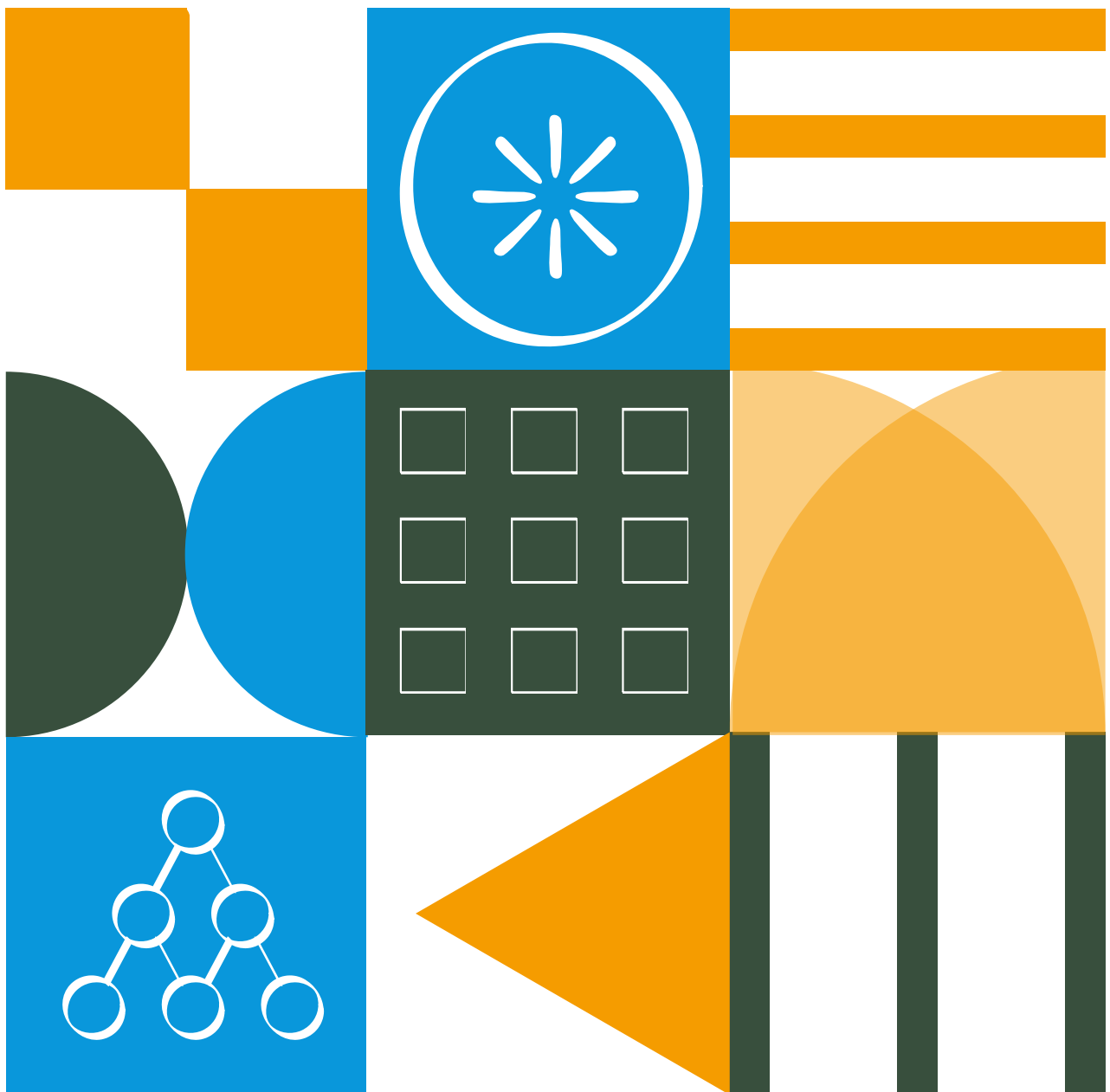


UNLEASH Impact Report

The Global Innovation
Platform for the SDGs



2023



Message from our Chairperson



As we pass the halfway point for achieving the UN SDGs, it is more apparent than ever that we need more changemakers engaged in tackling the world's most pressing problems. Overall progress towards achieving the SDGs has stagnated, and we are falling far behind on some critical goals. We cannot create a more sustainable future if we cannot progress on all the goals together.

At UNLEASH, we believe that the answer lies in enabling diverse youth around the world to co-create a sustainable future – through their existing organizations, through starting new enterprises, and through leading change in their communities. Creating inclusive, collaborative, and accessible experiences and programs for youth has been instrumental in enabling the changemakers and Partners who are part of UNLEASH to drive progress toward the SDGs through both daily and exponential change.

Since 2017, UNLEASH has brought together over 8000 youth from 180 countries through programming in over 65 locations. In 2023, 1000 young changemakers from 136 nationalities joined us in Rwanda, at the first UNLEASH Innovation Lab hosted in Africa, including 100 Forcibly Displaced Individuals, creating a truly inclusive environment to build the partnerships we need to achieve the SDGs.

On behalf of the UNLEASH Board of Directors, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our Partners who continue to make UNLEASH possible.

Thank you to our esteemed core partners, BESTSELLER Foundation, Chemonics International, and Mastercard Foundation, and thank you to the Ministry of ICT and Innovation of The Republic of Rwanda for your unwavering support as our host partner for UNLEASH Rwanda. UNLEASH would also not be possible without our dedicated Program, and SDGs, Talent, and Knowledge Partners, including Hempel Foundation, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Tuborg Foundation, World Diabetes Foundation, UNHCR, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Additionally, thank you to the Partners who have continued to support UNLEASH programming to extend our reach and impact in our partner communities: the 11th Hour Racing Team through follow-up workshops after UNLEASH Greenland, and Chemonics International through the UNLEASH Plus program.

