



AKA ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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About AKAZI KANOZE ACCESS “AKA”

Our vision

Our vision is to be a leading Organization contributing to youth well-being through employability skills and support services.

Our mission

Our vision is to be a leading Organization contributing to youth well-being through employability skills and support services.

Focus

We put young boys and girls in the center because we know that we cannot overcome poverty until all youth people have access to employability skills and advocate for financial opportunities

Our values

Integrity: We adhere to high ethical standards and principles while striving to be transparent;
Excellence: We strive for a high standard of accountability in delivering, measuring, and reporting to achieve excellent results;
Professionalism: We are committed to meet our obligations to provide impactful services to stakeholders;
Innovation: We are driven by continuous improvement. We find new ways to make things better. We optimize results by working smarter.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report 2020-2021 to our stakeholders and our readers in general.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to young people and youth, in particular, living in fragile states. We acted fast to safeguard their pathways to youth programs in schools, TVET education, and training through virtual means and responding to COVID-19 measures.

To support young entrepreneurs and provide jobs we increased access to finance and provided online training, mentorship, and coaching.

To ensure the continuation of activities we facilitated a shift towards online and blended forms of learning. To make sure nobody was left behind, we set up innovative interventions to reach communities with accessibility to digital solutions.

In an unprecedented year, one thing didn't change: the vital role played by our local partners. Thanks to their commitment and expertise we finished the year in a strong position to create an even better pathway to jobs for vulnerable youth.

I take this opportunity to thank Board Members AKA, the Management, and the entire AKA staff for their commitment to delivering towards the AKA mandate and for always finding innovative ways for overcoming challenges. I also appreciate the collaboration with various stakeholders whose inputs were invaluable to our achievements more particularly we are indebted to EDC, Plan International, PTI, USAID, and Mastercard Foundation.

Sincerely
BUSINGE Anthony
Executive Director

AKA areas of intervention

AKA operates in 4 areas as follows:

(1) Employability skills and support services (Carrier services):

AKA strives to provide youth with the employability skills (transferable skills) an individual needs to make them “employable”. Besides a good technical understanding and knowledge of the subject matter, employers often describe a set of skills that they expect from an employee. According to them, these skills will allow the employee to fulfill his role to the best of his abilities

(2) Entrepreneurship and skills development and Training:

The main objectives of the program are to provide the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in entrepreneurial skills training in vocational and technical training that will best respond to the economy and develop a positive attitude towards self-employment, judicious use of materials, and time in class and the field. The promotion and development of entrepreneurship essentially strive to nurture the talent of youth by enlightening them on various aspects of industrial/business activity necessary for the creation of MSEs.

This program takes into consideration youth and others interested in starting their own industrial/independent business in collaboration and partnership with ITIs, polytechnics, and other technical institutions/business schools, where the skills/talents are available to motivate them to become independent.

(3) Access to Financial and Inclusion:

Financial inclusion has also been identified as a key enabler when it comes to achieving the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Access to financial services for individuals and businesses is considered one of the most important building blocks for achieving the 2030 SDGs, and related issues are featured as targets in 8 of the 17 goals. SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, SDG 8 on promoting economic growth and employment, and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities. There is an implicit role for greater financial inclusion through greater mobilization of savings for investment and consumption which can drive the growth AKA envisions for youth and women through financial linkages, financial education, promotion of VSLG in the informal youth sector, school dropouts, teen mothers and other vulnerable women. Financial literacy encompasses the awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed to make rational financial decisions with the ultimate goal of achieving financial well-being. AKA accompanies established businesses, as well as start-ups, to help them reach and increase access to financial services for rural and urban populations and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs);

(4) Youth-Led Advocacy:

Through this program, AKA strives to advance youth-led approaches to sustainable development, social equity, innovative solutions, community resilience, and transformative change.

