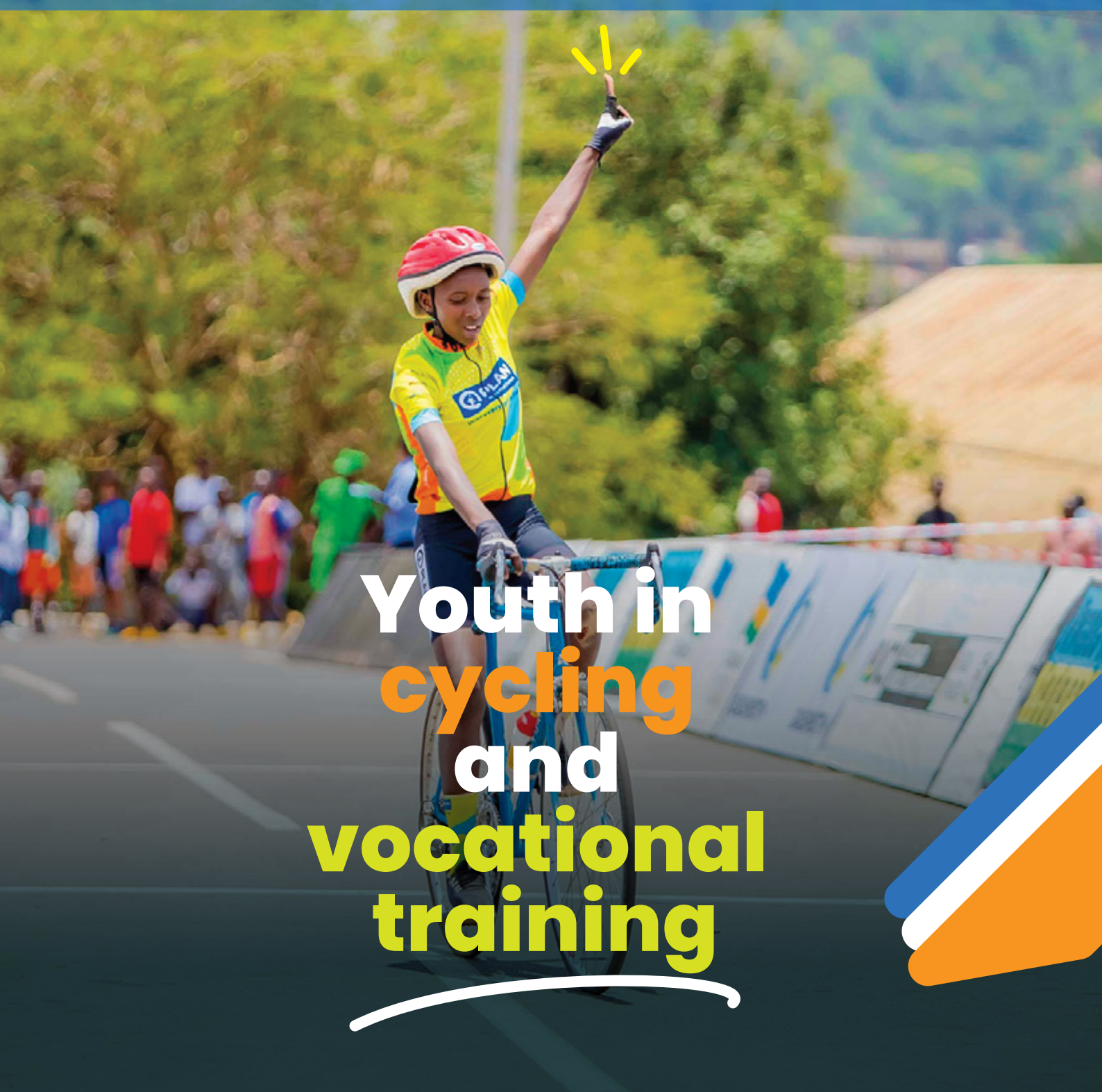


# Newsletter

## Bike for Future Project | Issue 1

Plan International Rwanda



Youth in  
cycling  
and  
vocational  
training



## About the project

The 'Bike for Future' project places a distinct emphasis on empowering girls and young women.

During its first cohort, the project has welcomed 30 as part of the cycling team. Through the vocational skills, 9 girls are now engaged in welding, 15 girls in bicycle mechanics, 15 in tailoring and 1 girl in information, communication and technology.