Our Partners have supported us over the years as we have brought UNLEASH around the globe. We are deeply thankful for your support as we look to accelerate our collective efforts to achieve the SDGs by leveraging the power of UNLEASH's global Community to scale our impact.

Lastly, I want to deeply thank all of the dedicated members of the UNLEASH Community, the Ambassadors, Facilitators, Experts, Mentors, and the Talents who join us every year. Your invaluable contributions make UNLEASH truly unique, and your unwavering drive and energy inspire change and create an impact around the world.

This Impact Report sheds more light on the incredible progress and impact of 2023. We invite you to continue your journey with us to co-create a sustainable and better planet for all



Prof. Flemming Besenbacher
Chairperson of UNLEASH

Prof. Flemming Besenbacher and Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Dr. Edouard Ngirente sign the SDG ball at the Opening Ceremony of UNLEASH Rwanda.





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Our Impact Since Inception

8000

**Talents from 180 countries
have gained innovation
skills to address the SDGs**

6

**Innovation
Labs**

60

UNLEASH Hacks

1200

**Solutions targeting
the SDGs developed**

140+

**UNLEASH Alumni have
received investment
since participation**

650+

**Partners have joined the
UNLEASH movement**

320+

**teams incubated to
support implementation
and scale**

9 in 10

**Talents are actively addressing
the SDGs following their
participation in UNLEASH**

97%

**of Talents recommend others
to participate in UNLEASH**

100K

**Followers across our social
media platforms**

Overview of 2023

220

New solutions

42

Ambassadors
from 42
Nationalities

45

Early-stage entrepreneurs
incubated

95%

of Talents plan to
actively work towards
the SDGs after the
Innovation Lab

10000+

new changemakers welcomed
to our Community

75

Facilitators Trained

Executive Summary

In 2023, UNLEASH experienced its most inclusive year to date, welcoming diverse nationalities and perspectives to our programs and championing a community-driven ethos that drives the scaling of our impact. With support from our long-standing and local partners, we achieved a historic milestone by hosting our first UNLEASH Innovation Lab on the African continent, in Rwanda, a thriving hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. We also ran the fifth iteration of our 6-month incubation program UNLEASH Plus, worked with our dedicated Ambassadors to engage our Community in our programming, and piloted post-program capacity-sharing opportunities. This year, our Community grew to 8000 changemakers from 180 countries worldwide and provided us with invaluable insights in shaping the future of UNLEASH.

In UNLEASH Rwanda, 1,000 talented youth from 136 countries gathered to co-create innovative solutions guided by trained Facilitators and Experts resulting in 200 solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals across 7 themes. Among them were a young refugee striving for change in their local community, an entrepreneur with a hearing disability addressing financial inequality, and a university student eager to uncover the root causes of education inequality. United by their shared commitment to effecting positive change, these Talents departed with lasting memories and experiences, joining a resilient Community of changemakers at UNLEASH.

The fifth edition of UNLEASH Plus engaged 45 social enterprises, providing support from over 50 world-class Experts and Mentors. The top 25 teams advanced to the program's final phase: an intensive in-person event at UNLEASH Rwanda, to scale their solutions and pitch for grants to further their social impact ventures. These initiatives, spanning 12 SDGs,

ranged from innovative land and home security solutions in Ecuador to tech-enabled skills development programs for refugee children in Nigeria.

In partnership with 11th Hour Racing, UNLEASH piloted post-Innovation Lab engagement initiatives to foster ongoing capacity sharing and upskilling for its Community members. These included a virtual mentorship program tailored to UNLEASH Greenland Talents and two innovation workshops in Greenland focused on tackling climate change. This year saw a strategic shift within UNLEASH to integrate more community perspectives into the core of UNLEASH activities. Our Ambassadors played pivotal roles in redesigning key programs such as the UNLEASH Ambassador Program and UNLEASH Hacks; and supported on-ground execution of the UNLEASH Rwanda Innovation Lab.

The Ambassador Program for 2023/2024 boasted the largest and most diverse cohort yet, with 70 Ambassadors representing 42 nationalities. They spearheaded committees in key programmatic pillars of UNLEASH, from organizing community networking events, facilitating networking opportunities for UNLEASH Rwanda Talents, and refining UNLEASH Hacks resources. Facilitator training sessions were conducted, with Ambassadors supporting as trainers and representing 30% of the UNLEASH Rwanda Facilitator cohort, thereby transferring innovation and facilitation skills to a wider community.

This report features key highlights and outcomes from each of our programs, inspirational impact stories from our Community, and the way forward for UNLEASH. We hope this report sheds light on the continued impact and work of UNLEASH and the vision ahead.

2023: A year of impact

July 2023 - June 2024

Ambassador Program engaging 70 leading Community members

January - March

The independent UNLEASH Secretariat is established

June - December

UNLEASH Plus: 45 social impact ventures incubated from Minimum Viable Product to Product-Market Fit

July

UNLEASH Hack Singapore

August - October

75 Facilitators trained in the UNLEASH Innovation Methodology

December 2 - 8

UNLEASH Innovation Lab in Rwanda

High level results

UNLEASH Rwanda

1,000

Talents
with 136 Nationalities

75

Facilitators
with 42 Nationalities

7

SDG themes
covered

94%
of Talents

gained confidence to
continue/start working
on an SDG solution
after participating in
UNLEASH Rwanda

002

SDG solutions
developed

97%
of Talents

recommend others to
participate in a future
UNLEASH Global
Innovation Lab

94 %

of Talents plan to use the
UNLEASH Methodology
after the program

35

cross-cutting
Experts engaged

UNLEASH Rwanda



In 2023, the UNLEASH Innovation Lab was brought to the African continent for the first time. The week of innovation happened from December 2 to 8 bringing together 1000 young changemakers from all over the world to Kigali, Rwanda, to co-create solutions around 7 themes based on a selection of Sustainable Development Goals.

