship program for professionals with disabilities in the private sector
- Supporting TVET training and skills development for persons with disabilities

**Key outcomes:** Reduced unemployment levels of persons with disabilities

## Workstream 4: Capacity strengthening of CSOs

**Output 4:** Civil society organizations have strengthened technical and financial capacities to support community-based socio-economic transformation

**Civil Society Organizations are critical channels for reaching vulnerable groups at local level.** They play an essential role in ensuring human rights, transparency, community development and citizens' participation. Their work with marginalized communities and the focus on advocacy and accountability are critical to a society's wellbeing. Without them, we cannot build societies that 'leave no one behind'. Strengthening their capacities to drive socio-economic transformation in the 8 districts is therefore crucial.

Key activities include:

- Selecting CSO initiatives to support in the 8 poorest districts. Selection will be based on their highest potential for impact on creation of decent jobs and business empowerment, capacity to absorb assistance and tangible existing traction and a clear path for accelerating their development
- Conducting capacity assessments of selected CSOs
- Developing and implementing a capacity development plan for CSOs with focus on institutional development, resource mobilization and community development
- Providing grants to CSOs and cooperatives to implement socio-economic community development

**Key outcomes:** Civil society organizations are strong drivers of socio-economic transformation in the 8 poorest districts

## Workstream 5: Project management and communication for development

**Output 5:** Project management, oversight and communication strengthened

This intervention serves to strengthen the project management and oversight, and internal knowledge sharing from this project to build further partnerships and inform decision making. It will require

consolidation of outputs from the four work streams and sharing within the ecosystem to find opportunities for partnerships.

Key activities include:

- Coordinating the overall implementation of the proposed activities
- Elaborating and implementing the project plans
- Regularly monitoring, reporting, and reviewing progress,
- Organizing the project's quarterly and annual meetings with partners, eg Enabel
- Documenting challenges, and successes
- Developing communication and advocacy materials, co-approved by UNDP and Enabel
- Developing and implementing a communication strategy to produce and share knowledge materials with stakeholders and the public

**Key outcomes:** Efficient project and resources management, effective visibility, and strong collaboration among stakeholders on interventions to support women, youth, and PWDs

## KEY IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

Key actors have been identified across the various workstreams. As initial conversations are conducted, revisions and additions changes will be made accordingly. The table below outlines an initial list of key partners.

Category	Key implementation partners
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rwanda Governance Board</li> <li>• Ministry of Local Government</li> <li>• Districts</li> <li>• Ministry of Youth and Culture</li> <li>• Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA)</li> <li>• National Youth Council</li> <li>• National Council of Persons with Disabilities</li> </ul>
Civil Society Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local civil society organizations</li> <li>• Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ)</li> <li>• Media associations and media houses</li> <li>• Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP)</li> <li>• National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda (NUDOR)</li> <li>• Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)</li> </ul>
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private sector Federation and private companies</li> </ul>
Development Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabel</li> <li>• Embassy of Belgium</li> </ul>

The partners identified above not only have mandate which so crucial to the achievement to the expected results but also, they have build capacities and networks through which the project activities could easily be rolled out. The project also ensures inclusion of all development stakeholders both public, private, the civil society and the media which is important to provide or develop integrated solutions. AS per the established rules and regulations, UNDP will conduct due diligence to ensure capacities and guarantee of success of the projects. In addition to direct partners, the project will also involve capacity development institutions and training institutes to contribute to capacity development.

### Partnership with Enabel and Belgian Embassy

**The Embassy of Belgium and Enabel are partners for this project.** The development cooperation framework in Rwanda is well developed and development cooperation with the Kingdom of Belgium spans decades. Globally, Rwanda remains among Enabel's top three beneficiaries underpinning the reciprocal importance in both countries' agendas. Anchoring the proposed interventions on inclusion at the local level in the poorest and most excluded, as well as elevating the voice and role of youth, women and PWDs aligns well with a long-standing focus on investing in decentralisation. On the other hand, UNDP is known to be a leading organization in terms of promoting sustainable development, inclusion, youth and women empowerment to ensure that none is left behind in accessing the development gains. The proposed interventions will help UNDP, Embassy of Belgium

in Rwanda and Enabel to scale the envisioned business and reaping the demographic, gender and PWD dividend in districts surrounding some of the emerging cities. This will be an additive component in scaling local economic development and addressing barriers in local economic development, urbanisation as well as transforming agricultural value chains (of which majority of women, youth and PWDs are dependent on) – two of the three pillars of Belgo-Rwandan partnership 2019 - 2024. Through this project, the Embassy of Belgium and UNDP Rwanda will also work together to promote complementarity and synergy with other initiatives supported by the Government of Belgium including through Enabel as well as NGOs. Synergies will be created both in terms of geographical areas of focus but as well as the thematic areas and three categories of beneficiaries: youth, women, and persons with disabilities.

