



BPN 
Business Professionals Network

THE ANNUAL BULLETIN

2022





Table of Contents

04 BPN Rwanda Country Director's Message

VOICES OF OUR TEAM

06 When SMEs blossom like a tree planted by the water

07 The contagious success

08 Why coached entrepreneurs thrive

09 The value of a reliable support system

VOICES OF OUR ENTREPRENEURS

11 BOA: The Origins of the Magnet Institute

12 Acquiring business ethical values through participating in the BPN Program

13 Becoming an entrepreneur by fate. Staying an entrepreneur by passion.

VOICES OF OUR PARTNERS

15 A fruitful partnership to empower businesses

16 A strong partnership for the benefit of social enterprises

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2022

19 International Women's Day 2022

20 Anniversary Celebration: BPN Rwanda turned 10

24 BPN's Audience at H.E. Paul Kagame's office

25 CHOGM 2022: Meet the Rwandan Entrepreneurs

26 Global Entrepreneurship Week 2022

27 Rwanda x Israel Business Breakfast

28 BPN Rwanda Country Director received the BEN AFRICA'S QUIVER AWARD

29 Demystifying Banking



BPN RWANDA COUNTRY DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



FOCUS ON DOING YOUR BUSINESS EFFICIENTLY, KNOWING THAT WE HAVE YOUR BACK.

The year 2022 that has come to an end is also the first year in which the world has been able to control and eventually stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic because of the vaccines that have been administered to the whole world. This has made it possible for people to go back to work and work normal hours, and it has given us peace of mind not to be afraid of the infection. However, this does not mean that the impact of Covid-19 ended with the pandemic.

Due to COVID-19, imports continued to be expensive and slow. 2022 ended with people hesitant to shop, and goods were scarce. The impact of the war in Ukraine has also increased these effects, leading to higher prices around the world. These are all challenges you face as entrepreneurs in your businesses. To be able to navigate those crises professionally, you must always be prepared, keeping in mind that you are part of a global system. It is also necessary to always find your own solutions because your partners (customers, suppliers, banks and other stakeholders you work with) are also affected by the effects of international crises.

I would like to remind you that you are not alone. At BPN, we will continue to work with you to address those challenges. Let's not forget that a sustainable business must always have reserves. A cash reserve, or an emergency fund, acts as a buffer and allows you to pay your employees and yourself during lean times. It protects you when customers are slow to make payments and allows you to pursue opportunities for growth when they arise. And let's not forget that when an entrepreneur keeps training her/himself, and her/his employees and attends events where s/he meets her/his peers, it allows her/him to find innovative solutions all the time.

For our part, as BPN, we will continue to provide you with training tailored to your needs, we will continue to be there to advise you, and we will continue to be your voice wherever we go. We inform other stakeholders about the problems you face, the explanations you may need, and we emphasize on the many good things you do and what you achieve that contribute to developing the country.

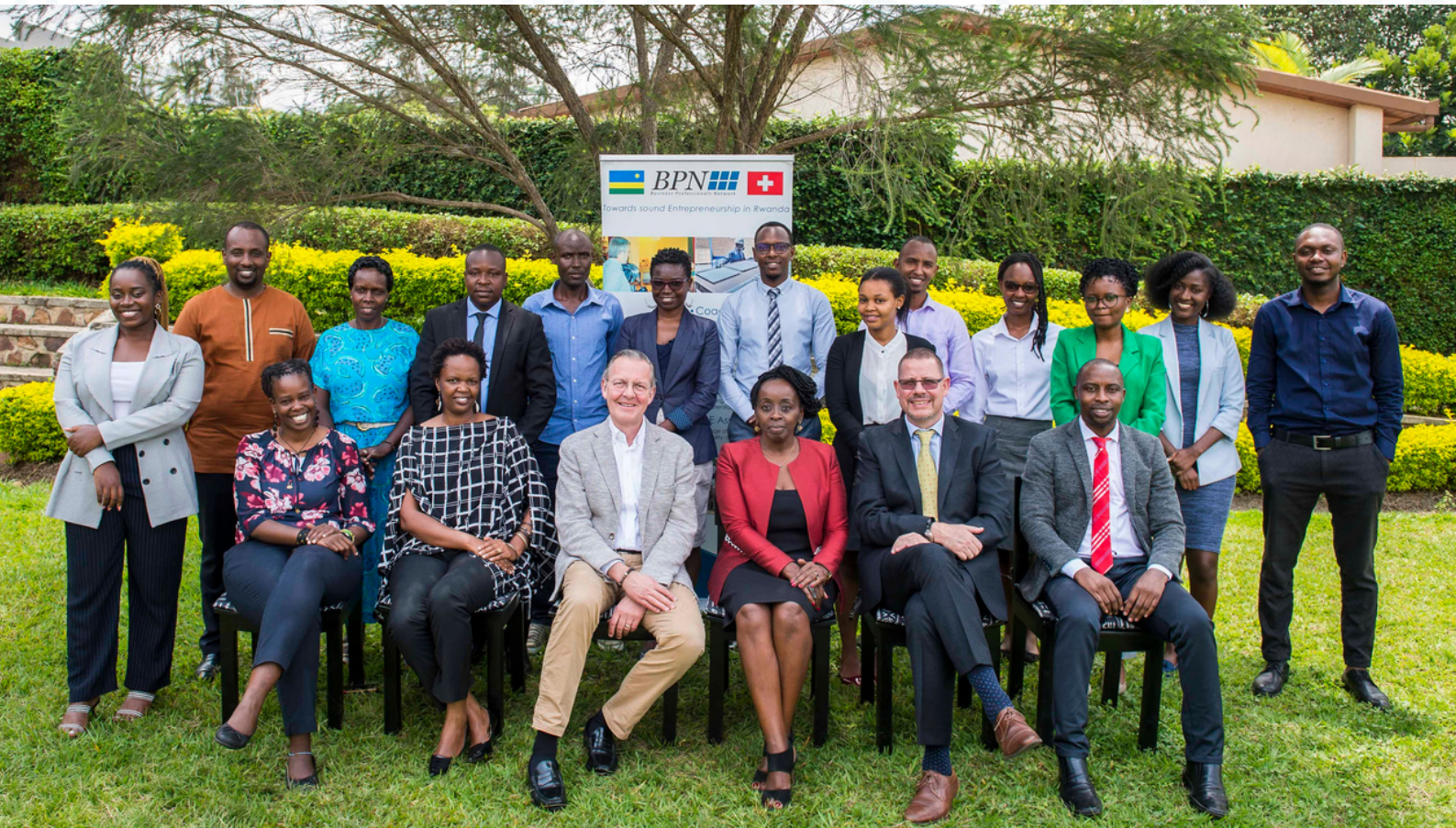
In this bulletin, you will find a variety of information about the past year's activities, testimonials from BPN entrepreneurs and partners. We have put it together to inspire you and to keep you informed of what we have done on your behalf. Enjoy the read.