AKA PROJECTS

1. SDEPAY Project

2. UKB Project

3. BRITE Project

4. HDAK Project

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SDEPAY Project

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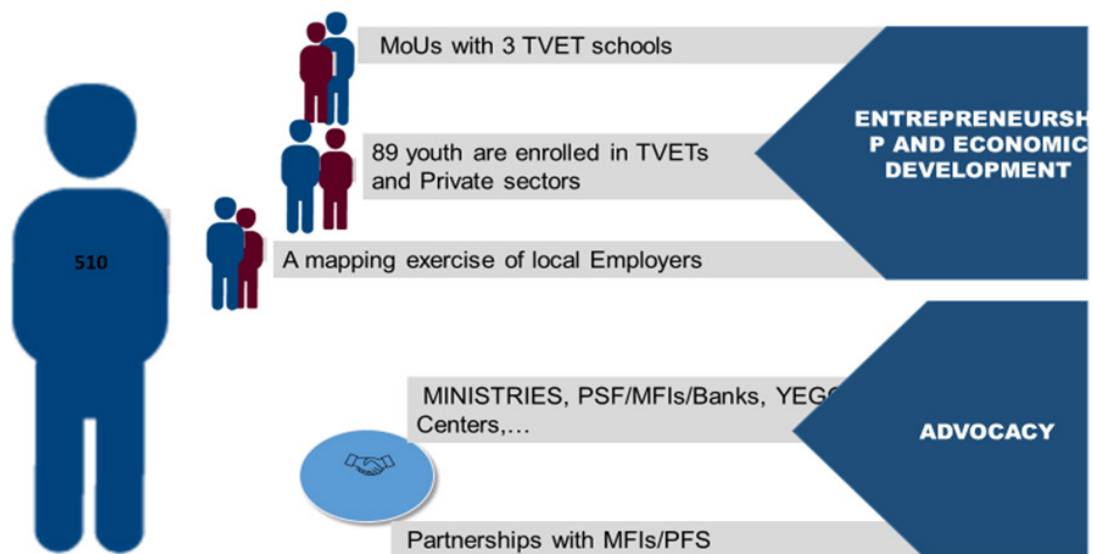
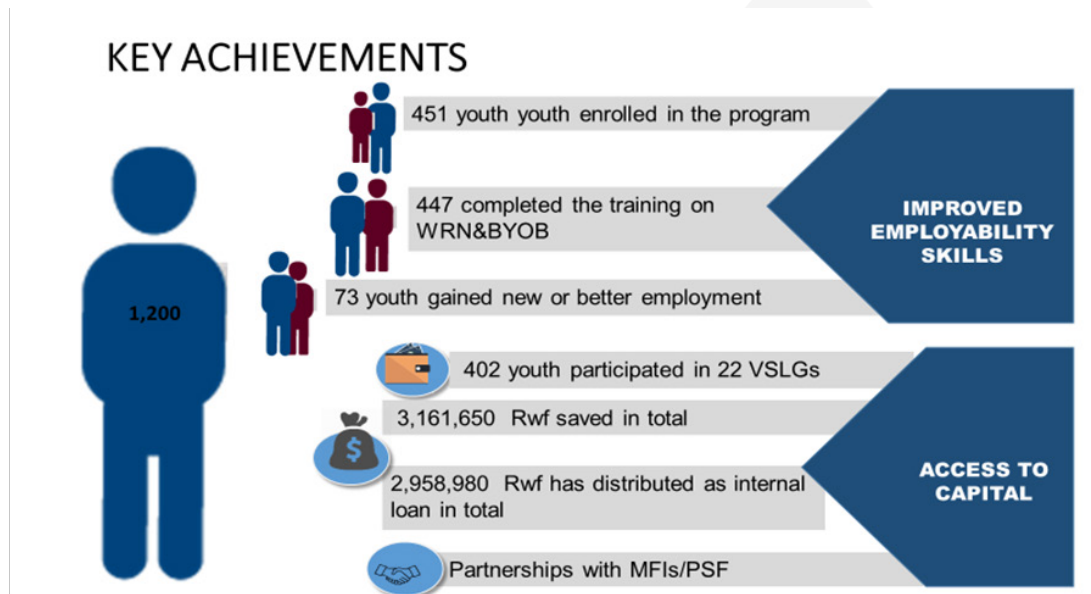




Photo 1: WRN TOT Training in Muhanga District



Photo 2: VSLG Youth Meeting in Bugesera District



Photo 3: SDEPAY Orientation to local leaders in Bugesera



Photo 4: Youth in Technical Training at Nyaruguru TVET



Photo 5: Youth in Technical Training at Butamwa TVET



Photo 6: Youth in Technical Training at Butamwa TVET

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UKB Project

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WRN& BYOB Training of trainers (TOT):

- A total of 12 (5F,7M) trainers (involving 3 deaf, one blind, 6 physical impairments, and 2 other trainers with any disability) attended the WRN&BYOB training of trainers.
- AKA master trainers facilitated this ToT to demonstrate satisfactory skills in their ability to train youth on WRN! & BYOB.

