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URUKUNDO Initiative

Annual Report

2023





Message from Chief Executive Officer



Dear Esteemed Customers, Partners, and Stakeholders,

As I reflect on the past year, I am moved by the remarkable progress and impact we achieved together in 2023. Through some truly challenging times, we continue to deliver life saving life skills information to the most needed areas through our unique and play based approach.

I and everyone here at URUKUNDO Initiative, can't find the right words to thank you! The year of 2023 was truly one for the books.

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the Annual Report of 2023, reflecting a year filled with remarkable achievements and milestones. Your tremendous support has enabled us to work tirelessly in delivering key life skills information to the youth, empowering them to strive and lead fulfilling lives.

Following the clear roadmap to achieve our vision through the areas of work we call our "theory of change", we recognized the challenges faced by the youth due to fatal information gaps on life skills especially on Sexual Reproductive Health and Mental Health, less-friendly approaches to their young people's needs, we continue to position ourselves as frontrunner among youth-led organizations. In pursuit of this commitment, our dedicated staff launched the URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME mobile app, a digital solution with limitless potential.

As we embark on the journey into 2024, we remain steadfast in our commitment to strengthening existing partnerships and fostering new collaborations with stakeholders and customers alike. Our goal remains to continue serving adolescents and youth with reliable, accurate, and life-changing information in a safe, friendly, and engaging manner. We believe that through informed decision-making, the youth can lead happy and healthy lives.

As you read on, I hope you feel inspired and proud of our transformative work in Rwanda and across Africa. Once again, we express our sincere appreciation for your invaluable support, and we look forward to a continued partnership that positively impacts the lives of the youth we serve. Thank you as always for accompanying us on this journey.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mick NDAYISHIMIYE', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Mick NDAYISHIMIYE

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Acronyms and Abbreviation

ABEM Association Burundaise des Etudiants en Medecine.

COO Chief Operations Officer

ULSBG URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME

SRHR Sexual Reproductive Health and Right

FP Family Planning

ASYV Agahozo Shalom Youth Village

WHO World Health Organization

UNFPA United Nations Population Funds

ERP Education Resilience Program

CSE Comprehensive Sexuality Education

HSC High School Championship

GBV Gender Based Violence

HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus

AIDS Aquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

STIs Sexual Transmitted Infections

TWG Technical Working Group

RMHS Rwanda Mental Health Survey

ABOUT URUKUNDO INITIATIVE

URUKUNDO Initiative is a youth led social enterprise committed to revolutionizing Life Skills especially Sexual Reproductive Health and Mental Health education in Africa through play based innovations. It is the first ever licensed health education “board game” producing organization based in Rwanda.

It provides URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME; a globally multi-awards winning board and cards based game available physically and digitally which provide evidence based Life Skills information in friendly, interactive and inclusive fashion to young people everywhere.



Vision

To become one of the leading global providers of innovative health-related solutions



Mission

Avail evidence-based Life Skills especially Sexual and Reproductive Health information to mitigate risky sexual behaviours through a wide range of innovations that are friendly, safe and trustful.



Core Values

Innovative

Inclusiveness

Integrity

Scientifically accurate

Hospitality

Result Drivenness

Youth Comprehensive Program Outreach



The year 2023 marked the commencement of an impactful initiative aimed at educating and empowering youth and adolescents in the critical areas of sexual and mental health, as well as life skills. In January 2023, Urukundo Initiative launched a comprehensive program that reached over 500 youths from three distinct youth centers in Rusizi, Nyamasheke, and Karongi districts. Central to this initiative was the innovative, safe, and engaging URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME (ULSBG)

Urukundo Initiative is committed to extending its reach to all adolescents and youth in underserved communities, ensuring the dissemination of accurate and reliable sexual reproductive health information.

In alignment with this commitment, we employed the URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME as an edutaining tool, conducting a pre-play survey to assess the participants' knowledge, understanding, behaviors, and attitudes towards critical topics such as gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS prevention, teenage pregnancy, and dispelling myths and misconceptions around sexual reproductive health and contraceptives.

Objectives

1. To raise awareness and empower adolescents and youth with sexual reproductive health information through the edutaining ULSBG.
2. To foster behavior communication change among adolescents and youth.
3. To prevent teenage pregnancy, new prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and other risky behaviors.