The week kicked off with a vibrant and inspiring Opening Ceremony, attended by high-level representatives from partner organizations and Rwanda's innovation

ecosystem, including the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of The Republic of Rwanda, Dr. Edouard Ngirente, and Hon. Paula Ingabire, Min. of ICT and Innovation of the Republic of Rwanda, a major advocate of UNLEASH. Also present was a sea of young people: Talents, Facilitators, Experts, and Mentors, who wore colorful attires depicting their

home country's traditions and cultures, and danced to songs from home, teaching one another their favorite moves! This diversity of people gathered under one roof with a shared vision to make the world a better place was underscored by Flemming Besenbacher, Chairperson of UNLEASH, in his address: "During the next few days, you will meet people very different from you. People with different experiences, and different mindsets. You will need to adapt, listen, be tolerant, and open-minded".

"UNHCR Rwanda, together with the Government of Rwanda and partners is working to advance the inclusion agenda for refugees in Rwanda. The experience with UNLEASH was strong evidence that inclusion is possible and that refugee youth can be leaders and agents of change."

**Representative UNHCR Rwanda,
Ms. Ndeye Aissatou Masseck Ndiaye**

Over the next few days, Talents worked in teams of 4 to 5 members within their SDG Tracks. Guided by their Facilitators and subject matter Experts, they worked through the first 3 stages of the UNLEASH Innovation Methodology: problem framing, ideation, and prototyping, to come up with around 200 solution ideas for the challenges they chose to address.

For the first time at a Global Innovation Lab, all the 7 SDG Tracks came together in a shared space to hold joint morning assemblies and innovated together, and this proved to be a magical experience for the overall feeling of Community in the co-creation process.

At the end of the week, teams presented their solutions at the Solutions Festival. They exhibited the prototypes of their solutions and delivered 3-minute pitches in front of a panel of Judges and their peers. The top 3 teams from each SDG Track then participated in a Pitching Semi-Final within their track. The top team from each SDG track was announced. These 7 teams pitched their solutions as part of Hanga PitchFest '23, the biggest innovation conference in Rwanda, which was attended by H.E. the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Mr. Paul Kagame and Hon. Minister of ICT and Innovation, Paula Ingabire, and UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner, a longtime supporter of UNLEASH.

One focus of UNLEASH Rwanda was, alongside our committed Partners, giving the Community a more active role in shaping the Innovation Lab. The ambition was to lean on the invaluable expertise of Community members, while simultaneously equipping UNLEASH Alumni with new skills that they can bring back to their organizations, where they act as changemakers creating impact within their enterprises or networks. A more active engagement of the Community translated into bringing onboard Ambassadors before the Innovation Lab to help train volunteers, serve as MCs at the Ceremonies, and create new content to support the Innovation Week, such as the UNLEASH Community Circles. This translated into a stronger sense of Community than ever before, making UNLEASH a true “global village” of changemakers who support each other to drive impact.

UNLEASH Rwanda clearly showed how UNLEASH has matured as an organization over the years, due to the continued support received from our partners. As a result, the Community now boasts an extremely high level of expertise, experience, and institutional knowledge exhibited by Ambassadors, Facilitators, and Experts.

“Working with a diverse group of young talents has been an enriching journey, witnessing their growth throughout the process at the UNLEASH Innovation Lab in Rwanda. I was inspired to see them collaborate, tackle challenges head-on, and navigate highs and lows with resilience. Guiding them to discover their inner resources, fostering teamwork, and instilling confidence in their ability to overcome obstacles was particularly fulfilling. Witnessing one of my teams reach the semi-finals was an incredible reward, and the joy of their success was beyond words.”

**Radouan Torkmani, French-Canadian-Moroccan
Facilitator, UNLEASH Rwanda**

UNLEASH Rwanda winning solutions

Most Innovative Solution, awarded by
BESTSELLER Foundation



JABANA provides education to rural women in Sudan in a safe physical space where they can come together to learn skills and competencies that they can use to sell goods and products online through print-on-demand platforms.

Most Scalable Solution, awarded by
Chemonics International



TEXCYCLO aims to create a production plant in Nairobi using HTL (Hydro Thermal Liquefaction) technology to turn low-value waste streams into high-value resources: crude oil and TPA and ashes.

