

# AKAZI KANOZE 2

## Scale & Sustainability

External Evaluation of the Integration of the Work Readiness Curriculum and School to Work Transition Program into the Rwandan Education System

OCTOBER 2017



PHOTO BY PAOLO PATRUNO

### DESCRIPTION OF AKAZI KANOZE 2

**Akazi Kanoze 2 (AK2)** is a Mastercard Foundation funded project implemented by the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). AK2 builds on the success of the previous USAID funded **Akazi Kanoze (AK)** program which tested the viability of providing youth, in and out of school, with work readiness skills. The AK program piloted several variations of work readiness interventions for youth adapted for different contexts and target audiences. One variation, a 2012 pilot program where the work readiness training was delivered in-school in TVET institutions showed that this program could successfully be delivered in school. This model was identified in the Scale & Sustainability evaluation of the first AK project<sup>1</sup> as a prime candidate for scale-up, and this program became the model for AK2.

The main objective of AK2 was to institutionalize work readiness training and school to work transition (STWT) programming. AK2 aimed to integrate these trainings into the Rwandan education system in both General Secondary Schools (GSS) through the Rwandan Education Board (REB) and Technical and Vocational Training Schools (TVET) through the Workforce Development Agency (WDA). AK2 also aimed to build the capacity of the Rwandan Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to sustain the delivery of these programs nationally.

During AK2, EDC and its implementing partner organizations trained District and Sector education officers, school managers, and teachers primarily in the Southern Province and Kigali to deliver STWT programming and work readiness training, based on the Work Ready Now!

1. JBS International. *Scale and Sustainability Study: The Akazi Kanoze Youth Education and Livelihoods Project in Rwanda*. April 2014. Published by USAID.

### TIMELINE

- 2008 WDA is established under MINEDUC
- 2009 AK program starts
- 2010 AK begins as an urban program for out-of-school youth in Kigali
- 2012 AK pilots in-school model of WRN! in TVET schools
  - AK expands to work with rural out-of-school youth in the Southern & Eastern Provinces
- 2013 EDC wins a two-year Innovation for Education grant from the UK Department for International Development to train young women in work-readiness and early childhood education.
- 2014 AK Scale and Sustainability Study<sup>1</sup> recommends scaling up in-school model
  - Akazi Kanoze 2, funded by the Mastercard Foundation, starts
  - USAID grants a 2-year extension to AK to incubate a local NGO, AKA
  - Work readiness is embedded in the national TVET curriculum as complementary modules.
- 2015 Throughout the REB curriculum revision process EDC staff work with MINEDUC to embed WRN! in Entrepreneurship subject curriculum
  - AKA Founded
- 2016 Work readiness is embedded in the national curricula as core or required content in both GSS and TVET schools.
  - AK2 expands to schools in North, East and Western Provinces
  - Senegal APTE project starts
  - EDC begins a USAID funded project, Huguka Dukore to provide out of school youth with work readiness skills and technical training
  - AK extension ends
  - EDC pilots the WBL approach to STWT programming
- 2017 EDC pilots the School Based In-service approach to teacher training
  - Akazi Kanoze 2 ends

(WRN!) Curriculum developed by EDC. In addition, staff from EDC and Akazi Kanoze Access (AKA), a partner NGO, worked with the Ministry of Education to adopt Work Ready Now! to fit within the national curriculum of both the GSS and TVET schools. In GSS, it was adopted as a mandatory part of the entrepreneurship subject curriculum in upper secondary school (S4-S6). In TVET, it was adopted as 5 modules in the Level 3 curriculum for all technical specializations.

The School to Work Transition (STWT) program was developed and refined during AK2 to fit the needs of the school systems. In the current iteration of the program, Work Based Learning

(WBL), students identify opportunities to visit or shadow various workplaces, and set up short work experiences such as internships. Students can then pursue an employment opportunity at one of those workplaces, or pursue a more entrepreneurial approach and establish their own business.

EDC also partnered with Catholic Relief Services throughout AK2 to help establish Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC groups) in schools in the Southern province. These groups provide an opportunity for students to develop startup capital for their own businesses, and they serve as a complement to the entrepreneurship components of work readiness training.



