

cosmos

MAGAZINE

ISSUE #5 DECEMBER 2024

**THE ROAD TO 10TH
ANNIVERSARY**

FELICITATIONS

**MEET THE
CHANGE MAKERS**

The journey of self-mastery
begins with learning....

**Blandine
UMUZIRANENGE,**
Word from the founder

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Word from the Founder

For anything to thrive, I believe it must first seek to serve. It was through serving that my identity and purpose were revealed with the power to influence change, impact lives, and shape the future for many. When I originally focused on distributing information in the health sector, specifically for children, women, and girls, I never imagined how many lives we would touch through our product lines, like Ineza Breastfeeding from Kadablah Collection to KosmoPads. The community of young girls and women has been the heartbeat of Kosmotive for the past 10 years—and continues to inspire me daily. They are why I wake up every day.



*Blandine
Umuziranenge*

Our partnerships with young girls, women, and both national and international Non-Governmental Organizations have kept our vision alive and helped us fulfill our mission through collaboration.

I know I am on the right path when things feel promising, but it hasn't always been easy; there have been challenges and uncertain times. Still, I had a gut feeling that we would find our way. As I stand here, reflecting on this decade, I ask myself: How did it all begin? How did we come up with our name? What were the turning points that guided us in the right direction? I've learned that trusting my instincts only truly makes sense when I look back at how far we've come. To understand our journey better, I'd like to introduce Madam Blandine, our 'chief vision officer,' to share the story of Kosmotive's beginnings.

"Hmmm, Kosmotive... If I take it back to 2014, I started with Cosmos Magazine, a print and online publication aimed at providing information about parenting, women's health, and lifestyle. Our content focused on both the practical and psychological aspects of raising a child. My decision to create Cosmos Magazine stemmed from my childhood experiences and educational background.

I have a background in IT and media, having earned an advanced diploma in IT and later a degree in business information and communication technology. I interned at a private radio station and a national TV station but always felt a passion for improving community health. Though unsure of how exactly to do it, I chose communication as my tool. My friends and I wrote and published articles, and I even took filmmaking and scriptwriting courses, creating educational and engaging scripts. This work led to the launch of Cosmos Magazine. As I foresaw a shift to multimedia communication, in 2014, I established the Cosmos Multimedia Center.

I chose the name 'Cosmos' to reflect the universality of our mission, signifying our aim to create a supportive environment for everyone. However, I couldn't use 'Universal' be-

cause a Hollywood company already owned the name. Instead, I settled on 'Cosmos Multimedia Center,' as 'Cosmos' alone had already been registered by another entity.

Running Cosmos Magazine was challenging, often requiring me to fundraise for new editions. I sought to understand the needs of our audience, focusing on pregnant and breastfeeding women and their challenges. Discovering the difficulty they faced in finding suitable clothing inspired me to launch Kadablah Collection, a clothing line separate from Cosmos but complementary to it. Though it seemed unconventional to have a clothing line and a multimedia company under one roof, it worked.

In 2017, I wanted a name that could encompass both ventures. Since 'Cosmos Multimedia' also focused on creative efforts, I renamed it 'Cosmos Creative.' However, a company in Australia already used that name. Combining 'Cosmos' and 'Creative,' I created 'Cosmotive,' then added a twist by substituting the 'C' with a 'K,' giving birth to the name 'Kosmotive.'

With the magazine and clothing line established, I continued delivering content. Driven by a need to spread information, I created Kosmo Health, a digital platform and app focused on pregnancy and postnatal care, providing alert messages and parenting tips. This remains a core goal for Kosmotive. While honing my writing skills through a creative writing program, I drafted a personal story about a time when I couldn't afford sanitary pads. Sharing it made me emotional, and with my mentor's support, I delved deeper into the issue. I was shocked to learn that 18% of Rwandan girls and women miss work or school due to a lack of menstrual products. Realizing the gravity of the problem, I couldn't simply keep writing about it—I wanted to act.