Most Inclusive Solution, awarded by
Mastercard Foundation

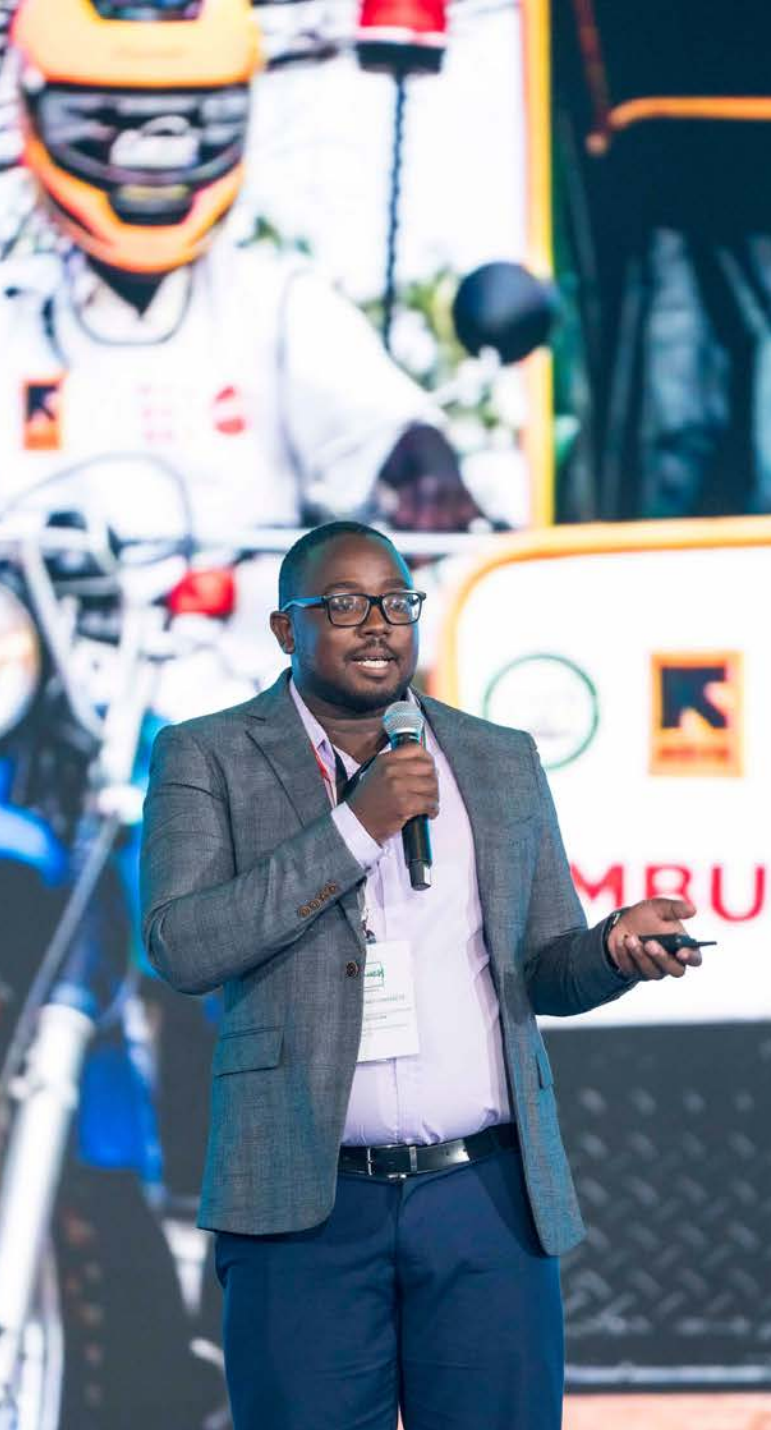


Sun Saver is a solar drying project to buy surplus crops at peak season and to sell those in off-season to local and international buyers at a premium and thus distributing the profits between farmers.

Most Viable Solution, awarded by the
UNLEASH Community



Green Roots brings together relevant stakeholders to deliver reliable, renewable, and affordable power to public hospitals. Investment is spent on roof-based renewable power solutions and batteries.



INNOVATION

#HangaPitchfest23



The "why" matters

A Community story by Harunah Damba

Talent from Uganda, UNLEASH Rwanda

My goal for participating in UNLEASH Rwanda was to build upon my experience as an entrepreneur and a person living with disability, to further enhance my skills, network, and leadership capabilities. I aimed to go beyond managing a business, mentoring, or training individuals. I aspired to delve into the root causes of social and financial disparities against people with disabilities and address them through innovation and collaboration.

Engaging in the UNLEASH Innovation Lab in Rwanda provided me with a fuller understanding of why the challenges facing our communities persist and inspired me to think about long-term, sustainable ways to address them.

During the UNLEASH Innovation Lab, I leveraged the UNLEASH methodology to refine my Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) model by examining why people with disabilities are marginalized within the mainstream financial system.

"Adopting the 'why' approach in problem framing has honed my critical thinking and enabled me to further develop solutions that truly make an impact"



Amplifying Voices

A Community story by Yves Ndiwokubwayo

Talent from Burundi, UNLEASH Rwanda

My experience at UNLEASH Rwanda as a Forcibly Displaced Person (FDP) was incredibly welcoming and engaging. Throughout the program, I was given the same opportunities as everyone else to share my ideas. Remarkably, I was even given the chance to pitch our solution on behalf of my team. I firmly believe that programs like UNLEASH can support FDP communities worldwide in numerous ways. Among them, such programs help individuals feel included in their communities, enable them to contribute constructive perspectives to global challenges, provide a platform for their voices to be heard, and offer opportunities to improve their living conditions.

After participating in the Innovation, I found inspiration and developed a passion for working on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I decided to put into practice what I learned by implementing my idea of repurposing leftover fabrics into affordable, sustainable toys. This opportunity has motivated me to address various SDGs and become an environmental activist, despite my socio-economic status as an FDP. Being a part of UNLEASH has instilled in me the confidence that anyone can contribute meaningfully to social impact, regardless of their circumstances.

“It was my first time encountering such a diverse international crowd, and what stood out to me the most was the equal treatment I received.”



High level results

UNLEASH Plus

45 teams
across 12
SDGs

145
Participants from 32 nationalities

49
Mentors
& Experts

UNLEASH Plus Phase 3 participants made
31 professional connections
on average

43%

Of cohort identified
as female

36K USD

Provided in implementation
grants to top teams

UNLEASH Plus



UNLEASH Plus, co-designed and co-led with Chemonics International, is a 6-month incubation program that equips young social entrepreneurs around the world with the right skills, tools, and mindsets to expand their unique solutions addressing the SDGs. The program enables teams to move from a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) closer to product-market fit.

After having worked with nearly 300 social ventures, UNLEASH Plus entered its 5th year strong. In collaboration with UNLEASH Plus Alumni, we re-designed key offerings of the program to better align with entrepreneurs' needs and operate in a leaner way by using our Methodology to improve value to our teams through iterative learning.