Results

The pre-survey findings revealed a concerning reality, with 90% of students scoring poorly in life skills and sexual and reproductive health (SHR). Youth from Rusizi, Nyamasheke, and Karongi youth centers pointed out the core cause of this information gap as inaccessibility, stigma surrounding sexual reproductive health, and a lack of youth-friendly information delivery.

Following three months of engaging gameplay with the ULSBG, the post pre-play survey demonstrated an exponential increase in positive outcomes. Over 85% of 500 participants nearly doubled their pre-play survey scores, committing themselves to be agents of change among their peers as peer educators. Surprisingly, the number of youth visiting the youth centres increased by 10%, surpassing our expectations. With the ULSBG, we discovered that making youth centres a hub for both leisure and learning can be a game-changer. Equipping them with various games, not only ULSBG but also other youth-friendly games, contributed significantly to this positive shift.

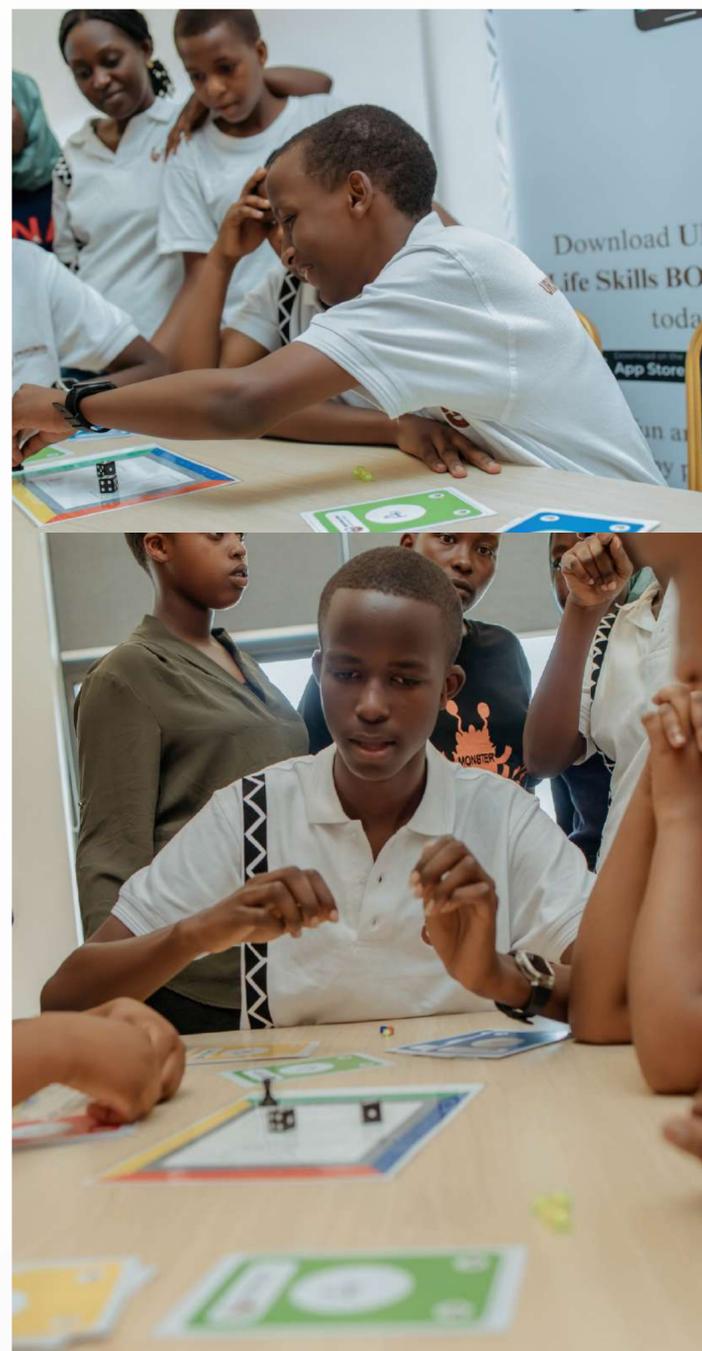


URUKUNDO LIFE SKILLS BOARD GAME

High School Championship 2023



URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME High School Championship (ULSBG HSC) 2023 is the competition that bring together high school students countrywide to learn life skills especially Adolescents sexual Reproductive Health through URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME. The competition was conducted in 20 different high schools where only two school for every province progressed to the semi-finals making it 10 schools progressed to semi-final and lastly only four schools headed to final stage of the competition, competing to find one champion of life skills especially Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health. ULSBG HSC 2023 was prepared and conducted by URUKUNDO Initiative in partnership with AGAHOZO Shaloom Youth Village and UNFPA.