I would like to end this letter by wishing that the year 2023 would be a year of success and prosperity. In this year we started, do your business efficiently and calmly, knowing that we are behind you. It is our pleasure and our mission to be your trusted partner for growth.



Alice Nkulikiyinka
BPN Rwanda Country Director

VOICES OF OUR TEAM





WHEN SMEs BLOSSOM LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE WATER

By Joie Claire Museke,
Deputy Country Director BPN Rwanda



While business success depends on various crucial factors, financing is one of the most pressing factors. Over the past years, BPN has been fostering sound entrepreneurship and creating an environment that supports and encourages it. Through advocacy, capacity building, and networking, BPN has been supporting entrepreneurs who struggle to secure the capital they need to grow their businesses and have cultivated fruitful partnerships that made a positive impact on Rwanda's entrepreneurial environment - **Learn how in this treatise!**

Entrepreneurs struggle with access to finance at different business stages. Yes, we believe that finances are the business' lifeblood, but the truth is; to be able to navigate different business challenges, including financial ones, entrepreneurs need skills and knowledge more than money. We have met several entrepreneurs who thought their businesses were fading because they lacked funds, but the reality was the absolute opposite. BPN supported those entrepreneurs through different financial training and mentorship programs by business experts. Training in Financial Management, Banking for SMEs, and Taxation, among others, helped them make better financial decisions and opened their eyes to the possibilities of generating their own income rather than just relying on external funds. How fulfilling it is to see their businesses flourishing!

Like a tree planted by the water, entrepreneurs reach greater heights when they network and collaborate with other entrepreneurs, investors, and experts. BPN Rwanda created various astounding opportunities for entrepreneurs to network among themselves and exchange ideas. BPN also organized different networking events to stimulate collaboration between entrepreneurs and potential investors. These events provided an opportunity for entrepreneurs to meet potential investors who might be the key to unlocking additional capital for their business, learn about their investment criteria, showcase their creations and latest innovations, and pitch their business ideas. Investors, on the other hand, learnt about new opportunities and connected with entrepreneurs who are working on projects that align with their interests.

True, a business' finances may need an external push at some point. We can all agree that financial institutions are at the forefront of the most common source of external

finance for SMEs. In this regard, BPN has strategically built strong partnerships with banks to help entrepreneurs have better access to funding.

The impact of this partnership so far is nothing short of sublime! Thanks to our partnership with I&M Bank, we provided a Covid-recovery fund for entrepreneurs whose businesses were deeply affected by the pandemic. Furthermore, BPN advocates for Small and Medium Enterprises to have financing on more favourable terms and interest rates.

BPN Rwanda has been (and will always) contributing to the Entrepreneurs' financial goals achievement and is proud to have an ever-growing community of entrepreneurs who do not fear when heat comes, nor worry in a year of drought, and never fail to bear fruits just like a tree planted by the water!

THE CONTAGIOUS SUCCESS

By Olive Uwamahoro,
Training Officer BPN Rwanda



It is a pleasure to share that like the previous years, 2022 has been a year of success for the BPN Business Academy. Better still, it was the year where BPN Rwanda celebrated 10 years of different achievements in supporting Rwandan entrepreneurs through its four-pillar program, coaching and training among those.

Despite the limitations imposed by covid-19, the Business Academy strived to increasing the number of seminars and workshops to equip entrepreneurs with the needed skills to deal with the global challenges and help them level up their businesses. In 2022 specifically, the business Academy introduced new training topics all the while upgrading the content of the already existing ones. All the trainings emphasize the value of knowledge, strengthen and sharpen the skills of entrepreneurs and change their mindset to equip them with all it takes to be professional entrepreneurs.

As Albert Einstein said, "Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value." At BPN Business Academy, we always smile at the thought of valuable moments we had with entrepreneurs. Allow me to share a recent anecdote: Right after the celebration of BPN Rwanda's 10th year anniversary, one of the guests of honours from Switzerland pledged to empower Rwandan entrepreneurs. That is how the BPN Branding workshop was born from which more than 20 entrepreneurs benefited - They learned how to describe their business brands, how to pitch their brand in a concise, precise way, with attention-grabbing words, a.o.

The BPN Business Academy further knows and follows opportunities, laws and policies for the benefits of the entrepreneurs we serve. In 2022 the #AfCFTA pilot was launched, Rwanda being among the 7 countries selected countries. Additionally, Rwanda is leading the Commonwealth and on OIF. For entrepreneurs to maximize on these Export opportunities, we welcomed RDB to share more about #AfCFTA and its benefits to Rwandan entrepreneurs as well as other export opportunities - This is how the Business Academy keeps entrepreneurs informed and will continue to serve you better in the coming years.

