



Awakening the Sleeping genius in each of us

UGANDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

NEWSLETTER



For Human Development

We are thrilled to bring you the latest edition of the URDT newsletter, marking the point of an exciting and productive year. As we reflect on the achievements and milestones of this year, we are filled with gratitude for your continued support and engagement.

In this issue, you'll find inspiring stories, updates on our initiatives, and a look into the innovative projects that are driving our mission forward. From groundbreaking research to community impact, we are proud to share the progress we've made together.

Thank you for being a part of the URDT family. Your dedication and enthusiasm are the heart of our success. Here's to the year filled with more growth, learning, and collaboration!

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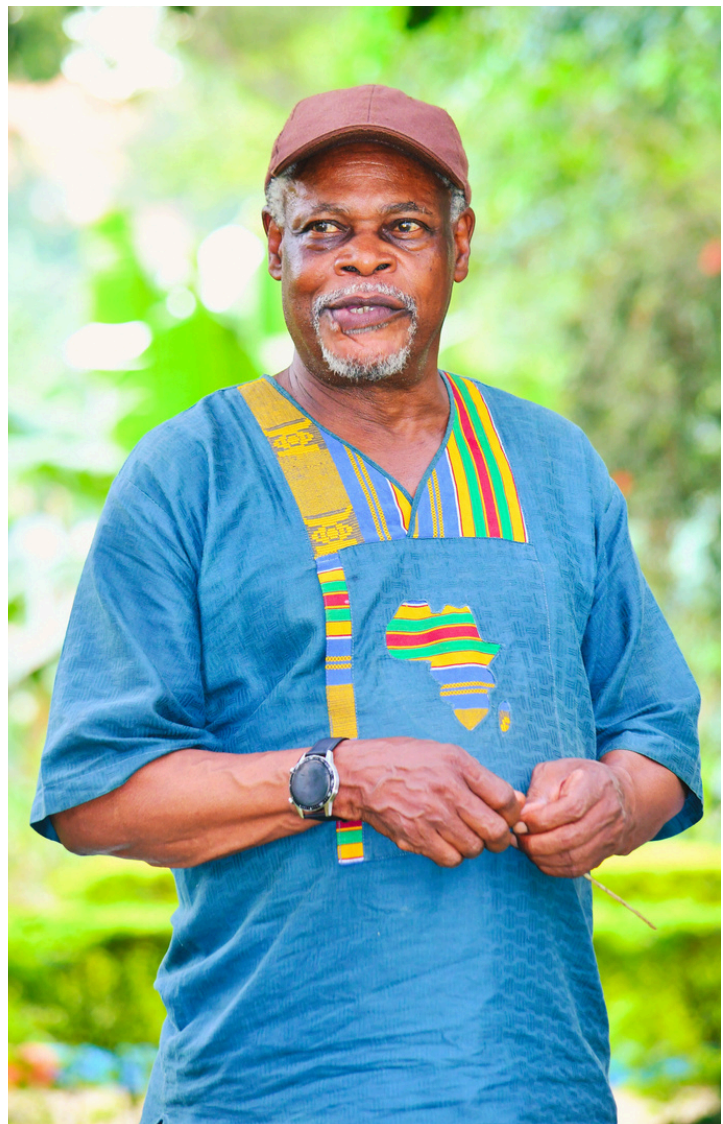
Learners at URDT Girls' Primary School actively engage in the mushroom project, gaining practical skills in mushroom cultivation, management, and harvesting. This initiative promotes hands-on learning, fosters entrepreneurial thinking, and contributes to food security and income generation.

MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

As we reflect on another year, it's clear that our journey at Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme has been one of continuous evolution. We've embraced opportunities, navigated challenges, and witnessed the power of collective action.

This year's newsletter is a testament to our collective efforts. It highlights the inspiring stories of individuals and communities who have been empowered through our programs. It's a reminder of the power of human potential and the transformative impact we can achieve when we work together. As we look ahead to the new year, let's continue to flow with the current, trusting in the inherent wisdom in each one of us. May we all choose health, happiness, freedom, peace, and prosperity in the days to come.

Wishing you all a joyous holiday season and a prosperous New Year.



Mwalimu Musheshe
URDT FOUNDER.