### **Sustainability and risk management**

The project will be implemented ensuring long term impact of the support provided by primarily building human and institutional capacities within local governments, CSOs, media, micro enterprises which are needed for Rwanda to achieve its mid and long term economic ambitions including being a private sector led economy but also ensuring shared wealth across the country.

Sustainability and risk mitigation will be guaranteed by focusing on the post incubation phase working with cooperatives and micro businesses which have proven capacities and business skills required to access the technical and financial support which will be allocated. For the sake of risk mitigation, due diligence will be applied both on the technical as well as operational side during the selection of local partners and a robust monitoring system will be put in place within UNDP but also the partners at central and local levels.

As the project will be implemented amidst a pandemic (COVID 19) and recovery period, the lessons learnt through the early days of the pandemic will be implemented such as limiting physical gatherings and meetings to the most essential ones as well as the use of modern technology to monitor and maintain engagement with local partners. The project remains essential as it addresses the challenges which are priority to the national recovery plan both for the private sector such as building strong business and entrepreneurship skills but also broadening space for media and CSOs engagement in recovery and development processes.

## **IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH**

### **Targeted beneficiaries**

This project targets at least 12,100 vulnerable women, youth and persons with disabilities as end beneficiaries. Interventions focus on skills development, entrepreneurship and start up development, business promotion at community level and capacity building of key actors. The project aims to work directly with at least 16 cooperatives and 14 CSOs. To identify these cooperatives and CSOs, UNDP seeks to tap into established frameworks and on-going partnerships. For example, as part of UNDP's support to community-based CSOs, UNDP is in the process of launching a national call for project proposals targeting Rwandan CSOs in 7 different thematic areas including youth empowerment, gender equality, empowerment of persons with disabilities. The submitted proposals will be evaluated by an independent grant selection committee, and as a result, a list of selected successful project

proposals will be generated. Through this framework, UNDP will be able to immediately engage in partnerships with relevant CSOs to contribute to achieving the expected results in this project proposal. UNDP is also working with the Ministry of Local Government to support cooperatives in the 8 poorest districts of the country with the aim of accelerating socio-economic development and fight against the risk for deepened economic inequalities across the country. This said, the ground is set to implement and scale up these initiatives as soon as the funding will be secured, where this partnership will enable direct and concrete support along the SDG principal to Leave No One Behind.