PHOTO BY PAOLO PATRINO

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE IN RWANDA

- Nearly 80% of Rwanda's population is under the age of 35.<sup>1</sup>
- Between 2015 and 2020, it is estimated that each year, more than 125,000 youth will join the labor force.<sup>1</sup>
- By 2050, forecasters predict that the population of working-age individuals in Rwanda will reach 16 million – more than twice the size in 2014.<sup>2</sup>
- The current overall unemployment rate in Rwanda is 13.2%, and an additional 21% of the population is considered underemployed, measured by hours worked.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to absorbing new entrants to the labour market and creating jobs for those currently un- or under-employed, the Rwandan government, through the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2, aims to generate higher paying and more secure off-farm jobs for those already active in the labour force.<sup>4</sup> It is critical that the young people currently entering the labor market be prepared to fill these jobs, or create their own. To achieve this, youth require technical specialties and possession of the soft skills critical to successful employment and entrepreneurship.

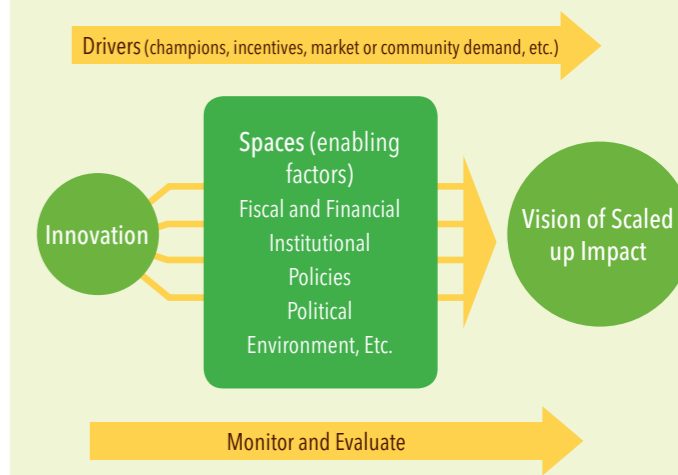
# SCALING UP

## SCALING UP FRAMEWORK

This evaluation applies a framework for scaling up development interventions developed by Hartmann and Linn of the Brookings Institute.<sup>1</sup> Hartmann and Linn define scaling up as: “Expanding, adapting and sustaining successful policies, programs or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people.”<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 below shows the key components of a scaling up pathway and how they relate to each other.<sup>2</sup>

Scaling-up requires **drivers of scale**, such as an innovative model, a clear vision of scale, strong leadership, favorable external factors, and incentives or systems of accountability. Attaining and sustaining scale also requires creating **space to grow** in each of the following domains: financial, political, policy, institutional capacity, partnerships, and learning. **Strong Monitoring and Evaluation** that includes feedback loops between learning and program design is also a critical to effective scaling.

Figure 1: Key components of a systematic scaling up pathway



Source - adapted from Cooley & Linn (2014)

## SCALING UP WITHIN AKAZI KANOZE 2

This brief uses the Hartmann and Linn (2008) framework<sup>1</sup> to reflect on how the AK2 program has scaled-up in Rwanda. The analysis presented here is based on information collected from key informant interviews, a thorough review of program documents, M&E data, and published literature on the AK and AK2 programs.

EDC envisioned scaling up within AK2 as the institutionalization of work readiness training and school to work transition programming in general secondary schools and technical and vocational training schools nationwide in Rwanda. This includes integration of work

readiness training into the national curriculum, adoption of school to work transition programming by MINEDUC and the increased capacity of MINEDUC to implement these programs.

Scaling up within AK2 occurred in two dimensions:

- **Horizontal** – expansion from two initial provinces, the South and Kigali, to all five provinces in Rwanda.
- **Vertical** – expansion from a EDC-led intervention to a national program institutionalized within the Ministry of Education's school curriculum.

