



AU-EU Partnership on Skills for Green Job Creation

The global call for sustainability and environmental responsibility resonates strongly with Rwanda's commitment to green growth and a sustainable future. As we continue to face the challenges of climate change, it is imperative that we embrace this opportunity to equip our workforce with the knowledge and expertise needed to drive the green revolution forward.

Rwanda, known for its breathtaking landscapes and rich biodiversity, has been actively pursuing a green growth strategy to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change. One of the key pillars in this strategy is the promotion of green jobs - employment opportunities that contribute to preserving and restoring the environment while driving economic growth. I will be highlighting the roles of different key players in fostering the skills for green job creation.

What role do education institutions play in shaping this transformation?

Curriculum Integration: Our educational curriculum must be revamped to include modules on environmental studies, sustainability, and green technologies. By instilling eco-consciousness and green skill sets in our students, we can cultivate a generation of environmentally responsible citizens and professionals.

Research and Innovation: Education institutions should actively engage in research and development of sustainable technologies and practices, collaborating with industry partners and relevant government agencies. And an excellent example of this is the recent set up of the mRNA Vaccine manufacturing facility in Kigali. Such a collaboration between BioNTech, the government of Rwanda and other stakeholders creates opportunities for research and job creation.

Vocational Training for Green Jobs: Establishing vocational training centres that focus on renewable energy, waste management, eco-tourism, and other green sectors can equip young people with the necessary skills to excel in emerging green job markets.

Let us explore the role of the private sector in fostering skills for green job creation:

Investment in Green Initiatives: The private sector has the capacity to invest in green technologies, research, and infrastructure. By directing resources towards sustainable ventures, companies can drive innovation and create green jobs in emerging sectors.



Public-Private Partnerships: Collaboration between the private sector and governments is crucial to fostering green skills. Public-private partnerships can facilitate vocational training programs, skill development initiatives, and job placements in green industries. The report by the IMF on climate change in Africa shows Rwanda's leading green innovations.

Entrepreneurship and Start-ups: Encouraging green entrepreneurship and supporting eco-conscious start-ups can spark innovation and create job opportunities aligned with sustainable principles.

Pivotal role of the youth in fostering skills for green job creation:

Africa boasts one of the youngest populations globally, with over 60% of the continent's population under the age of 25. Our demographic dividend presents a unique opportunity to lead the charge in transforming Africa into a green and sustainable continent.

Despite their immense potential, youth unemployment rates in Africa remain alarmingly high. By fostering skills for green job creation, the youth can empower themselves with meaningful and impactful careers while contributing to their nations' economic growth.

Let us look at specific ways the youth can foster skills for green job creation:

Innovation and Entrepreneurship: The youth are natural innovators. By harnessing their creativity and entrepreneurial spirit, they can develop sustainable solutions, products, and services that address environmental challenges while creating green job opportunities.

Community Engagement: As young activists, the youth can raise their voices to advocate for sustainable practices and climate action. Also engaging with local communities and grassroots organizations can be instrumental in driving sustainable initiatives. By participating in environmental clean-ups such as UMUGANDA, tree planting, and conservation projects, they can directly contribute to a cleaner and greener Africa.

Involve the youth in the diaspora: Establish platforms where the youth from the diaspora can access resources, share ideas, and collaborate on the green initiatives. These platforms can serve as hubs for knowledge exchange and talent sourcing for our continent.

Partnerships and Networks: Collaborating with like-minded organizations both local and international can amplify the impact youth initiatives have. By joining forces, the youth can mobilize resources, share knowledge, and collectively address environmental challenges at a large scale.

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As I conclude, I want to emphasize that fostering skills for green job creation is not merely a choice but a necessity for the World's sustainable development. By investing in green education, research, and vocational training, we can empower our citizens to become drivers of change and champions of sustainability. Together, let us rise to the occasion — nurturing a generation of green-skilled professionals who will shape a cleaner, greener, and more prosperous world for generations to come.



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Allen Kendunga is a Rwandese entrepreneur and the founder and CEO of Talent Match, Inc., a social venture working to close the skills gap and reduce youth unemployment. She engages businesses to identify skills gaps and develop programs in partnership with education institutions, while speaking to the disparity between available skills and the needs of industries and the value of the diaspora as a resource to upskill youth in countries of origin.

Sources:

Rwanda's revised green growth strategy:

https://www.rema.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Rwanda_Green_Growth_Climate_Resilience_Strategy_06102022.pdf

IMF: Climate change in Africa: Rwanda's leading green growth innovations:

<https://www.imf.org/en/videos/view?vid=6325522609112>

BioNTech is building its first manufacturing facility in Kigali, Rwanda, to support the production of mRNA vaccines in Africa.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/projects/biontech-mrna-facility-rwanda/>