Youth Leadership and Accompaniment (YLA):

- AKA organized ToT on youth leadership and accompaniment program to build the capacity of UKB partners: UWEZO, AEE, UPHLS, Ben-impuhwe, RUB, and RNUD. The training was attended by sixteen 16 (6F,10M) participants

Support UKB partners with YLA:

- AKA, in collaboration with EDC, organized training of youth leaders at the DPOs level,
- AKA has reviewed YLA tools (both trainer manual and youth leader guide) and made them more readable, presentable, and accessible to users.

Access to finance:» **Voluntary Saving and Loan Groups (VSLG):**

- AKA developed a VSL training manual
- A total of field officers 9 (7M,2F) from UKB partners attended the VSL training.
- AKA supported DPOs and IPs to follow up existing VSLGs and establish new VSLGs: 24 in total composed of 419 (134M, 285F) members.
- They have been able to secure 1,091,650 Rwf in savings, where 498,600 Rwf was given as loans to youth to support their social and economic activities.

Financial Linkage

- AKA in collaboration with EDC and RIM-Muhanga presented the Zamuka Rubyiriko product (which is a youth-friendly financial product) applied by RIM.
- Participants learned how the product is interesting to youth who want to grow their businesses;
- Testimonies on that profitable product have been given to motivate youth running small businesses.

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BRITE Project

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KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**E-learning materials development:
Work Ready Now “WRN” Audio Program:**

- 42 audio scripts for Level 3 developed and 42 audios produced
- 30 audio scripts for level 5 developed and 30 audios produced

E-lessons:

- 20 contents developed and 13 incorporated in Moodle platform
- 20 e-lessons contents developed
- 14 e-lessons adapted in Moodle platform

E-Work-Based Learning “WBL”:

- 2 consultation meetings were conducted with RTB, RP, Private sectors, and TVETs graduates
- 10 e-WBL lessons for phase 1 approved
- 5 e-WBL lessons developed

Capacity building

- Master ToT for both WRN audio program and trade e-lessons was conducted for 12

TVET trainers (1 female and 7 males) and 3 (male) IPRCs instructors

- **TOT for Level 3 WRN Audio Program** was conducted for 68 TVET trainers (15 females and 43 males)
- TOT for Level Trade-based e-lessons was conducted for 78 TVET trainers (23 females and 56 males).

The rollout of e-learning materials

- WRN audio Program rolled out in Level 3 for 16 TVET schools and 4 IPRCs
- E-lessons rolled out in Level 3 for 16 TVET schools and 4 IPRCs

Monitoring and trainers coaching

- Follow up and coaching for Level 3 WRN audios was done at 8 schools
- Follow-up and coaching for trade-based e-learning were done at 2 schools.



Photo 7: BRITE E-lesson monitoring



Photo 8: BRITE E-lesson monitoring

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HDAK Project

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WRN & BYOB program:

- HDAK delivered, in its last year, WRN/BYOB training to a total of 4,729 youth (3,429 females, 1,300 males), 68% of whom (3,197) came from rural areas, and 73% were female;
- In partnership with the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency “RBA” HDAK expanded the reach of its WRN audio program nationwide. In Year 5, HDAK broadcasted all 42 episodes twice a week on Radio Rwanda, while also sending weekly SMS reminders to its youth beneficiaries to tune to the radio.