This project will engage 60% girls and 40% boys, and has four pivotal goals:

- Empower girls and young women through the sports for change approach
- Achieve economic empowerment through skills training and networks
- Challenge gender stereotypes with community support
- Secure private sector commitment to engage youth in their respective sectors

The 'Bike for Future' project is implemented by Learn Work Develop Rwanda and sponsored by Plan International Belgium and Plan International Rwanda, expanding its outreach to the local communities in Gatsibo and Bugesera Districts.





## Cycling training

### The inspiring story of orphaned sisters

Olivia is a determined young woman with dreams as vast as the open road. At just 20, she is setting her sights on the upcoming World Cycling Championship in Rwanda, dated for 2025.

Olivia's journey began amidst adversity. Orphaned at 14, she found herself shouldering the responsibility of caring for her 4 siblings, including her little sister Joyce, now 18. Facing further challenges, Olivia became a mother at just 15.

The two siblings, however, are having promising lives, being part of the Bike for Future project, that has been instrumental in reigniting their senses of purpose and hope.



Olivia during her cycling practice

### Olivia and Joyce's voices

Olivia is gearing up for professional cycling, and is part of the project's cycling team, made up of 15 girls and runs practical training twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday. Mostly, Joyce accompanies her for motivation, as she is also eager to borrow a leaf from her elder sister and to become a seasoned cyclist herself.



Olivia (Left) with her sibling Joyce (Right).

**"I aspire to become a professional cyclist. Cycling instills in me the belief that I am capable of achieving my future dreams."**  
– Olivia, 20.

**"As orphans, cycling sports unite us and provide a sense of belonging."** – Joyce, 18



The Bike for Future's cycling team during the youth competition.

## Girls at youth cycling competitions

### **Kigali:** Young girls shine at the youth cycling competition

Fourteen young girls, all members of the Bike for Future Cycling Team, enthusiastically participated in the Youth Racing Cup 2024, a cycling competition held on Saturday, March 16, 2024, in Kigali City.

#### **Showcasing excellent cycling skills**

Among the cycling competition's participants were Amina, 14, and Cynthia, 15, who expressed their delight at winning medals on their first attempts. The young girls showcased an impressive display of their cycling talents.

**"The competition was my first-time experience, and I managed to secure a medal. It didn't only boost my confidence, but also proved that girls can excel in cycling competitions. It fuelled my passion for cycling, and I will dedicate significant effort to improve."**

**"I discovered a career path that where I truly excel. It is as if I unlocked my inner strength that I should use to achieve my greater dreams,"** said Amina, who studies in primary 6.

Amina mentioned that she was inspired by her father at the age of 9, who taught her how to ride a bicycle, highlighting how parents can be catalysts in shaping their daughters' futures.

15-year-old Cynthia, who is in her second year of secondary school, learned how to ride a bicycle at the age of 8, taught by her 2 elder brothers.

**"In our community, there is stereotype that cycling is exclusively for boys. By participating in competitions like these, it paves the way for more girls to break barriers and realise their potential,"** Cynthia expressed.

During this competition, organised by Rwanda Cycling Federation (FERWACY), Amina showcased her cycling skills in the Minims Girls U15 category, securing the 3rd position, while Cynthia claimed the 2nd spot in the Cadets Girls U17 category. For other participants, in the Women Juniors U19 category, Didiennie claimed the 2nd position, followed by Lea in 3rd place



Bike for Future's cyclists after winning medals.

## Bugesera: Joining the 4th edition of the Youth Racing Cup 2024

15 U19 girls from the Bike for Future cycling team participated in the 4th edition of the Youth Racing Cup 2024, on April, 21, at the Bugesera-based Field of Dreams cycling facility.

Two members from the Bike for Future cycling team clinched medals. Lea, exhibiting formidable prowess, secured 3rd position in the U19 category, while Amina, distinguished herself by attaining a 3rd position in the U15 category.

Rwanda's cycling governing body (Ferwacy) introduced a Youth Racing Cup, on June 16, 2023, as a new project through which the federation seeks to streamline talent development from grassroots.



Lea showcasing cycling skills during youth competition.

**"People always discourage me, saying it's dangerous for girls to ride bikes. But I refuse to let fear hold me back. I see myself rising to the top as a female cyclist and achieving success in this career,"**  
**-said Lea.**

# Vocational training



Girls and young women doing their practical bicycle mechanics together.