**Wishing you a prosperous 2023
crowned with outstanding achievements!**

WHY COACHED ENTREPRENEURS THRIVE

By Diane Izabayo
Head of BPN Core Program



Entrepreneurship can be a lonely journey. Even the most successful business owners need support and guidance to take their enterprises to the next level. With many entrepreneurs asking for coaching sessions and seeing significant improvements in their businesses, executive coaching proved to be a game-changer for Rwanda's entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Rangira (a fictional name used to protect a BPN client-entrepreneur's privacy), a business owner in Rwanda, was struggling to keep up with the fast-paced changes in his industry. He knew he needed help, so he decided to join the BPN entrepreneurship development program, where he could get coaching, among other services. Through working with a coach,

Rangira gained a fresh perspective on his business and was able to identify areas where he was struggling. With his coach, he developed new strategies and solutions for moving forward. The results were remarkable. Not only did Rangira see a significant increase in sales and profits, but he also noticed a positive change in his employees. They were more engaged, creative, and motivated. Rangira attributes this to the guidance and support he received from his coach, who helped him challenge himself to think differently and encourage and lead his team to do the same.

Many entrepreneurs in Rwanda are discovering the benefits of executive coaching. BPN has witnessed the transformative impact that coaching can have on entrepreneurs and is working to make coaching services more professional and accessible to more people.

Coaching is a powerful tool that can help entrepreneurs develop new skills, overcome obstacles, and grow their businesses in ways they never thought possible. By investing in coaching, entrepreneurs can expect to see real results in their businesses, gain new knowledge, and shift their mindset to think more creatively and strategically. For instance, BPN's 10-year experience providing coaching to Rwandan entrepreneurs showed a significant impact on job creation, bridging the gender pay gap, adoption of modern technologies, and expansion of operations, leading to increased productivity and profitability. As more entrepreneurs gain access to coaching services, Rwanda's entrepreneurship ecosystem will become more dynamic and successful in the years to come.

Yes! Executive coaching has the potential to make a significant impact on Rwanda's entrepreneurship ecosystem. With the right support and guidance, entrepreneurs can achieve their goals and lead their businesses to success. If you're an entrepreneur in Rwanda, consider investing in coaching services to unlock your full potential and take your business to the next level.

THE VALUE OF A RELIABLE SUPPORT SYSTEM

By Eliane Rutaganira
Business Coach



“

At BPN Rwanda we see ourselves as home for high potential entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs who are willing to grow, those who take a leap of faith and put all the risk on themselves to make a difference in the community in which they prosper.

”

Alice Nkulikiyinka,
Country Director of BPN Rwanda

This statement, which was made at BPN's 10 years anniversary celebration, invites us all to consider entrepreneurship as a road that we do not take for ourselves, nor by ourselves. Embarking on the entrepreneurship journey is a risk that one takes for a purpose that is beyond oneself. An entrepreneur embraces risk to have an impact in the community.

For more than a decade, BPN has been supporting Rwandan entrepreneurs. There are many success stories to be shared, as we have met entrepreneurs from various sectors, different walks of life, and almost every part of the country; we walked the entrepreneurship journey with them and saw them burgeoning.

Well, let's give you a glimpse into the kind of entrepreneurs we work with. On the one hand, we work with entrepreneurs who lead with a solution-orientated mindset; they embrace change, aren't afraid to innovate, and don't shy away from new ideas that will grow their businesses. These are the ones who are flexible, and open to learning something new and challenging their beliefs. What a joy to go through the entrepreneurship journey with them!

On the other hand, we also work with entrepreneurs who subscribe to the "if it is not broken, why fix it?" mentality. For those entrepreneurs, the uncertainty of what change brings is a major factor of resistance. However, comfort and growth do not coexist. It takes time for them to become confident that BPN Rwanda is their partner for growth, and we value the courage they have to be vulnerable with us, to share their successes, tears, and challenges.

What an enriching experience it is to witness a person who did not see the value of our collaboration at first, then embracing and growing from it!