The objective of ULSBG HSC 2023 was to empower high school students with the life skills knowledge and create the champions who will be agent of changes not only in their school but also serve as peer educator in their community. ULSBG HSC 2023 empowered more than 120 students with life skills and trained them to be the champions and peer educators to their colleagues in order to prevent risky behaviours that make them make uninformed decisions that result into teenage/ unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS and STIs.



The top 10 schools from four provinces and Kigali city, where North province was represented by G.S Kagogo and G.S Kageyo, Western Province, was represented by E.S Karengera and G.S Gihundwe, Southern province, was represented by G.S Kitabi and E.S Ruhango, Eastern province, was represented by G.S Sovu and G.S Kiziguro and Kigali City was represented by G.S Kigali and Kagarama secondary school. All top 10 finalists, representing each school mentioned above, headed to Rwamagana district to AGAHOZO Shalom Youth Village (ASYV) for competing to get the emerging champions. After welcoming remark from URUKUNDO Initiative CEO, all finalist kicked off with semi-final which concluded with Kagarama secondary school from Kicukiro district, G.S Kitabi from Nyamagabe district, E.s Karengera from NYAMASHEKE district and E.S Ruhango from Ruhango district progressed to the final stage of competition.

Among many benefits of ULSBG HSC 2023, the attending participants were trained to sexual and reproductive health mainly to conception and contraception, HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy prevention where URUKUNDO Initiative, CEO Dr Mick Ndayishimiye delivered the training before kick off of the friendly game between ASYV and Gashora Girls Academy.



After competitive semi-finals, Only four students representing four schools progressed to the finals where GWIZA Franco from Kagarama secondary schools (KICUKIRO district), Anitha NIYOKWIZERWA from G.S UMUCYO KARENGERA (NYAMASHEKE district), AUDA Generone from G.S KITABI (NYAMAGABE district) and Elphas TWAGIRIMANA from E.S Ruhango (RUHANDO district) were top four finalists.

After long competitive, fun and engaging playtime, GWIZA Franco was crowned the winner of ULSBG HSC 2023. GWIZA Franco from Kagarama secondary school, the winner of ULSBG HSC 2023 walked away with URUKUNDO Life Skills Board Game High School championship 2023 cup, one term school fees, school materials and certificate of merit as well as recognition to the school represented by the champion. Moreover, all four champions made to the finals were awarded certificates of merit, branded notebook and pen, as well as wooden certificates for school recognition and appreciation.



**GWIZA Franco
Champion**

The competition was concluded by distinguished guests from UNFPA and Executive Director of AGAHOZO Shalom Youth Village where they appreciated the participating students and accompanying teachers as well the attendees from ASYV and Gashora Girls Academy for their unwavering support along the competition as well as reminding all ULSBG HSC 2023 champions that they are agent of change who have the mission to empower their fellow students power of consent and respecting the consent.



Awarding ceremony Highlights



3rd Runner-up:
Anitha NIYOKWIZERWA



2nd Runner-up
Elphas TWAGIRIMAN



1st Runner-up:
Auda GENERONE



All top four champions



Agohozo Shalom Youth Village



Gashora Girls Academy

URUKUNDO LIFE SKILLS BOARD GAME SUMMER COMPETITION



URUKUNDO Life skills BOARD GAME Summer competition is the competition that aim to empower youth and adolescents in holidays with knowledge and life skills especially SRH through game-based learning by playing the most edutaining and funniest URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME.

Under partnership with Agahozo Shaloom Youth Village (ASYV), Urukundo Initiative as hub for youth innovators and front-runners in finding solution of most pressing health related problems among the youth especially life skills knowledge and information delivery, Urukundo Offered an internship to best two students from ASYV who demonstrated an exceptional passion and hard work towards serving the community by working together with Voice of Children organization and organize ULSBG Summer competition aiming to empower voice of children right holders with life skills knowledge through ULSBG.