In 2018, I launched KosmoPads to end period poverty, mobilize open conversations about menstruation, and include boys as allies. My journey focused on creating cost-effective, reusable pads using specific textile fabrics. This initiative not only addressed affordability and environmental concerns but also empowered women and girls to create and market the products, transforming menstruation into a source of pride and strength.

Looking back on our 10-year journey, I see every girl and woman gaining access to reproductive health information and menstrual products as the true victory. Moving forward, Kosmotive envisions a future where no girl in Rwanda or Africa misses school due to menstrual challenges. We remain committed to improving lives, fostering inclusivity, and ensuring no one is left behind.

If I hadn't led this journey, I might have pursued a career in IT, but my passion for storytelling and impact brought me here. Kosmotive is rooted in growth, compassion, and community—a place of exploration and belonging. Celebrating this milestone marks both an end and a beginning. The number 10 symbolizes completeness and divine order—a reflection of our journey and what's to come."

INTRODUCTION



We often become so consumed by everything we think we need or are working on that we overlook the most rewarding moments that have shaped who we are today. You might be wondering how it all began, who was there, what we achieved, and whether it was worth it or just a dream. Buckle up for this journey as we revisit those unforgettable moments—strides of achievement, challenges both great and small, and the impact we've made to date. Remember, in life, you either evolve or stagnate. Fortunately, that has never been the case at Kosmotive.

Over the past 10 years, we have translated our major achievements into meaningful projects and investments. Our journey began with a bold move—the publication of Cosmos Magazine in 2014, marking the start of something extraordinary.



COSMOS MAGAZINE

Laid the groundwork for our other initiatives, such as KosmoHealth, whether it be the platform, the app, or the helpline. All these efforts revolve around the goal of increasing access to health information and providing educational resources to build a healthier society. They are all, in a sense, extensions of Cosmos Magazine and are dedicated to ending period poverty. Our community activities, including poetry events and other efforts to break the stigma around menstruation, are all aimed at promoting menstrual equity.

The two major achievements we highlighted—Cosmos Magazine and KosmoPads—are closely connected to our mission.

We started online in January 2014, and by June, the first edition was released.

It was our first major achievement, and it was well-received. People loved it. I loved it. Seeing such enthusiasm for what was once a crazy idea gave us the motivation to keep going.

Throughout our journey, we embarked on various projects and collaborated with different partners. One of our most significant milestones was the launch of KosmoPads.