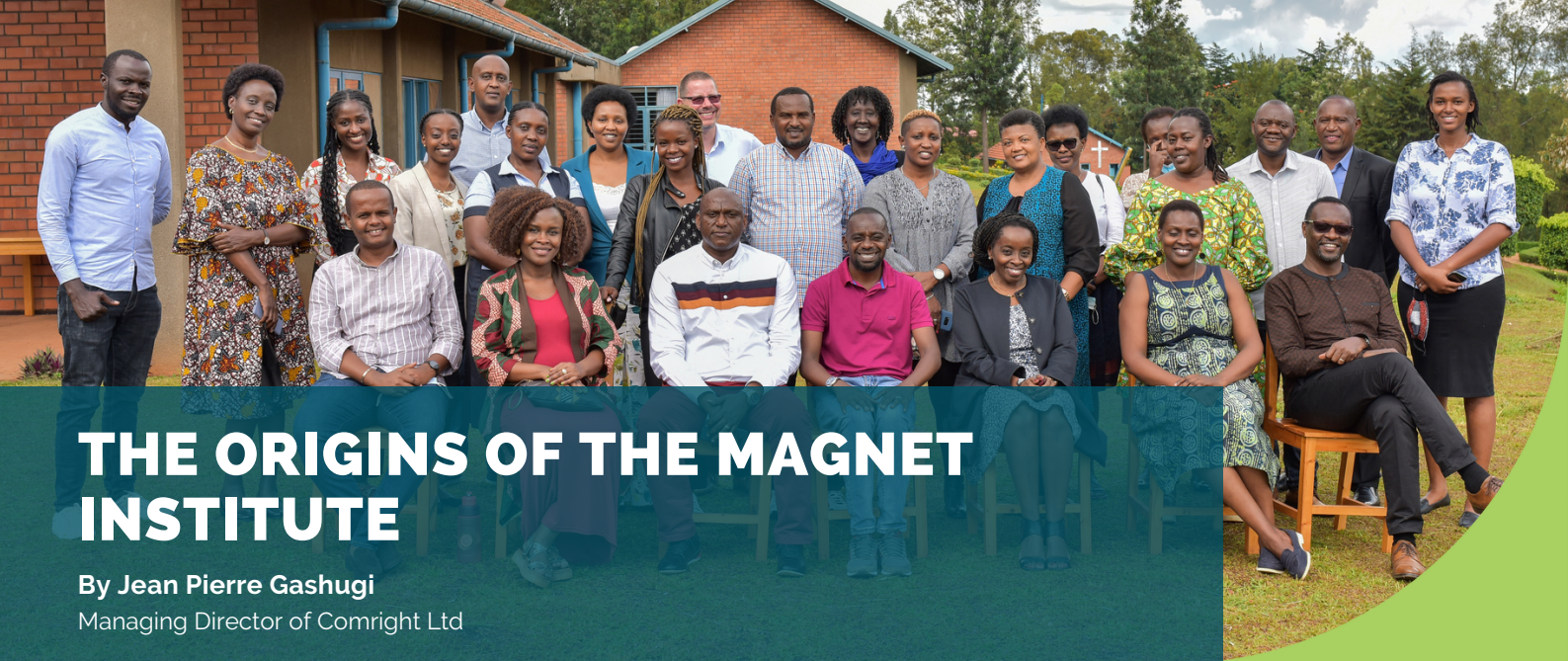
Wondering how we get the privilege to meet these entrepreneurs and want to know how we manage to turn on their spark, supporting them as they learn and leave their comfort zones to experience a mindset change. We'll tell you! We meet entrepreneurs through various channels. Some entrepreneurs contact us or come to see us directly. Others are spotted by one of our team members, and we also get to work with entrepreneurs through partnerships with other organizations. Getting people to work with us, commit to giving us their time, and trust that we will enable them to reach higher ground requires trust, integrity, understanding and professionalism. Our team at BPN Rwanda is built on those values. As our entrepreneurs often put it, the singularity of BPN Rwanda's approach is meeting entrepreneurs where they are.

Our goal at BPN Rwanda is to support entrepreneurs in acquiring and implementing the right business tools suitable to navigate change and grow their businesses. We do not just focus on your business, rather we value the connection built with you. We tailor our program to your needs - Our training and coaching sessions fit the entrepreneur's business and individual reality.

As an entrepreneur, being part of the BPN Rwanda community, is ensuring that you have a support system by your side, that inspire you to think outside the box, challenge you to transform your business, and expand your entrepreneurial universe as you network with like-minded entrepreneurs.

VOICES OF OUR ENTREPRENEURS





THE ORIGINS OF THE MAGNET INSTITUTE

By **Jean Pierre Gashugi**
Managing Director of Comright Ltd



In 2017, entrepreneurs who have experience in investing and trading in different ways in Rwanda and who had benefited from the BPN entrepreneurship development program decided to create a Business Owners Association (BOA). In order to use the knowledge gained from BPN and find solutions for themselves, the members contributed 100 million Rwandan francs, the SDC (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) supported them with 100 million Rwandan francs and BPN added 30 million Rwandan francs so they launched the school project called The Magnet Institute in 2022.

The Magnet Institute is an institute that offers training for middle managers and team leaders in small and medium-sized enterprises. The organization was established after an in-depth analysis revealed that one of the urgent problems holding back entrepreneurs and requiring sustainable solutions is the inadequate management skills of their assistant managers as they lack managerial knowledge and other essential competencies, such as effective teamwork, values-driven leadership, and the willingness to take responsibility and to be at the forefront of decision making.

In cooperation with the Swiss International Institute, called Höhere Fachschule für Technologie und Management/Centre de formation pour la technologie et le management (SFB/ESG), in February 2023, the Magnet Institute started the first round of training for 10 people from institutions led by Members of BOA and others who have expressed interest in attending the training.

In the beginning, training was given to middle managers and team leaders working in different business establishments on the following courses:

- Characteristics and Capabilities of Team Leaders, Project Management
- Communication, Passing verbal and written messages between people working at the same level and between different decision levels.

The training is conducted in Kinyarwanda and is held in Kigali, Nyarugenge, and Norrsken House Kigali.

The second phase will be prepared after assessing the success of the first one in order to improve the training services. Training methods will continue to be improved and include online classes.

We encourage all entrepreneurs to understand that we are the ones who must find solutions to the problems we face. We hope that many of you will become members of the Business Owners Association (BOA) soon, and work together to find solutions for and among ourselves.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our key partners: BPN, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, and SFB Switzerland.





ACQUIRING BUSINESS ETHICAL VALUES THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN THE BPN PROGRAM

By Marie Ange Mukagahima
CEO and Owner - ZIMA Healthy Group

ZIMA Healthy Group was founded in 2017. Our company processes pumpkin and pumpkin seeds into a range of healthy products. We create a beneficial impact on rural communities, the environment, urban employment and health. We distribute our products country-wide through over 60 retail outlets. We employ some 30 people and work with over 200 female farmers.



The year 2022 was the year my business ZIMA Healthy Group was invited to join the BPN alumni program. This was an important milestone for us since this invitation is offered only to successful businesses that have completed the BPN training and coaching program.

During our business journey, BPN training and coaching helped us significantly. BPN has helped me to become a professional entrepreneur. The entire pallet of business management subjects was covered - from finance to HR management, to marketing and more. With the help of BPN, I also improved my business model. A second key element is that BPN has made me an entrepreneur who embraces "business values", i.e., to extend my focus from daily operational issues to long-term planning and how to create and increase impact.

Another aspect that I really appreciate is that BPN not only addresses entrepreneurs but also key staff members. We were able to link given training topics to specific staff members, and by doing so, ZIMA employees were able to have a tailor-made training program. In 2022 we were trained and guided in time management, conflict management and investment readiness. Especially the latter has helped tremendously, as we're now in negotiation with external funding partners.