## Bicycle mechanics

### Olivia and Joyce's future resilience

20 year-old Olivia and 18-year-old Joyce are orphaned sisters actively engaged in vocational studies, particularly in bicycle mechanics. Despite their orphanhood, vocational training has given them assurance to self-sufficiency and a means to secure their brighter futures.

**“The opportunity to acquire specialised skills is invaluable. It equips me with the tools to build a better future for myself and my family,” says Olivia, 20**

Joyce stresses the pivotal role of vocational skills in surmounting the challenges faced by orphaned girls.

**“Armed with vocational skills, we are better equipped to navigate our lives’ uncertainties and fend off vulnerabilities,” notes Joyce, 18**



Olivia (Right) and Joyce (Left) are learning bicycle mechanics.

The two learn their practical bicycle mechanics at the Bike for Future project’s bicycle shop, where they also sell bicycles to the local communities, each between Rwf 60,000 and Rwf 150,000



Francine has discovered renewed hope through tailoring.

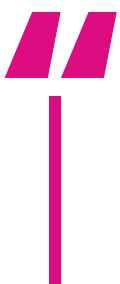
# Tailoring

## Francine discovers renewed hope through tailoring

At just 20 years old, Francine had already faced a multitude of challenges. Becoming a mother at 17 and being the youngest among nine siblings, her educational journey concluded prematurely after primary school.

### Restoring hope for the future

Following an unexpected pregnancy, Francine's aspirations seemed to diminish, as she witnesses, and she found solace in her mother's company. During our visit to the learning centre, we observed Francine diligently practising shirt-making, a skill she has been developing since January 2024.



**“I sense that my future is becoming brighter. Tailoring will enable me to provide for my child’s fundamental needs. Support for unemployed and vulnerable girls is essential to enhance their financial independence and prevent them from succumbing to sexual exploitation.”**



Denyse aspires to become a professional welder.

# Welding

## Breaking barriers: Beyond my community's gender norms as a girl welder

At the age of 21, Denyse wholeheartedly is embracing welding as her chosen vocation. Hailing from a humble background, she works hard to forge a brighter future for herself and her family. Denyse defies the prevailing norms in her local community that welding is a pursuit reserved for boys or me.

### Challenging my community's gender perceptions

Denyse completed her secondary school studies in languages, history and literature. Her path took an unexpected turn when she encountered a vocational opportunity to support vulnerable girls to acquire welding skills.

As the seventh of 9 siblings in her family, Denyse saw this learning opportunity as a shield against an uncertain future.

However, when she shared her vocational choice with her parents and close friends, they expressed surprise. They questioned her capability in welding, citing the absence of female welders in their local community where only males were visible.

Denyse was determined to challenge this perception, and affirm her ability to succeed as a girl.

**"I embarked on a journey into the world of welding, not only for my own welfare but also to shift the mindset surrounding welding, particularly in our community."**





## Flourishing in welding as a girl

Despite initial doubts during her vocational training, Denyse persevered. She found herself surrounded by male learners, but her inner drive pushed her forward.



**“One of my goals is to prove that girls are indeed innovators. Given opportunities in various sectors, girls can achieve their dreams and greatness. I am confident that I will accomplish even more in welding.”**

Denyse believes that whatever a boy can do, a girl can do equally well, if not better.

Taking on a six-month vocational training, Denyse’s welding skills have flourished at her boarding school, where together with her classmates, they dedicate 5 days a week in practical sessions to hone their skills. Today, she is good at creating various materials, including not limited to, doors, windows, chairs, beds and stoves.



Denyse and her five classmates engaged in welding.

## ICT

### Jeannette finds her way back to learning



Jeannette in her practical ICT session.

Jeannette, 24-year-old girl, is redefining the role of girls in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT). As a member of a large family, she faced the cessation of her education in her third year of secondary school due to financial constraints.

Jeannette’s story is one of courage, determination, and the transformative power of education.

After a two-year challenging hiatus from education, a period marked by domestic duties and a longing for the classroom, she found her way back to learning.

Through a six-month ICT training, Jeannette covers diverse ICT modules, ranging from domestic electricity to basic electronics, with a hands-on skill to repairing home appliances, mobile phones, and maintaining computer systems.



**“Reclaiming my educational journey has set my aspirations high. As a vulnerable girl, my acquired knowledge and skills are tools for my personal growth and integration into the local technology markets,” Jeannette states with conviction.**

# More pictures...





Let's support girls  
on their journeys  
to reach their  
future potential.

#Sports4Change  
#Bike4Future