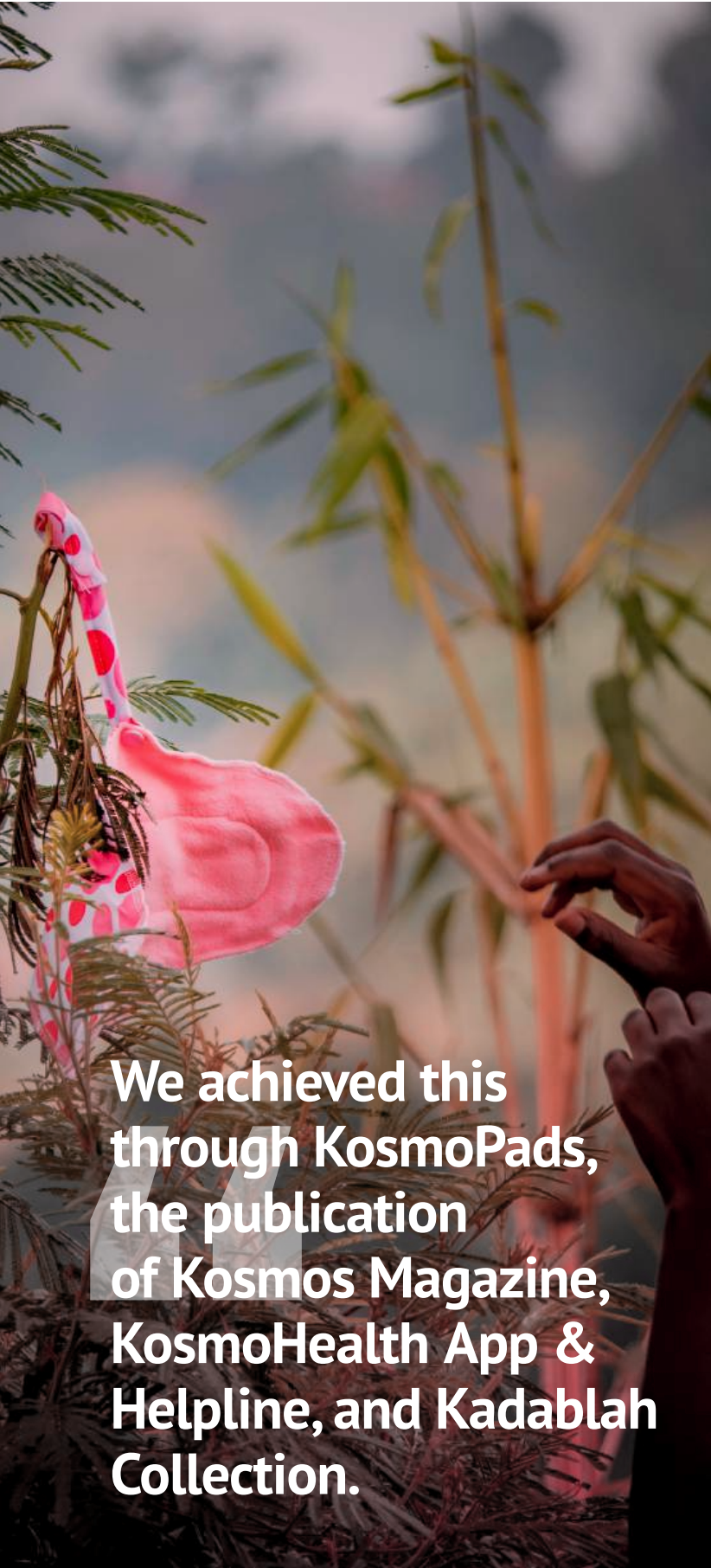
Before delving into all the details, we must express our heartfelt appreciation to the incredible individuals who believed in us and supported every step. We honor the unwavering commitment of Deogratias Nzaramyimana, Felicien Gapfizi, and Abdulkalim Biseruka, our journalist. These great people went the extra mile, often working sleepless nights to gather vital information, which was later handled by Saidath Murorunkwere, our Chief Editor. We also extend our gratitude to Epaphrodite Ndungutse, who led our Marketing & Ad Sales department, and to Blandine Umuziranenge, our Managing Director and Lead Publisher. We are grateful to our initial partners, including Select Kalaos, Igihe Ltd, Family TV, Samples Studio, and Angels 4 Angels. While some partners may no longer be with us, they played a crucial role in the growth of Kosmotive and in building the strong foundation we have today.

While we have had many projects along the way, the launch of KosmoPads stands out as a major milestone. We did not foresee its impact—both in terms of business sustainability and its profound societal influence. KosmoPads addresses an urgent need and has created a meaningful impact that every business owner dreams of achieving.

WHO WE ARE



We are a social enterprise on a mission to save lives by Increasing access to menstrual, child health information, and products which will lead to good health care services to people who do not have access.



**We achieved this
through KosmoPads,
the publication
of Kosmos Magazine,
KosmoHealth App &
Helpline, and Kadablah
Collection.**

Our pulse is in social and economic empowerment of marginalized women, parents and the girlchild. We dare ourselves every day to work on issues which matter to them most through a human-centered design approach. This has facilitated the setup of Kadablah Fashion Incubator, and Kosmo School Program through which KosmoPads are donated and distributed. By utilizing these avenues, we have been able to stand regardless of what.

VISION: To see a world where every girl and every woman has access to reproductive health information and access to sustainable feminine hygiene products.