YLA Condensed Version:

- To enhance the condensed Youth Leadership Accompaniment “YLA”, a supplementary User Guide was developed to help Youth Leaders. The condensed plan consisted of a series of 8 meetings with a pre-developed agenda, covering the following 8 modules:
 - Orientation: SMART Goal Setting;
 - Conducting work-based learning (Observation and Informational Interviews);
 - Conducting community mapping;
 - Reviewing progress and SMART goals;
 - Split into wage and self-employed groups;
 - Financial record-keeping: Wage- or self-Employment options;

- Wage or self-employment pathways;
- Employment sustainability: Record Keeping and customer numbers.

YLA adapted to the COVID-19 situation:

- The YLA’s interventions in Year 5 were constantly adapted in response to the COVID-19. Four strategies:
- Telephonic and Motivational surveys for Youth Groups to finish YLA.
- YLA Virtual Coaching to provide Youth Leadership skills to new Youth Leaders
- Youth Ambassadors to support ongoing Youth Groups
- Virtual Orientations and Refreshers for all Field Officers

Youth certification:

- AKA facilitate the external assessment to 4788 youth but 3934 youth were eligible for the certificates.

Legacy events:

- The project team, organized and led the legacy events as an opportunity to celebrate achievements, gather lessons, and ensure that capacities were built among local partners and existing government institutions such as RP and RTB. Ten (10) regional legacy events were held in total and 333 (239M, 94F) attended those various events.

At the end of the HDAK project duration, the main significant achievements are as follows:

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

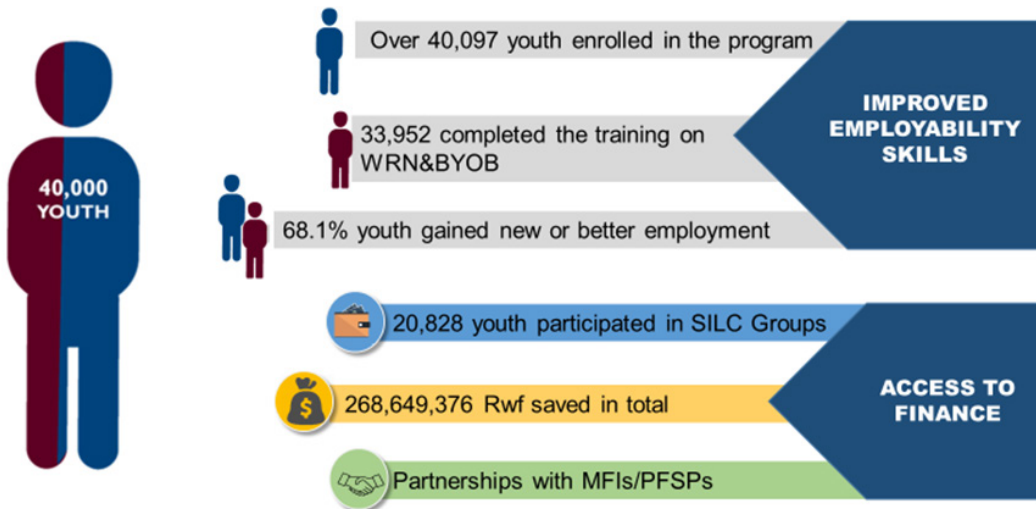


Photo 9: Youth Technical Training in Bakery



Photo 10: Youth Technical Training in Tailoring



Photo 9: Youth Technical Training in Bakery



Photo 12: Youth showcasing in Tailoring

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Others: AKA Activities**@Participation in District Joint Action Forum (DJAF) meetings**

AKA, through the SDEPAY project, is currently a member of JAFD-Gatsibo & Bugesera & Nyaruguru, this forum organized the meetings with their members, to which AKA Senior Management Team was invited to participate. The members had met as development agencies of the districts, to assess the level of achievement of the performance contract of these districts, where each actor was to share the key priorities vis-à-vis the development strategies of the country. This was the opportunity for AKA, in collaboration with PIR, to present the objective and target of the SDEPAY project to the participants. This moment was an entry point to be able to establish direct contacts with other actors involved in the youth development of the districts of Gatsibo, Bugesera, and Nyaruguru, and to discuss their approaches.