URDT Girls Schools

URDT Girls’ Schools have reported significant achievements following the successful merger of their primary and secondary institutions. The schools, which aim to empower students and their families through education and skills development, have showcased transformative impacts in education and household well-being.

Growing Enrollment and Academic Milestones Since the merger

STUDENTS	PRIMARY	SECONDARY		Total
	To date			
Students Enrollment after successful merger of schools	108	210		
Registration for National Exams	48	UCE	UACE	
		15	43	
Learners Households earning over 3M	11.1%	57.6%		
Learners Households with commercial land over 2 acres	28.7%	79.5%		
Learners Households with permanent structure	45.4%	66.2%		0
Learners Households that are food secure	81.5%	97.6%)		
Learners households with sanitation ,clean and safe water	90%	90%		
Back home projects	A total of (318) learners and (279)parents have a back home project			



Learners filling saw dust in the pigsty



Learners at URDT Girls primary school Kanywamiyaga



The 2-Generations Approach

The implementation of the 2-Generations Approach has yielded remarkable achievements across 11 schools, empowering learners, teachers, and stakeholders to embrace sustainable agricultural practices and visionary planning. Through this initiative, a total of 718 learners have acquired critical knowledge and skills in enterprise selection, nursery bed preparation, transplanting, mulching, spacing, watering, and weeding. These young innovators applied their skills by planting beans, bananas, maize, and vegetables, not only enhancing their understanding of agriculture but also contributing to food security within their communities.

Muhwezi Gabriel

Muhwezi Gabriel, a P.5 pupil at Kyabasara P/S, learned to grow garden eggs, eggplants, and Sukuma wiki at school. He planted Sukuma wiki at home from school seedlings, now feeding his family and teaching his siblings.

Ninsiima Kirabo, in P.6 at Kyabasara P/S, learned banana plantation management. She planted 10 suckers at home, all thriving. She plans to sell bananas to help meet her school needs while applying her school-taught skills.

URDT Institute using the Satellite Approach

URDT-I, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation under the Young Africa Works strategy, has successfully enrolled 70,000 young people aged 18-35 in a five-year project (2021-2025) focusing on entrepreneurship and dignified employment across 20 districts and four refugee settlements.

The project targeted 70% females, 30% males, of which 30% are refugees, and 5% Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

To date, 57,869 (83%) participants have graduated, with 12,131 still undergoing training. From the graduates, 14,118 enterprises have been created, 61% led by females, generating 2,732 jobs for other youth. Additionally, 18,700 graduates secured employment, including 11,594 females.

A joint tracer study revealed program graduates are employed in 25 districts beyond the project scope, four African countries, and internationally in Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and Denmark. Unemployment among participants fell from 62.87% to 14.27%, while self-employment soared to 59.85%, and formal employment doubled to 26.63%.

This transformative program is boosting youth livelihoods, creating opportunities, and empowering communities across Uganda and beyond



Nakibiri Ritah, an artisan in Mityana District instructing a trainee



Nangobi Barbra

Nangobi Barbra, a 19-year-old from Rwamata, Kiboga District, turned her life around through resilience and opportunity. After dropping out in Senior 3 due to financial hardships, Barbra moved to the city in search of work. However, difficult working conditions led her back to her village.

Determined to learn a skill, she approached Ms. Namagala Joseline, a hairdresser, offering to do housework in exchange for training. Ms. Joseline, an artisan with URDT-I, introduced Barbra to URDT's free skilling program. Barbra enrolled in a three-month hairdressing course and never looked back.

Seven months ago, Barbra opened her own salon, which has grown into a thriving business. With her earnings, she also purchased a popcorn machine, further diversifying her income. Barbra's journey is a testament to the power of determination and the life-changing impact of skills training programs like those offered by URDT-I.



Masereka Husain, an artisan in Kyenjojo District instructing a trainee

Bridging the Digital gap in Rural Communities of Uganda



The Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT) ICT and Resource Center is transforming rural communities by providing critical access to technology and knowledge resources. Located at the URDT campus in the mid-western region of Uganda, the center empowers youth, women, and entrepreneurs through digital literacy training and sustainable development initiatives.

Equipped with computers, internet access, and a library, the center serves as a hub for education, research, and innovation. Farmers and cooperatives use the space to network, share best practices, and explore sustainable solutions like agroforestry and organic farming. By bridging the digital gap and fostering innovation, the URDT ICT and Resource Center is not just a facility—it's a gateway to opportunity and resilience for rural Uganda.