MISSION: Help the most vulnerable women improve their menstrual, maternal and child health by increasing access to products that they need for self-care.

CORE VALUES: Passion, Empathy, Creativity, Integrity, Tolerance.

THE ROAD TO



THE POWER OF EVOLVING



IN 2014, WE SET OURSELVES ON A COURSE, A JOURNEY OF POSSIBILITIES.

Our first prompt was to Improve maternal and child health in Rwanda and throughout Africa. But for the past 10 years we have witnessed the power of making the first step, the power of that first decision which birthed the “Power of Evolving”. The mind behind Kosmotive started with the understanding by our founder that she is a “World Messenger” - with the power of information and technology to improve Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health. In this series on ‘The Road to Anniversary; The Power of Evolving’, we want to interest you in who we are, who we serve and what makes us serve them. Walk with us as we journey through the mind of our founder, and the team she leads.





RESILIENCE AND A STRONG FOUNDATION AS THE BACKBONE OF OUR SUCCESS

This journey has shaped us over the past decade. As we continue our mission to provide menstrual products, we are working to expand our partnerships with health organizations, healthcare facilities, and development partners to deliver essential health services and women's self-care products to every girl and woman in need.

Growth is a universal aspiration, but it requires building strong foundations that can withstand challenges. In this metaphor, I refer to the importance of resilience. As we have nurtured Kosmotive, I want to share a few of the challenges we, as the founder and CEO, along with the entire team, have encountered. Despite these challenges, we have remained determined and optimistic.

When we first started, I believed that

change was synonymous with growth and success. Initially, with our magazine, the audience loved the photo novellas we produced. These were educational, scripted pieces featuring actors, which added significant production costs but resonated well with our readers. People especially enjoyed the novellas and wished we had a similar format for our home magazine. While the feedback was positive, the financial return was not sustainable. This raised the first challenge: how to sustain the

magazine without relying on constant fundraising for each new edition. To understand the needs of our audience, which mostly included pregnant and breastfeeding women, I conducted research. This revealed a deeper need for products beyond information, leading us to begin producing clothing for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. The clothing line proved successful, helping to improve our cash flow and attracting more readers to the magazine.

I felt confident that we had found a balance: providing both information and products. However, the emergence of period poverty as a theme presented a new challenge. This initiative required substantial upfront investment for materials and production, which was more capital-intensive than the magazine alone. But it was an opportunity to make a greater impact, so I moved forward.

At first, our production capacity was limited—just 100 pads per day. This felt like a lot at the time, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown. However, when the lockdown lifted in late 2020, we received an unexpected order: 5,557 packs of KosmoPads, which amounted to 27,785 individual pads. This was overwhelming, as we had never produced anything close to that volume. We didn't have enough stock to meet this demand, and fulfilling the order required quickly sourcing raw materials and paying for expedited shipping, which was expensive. But we were determined to deliver, as this client played a significant role in the sector.

This experience made it clear that we faced a challenge with material shortages. We needed to increase our production capacity, and in 2022, we secured funding to do so. However, in hindsight, I realized that I should have first studied the market demand before expanding production. The mistake was increasing our capacity without fully understanding the market, which led to an imbalance between production and sales.

Today, our current challenge is finding sustainable ways to manage our large production capacity while meeting market demand. It's an exciting challenge, and we are exploring new business models to ensure that every woman and girl can afford our products. Our mission is to make these products accessible to as many people as possible, and we're working on refining our approach to achieve this. It's challenging, but I'm excited for what the future holds, especially as we lay out a clear sustainability plan.

Ultimately, our goal is for the cash flow to be self-sustaining, driven by our customers, and for our impact to expand, reaching those at the bottom of the pyramid. While it's difficult to see the large inventory sitting there, the question remains: what will happen when we overcome this challenge?

Through the ups and downs, it's refreshing to realize that our efforts are creating opportunities for others to live better lives, especially those who make things happen within our team. I'm proud of our team for their dedication and the impact we're having.