The competition brought together more than 16 students who competed for two rounds after a pre-selection phase that took place at children's voice organization head office. After competition, every Student drawn the basic Life Skills needed to navigate through a challenging adolescence life, therefore, help them to take informed decisions as they raise self-awareness about Sexual Reproductive Health and Behavioral communication change.



The finals of ULSBG summer competition was hosted at Urukundo Initiative Game Center, Whereby 4 Players(2 Males & 2 Females who have won the semi-final stage competed to get the winners (male and female) of the competition.



After a very competitive long run, two young champions and emerged as winners of ULSBG summer competition and committed themselves to empower youth and adolescents with life Skills knowledge gained from the competition to their colleagues at school and community where they live. After winning the competition, they were awarded the scholastic materials such as branded notebook and pen as well as t-shirts.

Special Appreciation goes to our hard-working interns Anitha and Claude from our partner ASYV for making ULSBG summer competition a success. Our participants recommended that this initiative need to be extended to different part of the country so that all students in holidays can benefit from this learning opportunity.



URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME Mobile App and Social Media Campaign



URUKUNDO Initiative have been striving to empower and equip all the adolescents and youth in all corners. After, creating a positive impact to more than 200,000 adolescents and youth with our globally recognized URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME physical, which has won numerous awards for its interactive and evidence-based approach to delivering life skills information to young people in an inclusive and engaging manner. In order to further reach and impact the youth, URUKUNDO Initiative created URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME mobile App, and conducted the social media campaign in order to introduce and mobilize youth and adolescents to learn more about life skills especially sexual reproductive health and mental health using digital mobile App available for both IOS and android to App Store and Play Store respectively.

Objectives

- Raise awareness of life skills using ULSBG mobile application as an extension of the physical board game.
- Position URUKUNDO Initiative as a leading youth-led organization in providing accessible and effective life skills education, especially Sexual reproductive Mental health, in Rwanda.

ULSBG Mobile game application was really welcomed well by youth and adolescents who could find it hard to access our safe, engaging and friendly ULSBG physical game. Where in only five months of its launch, It has now more than 1000 users for both IOS and Android.

In order to raise awareness of life skills knowledge among adolescents and youth as one way of empowering them to make informed decision that will help them prevent themselves from risky behaviours, unwanted pregnancy, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender based violence as well as foster behaviour communication change, we initiated social media campaign targeting adolescent and youth who use different social media campaign which is the most trend among youth and adolescent.



ULSBG social media campaign targeted different social media influencers from different social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and TikTok. Due to young people tend to be influenced by their idol or those public figures they follow from different platforms, we worked with top three twitter influencers. 400,000 people on Twitter 62,000 on TikTok, and 60,000 on Instagram got life skills information and were mobilized to use ULSBG mobile App, which make it more than 520,000 people who are aware of ULSBG mobile App therefore have access reliable and accurate life skills information anytime and anywhere.

ULSBG KIRUNDI VERSION LAUNCH



The strategic plan of URUKUNDO Initiative is to expand the reach of UL SBG not only by geographical coverage but also by overcoming language barriers different young people might face by accessing sexual reproductive health information in a safe, youth friendly and engaging environment. In line with that under Share-Net International grantee, URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME was contextualized and translated in KIRUNDI language as result of collaboration and partnership of Urukundo Initiative and ABEM.



Under this partnership, 20 schools in BURUNDI will be empowered with sexual reproductive health information using UL SBG in contextualized kirundi language as one way of overcoming different social and culture norms, language barriers, break silence and stigma around sexual reproductive health which is commonly known as taboo in Burundi, thus this will contribute to national strategic plan of fighting against teenage pregnancies and other risky behaviours that lead to high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and STIs among youth using safe and youth friendly approach especially games.

During the launching event held in Bujumbura, Sidique NIYONKURU, Chief of Information, Education and Communication, the representative of National Reproductive Health Program, appreciated the effort made by all involved partners not only to bring the innovative, informing, and edutaining tool but also contextualize it to make it culture friendly and abide to the society as well as preventing young people to engage in risky behaviours.