This year, we focused on social enterprises from previously untapped regions. Of the promising 45 teams we selected, 40% were former UNLEASH Talents who wanted to continue their social impact journey with UNLEASH's implementation support. 43% of the UNLEASH Plus Mentors had previous UNLEASH experience highlighting the commitment of our Community to support changemakers.

The program kicked off in June 2023, supporting entrepreneurs who had phenomenal ideas that had been validated by an initial group of users and were ready to expand and reach product-market fit.

This objective was broken down into four outcomes that the teams needed to continuously demonstrate evidence of achieving:

- Gaining user traction
- Achieving a financially viable organization
- Creating social impact
- Assembling a team uniquely qualified to implement the solution

Solutions spanned 12 SDGs and included climate-friendly air conditioning, refugee education, indigenous land rights, finance for unbanked populations, and more. Teams started their journey with an intensive orientation comprising a series of workshops on foundational entrepreneurship concepts. These included design thinking, systems thinking, measuring what matters, and agile management.

During the online incubation phase which happened over the course of 5 months, teams worked in sprints of 3 weeks based on our action-learning methodology.

With support from their Mentors, they prioritized solving a specific organizational problem during each sprint through user testing and interviews. At monthly checkpoints, they engaged in practical workshops from Experts and shared insights.

The final phase was held in Rwanda in December 2023, as part of the Global Innovation Lab. It included an in-person incubation process and pitching event for the top 25 teams, who were selected based on their pitch performance, and an application capturing their business model.

During the week, teams went through an iterative process of stress-testing their business models and pitches with qualified and well-connected Experts. The week culminated in a pitching event, the UNLEASH Dragons' Den, where the top 10 teams showcased their solutions in front of an audience of 1000+ changemakers, potential funders, and partners.

Owanga Solar pitches during Dragons' Den





“The best thing about UNLEASH for me was the people I met. Never have I been in such a concentrated space filled with so much care, expertise, desire for positive change, and intelligence. I feel like I've walked away with not just a better understanding and knowledge of entrepreneurship, but a broader view of the world, humans, and my place in everything.”

Clarissa Say, Mongolia
Fourth Academy Team, UNLEASH Plus

UNLEASH Plus winning solutions

Owanga Solar, supported by BESTSELLER Foundation with USD 5,000



A dynamic team driving sustainability by providing solar-powered solutions in the Congo.

Natal Cares, supported by Chemonics International with USD 25,000



A digital social enterprise that leverages the power of mobile technology, machine learning, and low-cost innovation to combat maternal and infant mortality in Nigeria.

AREAi supported by Mastercard Foundation with USD 5,000

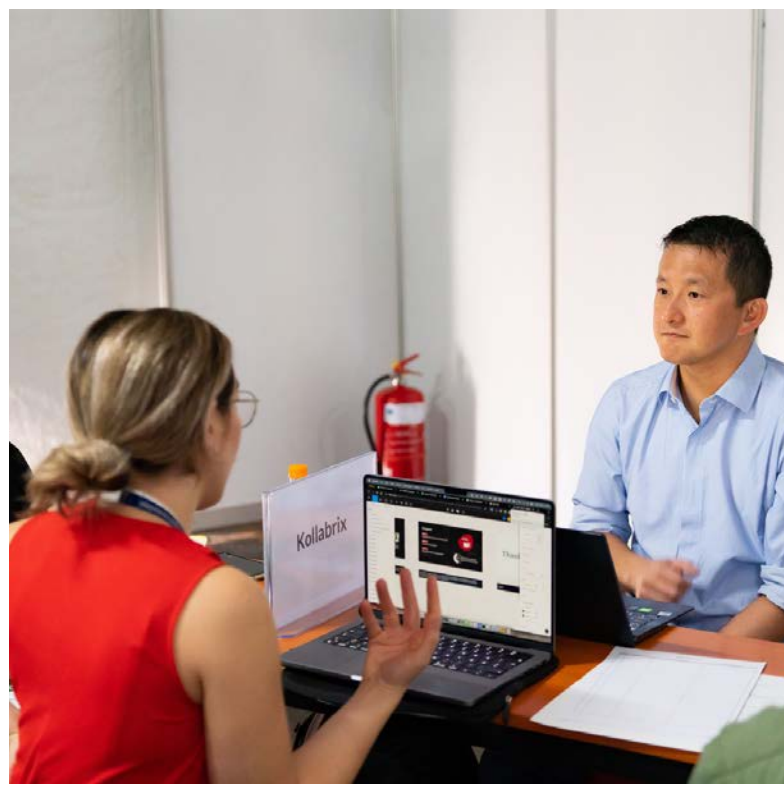


A tech-enabled accelerated foundational skills development program aided by an offline digital pen and tridimensional learning approaches targeted at out-of-school children in refugee camps.

Yasmin, supported by the UNLEASH Community with USD 1,000



A Syrian innovation to aid Arab children's language learning, combat poverty, support women, and secure funding. This initiative unites members, including refugees, to tackle diverse challenges.



Innovating for Inclusion

A Community story by Alliance Team

Team from Ethiopia, UNLEASH Plus

At Alliance, we are committed to providing extended and blended education services for people in remote rural areas in the Gamo zone of southern Ethiopia. Our solution combines in-person teaching with online platforms to bridge the gap in access to education. By integrating digital literacy and entrepreneurship training programs into our core solution, we enhance its impact and enable individuals to thrive in today's digital economy. The economic value generated by our services stems from the significant savings our customers achieve by avoiding travel costs to towns for education services. We extend this inclusive approach to approximately 75 prisoners whose service charge is covered by 2% of the value generated from our mainstream users. These prisoners benefit from skills training, enhancing their opportunities for successful reintegration into society upon release; fostering a virtuous cycle of learning and progress, where advancements made by one group directly benefit another.