URDT and Cyber School Technology Solutions

The Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT) and Cyber School Technology Solutions (CSTS) have joined forces under the Young Africa Works Uganda project to revolutionize education and skill development in rural communities.

The collaboration focuses on equipping youth with 21st-century skills through technology-driven education. URDT schools, supported by CSTS, have integrated interactive digital content into their curriculum, enhancing learning experiences in subjects like science, technology, and mathematics.

This partnership aligns with the goals of Young Africa Works Uganda by empowering young people with the skills needed for the modern workforce. Together, URDT and CSTS are fostering a generation of tech-savvy, innovative leaders prepared to drive Uganda's development.



URDT Expands Agricultural Projects, Boosting Productivity and Income



The Uganda Rural Development and Training (URDT) programme has made remarkable strides in agriculture and sustainability, advancing Uganda's National Development Plan III (NDP III) objectives. Notable achievements include expanding the dairy herd to boost milk production and launching a mushroom project to diversify income streams. The program has also excelled in environmental conservation, selling 4,000 cocoa seedlings to support reforestation.

Increased efficiency in the poultry sector has led to a 40% rise in income, while the expansion of banana plantations from 1.5 to 3 acres underscores URDT's commitment to scaling food production. The adoption of advanced farming technologies such as drip irrigation and vertical gardens highlights the organization's focus on sustainable practices.

Through these initiatives, URDT continues to empower rural communities and contribute to transforming agriculture into a competitive and profitable sector, fostering inclusive growth in line with Uganda's development goals.



Community engagement

Community members are actively engaging with the Uganda Rural Development and Training programme (URDT) to learn innovative agricultural technologies. Regular visits to URDT facilities provide hands-on knowledge, complemented by the efforts of epicenter managers who work within communities to orient the public on holistic agricultural practices.

This approach not only enhances skills but also fosters sustainable farming methods, contributing to improved livelihoods and aligning with Uganda's broader agricultural development goals



[Read More on our website](#)

URDT Welcomes Agronomic Experts to Boost Sustainable Agriculture



On 3rd September 2024, the Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT) warmly welcomed Philo Serem and Lydia Kamau, experts in sustainable agronomic practices from Kenya. Their visit aims to supplement existing agricultural practices and engage learners and

students in practical, hands-on learning. Philo Serem, reflecting on her long-standing relationship with URDT, shared that it began in 2005 when URDT's Chief Executive Officer and co-founder, Dr. Mwalimu Musheshe, visited Etang, a company where she worked.

URDT Empowers Learners with Modern Sustainable Agriculture Skills



Pupils of Rugashari public primary school on an exchange visit at URDT Demo Farm



ARU Students Learning Modern Techniques of Tomato Growing

Learners from both higher and lower institutions are visiting the Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT) to acquire hands-on skills in modern sustainable agriculture. These practical techniques are enabling them to transform their homes and workplaces into models of sustainable agricultural practices, fostering real-world impact and improved livelihoods.

Community Asset Voucher for Rural Transformation (CAVRT)



Epicenter Manager Twikirize Oliver enrolling members

The Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT), in partnership with the Grassroots Economics Foundation (GEF) and supported by Mustardseed Trust (MT), has designed a collective intervention aimed at creating conditions for rural households in the Bunyoro Region of Uganda to achieve food security and establish prosperous learning centers.

These centers serve as inspiration for communities, particularly women and youth, to break free from the poverty trap.

The project has empowered 8 out of 10 Farmer Family Learning Groups (FFLGs) to develop shared visions, benefiting 78 households.



Sarah Kobusinge the project manager, provided extensive orientation on how to use the voucher system, offering members insights into the visionary approach and technologies that promote sustainable agriculture

She says the main aim of the Community Asset Voucher system is to foster regenerative agricultural practices, enhance eco-system restoration, and encourage self-reliance within the communities.

URDT enrolls more members in Voucher System to Promote Labor Exchange in Kagadi District

The Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT) has taken another innovative step towards promoting regenerative agriculture and ecosystem restoration through the Community Asset Voucher for Rural Transformation project by enrolling 17 more community members onto the Sarafu Network, a digital voucher system.