CAPACITY BUILDING AND COLLABORATION

WOMEN DELIVER 2023

Our Chief Operation Officer attended the Women Deliver 2023 conference held in Kigali and focused on exploring non-health sector linkages in various critical areas, including education, economic empowerment, climate change, and family planning/sexual and reproductive health. It was a great opportunity to showcase how as youth-led organization is combating different critical health challenges, especially sexual reproductive health and family planning, Gender Based Violence, Safe Abortion and Mental Health by bridging information gap using our innovative, safe and youth friendly ULSBG.



SDGs Student Hub Educating Event at UR-CST 2023

Our Chief Operation Officer had the privilege of representing our organization as a panellist at the SDGs Student Hub Educating Event held at UR-CST 2023. The event focused on exploring the role of university students in creating sustainable solutions for a resilient future, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how URUKUNDO Initiative is addressing different SDGs such as SDG 3 (Good health and wellbeing) and SDG 5 (Gender Inequality) by empowering adolescents and youth with life skills via ULSBG.



MCR Youth Engagement Workshop

URUKUNDO Initiative staff participated in the workshop as trainers for sexual reproductive health and other life skills through being part of panel discussion themed “Increasing your capacity and personal care to optimize your development” where our COO, highlighted why youth need to know themselves and take care of their sexual reproductive health by understanding their changes that happen during adolescent development. Hence, challenge myth and different misconceptions in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies, STIs and HIV/AIDS, GBV. Therefore, take an informed decision.



TEKANA Hub Right Holders training

URUKUNDO Initiative actively seeks collaborations and partnerships with various actors and stakeholders working with adolescents and youth. Impanuro Girls Initiative, a prominent youth-led organization, through Tekana hub which focus on the socio-economic empowerment of girls and young women in the age range 15-29 years old in all their diversitie, has been identified as a key collaborator.

In line with that, URUKUNDO Initiative conducted a training session for TEKANA Hub right-holders on the effective use of the URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME, specifically addressing topics related to Sexual Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence. Subsequently, participants demonstrated unmatched experience with the game as an edutainment tool within the TEKANA Hub setting.



ULSBG add smiles to Save Generation Beneficiaries in BUGESERA safe Spaces.

Under ongoing partnership between URUKUNDO Initiative and Save Generation Organization, September 21, 2023 in joint collaboration of URUKUNDO initiative staff and Save Generation Organization carried out a pilot study aiming to assess the feasibility of using URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME as edutaining tool that merge learning and fun by creating safe, non-judgemental and youth-friendly learning environment in different programs that aim to empower adolescents and youth with sexual reproductive health carried out by Save Generation Organization that strive to promote, protect and advocate for children, youth and women's right.

Education Resilience Program Life Skills Training

In partnership with ASYV under Mastercard funded project, more than 700 teachers from all over the country were trained about life Skills under Education Resilience Program. Teachers were trained and empowered with knowledge to different topics such as sexual reproductive health, gender equity and equality, mental health, drug abuse, health system, living values and align them with students needs and necessary support they need to succeed. UL SBG playing session was highlights for the whole training as the teachers like the new approach that break silence, create safe and user-friendly approach for adolescents and youth.



Young and Alive Initiative visit

Collaboration and working with other stakeholders is one of our core values, that's why this year in October our COO paid a visit to Young and Alive Initiative in Tanzania to discuss different areas of collaboration and partnership aiming to join effort to serve regional youth and adolescents with accurate and reliable sexual reproductive health information in safe, youth-friendly and engaging approach which is ULSBG.



Young and Alive Initiative as leading youth-led organization chairing youth wing in WHO/IBP Network and TWG of SRHR/FP in Tanzania, learning from their work and share our work and how we are all addressing common cause, fostered and strengthened our relationship and commitment to setting bar high in terms of SRHR/FP service delivery.

Presented impact of our digital and tech enabled Approach to life skills education across Africa during Innovation Africa 2023.

Represented by our co-founder and Director of public relation, Dr Christelle GIRANEZA, We shared with thousands like-minded people attending Innovation Africa 2023 in Kigali how our digital and tech enabled URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME Mobile App is revolutionizing life skills Education across Africa. In addition to that, we were honoured to receive the honourable minister of education to our exhibition booth and present our impact and discuss extending our reach to all schools with ULSBG as complementing tool to CSE.