### The respective roles of the various stakeholders, including the Belgian NGO's, ENABEL and the Embassy

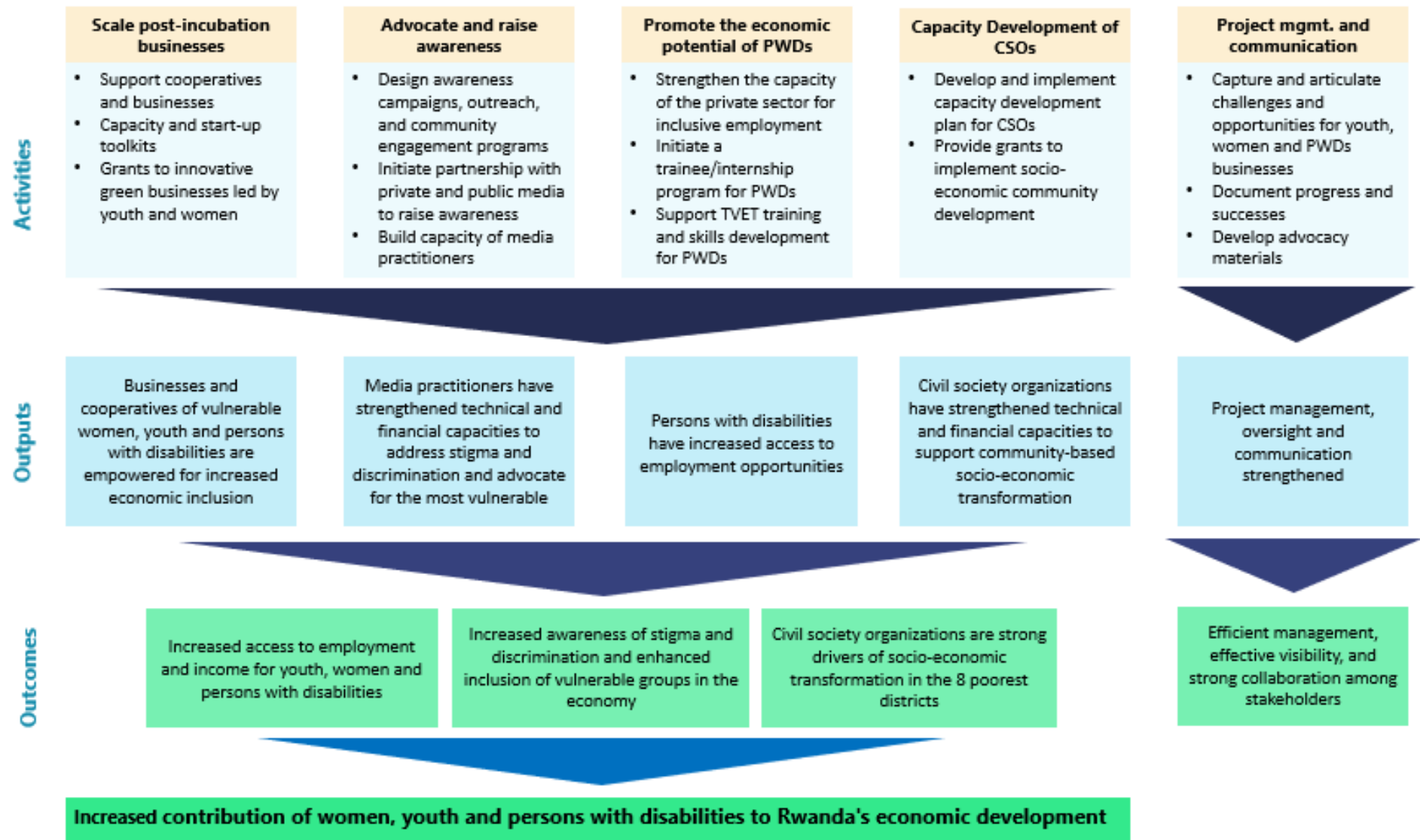
This project will contribute to further strengthening collaboration and synergies between UNDP and the Government of Belgium both at corporate level but also at national level through the UNDP Country office and the Embassy of Belgium in Rwanda and Enabel. Beyond this, UNDP looks forward to working with other CSOs supported by the Government of Belgium such as Humanity and Inclusion in order to advance the disability inclusion agenda at national level and create tailored socio-economic opportunities for persons with disabilities. Both Enabel, the Embassy of Belgium and UNDP are part of the governance and decentralization sector working group, one the key sectors under the national development plan. This partnership will contribute to enhance the contribution of the Government of Belgium in this sector but also allow the three institutions mentioned to jointly develop and implement advocacy strategies towards inclusive local economic development and inclusive national recovery for increased synergy and greater impact. As part of CSO capacity strengthening, local CSOs could benefit from peer exchange and peer learning with Belgian NGOs in Rwanda. Furthermore, UNDP will seek representation of the Government of Belgium on project boards related to the implementation of the Belgian-funded initiatives.

### The visibility of the Belgian contribution

UNDP will secure additional human capacities dedicated to developing and implementing a communication and advocacy strategy for the project to create greater visibility of the contribution of the Government of Belgium but also document results and develop success stories which could attract more funding within this collaboration framework. In close collaboration with the Embassy of Belgium in Rwanda, UNDP will ensure active participation of Belgian officials in all key events. The project will also involve the media (both traditional as well as social media channels, short videos and Op-ed articles Co Authored by UNDP and Belgian in National and Regional papers) to showcase the outcomes of the project, to maintain regular communication and to advocate for the key themes addressed by the project. Constant efforts will be made to ensure timely communication of results through various channels showcasing the support from the Government of Belgium.



Figure 3: Theory of Change



RESULT FRAMEWORK								
EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE		TARGET			DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
			Value	Year	Dec 2022	Dec 2023	Final	
<b>Output 1:</b> Businesses and cooperatives of vulnerable women, youth and persons with disabilities are empowered for increased economic inclusion	<b>1.1 Number of cooperatives supported to improve their business</b>	Project reports	0	2021	8	8	16	Project reports No risk for measuring
	<b>1.2 Number of vulnerable women, youth and persons with disabilities directly supported with business advisory services</b>	Project reports	0	2021	5,000	5,000	10,000	Project reports No risk for measuring
	<b>1.3 Number of grants awarded to innovative green businesses</b>	Project reports	0	2021	6	6	12	Project reports No risk for measuring
<b>Output 2:</b> Media houses and media practitioners have strengthened technical and financial capacities to address stigma and discrimination and advocate for the most vulnerable	<b>2.1 Number of targeted capacity building trainings for media houses and media practitioners organized on addressing stigma and discrimination of vulnerable groups</b>	Training reports	0	2021	4	4	8	Project reports Training reports No risk for measuring
	<b>2.2 Number of awareness campaigns organized</b>	Project reports	0	2021	1	1	2	Project reports No risk for measuring
<b>Output 3:</b> Persons with disabilities have increased access to employment opportunities	<b>3.1 Reasonable accommodation requirements for private sector employment of persons with disabilities are in place and in use</b>	Reasonable accommodation requirement guideline	No	2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	Reasonable accommodation requirements document Potential risk of measuring the use of the document
	<b>3.2 Number of professionals with disabilities accessing internship opportunities in private sector companies</b>	Project reports	0	2021	8	8	16	Project reports No risk for measuring
	<b>3.3 Number of persons with disabilities supported through TVET training and skills development</b>	Project reports	0	2021	10	10	20	Project reports No risk for measuring
<b>Output 4:</b> Civil society organizations have strengthened technical and financial capacities to support community-based socio-economic transformation	<b>2.1 Number of CSO projects in the 8 poorest districts supported with technical and financial capacity</b>	Project reports	0	2021	7	7	14	Project reports No risk for measuring
	<b>2.2 Number of direct beneficiaries reached through grassroots level support by CSOs in the 8 poorest districts</b>	Project reports	0	2021	1,050	1,050	2,100	Project reports No risk for measuring