@COVID-19 government's restrictions vis-a-vis of AKA operations:

Like other civil society organizations in the country, AKA has scrupulously followed the measures adopted by the government of Rwanda to stop the spread of COVID-19. Thirty (30%) of all staff (in most cases) worked permanently in the AKA office, while another part of the staff worked through the office. All staff was always easy to have everything needed to complete their assigned tasks and responsibilities. The materials and equipment that could stop the spread of the epidemic have been put in place at the office and the training sites for the young people. Among that equipment figured out a thermometer, sinks with a foot pump or “kandagira ukarebe”, sufficient liquid soap, hand sanitizers, and masks for all participants.

A COVID-19 Response Team was elected and monitored the COVID-19 situation in the country, and suggested to AKA anything that could help prevent COVID-19 within and/or outside the AKA office.

In this regard, in response, we supported virtual meetings (as needed), AKA technical staff developed the imperative audios/ scripts which were shared and communicated to youth enrolled in the WRN & BYOB program either via national radio and/or sends links created on youth's telephones. Thus, AKA did not completely stop its activities on the ground, because this mechanism had helped more the direct and indirect youth to have access to certain AKA interventions.

@AKA participation in meetings of government institutions and other stakeholders

To be able to contribute to anyone initiative that promotes skills and knowledge about youth employability, AKA had taken part in quite a few meetings organized by government institutions. These organizations include TVET, NESAC, RTB, and RP, which organizations empower youth in technical skills. In most cases, AKA, based on its experience in youth empowerment, was part of the thematic teams with the mandate to guide the curricula that these institutions wanted to develop. For example, setting up curricula of TVET schools for level 3, level 4, and level 5. AKA's contribution in these thematic areas has been highly appreciated by the various partners.

Apart from this participation in these government institutions, AKA attended the meetings organized by other stakeholders who know AKA as one of the youth development agencies. Always look for an opportunity to share its program areas and then make it visible.

@Child Safeguarding Policy

AKA, in collaboration with Plan International Rwanda “PIR”, has developed a policy on the rights and protection of the child that each member of staff and each stakeholder must sign before taking on any assignment with AKA and/or PIR. Note that AKA and PIR are committed to protecting and avoiding any action that could violate the rights of the child.

@External audits (of the organization and projects)

AKA annually hires an external independent audit for its annual financial statements as well as the fund accountability of projects implemented during the year. In this regard, 2 additional audits were carried out in 2021 by external auditors, named RUMA CPAY, recruited by donors to audit their respective funded projects. In addition to the project audits, AKA hired an external consultant to audit the organization’s interventions. This is in line with the AKA’s strategic plan. The external audits did not exclude the internal audit carried-out by the internal auditors supported by the Board.

Internal and external audits did not reveal any major issues such as financial management issues, and they reiterated that we used our best practices always based on the manual of procedures and policies already in place.

@Institutional capacity building and staff meetings

In March 2021, the AKA, in support of the PIR, organized two-day training sessions with all staff (22 in total) on gender, social inclusion, child rights, and safeguarding components. To comply with the COVID-19 measures given by the GoR, this training was held virtually.

AKA has organized meetings every Monday of all staff (projects and administration) gathered (virtually and/or physically) to share updates from the organization (at a high level) and projects in particular. During these meetings, staff used these opportunities to learn more about what was going well, what were the areas of improvement, what were the strategies/approaches to address the challenges encountered during the implementation of the projects. Project and administration staff found the opportunity to get to know each other and each other’s responsibilities, thus providing the necessary guidance to achieve AKA’s mission through its projects and other possible interventions.

Note that the COVID-19 measures have forced AKA managers to financially support the staff to be tested and then everyone knows their status in advance before waiting for these physical meetings.