International World AIDS Day 2023 Celebration

In partnership with Imbutu Foundation, we joined effort with other implementing partners combating to fight HIV/AIDS and support people who live with HIV, we celebrated World AIDS 2023 by showcasing our impact to the Honorable Minister of Health and other honorable guests like but not limited to UN Secretary General to Rwanda, WHO Rwanda representative, UNFPA Rwanda representative, etc.

ULSBG as the leading evidence based and youth friendly information delivery approach empower youth and adolescent with life skills information especially sexual reproductive health information and mental health and enable them to make informed decisions by preventing risky behaviours that can lead to new HIV prevalence.



NEW ULSBG PACKAGES ALERT

URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME - Gender Based Violence



There was no better way to conclude 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence than launching URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME - GBV prevention. URUKUNDO Initiative, strive to innovatively foster healthy community free from any form of GBV. The new package of ULSBG provide all evidence based and reliable information that raise awareness about GBV prevention, challenge social norms that might lead to GBV, and advocate for positive masculinity.

In collaboration with Rwanda Men's Resource Centre (RWAMREC), under Generation G Program in Gashali sector from Karongi district, community enjoyed learning and challenging root cause of gender based violence in order to promote gender justice using edutaining ULSBG-GBV prevention which break the silence around GBV and create a friendly and safe environment that foster engagement of everyone to fight against GBV.



URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME - Safe Abortion



In Rwanda, abortion is illegal however Rwanda reformed its abortion law to permit abortion in cases of child pregnancy, rape, incest or forced marriage, and in cases of risk to the health of a woman or the fetus. Less awareness, information gap, cultural and religious stigma, however, make it nearly impossible for women to get a safe, legal abortion. Therefore, many women with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies in Rwanda resort to unsafe and illegal abortions and in return, hundreds of women and girls are arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned on abortion or infanticide-related charges each year.

In order to challenges the root cause of unsafe abortion and its legal implications, we launched ULSBG for safe abortion that raise awareness, break the silence and challenge social norms and misconception related to safe abortion in safe, friendly approach.

URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME - Mental Health



The prevalence of mental health disorders, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, among Rwandan citizens is a significant concern. Approximately 25% of the population grapples with PTSD, while one in six individuals experiences depression. The Rwanda Mental Health Survey (RMHS) conducted in 2023 highlights a particularly alarming situation among the youth, with mental health conditions prevalent at rates ranging from 10.2% to around 20%. Specifically, individuals aged 14 to 25 exhibit a substantial burden of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, and trauma, as revealed by the RMHS findings.

This underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and support systems to address the pervasive mental health challenges faced by the Rwandan population, especially the vulnerable youth demographic. Therefore, with our unmatched commitment of always being front-runner in addressing most pressing challenges of youth and adolescents, we developed **URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME-Mental Health** package for raising awareness, break the silence, challenge cultural norms and prevent the stigma around mental health by making mental health information accessible for youth in youth-friendly fashion.

URUKUNDO Life Skills BOARD GAME - Drug Abuse

The escalating concern of drug abuse in Africa, including Rwanda, is underscored by a recent study conducted in seven districts of the country. The study reveals that 28.5% of adolescents have reported alcohol consumption, and 4.4% have engaged in cannabis use. Notably, locally brewed substances, cocaine, and other inherent drugs such as glue are prevalent. Given Rwanda's youthful demographic, with a median age of 22.7 years and 61% of the population under 25, adolescence becomes a critical period marked by significant challenges and diverse behavioural exploration, both positive and negative.



The URUKUNDO Initiative always strives to protect the younger population from risky behaviours by imparting knowledge and information through a non-judgmental, safe, and youth-friendly approach, employing the ULISBG-Drug Abuse prevention was crucial for the well-being and future prospects of the youth in Rwanda, ensuring they navigate adolescence safely and make informed decisions to lead healthy lives.

Partners



Next Health Accelerator
by INTREPID ENTREPRENEURS



Le livre et la main au Service de la santé



Hope Haven Christian school