## SCALING EDC'S WORK READY NOW! CURRICULUM INTERNATIONALLY

### APTE – Senegal (Projet de l'amélioration des performances de travail et d'entrepreneuriat)

In 2016, EDC with funding from the MasterCard Foundation, has taken on a new project to institutionalize the Work Ready Now! Curriculum into Senegal's formal education system. The APTE program aims to train 30,000 youth and 1,575 teachers in 200 lower secondary schools and 50 TVET schools in work readiness skills.<sup>4</sup>

The AK project in Rwanda has served as a successful model of institutionalization of the Work Ready Now! Curriculum for the APTE Senegal project, and around the world. In addition to the projects in Senegal and Rwanda, EDC has implemented the Work Ready Now! Curriculum in over 20 countries.<sup>5</sup> When the Work Ready Now! curriculum was being developed and piloted in the early years of AK, it was designed to fit in the Rwandan context, but with the flexibility to adapt to new cultural contexts. This flexibility in the program components, and the recognition that the need for work readiness training extends to many country settings, has created the space for the Work Ready Now! Curriculum to continue horizontally scaling into new countries.

1. Laterite Ltd. *Youth Employment in Rwanda: A Scoping Paper*. 2015. Published by the International Development Research Center.

2. The World Bank. *Rwanda at Work, Rwanda Economic Update: Issue No. 9*. February 2016.

3. National Institute of Statistics, Rwanda. *Labour Force Survey Report Pilot 2016*. June 2016.

4. Rwanda Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy II, 2013-2018*. May 2013.

1. Arntraud Hartmann and Johannes F. Linn. *Scaling Up: A Framework and Lessons for Development Effectiveness from Literature and Practice*. Wolfensohn Center for Development: The Brookings Institution. Working Paper 5. October 2008.

2. Larry Cooley and Johannes F. Linn. *Taking innovations to Scale: Methods, Applications and Lessons*. Results for Development and Management Systems International. September 2014.

3. Arntraud Hartmann, Homi Kharas, Richard Kohl, Johannes Linn, Barbara Massley, Cheikh Sourang. *Scaling up Programs for the Rural Poor: IFAD's Experience, Lessons and Prospects (Phase 2)*. The Brookings Institute. January 2013

4. Education Development Center. *APTE Senegal*. <https://www.edc.org/apte-senegal>. Accessed October 5, 2017.

5. Education Development Center. *Work Ready Now!* <https://www.edc.org/work-ready-now-wrn>. Accessed October 5, 2017.



# SCALING UP IN RWANDA

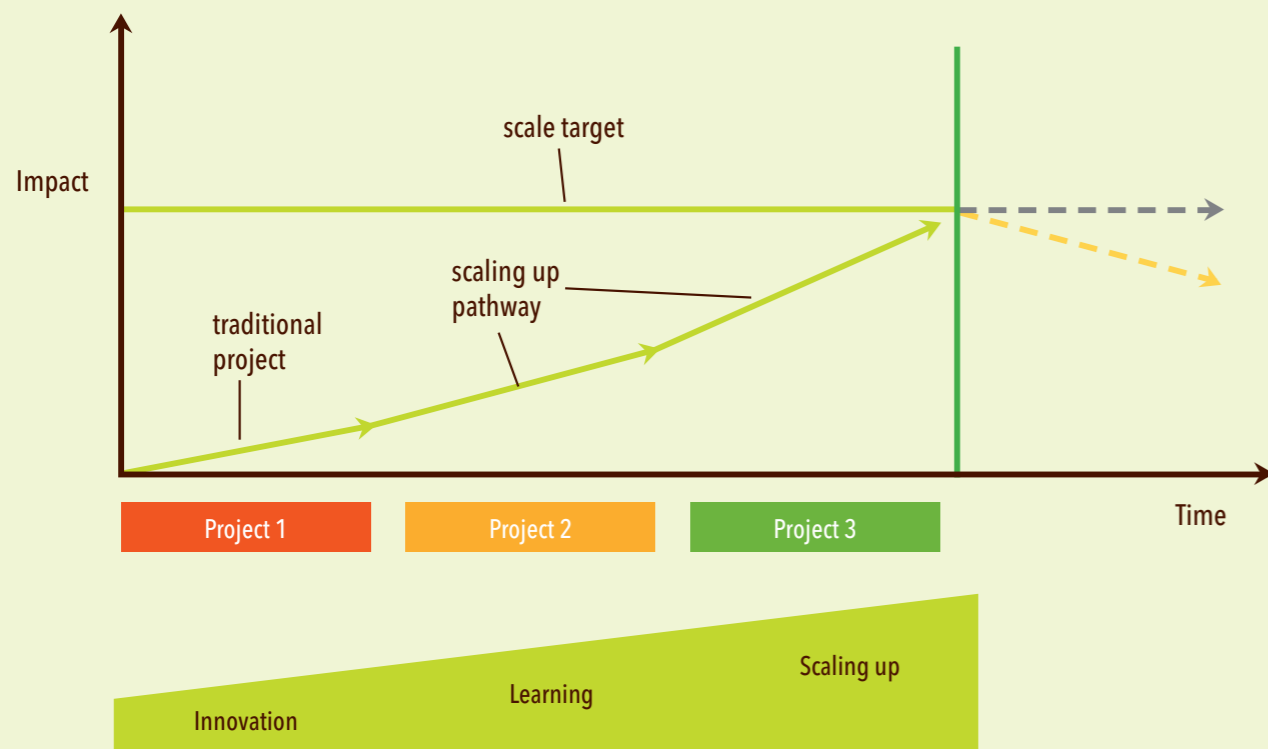
The AK and AK2 programs scaled up the delivery of work readiness training and STWT programming to youth throughout Rwanda. Figure 2, adapted from Cooley and Linn<sup>1</sup>, shows a theoretical model of the impact of scaling up across successive projects over time. Looking retrospectively, it is evident that the process of scaling AK and AK2 in Rwanda has followed a similar trajectory.