Guided by our Mentor, we were inspired to delve into the economic outcomes in addition to the educational ones. We are now complementing our supportive entrepreneurial training with a business incubation program for our graduate students. This initiative is being piloted with 31 youths to enable them to create job opportunities using the savings they generate by participating in our program.

“UNLEASH Plus played an instrumental role in our journey, providing insights and mentorship to shape our approach to impact metrics.”



UNLEASH Hacks



UNLEASH Hacks are localized, scalable, and cost-accessible innovation sprints that span over 1 to 2 days and are designed to address concrete sustainability challenges in specific contexts. They are organized by UNLEASH Community members or by local partner organizations of UNLEASH. At its core, the program is designed to support Alumni to organize programs in their community thereby equipping them with community leadership skills; and providing them with an opportunity to support other youth in their journey to co-create impact on sustainable development.

UNLEASH Hacks participants co-create solution ideas to address challenges impacting their local communities. They are exposed to the UNLEASH Innovation Methodology and gain access to tools and

to continue in the journey of making a long-term impact for the SDGs. By participating in a Hack, they join the UNLEASH Community through a shorter program that is localized to their community's challenges.

In 2023, UNLEASH made an intentional move to pause active support to the UNLEASH Community for planning and executing Hacks. This break was in line with the broader strategic shift within UNLEASH's programming to become more decentralized, give more agency to the Community, and provide an avenue to scale our reach. A step towards this was to set up the UNLEASH Hacks Committee within the framework of the UNLEASH Ambassador Program.

The members of the Committee have extensive experience in organizing and executing UNLEASH Hacks. Their mandate was to lead the process of leveraging the experiential knowledge of previous UNLEASH Hacks organizers to revamp existing resources that will guide future organizers in conceptualizing and executing a Hack. In early 2024, the new UNLEASH Hacks program will be launched.

Despite this pause in ongoing support, 2 UNLEASH Hacks were organized by UNLEASH Alumni one in Singapore and one in Vietnam.

These UNLEASH Alumni are those who have previous experience organizing an UNLEASH Hack or participating in one. Because of their experience based on previous support in preceding years, we saw manifested what is now the dream next step for UNLEASH. A world where UNLEASH Community members can leverage our global partner network, their own experiences, and learnings to mobilize their local communities and create a tangible impact.

After attending the Innovation Lab in India, I wanted to bring the UNLEASH experience to my community in Vietnam. As an UNLEASH Ambassador, I seized the opportunity to organize the first UNLEASH Hack in Vietnam. Around the same time, I designed the Vietnam Youth Parliament - Mekong Program (VNYP-Mekong) to empower local youth to address climate change and engage in policy advocacy. In cooperation with my team members, we secured funding of USD 12,000 from the US Consulate in Vietnam and the International Climate Initiative of the German Federation for our program. The UNLEASH Innovation Process has instilled in me a belief in the capacity of youth in Vietnam to take tangible actions for the sustainability of their communities and region.”

Nguyen Son Tra, Vietnam

UNLEASH Ambassador, and Organizing Team Lead, UNLEASH Hack Vietnam

The Bambana Box

A Community story by Susil Khanal

Talent from Nepal, UNLEASH Hack Nepal

My journey from an UNLEASH Hack to leading the innovation of Bambana Box has been a thrilling adventure fueled by my passion for sustainable agriculture and climate action.

I participated in an UNLEASH Hack in 2020 and created Bambana Box: an eco-friendly alternative to plastic crates, that extends the shelf life of agricultural products by 2 to 3 days. This reduces food waste, addresses food security issues, and mitigates climate change by minimizing carbon emissions associated with plastic use across India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. It benefits smallholder farmers, food producers, and distributors by enhancing their livelihoods.

The Bambana Box is now at the final stage of testing and is poised for scale with support from institutions such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, offering both financial and technical assistance. This showcases the power of collaboration and innovation in driving meaningful change toward a more sustainable and resilient future. We are committed to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and mitigating environmental degradation caused by plastic use in the food supply chain.

“I developed a solution I am passionate about and cultivated a supportive ecosystem of changemakers to address pressing challenges.”



High level results

UNLEASH Community

70

**Ambassadors from 42
Nationalities and
55% women**

1K

**New members in the
UNLEASH Community
in 2023**

6

**Ambassador
Workshops from June
to December 2023**

**Piloted new post-
Innovation Lab
initiatives, like a
Mentorship Program
for Talents**

UNLEASH Community



In 2023, UNLEASH took the next step in embodying our Community-driven approach, as we look to scale our impact even further through our growing Community. From involving Community members in the redesign of key programs like the UNLEASH Ambassador Program and UNLEASH Hacks, to including them to a much larger degree in the execution of the UNLEASH Rwanda Global Innovation Lab, the UNLEASH Community members were brought in as often as possible throughout the year to contribute to shaping the UNLEASH movement. At the end of the year, the UNLEASH Community grew to 8,000 individuals across 180 nationalities.

The **UNLEASH Ambassador Program** was launched in 2020 with the purpose of training motivated UNLEASH Alumni to engage youth in their communities and

make a positive local impact. In the 2023/2024 edition, the cohort size of the program has doubled, representing UNLEASH's most diverse cohort yet with 70 Ambassadors, representing 42 nationalities and with a majority of women.

This edition also builds on our ambition to drive scale through our Community, as such we structured the Ambassadors' engagement around three programmatic pillars, steered by Committees: 1) Talent Experience, which supports the Secretariat in refining the journey for future UNLEASH participants, ensuring a strong Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion lens, and a successful onboarding experience. 2) Community Initiatives, focused on organizing Alumni events, SDG Workshops, and enabling other Alumni opportunities. 3) UNLEASH Hacks, leading the redesign of the program.