The Sarafu Network, a community-based voucher system, piloted in Ruteete sub-county will allow members of the Nyakashema Tukolere Hamwe Group offer labor to one another in a rotational approach, enabling them to pool resources and time for the development of agricultural projects and ecosystem restoration efforts.

The community members who attended the session expressed their excitement about the new system, believing it will boost local agricultural productivity and strengthen bonds within their group





URDT Drives Food Security and Climate Resilience Through ESFROMA Program

The Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT) is making significant strides in empowering small-scale farmers in Uganda through the second phase of the ESFROMA Program. Running from January 2024 to December 2027, the initiative targets food security, climate resilience, and income growth for 20,000 small-scale farmer families in Uganda and Tanzania.

In the mid-western region, URDT is working with 106 Farmer Family Learning Groups (FFLGs), eight cooperatives, and 1,890 farming households across 20 sub-counties.

Over 460 FFLG members are food secure, 280 households have adopted climate smart agriculture , and five cooperatives societies earn UGX 10,164,200.

The program also emphasizes gender equality, with increased youth participation in cooperative leadership and the establishment of gender taskforces across partner organizations.

Through farmer field days, training sessions, and networking events, URDT continues to transform lives, fostering a resilient and sustainable future for small-scale farmers in Uganda and beyond.



Board members' convene after a field visit to assess the impact of URDT in rural communities



Screening Project for Advancing Cervical Cancer Awareness and Detection (SPACC)



The Uganda Rural Development and Training Programme (URDT), with support from the Female Cancer Foundation (FCF), is implementing a 2.5-year cervical cancer prevention initiative titled "The Screening Project for Advancing Cervical Cancer Awareness and Detection" (SPACC), which was launched in February 2024.

The project is being implemented by URDT under its Epicenter Strategy Directorate, in collaboration with Kagadi, Kibaale and Kakumiro District Local Governments,

communities in targeted areas, and the Ministry of Health. It aims at preventing cervical cancer by providing screening and treatment for precancerous lesions in a single visit, while increasing advocacy and promoting regular cervical cancer screening for women aged 25-49.

Through this collaborative effort, URDT, supported and funded by the Female Cancer Foundation, seeks to enhance rural women’s access to cervical cancer screening services. The project focuses on detecting and treating precancerous lesions before they advance into life-threatening cervical cancer

Since the project’s launch, over 6170 women have been screened in just eight months. Among these, 505 were found to have precancerous lesions and 494 have had preventive treatment. The project aims to screen a total of 15,000 women by the end of 2026.

To achieve these outcomes, the project is focusing on creating awareness, advocacy, cervical screening and treatment, capacity building, and sustainability.

However, there are concerns about the low number of women visiting health facilities for screening. To address this, the team is intensifying awareness campaigns and involving men to encourage more women to access these critical services.



African Rural University (ARU)

The African Rural University (ARU), located in Kagadi District, Uganda, is a unique institution dedicated to empowering women to become leaders in rural development and transformation. As the first all-women university in Africa with a focus on rural innovation, ARU provides a platform for women to acquire skills, knowledge, and values needed to create sustainable solutions to rural challenges.



Since its establishment, ARU has produced transformative leaders who are actively driving rural development in Uganda and beyond. Graduates have initiated community-driven projects, improved livelihoods, and contributed to creating sustainable rural communities.

Through its commitment to empowering women and fostering innovation, ARU continues to be a beacon of hope for rural Africa, demonstrating the transformative power of education and leadership.

Ubuntu Spirit at URDT/ARU's Feature Day; A Day of Learning and Community Engagement



The African Rural University (ARU), in collaboration with its mother organization, URDT, has been holding transformative Feature Days throughout the year at its campus. Key activities undertaken include the painting of the ARU faculty wing, the formation of a mini lake, and the construction and grading of the ARU multi-purpose resource center. These initiatives embrace the Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes collective humanity and togetherness.

Eight Rural Transformation Specialists Graduate from African Rural University



On November 22nd, 2024, African Rural University (ARU) marked another milestone in rural transformation as eight Rural Transformation Specialists received their Bachelor's Degrees in Rural Development at the university's 10th Graduation Ceremony, held at the Kagadi main campus.

This transformative occasion celebrated the achievements of graduates who are now poised to lead transformative change within the African context across Uganda and beyond.