Figure 2 shows a theoretical framework of the impact of scaling a program over time. The impact of a program is the result of both the total number of individuals reached by the program, and the effect of the program on each individual. The effect size of a program is influenced by both the content, and the mode of delivery. Impact evaluations of both AK and AK2 showed a significant effect of the content of the programs, when delivery was controlled by EDC – geographic reach was limited, and sessions were delivered in a consecutive concentrated period of time by experienced trainers. While the content has not changed, the scaled mode of delivery is quite different: the work readiness training is now delivered by entrepreneurship teachers nation-wide with various levels of training in the content, spread out over three years in

the GSS curriculum and over one year in the TVET curriculum, and in some schools is not yet accompanied by the work based learning component. To accurately plot the impact of the program at scale, further evaluation of the effect of the current mode of implementation is needed. For this reason, Figure 3 graphs the reach, rather than the impact, of the AK and AK2 programs over time. Overlaying AK and AK2 reach data onto the Hartmann & Linn model we can clearly see the evolution in reach of the program as it scaled.

In Figure 2, the gray arrow represents the trajectory of impact if programs are sustained at scale and the orange arrow represents the risk to the trajectory of impact if sustainability isn't maintained. Similarly, within Akazi Kanoze 2, sustainability of the programs – in particular, maintaining the strong effect size seen in AK and AK2 as reach grows – is critical to maintaining impact at scale. Reach has increased dramatically over time, but there is a risk that going forward, the effect on individuals might be diluted under the new mode of delivery.