During the first 6 months of the program, Ambassadors participated in 6 workshops, ranging from supporting the content updates of UNLEASH Activity Cards, to advising on challenges for the SDG Tracks for the upcoming Innovation Lab. They organized virtual and physical Community Networking Events for incoming UNLEASH Rwanda Talents, sharing the value of their experience to their personal and professional journeys. Ambassadors contributed to enhancing the Talent Experience of the Innovation Lab and represented 30% of the UNLEASH Rwanda Facilitator cohort.

Piloting Post-Innovation Lab Engagement. 2023 provided UNLEASH with a unique opportunity to pilot various forms of post-Innovation Lab engagement.

In partnership with the 11th Hour Racing Team, UNLEASH embarked on a journey to explore three new forms of engagement to follow up with Talents after the UNLEASH Greenland Innovation Lab.



A 3-month **Mentorship Program** was launched following an UNLEASH Greenland Community Event. A pool of Facilitators, Experts, and Partners from the Innovation Lab were engaged as Mentors and were matched with UNLEASH Greenland Talents. The Mentors engaged in mentoring sessions where they coached Talents to continue working on their solutions, general career advice, or help with challenges in current projects they were pursuing. 80% gave positive feedback about the Mentor-Mentee matching and the relevance of mentorship content, and

confirmed they had strengthened capabilities and connections. Since the program was purely virtual, this resulted in a low-cost, high-impact potential pilot of a Mentoring Program, which we plan to build on for our post-program engagements moving forward.

To continue our work in Greenland, we also planned two innovation workshops, which took place in Nuuk and Sisimiut in 2023 and the beginning of 2024, respectively. The first workshop was hosted over 3 days at Ilisimatusarfik, The University of Greenland, in collaboration with Arctic Action. Around 20 students and faculty members developed solutions to make the university a frontrunner in incorporating and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Using the UNLEASH Methodology by bringing in trained UNLEASH Facilitators, the group proposed scalable ideas relevant to multiple levels of



Greenlandic society. The second workshop was hosted over 2 days at the beginning of 2024, in collaboration with DTU Arctic Sisimiut, Implement, and Arctic Action. It applied the UNLEASH Innovation Methodology to help 30+ engineering students frame problems and develop solutions related to how extreme climate and changing weather patterns impact Greenlandic communities and industries.

Furthermore, the 11th Hour Racing grant allowed for 3 of the top teams from UNLEASH Greenland to participate in a virtual early-stage entrepreneur mentoring program, before meeting physically in Aarhus, Denmark for the Ocean Race Stopover (one of the world's largest sailing events). Here, they pitched their solutions and spotlighted their lived experiences and perspectives on innovation and sustainability in the Arctic region at various



events throughout the week, such as the Youth Summit, the Ocean Race Summit, the Business Summit, and an UNLEASH panel on stage in the Race Village.

We aim to use the learnings from this pilot of post-Innovation Lab engagements to provide more holistic support to all of our Talents after UNLEASH programs. This has the potential to create a concrete pathway to ignite the innovation ecosystem in the host countries of UNLEASH Innovation Labs and leverage the momentum that arises from the execution of programs. These engagements also feed into our goal of ongoing capacity sharing and upskilling of young people in the region, matchmaking between partners and Talent solutions, and integrating local stakeholders into the wider, global UNLEASH Community and programming.

“UNLEASH has been a transformative experience for me. From the global network and friends that I gained from joining in as a Talent, to becoming an Ambassador and sharing my learnings with my community, to then becoming a Facilitator supporting other Talents develop solutions for SDGs.

No other organization empowers and mobilizes youth to solve for SDGs as UNLEASH does!”

Aya Alsafadi, Syria
UNLEASH Ambassador

UNLEASH Ambassadors during the Facilitator Training in Kigali, Rwanda.





Initiating Grassroots Change

A Community story by Zanna Sumaila

UNLEASH Ambassador, Nigeria

In 2019, I participated in the UNLEASH Innovation Lab held in Shenzhen, China. Since then, I have been actively engaged with the UNLEASH Community and sought to translate my learnings into my local community.

I grew up in Yobe State Nigeria where observed how local communities couldn't access healthcare and education because funds allocated to develop these services did not reach communities. I became passionate about promoting sustainable and inclusive grassroots development. Working as a Community Engagement Manager at the Spotlight for Transparency and Accountability Initiative (ST&A), I led the design of a citizens-led tracking campaign using the UNLEASH Innovation Methodology and got the opportunity to accelerate this idea at UNLEASH Plus 2020.

I also share capacity with young people in my community. Using the UNLEASH Activity Cards, I set up an academy that equips youth leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to drive change in their communities. Mentors sourced from the UNLEASH Community guided participants to develop community projects during 3 months of mentorship.

I believe my learnings have the potential to impact many more young people in my community.

“Through UNLEASH, I have learned that real change begins with enabling communities and amplifying their voices.”



Our Reach



Prof. Flemming Besenbacher and Hon. Minister of ICT and Innovation, Ms. Paula Ingabire, during the press conference.

The attractiveness of our programs has had a footprint on our social media growth, which last year reached 25K new individuals and has passed the 100K mark. The engagement in our programs has also translated into a strong desire within the Community to share their experiences online, and we've seen a surge in participants talking about UNLEASH on their own platforms.

UNLEASH Rwanda gained national exposure on the biggest outlets of the country, with the Opening Ceremony

featured on the evening news segment of the national TV channel, and the meeting of UNLEASH Chairperson, Prof. Flemming Besenbacher with His Excellency the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Mr. Paul Kagame, featured on the cover of the biggest newspaper in the country!