Kagadi Kibaale Community Radio KKCR

This community radio accommodated by URDT facilitates sustainable rural development through the open door policy and acts as a platform to community members and development partners to share sustainable development thoughts on decision making, accountability, good governance, environment, human rights, health and nutrition, agriculture and service delivery.



KKCR continues to transform lives with 144 programs focused on agriculture, environmental education, gender development, and health, alongside new additions like Iraka Lyawe, Manya Hendugire, and the Parish Development Model. With a listenership of 4.5 million of KKCR receivers, 900 online listeners, and 664 YouTube subscribers, the station is reaching diverse audiences across seven districts and 76 sub-counties.



KKC Radio in Environmental management

On November 7th, KKC Radio, in partnership with Friends of Chimpanzees and the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU), planted over 300 indigenous trees in Katyobone Forest, located in Muhorro Town Council, Kagadi District. This initiative aims to restore the habitat for more than 70 chimpanzees and other wildlife.

KKCR Manager Evas Atukwasibwe highlighted the radio station’s background, explaining that it is part of the East African Community Media Programme (EACMP), which was initiated in 1992 following the RIO World Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She emphasized the station's strong commitment to environmental management and commended the partner organizations for their efforts in restoring forest corridors.

URDT and Social Initiative Upscale 2-Generations Approach in Greater Kibaale

URDT, in partnership with Social Initiative, is upscaling the 2-Generations Approach to 10 primary schools across Kagadi, Kibaale, and Kakumiro districts. The targeted schools include Kabworo, Kyabasara, Burora, Rugashali, Kyani, Marongo, Kasojo, Kiryamasasa, Kisengwe, and Nkondo.

In November, Ms. Pernilla Bard, a representative from Social Initiative, visited two of the implementing schools, URDT schools, and conducted home visits to observe how pupils are applying nutrition-based farming skills learned at school to their homes.

The initiative aims to address malnutrition by involving learners in practical, nutrition-focused farming activities, creating healthier school and home environments.



Partnership and Collaborations



Uganda NGO Forum Board Visits URDT to Learn Transformative Development Approaches

From October 23rd to 26th, 2024, the Uganda NGO Forum Board visited held their board meeting at URDT Kagadi campus to learn about URDT’s visionary approach to rural development.

The visionary approach, URDT’s staple methodology, focuses on creating transformative change through three core elements: Vision, Current Reality, and Structural Tension. This method drives progress by addressing the gap between a desired future and the present state.

During the visit, the NGO Forum Board engaged with Artisan Groups and the Nyakashema Tukorehamwe Farmer Family Learning Group in



Rutete Town Council, witnessing the tangible impact of this approach on community development.

he team explored pathways for community engagement, including URDT’s education programs, KKCR Radio (91.7 FM), and African Rural University’s role in producing systems thinkers who drive sustainable rural transformation.

URDT and War Child Canada hold a cutesy meeting to explore Partnership to Empower Refugees



In a collaborative effort to empower Uganda’s displaced youth, Uganda Rural Development and Training Institute (URDT) and War Child Canada embarked on a transformative partnership. The initiative, facilitated by the Mastercard Foundation’s Young Africa Works Strategy is aimed at enhancing education and employment opportunities for youth in refugee settlements across Uganda.



URDT Partners with Local Governments to Advance National Development Plan III

The Uganda Rural Development Training Programme (URDT), in partnership with district and lower local governments, is playing a pivotal role in achieving Uganda’s National Development Plan III (NDP III). Through its visionary approach and community-based strategies, URDT focuses on transforming rural communities by aligning its programs with national priorities.

Key initiatives include capacity-building at the local government level through the Epicenter Strategy, which strengthens leadership, skills, and systems at the sub-county, village, and individual levels. Graduates from African Rural University (ARU) work alongside Community Development Officers (CDOs) to facilitate rural transformation and address community-specific needs.

URDT is operating in 20 districts and four refugee settlements, equipping youth with both soft and hands-on skills to enhance their employability, foster self-reliance, and drive sustainable community development.



URDT Promotes Gender Equality in Vocational Training

URDT Institute conducted a stakeholders’ Gender Review Workshop, bringing together gender specialists from 20 districts and 4 refugee settlements across Western, Mid-Western, and parts of Central Uganda.

