



Kigali



The digital gap and citizen engagement

Although the government of Rwanda has made great efforts to reduce the digital gap, to truly overcome it there are three essential requirements: a consistent national strategy for information technology and communication (ITC), the creation of an affordable telecommunications infrastructure, and for there to be a qualified workforce available.

Extract from the preliminary research, p.7

Our project / To limit the digital gap and its negative effects on young people in order to improve their access to municipal information and services.

Our proposed solutions

1. **Standardise access to the Internet** and the provision of digital equipment throughout the area, focusing specifically on young people in rural areas outside the city.
2. **Pilot the setting up of an information technology and communication centre (ITC) in a rural administrative area** and expand these centres more widely in remote areas.
3. Significantly increase **digital training for the population** to provide them with a full knowledge of digital issues, in order for them to understand its benefits (increase in civic participation, etc.) and associated dangers (cyber-stalking, confidentiality, data protection, etc.)



Kigali in figures

Population:
1,140 million
inhabitants

Population aged
between 14 and
35 years: **53 %**

Growth in the number
of high speed mobiles
by 2024: **19 %**

Households with at least
one mobile phone: **67 %**

Households with home
Internet access: **17%**

Rwanda's 4G LTE
coverage: **95 %**

Kigali and the inequality of residents' access to the Internet

Despite the action taken by the government of Rwanda to implement strategies to reduce the digital gap, there is only limited take-up of digital technology — mostly by young people. This can be explained by the low level of equipment available to people and unequally distributed Internet access, as well as a lack of digital skills and the excessive cost of hardware.

The challenges to overcome

- There are multiple social, economic and cultural factors, including a lack of education, which create a digital gap among young people. Yet, equal digital access is a key driver of financial growth.
- Many people are unaware of the advantages made available by local digital solutions, (online banking, mobile money, etc.) or hesitate to use them due to service fees and the fear of hacking.
- Young girls are not able to access youth centres and the ITC facilities offered there, as easily as boys can.
- The geographical distribution of access to ITCs needs to be redressed by creating clusters to end this concentration in city centres and scarcity on the North-Eastern edge of the city.

Our goals

-  Eradicate the bottlenecks in the physical infrastructure to promote better digital access for everyone, and specifically the younger population.
-  Develop community-based, hands-on educational activities by mobilising the young unemployed from the digital automation sector. Residents lacking ITC knowledge find themselves in the same situation as those who were unable to read and write in the last century.
-  Strengthen professional training and equip ITC centres with new equipment, particularly in rural and suburban areas to ensure everyone's inclusion in the digital world.

This content has come from the preliminary research carried out by the city as part of the ASToN project in 2021