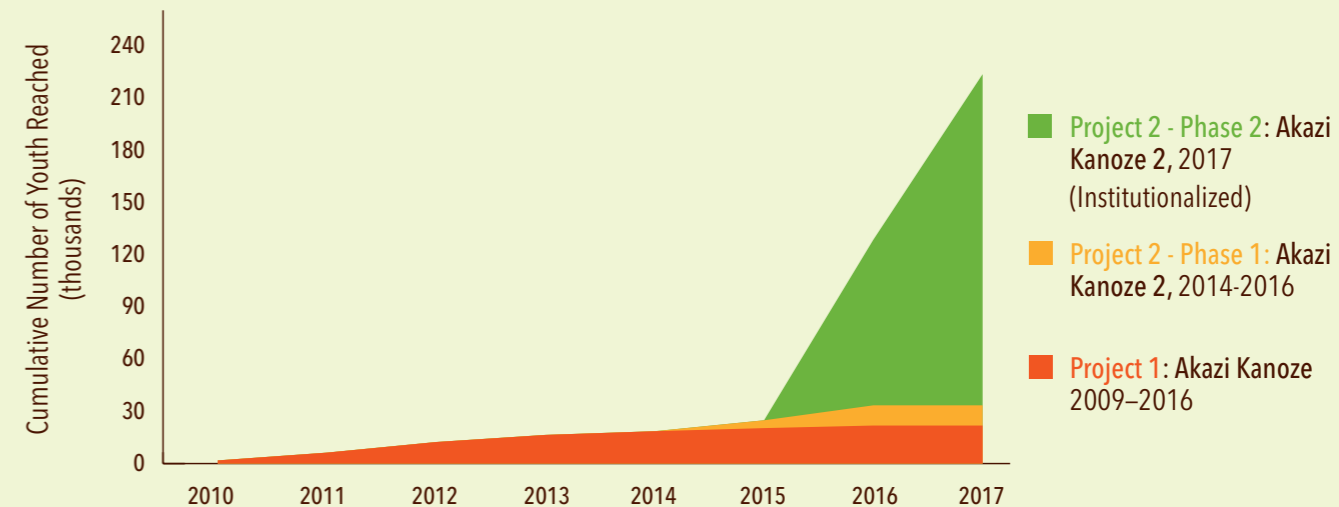
Figure 2: Scaling up with successive projects



Source - adapted from Cooley & Linn (2014)

1. Larry Cooley and Johannes F Linn. *Taking innovations to Scale: Methods, Applications and Lessons*. Results for Development and Management Systems International. September 2014.

Figure 3: Scaling up reach of Akazi Kanoze 2 over time



### Project 1: Akazi Kanoze 2009-2016

EDC developed the WRN! Curriculum. Throughout AK, EDC piloted different iterations of program format and audience, primarily targeting out of school youth.

### Project 2 - Phase 1: Akazi Kanoze 2, 2014-2016

AK2 aimed to scale the successful components of AK, the WRN! and STWT programming. They originally engaged in-school youth through an extracurricular program in two Districts and laid the foundation to integrate the WRN! program into the national school curriculum.

### Project 2 - Phase 2: Akazi Kanoze 2, 2017

In its last year, the work readiness training component of AK2 was institutionalized nation-wide as part of upper level secondary school curriculum. EDC piloted the WBL model of STWT programming.

Beyond Akazi Kanoze 2: Going forward, MINEDUC will lead implementation as the WRN! continues to be taught as part of national curriculum.

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

To extend the reach of AK2, EDC worked with implementing partner organizations who were familiar with each region to carry out different components of the program. Below is a summary of the role of each of the implementing partner organizations:

**Akazi Kanoze Access:** Originating from EDC and the AK program, this local NGO collaborated with EDC, REB, and WDA to integrate WRN! into the national curricula. They also trained master trainers, teachers, and REB and WDA staff on the WRN! curriculum and WBL program. In addition, they function as the certification entity for youth and trainers in the WRN! curriculum, and maintain the AK network of partner organizations.

**Health Poverty Action:** They trained teachers on the WRN! curriculum, monitored implementation and quality of work readiness training, supported schools and school liaison officers in implementing the STWT/WBL programming, and convened District Steering Committees in the Huye, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru, and Gisagara districts in the Southern Province.

**AVSI Foundation:** They trained teachers on the WRN! curriculum, monitored implementation and quality of work readiness training, supported schools and school liaison officers in implementing the STWT/WBL programming, and convened District Steering Committees in the Kamonyi, Muhanga, Ruhongo, and Nyanza districts in the Southern Province. In addition, they implemented the WRN! components of the program in the Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge Districts in Kigali Province.

**Frontiers Adventures Great Lakes:** They collaborated with EDC to develop the STWT programming, and supported schools and school liaison officers in implementing the STWT/WBL programming in the Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge Districts in Kigali Province.

**Catholic Relief Services:** They trained teachers and students on creating and conducting SILC groups, and monitored implementation of these groups in the Southern province.