Beyond the business side, we're also focused on environmental sustainability.

One KosmoPad can replace up to 100-120 disposable pads, and when you factor in the plastic waste that's avoided, it's equivalent to eliminating the pollution from 400 plastic bags. We strive for zero waste in our operations, from sourcing to production to distribution, and we aim to inspire other producers and consumers to adopt a more conscious, sustainable approach.

As a bonus, if our work can inspire any girl or woman, whether in a rural area of Rwanda or anywhere else in the world, that would be the greatest reward. I didn't have someone who looked like me to inspire me growing up, and I want to be that inspiration for others. If we can reach as many people as possible and inspire them, that will be the ultimate bonus for me—a daily reminder of the impact we're making.



STORY BEHIND OUR SUCCESS



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS REFLECT THE JOURNEY WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN WITH SUPPORT FROM KEY PARTNERS WHO BELIEVED IN OUR MISSION TO SPREAD AWARENESS ABOUT MENSTRUAL HEALTH.

This year, we received the Bayer Foundation Women Empowerment Award, which has been one of the most significant recognitions we've achieved. While we've had various other opportunities, allow me to take you through the journey that brought us here—all centered around KosmoPads. Our two major achievements, in terms of activities and operations, have been supported by different individuals and recognized through various awards and programs.



OUR FIRST MAJOR EXPOSURE CAME IN 2019 WHEN WE SECURED THE YOUTH CONNECT AFRICA AWARD FOR INNOVATION.

We were recognized as girls in innovation with a solution that benefits other women, specifically in that category. This award was presented in October 2019. Just one month later, we received an even bigger recognition: the Invest to Impact Africa Women's Empowerment Award. This award honored Kosmotive as a company and came shortly after the release of KosmoPads as a product.

These milestones marked the beginning of increased interest and partnerships with various organizations. Another major highlight was securing funding from the King Baudouin Foundation. This was a pivotal moment for our growth and was granted on the first day of 2022. I often refer to 2022 as a great New Year, as this funding allowed us to expand our production capacity fivefold. With this support, we moved from a small space to our current facility, grew our team, and increased production capacity with new machinery, raw materials, and various initiatives. We were able to train up to 100 women from southern and eastern Rwanda.

Following the King Baudouin Foundation funding, we started attracting more substantial financial support, which boosted our sales and growth significantly. This milestone laid the foundation for all subsequent successes.



In the early days, our partners included Select Kalaos, Igihe Ltd, Family TV, Samples Studio, and Angels 4 Angels. As Kosmotive evolved, we established partnerships with notable organizations such as GIZ Rwanda, Pan International Rwanda, WaterAid Rwanda, One Acre Fund, Greater Good USA, The King Baudouin Foundation, Impact Hub Kigali, The DOEN Foundation, Africa Oxford Initiative (AfOx), Making More Health (Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim), USADF, UNDP, Internews, The Segal Family Foundation, Intrepid Entrepreneurs Foundation, The Bestseller Foundation, Red Cross Rwanda, Young Water Solutions, Villgro Africa, European Union, Enabel Rwanda, The Bayer Foundation, Impact Hub Network, The Clinton Global Initiative, Vital Voices Global Partnership, Expo City Dubai Foundation, The Tony Elumelu Foundation, French Cultural Center, Opportunity Collaboration, Akili Dada, The Pollination Project, HDI Rwanda, DHL, and many more including influencers and artists.

Meet the Kosmotive employees

THE TEAM BEHIND OUR SUCCESS

With all these brilliant minds gathered under one roof, we experience first-hand how Africa's changemakers possess the power to end period poverty and improve access to menstrual, maternal, and child health products and services across rural and urban communities in Rwanda and throughout the continent.

Our vision is a world where every girl and woman has access to reproductive health information and sustainable menstrual hygiene products, and where every parent has access to maternal and child health information and essential health-care services—achieved through passion, empathy, and creativity.