“ Today, ZIMA is looking ahead at further growth, upscaling and diversification. Thanks to BPN I can do this from a stable foundation of skills and mindset. And I can be confident to face the new challenges and opportunities as I'm assured to find a reliable coach in BPN. ”



BECOMING AN ENTREPRENEUR BY FATE. STAYING AN ENTREPRENEUR BY PASSION.

By Nadia Keza

CEO of International Travel Agency I.T.A.

My Name is Nadia Keza, CEO of International Travel Agency I.T.A. The company was founded by my mother in 1995. In 2005, as I was getting ready to start my career, a choice was presented to me: either I take the job opportunity that was presented to me, or I take over my family's business. I chose the latter, despite my plans to pursue a career I had studied for. Eighteen years later, I am still passionate about what I do, and I always try to hire people who share that passion. What I have discovered is that running a successful business, it takes passion.

Of course, one can argue that running a business takes skills, and I don't dispute that - It is necessary to have the right skills. However, you need more than talent or skills to reach your goals. You need tenacity, perseverance, and love for what you do. Those are the pillars that I have built on and found that I share with BPN.

A few years ago, I learnt about BPN from a friend and business owner. I still thank her for that to this day. The BPN Rwanda team is driven by their passion to support entrepreneurs by giving them tools that help them manage their businesses well and grow as entrepreneurs. The four so-called BPN basic seminars every entrepreneur is invited to take have significantly impacted my business and me.

The first training was on Business administration, it helped me redefine my vision, it steered my focus in the right direction and clarified the necessary steps to accomplish my goals. That training was a real eye-opener, and it was given by an extraordinary trainer. The second training is on Finance management - We learnt a lot! We got to understand the role of reserves, of separating personal and business finance and the need to reinvest in the business for it to grow. 'Finances are at the heart of every business, every entrepreneur should understand that without proper finance management, the business is successfully driven to failure.'

Then the Marketing seminar challenged us to reevaluate whom we serve and how we serve them. Through this training, I gained a new perspective on the purpose of my business. The final training was breathtaking! It was a Leadership seminar. We learned much more than doing business - We learnt about our personalities, how to work in harmony with the team, and the importance of sharing the same vision to create the business' growth as we work to reach our goals.

Prior to joining the BPN Rwanda family, I had taken other training. I can confidently say that BPN is different. I have gained practical tools to run my business, I have grown as an exemplary entrepreneur and person, and I highly value my clients and team. I thank BPN Rwanda for the training and for allowing me to work hand-in-hand with an experienced coach who has supported me beyond my expectations.

“ To my fellow entrepreneurs, being passionate about what we do and who we serve gives us courage to persevere through challenges, to thrive for continuous improvement and to have the humility to face up to our shortcomings. I wish you a successful and passionate entrepreneurship journey!

”

VOICES OF OUR PARTNERS

Seqal
Family Foundation



NIRDA
National Industrial
Research and Development
Agency



A FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIP TO EMPOWER BUSINESSES

By Christian Sekomo Birame,
Director-General - NIRDA

Over the past years, the National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA) has embarked on the journey to support industries and firms in different value chains to ensure their growth and productivity. This is in line with its mission to enable a generation of industrial innovators to become competitive through technology monitoring, acquisition, development, and transfer & applied research.

Through our Open Calls program, we have been partnering with Enabel to support the selected companies in acquiring upgraded equipment, business, and technical advisory services, among others.

As NIRDA, we ensure that companies that benefit from our program get a holistic service and don't limit ourselves to those selected to acquire equipment. We accompany all the companies that are selected in the second phase and ensure they all acquire Business Development Services (BDS). To ensure this is done professionally, we work with professional institutions. This time around, NIRDA, in partnership with Enabel-Rwanda, hired BPN-Rwanda to provide training and coaching to companies in the construction sector (Stone, Clay, Bamboo and Agri by-products value chains) under the Urban Economic Development Initiative (UEDI).

Over the past two years, BPN Rwanda, a leading business development service provider, has done a tremendous job by providing 75 firms in different construction value chains with business development services to boost competitiveness and productivity for their respective companies. Companies benefited from training and seminars, coaching, and linkages with commercial institutions and other partners for networking purposes

As an institution, we ensure that companies are empowered to become competent not only locally but also regionally and why not internationally.

I hope companies that benefited from Business Development Services will be able to run their business smoothly, expand and become more competent and productive.

As a fast-developing country, Rwanda needs more construction materials, and we are lucky we have enough raw materials such as natural stones, enough clay, and many others. However, the construction sector still faces challenges associated with a lack of upgraded equipment, limited management skills (Both finance and human resource), limited finances, and networking issues, among others. It is worth noting that the business development services provided, are aimed at addressing such challenges. As NIRDA, we are grateful that BPN has been a good partner in providing the aforementioned training.

Rwanda needs more quality and affordable construction materials to develop its infrastructure if it is to cater for the urban population growth that's projected to increase from 18.5% in 2015 to 41.2% in 2050. We are equally grateful to Enabel for partnering with us, particularly for funding our Open Calls Program from which this Business Development Services were provided.

“
I participated in different BDS sessions by BPN and acquired practical skills that I have started applying at work. For instance, I now record everything that comes in and everything that gets out and this has improved my business.

”
Fortunée Murekatete
BDS Beneficiary



Moving forwards, we commit to similar partnerships to ensure that other companies in other value chains benefit from such resourceful Business Development Services. We have heard of beneficiaries of the Business Development Services who testified that they acquired more practical skills which have already changed the way they do their business even before completing their tailored program. Fortunée Murekatete, one of BDS beneficiaries, is upbeat. She believes that the skills acquired will take her business further.

"I participated in different BDS sessions by BPN and acquired practical skills that I have started applying at work, for instance, I now record everything that comes in and everything that gets out, and this has improved my business," she testified to us.