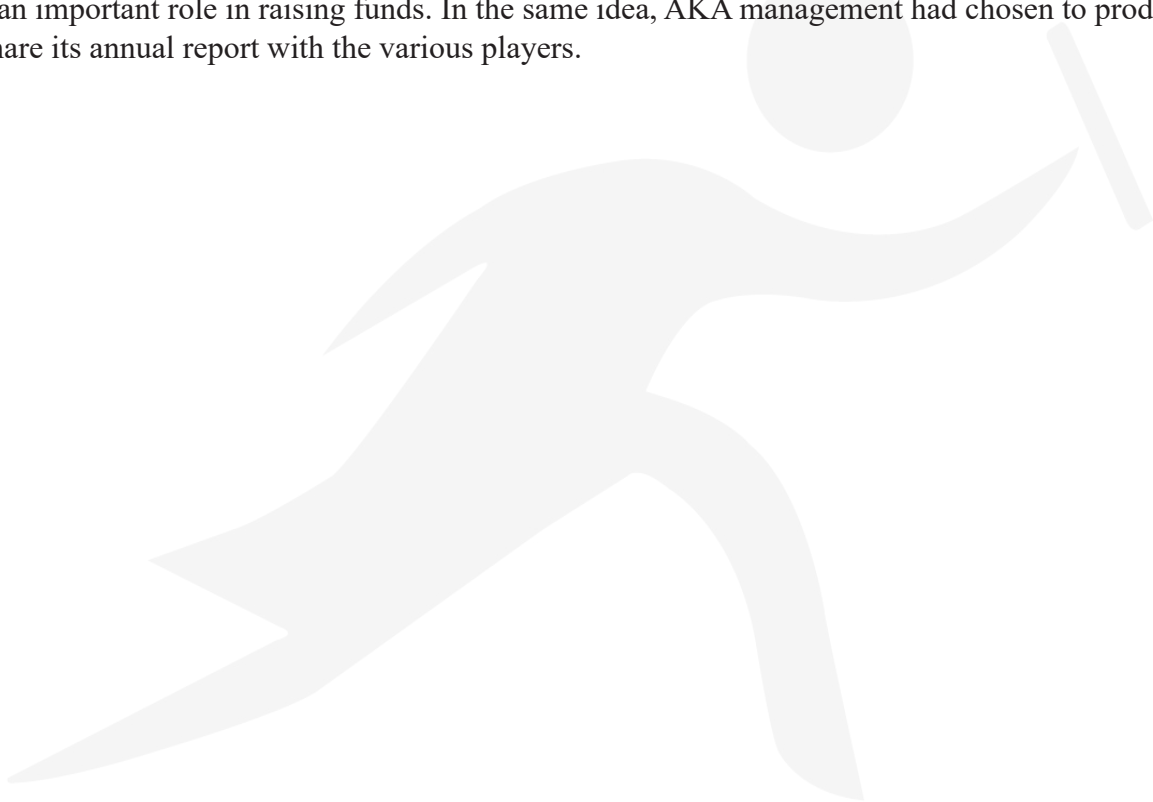
@AKA management meetings (SMT, Board, and General assembly)

During the year, members of the AKA “SMT” leadership team met to regularly assess accomplishments, challenges, and strategies/pathways to achieve AKA’s mission. Similarly, board meetings were organized to assess the level of management of the AKA where it was sometimes obliged to make the decisions for good management.

In addition to these executive meetings, the AKA representatives organized the General Assembly consisting of AKA members (including 19 staff and 18 others). A total of 37 people makes up the general assembly of the AKA who participated in an annual meeting. With the facilitation of the legal representatives, the participants discussed how the resolutions of the previous meeting have been implemented and also discussed the future life of the organization.

@Promotion of AKA's visibility.

AKA has continuously promoted its culture of regularly promoting itself through various communication tools and social media, including the website, Facebook, monthly newsletters, and Twitter. In addition, banners, flyers, and T-shirts were developed and distributed either to AKA staff or to the public to increase the visibility of the AKA. This not only falls within the scope of AKA's visibility but also plays an important role in raising funds. In the same idea, AKA management had chosen to produce and share its annual report with the various players.



AKA PARTNERS



Strategic Partners and Collaborators

- AEE
- AJCEL
- ANLM
- APAFORME
- AVSIBenimpuhwe
- Caritas-Byumba
- Caritas -Kibungo
- Caritas -Nyundo
- COCOF
- CPJSP
- Frontier's Aid
- MAARIFA AFRICA
- IBC group
- IMBARAGA
- Never Again
- RODI
- SOS
- UPHLS
- CEFOTRAR
- VJN
- George Town University (GTU)
- APEFE
- RP
- RTB



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