### What was the innovation?

- The **learner-centered methodology** of WRN! was an innovative style of teaching when Akazi Kanoze started in Rwanda. When the Ministry of Education in Rwanda decided to adopt a competency-based curriculum in 2015 that prioritized a learner-centered approach to teaching, WRN! was well-placed to be integrated into this new curriculum.
- **Innovation and adaptation has been a hallmark** of the AK and AK2 programs: as each program scaled, EDC piloted various formats of both delivery and content for the WRN! and STWT programming to find models that were best suited to a given context. For example:
  - As the WRN! Curriculum was scaled from a program for out-of-school youth in AK to an in-school program in AK2, the curriculum and assessments were adapted to a higher reading level, and the language of instruction changed from Kinyarwanda to English, the national language of school instruction and examinations.
  - Throughout AK2, the STWT programming was streamlined from a labor-intensive process led by the implementing partners to the more straightforward WBL process, which is led by the students and parents.

### What evidence was there for its success?

- Several **pilot programs** took place during AK, developing an evidence base for the success of WRN! in a variety of contexts, including with in-school youth. The evidence from these pilot programs was critical to getting buy-in for the program as it scaled nationally. For example:
  - The pilot in the TVET schools in 2012 provided some evidence that an in-school model of work readiness training would work, which was the model then scaled in AK2.
  - A pilot of the WBL program in 2016 provided evidence this model would be a successful adaptation of the STWT program.
- Both AK and AK2 included **randomized control trial evaluations**, which provided strong evidence that the WRN! curriculum in combination with STWT programming as delivered by EDC, were clearly associated with an improvement in work readiness skills and in employment outcomes among participating youth.
- However, there is a **gap in the evidence of program impact around the effect of the change in format of delivery** of the work readiness training that occurred during the institutionalization process – from a one-year extracurricular program to content spread across three years taught within the entrepreneurship course, and not necessarily accompanied by STWT programming.

### Was there a vision for institutionalization?

- **For the WRN! curriculum there was a clear vision** for and path to institutionalization through integration into the national curriculum, and this goal was explicitly articulated at the program's outset.
- **For the STWT programming, there was not a clear vision at the beginning** for how the program could be institutionalized,

particularly within general secondary schools. Instead, AK2 was used as a learning opportunity to refine a model that could be institutionalized. The short 3-year time frame of the AK2 project was not sufficient time to both refine and institutionalize the final model, WBL; finding a clear path to integrate WBL within the national school system remains a challenge.

### Who were the external or internal champions of that vision?

- AK2 benefited from **strong leadership** within EDC that drove forward institutionalization. Many of the leaders within EDC (and later, Akazi Kanoze Access) believed deeply in the value and impact of the program, understood how work readiness programming aligned with the national priorities, and could clearly communicate that vision to others.
- Throughout AK and AK2, **EDC built awareness around the importance of soft skills training**, particularly within MINEDUC. By training many of the staff at MINEDUC on the work readiness curriculum, continuously advocating for the need of this type of program, and showing the impact the program could have on youth livelihoods, they have helped develop buy-in to the importance of teaching soft skills.
- In addition, **EDC actively fostered strong relationships with MINEDUC** through continuous engagement with them throughout the AK and AK2 programs. For example, EDC worked with officials at MINEDUC from an early stage in the design and development of programming, and they invited high-level MINEDUC officials to the program graduations to join in celebrating the effect and success of the programs.
- **Officials in MINEDUC served as external champions of the program**; when they saw the success of the AK program, they invited EDC to partner with them in scaling and integrating work readiness training into their structure. This government support was an essential driver of scale and critical to the ability of the AK and AK2 programs to achieve that scale.
- In both AK and AK2, **graduates of the program and employers who have hosted AK or AK2 students often acted as advocates** of the program by sharing their successful experiences. This created demand from other students, teachers, and employers to expand the reach of the programs.

### What external factors influenced institutionalization?

- The **timing of the REB national curricula review process** created a clear mechanism through which institutionalization of WRN! into the national curriculum could occur.
- The government of Rwanda has identified **reducing youth unemployment as a national priority**, outlined in the Vision 2020 and the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2 policy frameworks.
- The **private sector** confirmed that AK2 developed the soft skills and work-readiness skills critically needed in the labor market.