“
One thing I benefited greatly from, through BPN training, is the network I have created with other business people in the program. We started out in seminars together and now I am working with some of them!
 ”
Fortunée Murekatete
BDS Beneficiary

"Besides, I understand how to treat my staff. Now I know that even if the majority are casual workers, they still have rights. I pay them on time and try to motivate them. Another thing I benefited from BPN training is that I created a network with other business people through seminars, and I started working with some of them," she added.

As we remain with a few months towards the end of Business Development Service (BDS) program, there is a hope that more additional skills will be acquired, especially through coaching. We are committed to supporting the private sector actors and building their capacity financially as well as in business management.

75

BUSINESSES IN THE CONSTRUCTION VALUE CHAIN RECEIVED BDS SERVICES FROM BPN



A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

By Yvan Gatoto
, Program Officer – Segal Family Foundation (SFF)

Segal Family Foundation is a social impact funder and advisor transforming how change happens in Africa. We invest in visionary local leaders with bold ideas and huge potential to transform society, and we help progressive donors do the same. We're building a community of extraordinary people who know that change is possible and are willing to work together to make it happen. In fact, we're building the most influential network of African leaders in Africa, who can share resources and intend to advance positive change in the communities they serve.

Segal first crossed paths with BPN Rwanda in 2020 through our Social Impact Incubator (SII). Starting in Burundi in 2013, SII created an environment for innovators to amplify and grow their impact, later expanding to Malawi and Rwanda. Since BPN is a leader in business development, we were eager to partner with them to support three cohorts of social enterprises within the Social Impact Incubator. Recognizing the complexity of the social enterprise model, where the go-to-market strategies do not just look at business performance but also the social impact within the communities they serve, BPN Rwanda has been catalytic to our SII champions' business performance growth through their hands-on coaching and workshops.

We appreciated working with BPN Rwanda because they have a strong and dedicated team of business coaches who walk the journey with entrepreneurs. Also, their year-to-year model provides them with the ability to help the companies grow by offering transformative hands-on support. To date, they have supported companies that have managed to break through Rwanda's complex market in different sectors, including fashion, construction, and interior design, among others.

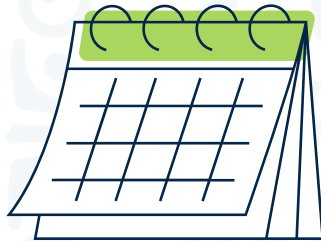
Moreover, we have seen BPN Rwanda make great strides. Previously, their core program aimed to enrol 25 entrepreneurs per year, and they grew to 30+ entrepreneurs per year. We were also excited to see BPN leverage exciting strategic partnerships, such as Enabel Rwanda, which allowed them to grow their team and support more entrepreneurs. To date, BPN Rwanda's reach through its seminars and workshops has extended to more than five thousand (5,419) entrepreneurs and changemakers in Rwanda's private sector.

5,419

**ENTREPRENEURS &
CHANGEMAKERS REACHED VIA
BPN SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS**



MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2022



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2022

#breakthebias

On March 8th, 2022, we had the pleasure of collaborating with Norrsken Kigali to host a Women's Day event dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of women entrepreneurs across various fields while inspiring them to push beyond barriers and achieve even greater success.



Successful women entrepreneurs shared their experience & learning with a large audience consisting predominantly of young start-ups & key eco-system players.



A close-up photograph of a woman in the audience clapping.



BPN RWANDA TURNED 10

On May 11, 2022, at BPN Rwanda, we celebrated our 10th anniversary. The event took place in Kigali at the Park Inn Hotel by Radisson. As we wanted it to be a day contributing to entrepreneurship in Rwanda, the event's theme was "Digitalization, Innovation & a knowledge-based Economy." Government officials, such as heads of institutions, finance and private sector experts, Ambassadors, entrepreneurs, BPN Board members from Switzerland and BPN friends graced the event. All were people and institutions who have been instrumental in the journey that BPN has been on in Rwanda.



At the opening of the ceremony, a moment of silence was taken in remembrance of the late Mr Jürg Opprecht, the founder of BPN, who passed away in July 2021. After that, his wife, Ms Benzli Opprecht, a BPN co-Founder and Board Member, addressed her opening remarks to the guests and commended Rwanda's progress and the partnership BPN has established with the country.

BPN Rwanda's Country Director, Mrs Alice Mkulikiyinka, gave a heartwarming snapshot of the BPN Rwanda journey, reflecting on humble beginnings and acknowledging milestones the organization has achieved over the past decade. She hailed the collaboration with Rwanda government and appreciated the presence of government representatives as well as the role their leadership has played in the BPN Rwanda success story. In a special way, she lauded the support of BPN global and their commitment to supporting Rwanda's entrepreneurship ecosystem, which directly feeds the heart of the country's economy.



Several entrepreneurs shared their success stories and how BPN has acted as their partner for growth

PARADINE NISHIMWE, owner of Wood Habitat gave a tear-jerking testimony about her business idea that was born while she was pregnant and not thinking much about entrepreneurship, and how BPN helped her grow from a hobby to a business. She recalled thinking about quitting her business several times and spoke fondly about how BPN did not give up on her. She credits her resilience and futuristic entrepreneur mindset to BPN. A teary testimony, many guests in the room evidently resonated with!



JOHNSON THE BAKER, a newcomer, shared his unconventional story, from his love for the kitchen as a young boy to the structure and financial stability that BPN gave to his business.



JOHNSON RUNUYA

BITAH UWERA of Toddle care shared her journey of starting a business at home and how BPN saw her potential and equipped her with entrepreneurial knowledge and skills. A moving testimony on how she felt empowered to be a leader and the impressive results that came with it.



LISE HUMURA told her story of opening a daycare after struggling to find one that met her standards. Prior to being approached by BPN, she was barely earning a salary and paying those she employed was a challenge, but after encountering BPN, her business is now thriving. She spoke highly of the opportunity to have a support system that BPN offers.