The first UNLEASH Innovation Lab on the African continent was received with great enthusiasm around the world as well, reaching 100+ countries through our media appearances and being part of a larger documentary from CNBC Africa.

High level results

100K

followers
across
Social Media

4

TV
Appearances

#UNLEASHRwanda

became a national
Trending Topic

100+

countries
reached through
media mentions

36.5M

Media impressions

800K

Impressions on Social Media

Featured in the
cover of
Rwanda's
national
newspaper

Partnerships for scale

A story from Andreas Kryger Jensen

Partner at Implement Consulting Group

Implement Consulting Group has been a strategy advisor and innovation partner of UNLEASH since 2022. As part of our partnership with UNLEASH, our consultants and partners participated in both UNLEASH India and UNLEASH Rwanda as Lead Facilitators and Facilitators who worked with teams throughout the innovation week. What they came back with – enhanced innovation and leadership skills, an experience with incredibly diverse cultures, and new energy and perspectives – make the experience worthwhile for their growth within our company.

UNLEASH's purpose of enabling youth to co-create positive impact aligns closely with Implement's DNA and aspiration to create change with impact through collaborative consulting. We believe that when people involved in making the change happen are truly engaged and grow their capabilities, the odds of success are dramatically increased. By joining forces with UNLEASH to upskill youth, our outreach is much broader, and we can catalyze a sustainable change beyond our usual reach.

Looking ahead, we're excited to extend our collaboration with UNLEASH by providing strategic direction throughout 2024 and deploying consultants and partners as Experts and Facilitators to the upcoming Global Innovation Labs.

“Implement and UNLEASH share the same DNA with their values and their ambition to create change with impact”





2024: Scaling Community-Driven Innovation



Re-Launching Hacks with the UNLEASH Ambassadors

UNLEASH Hacks has enabled us to democratize innovation through our Community. After some months of working with the UNLEASH Hacks Committee, we are launching the program in early April 2024, and all UNLEASH Alumni will be supported to create innovation programs that mobilize their communities.

Community-Driven UNLEASH Innovation Labs

What if we could scale our flagship program through our Community, which time and again has demonstrated an unparalleled passion and ambition to create a positive impact? As part of our strategy for 2024, we want to take their engagement to the next level by co-creating Innovation Labs with them.

As we reflect on the impact of UNLEASH in 2023, it becomes apparent that our journey toward fostering global innovation for scaled social impact is about supporting communities around the world and nurturing sustainable change from within. For this, we are looking to widen our pool of long-term partners who will support our programs with the mission of scaling our impact through our Community.

In line with this vision, our focus in 2023 was to pilot Community-driven initiatives, fostering collaborative efforts that harness the diverse expertise and perspectives of individuals worldwide. Here is a glimpse into how we plan to continue that journey in 2024:



Prof. Flemming Besenbacher with Chef Doris Bill and Adam Mostogl.



Who will be the next host to pick up the torch?

From an Innovation Lab to an Innovation Hub

In 2023, we explored different activities to support our Alumni beyond the current programmatic offerings. Throughout 2024, we plan to roll out new initiatives that will equip our Community with mentorship, inspiration, and skills to drive change – no matter the path they have decided to follow to do so.

Introducing a Tender Process

As part of our mission, we want to host an Innovation Lab in every continent, culminating in New York by 2030. We are currently looking for exceptional organizations driving innovation in their communities who would be interested in organizing an UNLEASH Innovation Lab in their region. Read more [here](#).





Our Partners

While we work closely with our Community to create impact at scale, it is our Partners who are the driving force behind UNLEASH enabling this impact. As we reflect on our achievements for the past year, we want to acknowledge our partners for their instrumental role in advancing our shared vision for a better, more sustainable world.

The impact that UNLEASH created in 2023 was made possible through the invaluable support

and meaningful contributions of our dedicated partners, who enhanced our collective efforts to address global challenges.

Together, we reached new heights in fostering innovation, sustainability, and positive change. Our sincere gratitude goes to all our partners, whose support plays a pivotal role in shaping UNLEASH's success year after year.

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TOPSOE



Acknowledgements



UNLEASH would not be where it is without the support of our Partners, who make our programs possible. Thanks to them, we can mobilize thousands of changemakers around the world. We get to do that with the dedication of our vibrant Community, and we want to end the recap of our impact in 2023 by highlighting the incredible voluntary work coming out of the UNLEASH Community, who contribute with their time and ideas to how our programs are shaped.

A massive and heartfelt thank you goes out to our **70 UNLEASH Ambassadors** who have propagated the message and spirit of UNLEASH within their network and local communities. A special thank you goes out to those of this cohort who served on Ambassador Committees or in Ambassador Working Groups, and who have done incredible pro bono work, driven only by passion and a desire to foster a thriving Community. From planning and executing networking events, to

updating the UNLEASH Activity Cards, to promoting the SDGs and the UNLEASH Methodology in your communities, to being brilliant Community Organizers or Facilitators at UNLEASH programs like Hacks or Innovation Labs. You truly are the backbone of the UNLEASH Community.

A special thank you goes to **Lauren Behr, Andreas Kryger Jensen, and Adam Mostogl**, who supported the Secretariat during the execution of UNLEASH Rwanda in all possible ways. Another special thank you goes out to the **Facilitator cohort for UNLEASH Rwanda** who guided Talents through the Innovation Process, providing practical and moral support to enrich the experience for Talents. A final thank you goes to the **Mentors and Experts who supported UNLEASH Plus Teams** across their 6-month incubation, showing up for multiple workshops and sharing high-quality expertise to guide teams along their entrepreneurial journey.

BREAK IT DOWN – HEAT IT



CYCLO

**We thank you
for your
ongoing
support of our
program!**



2023



THE GLOBAL GOALS