	<b>2.2 Number of targeted capacity building trainings for CSOs organized</b>	Training reports	29 (through other interventions)	2021	4	4	8	<i>Training reports No risk for measuring</i>
	<b>2.3 Effectiveness of CSOs in meeting societal needs</b>	CSDB	64.9%	2018	70%	70%	70%	<i>New CSDB to be published in 2022</i>
<b>Output 5:</b> Project management, oversight and communication strengthened	<b>5.1 M&amp;E strategy has been developed with accompanying tools, and is being implemented</b>	M&E Strategy document	No	2021	Yes	Yes	Yes	<i>M&amp;E tools No risk for measuring</i>
	<b>5.2 Annual programme delivery rate</b>	UNDP Atlas reports	N/A	N/A	98%	98%	98%	<i>Delivery rate indicated in atlas reports No risk for measuring</i>
	<b>5.3 Number of success stories of the project published</b>	Project reports	N/A	N/A	3	3	6	<i>Success stories published on social media/websites No risk for measuring</i>

## BUDGET

The implementation of these interventions will require **2,000,000 Euro** split across the different workstreams.

	Activities	Budget (€)
<b>1. Scaling Post-Incubation Initiatives</b>	Identify and screen potential beneficiaries whose businesses are in post incubation phase, with a focus on those with a clear path to scale, greatest impact for vulnerable groups and tangible traction	N/A
	Develop business and cooperative specific support packages to address the most pressing challenges and opportunities to sustain and scale their businesses	100,000
	Provide capacity and start-up toolkits for vulnerable women and youth e.g. teen mothers, vulnerable women, persons with disabilities in the community to increase productivity for market access and job creation with focus to 8 poorest districts	550,000
	Provide grants to the best innovative green businesses led by youth and women through the youthConnekt programme	250,000
		<b>900,000</b>
<b>2. Advocacy and Awareness Raising</b>	Design awareness campaigns, outreach, and community engagement programs covering media channels i.e., TV, radio and online platforms.	40,000
	Build capacity of media for active engagement in community mobilization for inclusive development and to address stigma and discrimination	40,000
	Engage the media to stimulate public private partnership in inclusive development including through cooperatives, CSOs and micro businesses owned by women, youth and PWDs	20,000
		<b>100,000</b>
<b>3. Promoting economic potential of persons with disabilities</b>	Strengthen the capacities of the private sector to mainstream, promote and advocate for disability inclusion in private sector companies; develop reasonable accommodation requirements for private sector employment of persons with disabilities	70,000
	Initiate an internship/trainee programme for professionals with disabilities in private sector companies	50,000

	Support TVET training and skills development for persons with disabilities to increase self-reliance and independence	50,000
		<b>170,000</b>
<b>4. Capacity strengthening of CSOs</b>	Provide technical and financial support to CSOs (grants) to promote and accelerate community driven equitable development with a focus on vulnerable women and persons with disabilities	350,000
	Conduct capacity assessments, develop and implement capacity development plan for CSOs with focus on institutional development, resource mobilization and community development with aim to better empower their communities and to run effective sustainable organizations	90,000
	Promote peer-learning and experience-sharing through partnership building and the organization of CSO field visits to other CSO projects	40,000
		<b>480,000</b>
<b>5. Project management, communication for development</b>	Knowledge management production and dissemination: document challenges, and successes, report progress regularly, develop advocacy materials and host external workshops with other stakeholders to report progress and findings	70,000
	Project management (M&E)	113,517
		<b>183,517</b>
	<b>Total direct costs</b>	<b>1,833,517</b>
<b>Indirect costs</b>	General management expenses (8%)	146,681
	Coordination levy (1%)	19,802
	<b>Total indirect costs</b>	<b>166,483</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>		<b>2,000,000</b>