### Have the financial resources been mobilized to support the scaled up intervention?

- **USAID provided the initial funding for the Akazi Kanoze program** to develop the WRN! Curriculum, pilot different models of delivery, and build foundational relationships for EDC's work in Rwanda.
- **The Mastercard Foundation funded Akazi Kanoze 2** through the Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education program, which provided the financial resources to scale the WRN! curriculum and STWT programming nationally and to build the capacity of MINEDUC to sustain the program.
- EDC in partnership with Mentoring Africa has **completed a cost analysis** and presented to MINEDUC on the financial resources required to sustain the program over the next five years.
- **Financial resources need to be mobilized going forward**: either MINEDUC will need to set aside funds in its budget, or another entity will need to allocate funds, to conduct the teacher training and to develop systems of accountability and quality assurance required to sustain implementation.
- **Ensuring procurement and distribution of resources** such as materials and work books for the work readiness training has been a challenge during the institutionalization of the program. Teachers may be able to identify locally available alternatives for course materials, but a plan to finance the purchasing of student workbooks, training manuals for teachers and course materials should be established.

### Is there political support for scaling up AK2, and is there buy in from key stakeholders?

- EDC **successfully mobilized political support in MINEDUC** for work readiness training, which allowed for the integration of this training in the national school curriculum.
- The monitoring and evaluation data from AK2 will be made available to MINEDUC in the format of **an interactive dashboard** to use in decision making going forward. Public access to data can often support program credibility and maintain support for a program through transitions in staff in government offices.

### Does the policy and legal framework support scaling up?

- The **Work Ready Now! Curriculum was successfully integrated** into the curriculum of the Entrepreneurship class in upper secondary schools under the REB, and into the Level 3 coursework for students in TVET schools under WDA, thereby creating a policy framework for continued implementation of the program.
- While some schools in the Southern Province and Kigali will continue to implement WBL because they see intrinsic value in the program, and a manual exists for how to run the WBL program, the **STWT programming doesn't yet have a clear policy mandate to continue**. However, it does align with existing education policy priorities, and interest has been expressed in integrating WBL into the policy framework of TVET. There is a need to identify a mechanism and method of supporting the institutionalization to achieve scale of this program component.

### What capacity is needed within Rwandan Ministry of Education to carry forward the scaling process?

- **EDC in partnership with AKA has trained** several officials within MINEDUC in the WRN! curriculum and STWT programming, and they have trained all the Master Trainers in REB and all the VTC Lead Trainers under WDA in the WRN! curriculum.
- **Timely training of all GSS teachers nationwide** on the new REB curriculum is an on-going challenge, but not one unique to AK2. Currently a cascade model of training is used by REB, which poses challenges to ensuring quality. An alternative school based in-service model of peer-to-peer training shows promise as an innovative way to overcome this challenge, yet it is more resource intensive making it difficult to implement nation-wide.
- The switch to the competency-based curriculum (CBC) has introduced challenges not only around training teachers in the new methodology, but also in **monitoring quality** of delivery of the new curriculum. As the switch to a CBC requires a new method of delivering content and conceptualizing the delivery of information between teachers and students, monitoring quality will be particularly important in the initial years of implementation.
- Critical to the ability to monitor quality is the capacity in **assessment of soft skills like work readiness training**, which requires a different set of tools than the more traditional assessment of hard skills.

### Has EDC mobilized its partnerships to support and sustain scale up?

- **EDC has established a variety of partnerships** to support scale up WRN! and STWT programming, including with the government, implementing organizations, the private sector, and other development organizations.
- **The creation of AKA** was critical to maintaining the network of organizations working on work readiness and youth livelihoods programming going forward.
- With institutionalization into the REB and WDA curricula, **implementation is now carried out by the government rather than EDC and partner organizations** on the ground.
- AK2 helped shape the policy setting, and created a framework to support scaling. But, due to **the short time frame of the project, AK2 has not yet been able to build the independently functioning systems around these frameworks** that are required to sustain the programs. For example, Steering Committees were established in each District by Implementing Partners to build public-private sector partnerships and identify bridging work experience for youth. While they were widely viewed as critical to getting buy-in from a variety of stakeholders in each community, there is no clear incentive or accountability structure in place to sustain them beyond the end of AK2.