Jean Pierre Gashugi, MD of Comright, announced the launch of "The Magnet Institute", an initiative by entrepreneurs who graduated from BPN Rwanda.

The aim of the initiative is to tackle one of the pressing issues in the growth of SMEs: The lack of skilled middle managers. SMEs tend to micromanage their businesses rather than focusing on the strategic growth of the company. Entrepreneurs want to be the solution to this issue.

A panel session discussed the role of Digitalization, Innovation and a knowledge-based Economy by Hon. Paula Ingabire, Minister of ICT; Ms. Rolande Pryce, Country Representative World Bank; and Moses Turahirwa, CEO Moshions.



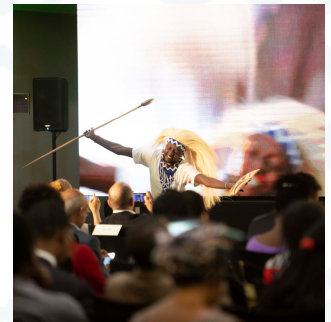
In the name of the Government of Rwanda, Minister Beata Habyarimana expressed the country's commitment to supporting entrepreneurship as a key contributor to Private sector development. She expressed the government's recognition and gratitude for BPN's consistent and impactful contribution. The minister conveyed the government's readiness and commitment to a continued and strengthened partnership with BPN.



10
Years
in Rwanda

BPN
Business Professionals Network

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS



BPN'S AUDIENCE AT H.E. PAUL KAGAME'S OFFICE



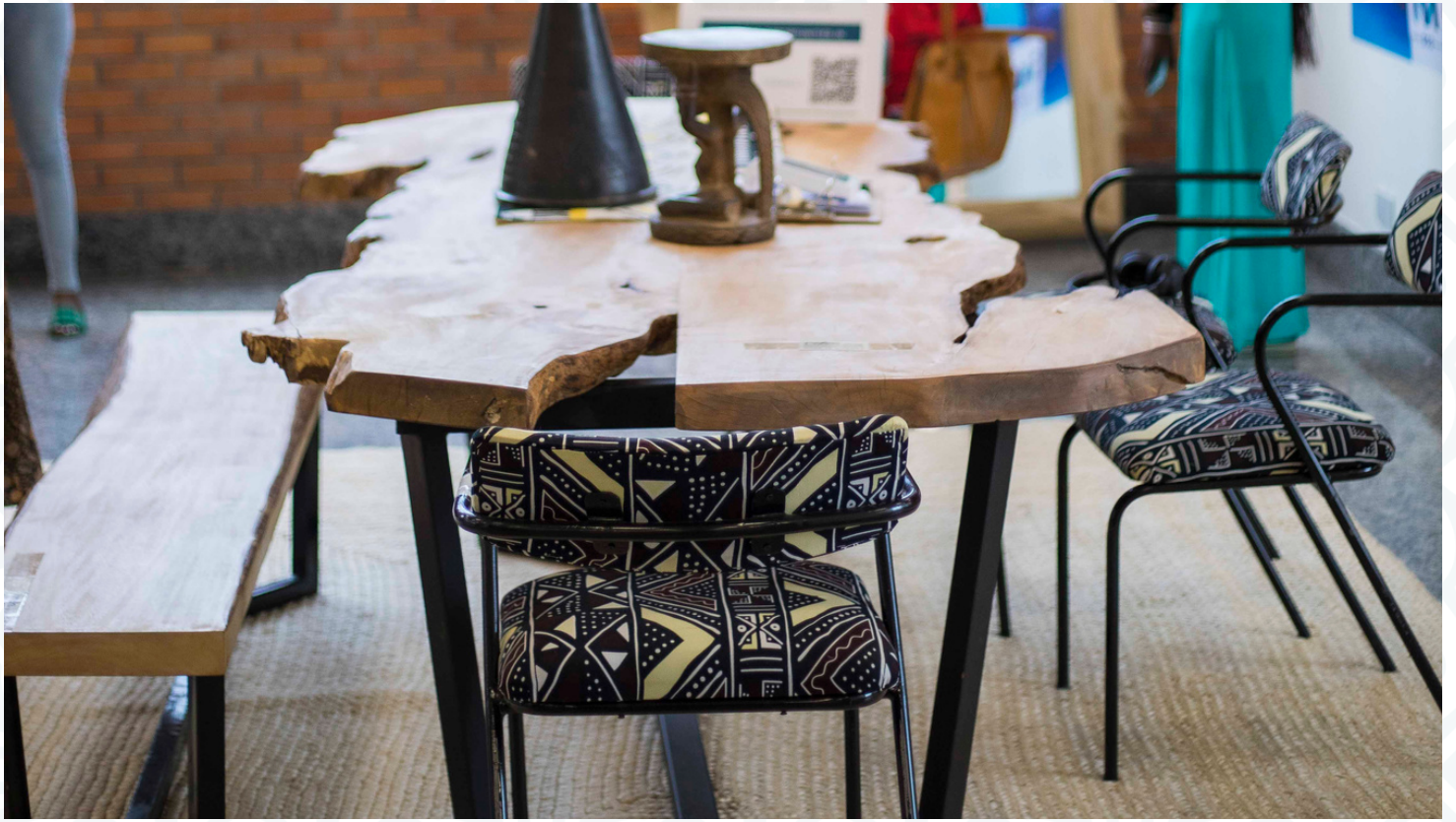
On Thursday, 12th May 2022, on the occasion of BPN Rwanda's 10th anniversary, H.E. President Paul Kagame welcomed a delegation from BPN at Urugwiro Village.

The audience at His Excellency's office was an opportunity that the President took to acknowledge the organization's contribution to entrepreneurship in Rwanda, emphasizing the role of entrepreneurs in driving economic growth and creating not just jobs but dignifying jobs and reaffirming his commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and economic development in Rwanda.