This collaborative effort focused on "Promoting Gender Equality in Vocational Training," aiming at creating an inclusive and equitable environment for all learners.

The workshop highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to tackle institutional policies, cultural attitudes, and practical barriers. Participants discussed key strategies to promote gender equality, emphasizing the importance of developing gender-inclusive policies, affirmative action, and outreach programs to enhance access to training.

URDT and ARU Join Rotary Cancer Run in Kagadi to Support Cancer Treatment

Uganda Rural Development and Training Program (URDT) and African Rural University (ARU), in partnership with the Rotaract Club of Kagadi, actively participated in the annual Rotary Cancer Run held in Kagadi Town. The event aimed to raise funds for the purchase of a radiotherapy machine at St. Joseph's Nsambya Hospital, a crucial step in improving cancer treatment in Uganda.

Since 2017, the Uganda Rural Development and Training Program (URDT) has been at the forefront of fighting cervical cancer through various initiatives aimed at raising awareness, promoting early detection, and providing access to medical care in rural communities. Recognizing the critical need for intervention, URDT has implemented several projects that target women and girls, the most vulnerable to the disease



“Through our cervical cancer projects, we focus on creating awareness and organizing community outreach programs to educate women on the importance of regular screenings and the risks associated with cervical cancer. So far, over 22,448 women in the Bunyoro sub-region have been screened, 1,922 have been treated, and 102 referred to Uganda Cancer Institute in Mulago. We look forward to continuing to deliver these services in rural communities,” Nampewo the Executive Assistant to the VC said.

Professors Without Borders 2024 Programme at ARU



On September 1, 2024, African Rural University (ARU) welcomed back Professors Without Borders for the 2024 programme, titled "Empowering Change-Makers: Holistic Learning and Leadership for Sustainable Development!" The programme, which officially began on September 2, featured experts Cindy Yee Au, Dr. Naveen Hyder, Karen Panzarella, PT, PhD, CHSE, and Nicole Zulu.

Read More on our website

URDT and Organic Denmark transforming Farmer Families Through Rainwater Solutions



URDT, with support from Organic Denmark, took a bold step toward transforming the lives of farmer families. Securing funding for a rainwater harvesting project in partnership with Water Access, they set out to address a long-standing water scarcity.

Baseline studies were conducted, revealing the struggles of families dependent on

unreliable water sources for farming and daily needs. With these insights in hand, the groundwork was laid for a brighter future.

As implementation begins next year, the community envisions having thriving crops, abundant harvests, and clean water flowing freely—ushering in a new era of hope, resilience, and sustainable growth.

AFPF Donates Scholastic Materials to URDT Girls' School Students



Students of URDT Girls' School in Kanywamiyaga and Nkondo received a generous donation of scholastic materials from African Food and Peace Foundation (AFPF) to support their academic success

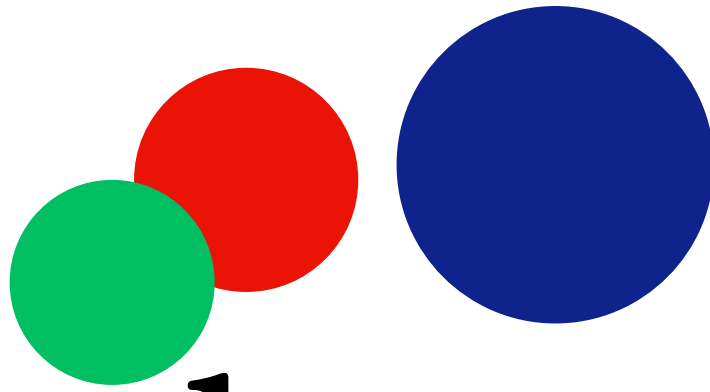
The materials, including books, pens, and other supplies, were warmly welcomed by the students and staff.

URDT and Mastercard Foundation



URDT Institute, in collaboration with the Mastercard Foundation, continues to empower young people through skills development and entrepreneurship training. This partnership focuses on equipping youth with vocational and soft skills, enabling them to start businesses, create jobs, and transform their communities.

Through tailored training programs, participants gain expertise in various trades, financial literacy, and leadership, fostering self-reliance and sustainable economic growth.



Thank You



SCAN FOR MORE



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