### What were the monitoring and evaluation structures in place to assess both impact and the scaling up process?

- The AK2 **monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan included targets for measuring both impact and scaling** of the work

readiness curriculum and work based learning, as institutionalization of these components was a primary objective of the AK2 program.

- The information collected from monitoring and evaluation **was used to improve program implementation**. For example, information about the challenges in the STWT programming was used to create WBL. And, data from teacher observations during the program was used to inform future teacher training and school based in-service training.

## Are assessment systems in place going forward to ensure quality in delivery?

- **EDC has worked with WDA to create assessment tools for the WRN! core models**, but not for WBL. Currently, within REB no specific guidelines exist for assessment of work readiness skills, so assessment will likely follow their traditional format with questions on the work readiness content appearing in the national exam.
- **Quality assurance** of work readiness training will now follow the usual MINEDUC procedures for ensuring quality in delivery of curriculum. However, currently there are limited structures within MINEDUC to assess soft skills under the work readiness program and ensure high quality delivery of content across all schools.

# LESSONS LEARNED

## POINTS TO CONSIDER FOR WORK READINESS PROGRAMS READY TO SCALE

### **Innovation and experimentation are critical to successful scaling up:**

The implementation of the work readiness training in a variety of contexts and formats during AK provided valuable learning opportunities that were later used to refine the model that would be scaled during Akazi Kanoze 2. Some examples include:

- The innovations within the STWT programming allowed for the creation of a work-based learning model that worked more sustainably in the Rwandan context.
- When it became clear that teacher training on the work readiness content would be a limiting factor to the scaling of the program, EDC began working with other development partners to utilize the School Based In-Service model to deliver training.

**Strong branding can facilitate program scaling:** In their years of work in Rwanda, EDC excelled at branding the Akazi Kanoze program. In retaining the name in Akazi Kanoze 2, they were able to retain the goodwill, recognition, and understanding associated with AK throughout the second project.

**It's never too early to think about assessment:** Assessing soft skills like work readiness that are taught using learner-centered methods requires a different set of tools than assessment of hard skills, and may require a paradigm shift in both the format of assessment and in the relationship between the learner and educator. Because this shift may take a long time to implement, it is critical to start developing assessment tools and capacity to create and conduct soft skills assessment early.

**Engaging parents early is critical in programs for secondary school students:** When parents were engaged early in the process in AK2, they understood how students could benefit and were not only able to support their children through the program, but were also often instrumental in connecting them with work-based learning opportunities. One method of engaging parents that was successful in many areas was working through the Parent Teacher Associations at each school.

**Involving the Private Sector at the beginning will facilitate scale up:** EDC began involving the private sector in the nascent stages of the project, to get their perspective on what skills and technical

gaps exist in the workforce. They continued to involve the private sector throughout, during development of WRN! and the STWT programming, and when they were identifying employment or internship opportunities for students. Having their buy-in at all stages was critical. Private sector representatives as well as others have suggested they could have been engaged even more continuously, and farther in advance of providing work experiences for students.

**Buy-in is needed at all levels:** EDC was successful at getting buy-in from government officials whose approval is required, and from students, teachers, and employers who were participants in the programs. However, there was a gap at the beginning of AK2 in buy-in from the middle officials – District and Sector education officers and school managers. When these leaders were better integrated into the steering and advisory committees and understood the value of the AK2 programs to students, their schools, and their regions, they were better able and motivated to facilitate partnerships with the private sector, ensure time in the school and teacher schedules was available for the program, and monitor implementation of the program.

**The work readiness curriculum speaks for itself:** One of the most common methods EDC used to get buy in for the program was to train potential advocates in the WRN! curriculum. For example, to gain the buy-in of the members of the REB entrepreneurship subject curriculum review committee during revision process, EDC trained the entire committee, as well as other leaders in REB on the curriculum, so that they understood the concept and value of work readiness skills. While soft skills and “work readiness” may be a difficult concept to communicate, once people have gone through the modules and exercises, they understand the practical value. In addition, throughout AK and AK2, one of the biggest drivers of the program scale up has been the satisfied students and employers who share with others their experience as participants, or with graduates, of the program.

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