During the meeting, BPN's delegates expressed their gratitude to the President for his unwavering support of entrepreneurship in the country. They committed to continuing to provide high-quality, impactful Business Development Support to SMEs in Rwanda. The BPN delegation included Rwandan entrepreneurs Ysolde Shimwe and Vincent Mugisha, founders of Uzuri K&Y and Digitec studios, who represented other entrepreneurs in this high-level meeting. They took the opportunity to advocate for their peers **"We are no longer passive receivers of government support. We are ready to be partners with the Government"**.

The visit was a testament to the importance of supporting entrepreneurship in emerging economies. With the continued support and commitment of all stakeholders who were present, incl. MINICOM and RDB, Rwanda is well-positioned to continue its economic development and achieve long-term prosperity.



CHOGM 2022: MEET THE RWANDAN ENTREPRENEURS



The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2022 took place on 20-25 June 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda, where 6374 delegates from across the globe met in Kigali. This was one of the biggest highlights of Rwanda's entire event calendar. Part of BPN Rwanda's appeal to entrepreneurs is the belief that the organisation has in the entrepreneurs who graduate from the program and become successful businesspeople. BPN takes every opportunity to support and showcase these businesses.

BPN and I&M initiated a "Meet The Rwandan Entrepreneurs" space during the CHOGM event. The showcase was a showroom that featured BPN businesses in an interactive and engaging manner, encouraging visitors to learn about each business and purchase products. It incorporated both product-based and service-based businesses in the showroom, creating a seamless opportunity for both businesses and guests.



Hot coffee and snacks were provided by some of Kigali's leading bakers and coffee shops – all members of the BPN program, creating a welcoming environment. The session, 'Meet the Entrepreneurs', allowed guests to have comfortable sit-down discussions over coffee to speak about what it means to do business in Rwanda and beyond.

GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK 2022

Every year, BPN joins the world to celebrate entrepreneurs, their achievements, and their impact on Communities. In 2022, BPN hosted three events together with BPN's partners to honor the entrepreneurs they serve. In total, around 150 people attended these events.



RWANDA X ISRAEL BUSINESS BREAKFAST

POWERED BY RWANDA DEVELOPMENT BOARD (RDB)



Alice Nkulikiyinka, our Country Director, welcomed Itzhak Fisher, the chair of the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), and a group of investors to Wood Habitat, which is owned by Paradis Imfura Nishimwe, to introduce them to the BPN enterprises. Potential synergies for future collaborations were discussed, as were anecdotes and lessons learned from previous business endeavours. What a wonderful start to the day. What a fantastic morning it was. It finished with informal networking.



Applause for Johnson Runuya's delicious cookies!



BPN RWANDA'S COUNTRY DIRECTOR RECEIVED THE BEN AFRICA'S QUIVER AWARD

On November 4th, 2022, our Country Director, Mrs Alice Nkulikiyinka, received the BEN-AFRICA'S QUIVER AWARD for her outstanding commitment to sound business practices in Rwanda. The Award was granted by BEN-Africa, **The Business Ethics Network (BEN) of Africa.**

Our country Director advocated for BPN to come to Rwanda. She gave up her international career to come and establish BPN in Rwanda. We are grateful that her commendable dedication and commitment to this cause are felt and rewarded.



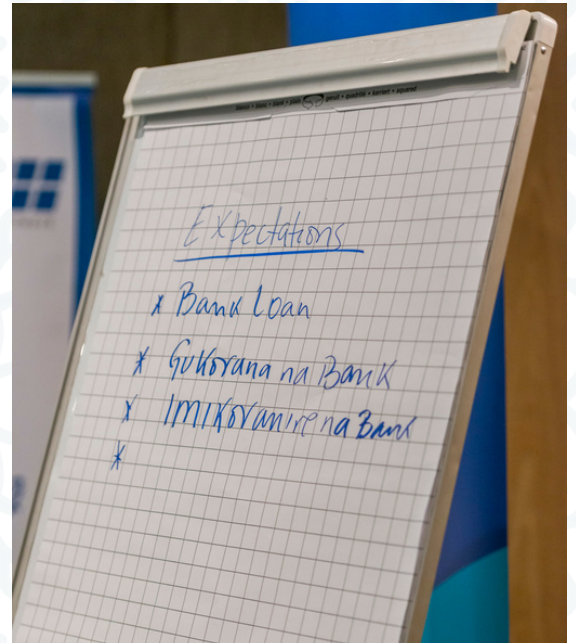
BPN's work focuses mainly on promoting **Value-Based Entrepreneurship**. It is the deeply felt belief that if a group of entrepreneurs share values like honesty, punctuality, diligence, transparency, integrity and trustworthiness, they can create an environment that is best for both business and country. BPN motivates entrepreneurs to create something that is not only good for them, but something that creates value for others as well. BPN clients learn to care for the people that are directly or indirectly involved in their businesses and to run their businesses with a serving attitude.



DEMYSTIFYING BANKING

AN INITIATIVE BY MASTERCARD FOUNDATION, I&M BANK & BPN

In November of 2022, once again, we partnered with Mastercard Foundation and I&M Bank to deliver extensive 'Banking for SMEs' training. We empowered 54 entrepreneurs in the Tourism & Hospitality sector and its value chains.



The attendees were equipped with the necessary knowledge on how best to work with financial institutions, turning the relationship into a partnership for growth.





bpn.rw
info@bpn.rw

KG 684 St.6 | P .O. Box 7083 | Kigali | Rwanda



[@BPNRwanda](https://twitter.com/BPNRwanda)



[@bpnrwanda](https://www.instagram.com/bpnrwanda)



[BPN Rwanda](https://www.facebook.com/BPNRwanda)



[BPN Rwanda](https://www.linkedin.com/company/BPNRwanda)