OPPORTUNE UWACU TUMUKUNDE

Operations and Finance Manager

When I joined Kosmotive, I didn't have a full grasp of the challenges women face or the company's purpose and journey. My journey began by learning about Kosmotive's work, mission, and vision. With the support of the team, I grew in many ways, from building a community of empathetic women dedicated to tackling period poverty, to developing personally and becoming more supportive of women's empowerment through various sessions held across the country.

Celebrating a decade of Kosmotive under Blandine's leadership is a major milestone for us as a team. We've grown from a small staff of four employees to a permanent team of 20. Our production has expanded from making 27 pads a day to 2,500 pads daily, impacting communities and changing lives through educational series and access to KosmoPads. One of my proudest moments has been seeing young girls attending school confidently because of KosmoPads. I'm also proud of our team's growth; many of our production staff joined as adolescents and are now adults. Seeing the career development of Alice, Delphine, and Bertin has been particularly rewarding. I remember when they first joined—they were so young. Now they're mature, some are married, and even raising children. Our brand's growing recognition in Rwanda is another highlight.

Working under Blandine's leadership at Kosmotive for four years and seven months has been a privilege. It has shown me the power of vision and what it takes to make dreams a reality. If I hadn't worked at Kosmotive, I might have pursued a role in an NGO sanitation program or mentored young girls. But now, I ask myself: what could I have taught them without the experiences and achievements I've gained here? I am deeply committed to continuing our work, serving communities in need. "I am proud of you all."



JEANNE FRANÇOISE GATESI

Partnerships and Business Development Officer

"We may not have the same dreams, but I believe that everyone has a dream. We must ensure that on our journey to success, we leave a positive impact on society". Reflecting on my journey, I remember starting as a volunteer in 2019, helping design KosmoPads.

I recall Blandine spending countless days in markets, searching for the perfect materials for the pads. I'll never forget the afternoon we hosted our mentors to showcase our innovative solution for girls.

On that day, Alice Manishimwe, Yankurije Delphine, and Christine Uwamariya made some of the first KosmoPads. Christine, curious and motivated, created four or five pads that day. Though sourcing materials locally was a challenge, those early moments gave us a glimpse of what was possible.

Looking back on my journey since 2019, I am proud of how far we've come. Comparing our initial KosmoPads to what we produce now is truly inspiring—and even a bit humorous. Kosmotive began by focusing on the production of KosmoPads and has become the first and leading manufacturer of reusable pads. While some people remain curious about how KosmoPads work and stigma around menstruation persists, we continue to push forward. Though evaluating the efficiency of our products and marketing with evidence is challenging, our mission remains strong and unwavering.



VENUSTE *HIRWA*

IT Manager

I want to start by sharing why I joined the Kosmotive team. From my experience, Kosmotive stands out as one of the few start-ups in Rwanda that wins and secures funding and uses it precisely for its intended purpose. Observing this and the life of our leader, Blandine, offered me an opportunity to serve and learn under someone with a great and clear vision.

Having worked with various corporations and agencies across Rwanda, I feel privileged to be part of the team celebrating 10 years of impactful work. In the four months I've been here, I've experienced immense growth and motivation—this is a vibrant community that thrives on learning and making a real difference for women and young girls. Product design in this field can be complex, but I appreciate the challenge and have committed myself to learning and understanding this language. As a tech enthusiast, being part of Kosmotive is particularly rewarding because of its visionary leadership and a team that genuinely believes in its mission. Our collective goal to penetrate the local community through market research, so that the community appreciates KosmoPads organically, has been particularly inspiring.

Through a few innovative ideas under Blandine's leadership, we've made significant progress in helping Rwandan girls feel comfortable and empowered to speak about menstrual health—a topic that was once taboo in their communities. I'm grateful to the entire Kosmotive team and every partner who has contributed to breaking barriers and continuing to fight against stigma.

My advice, as a tech professional, is to remember that leadership is not about knowing everything. It's about stewardship—nurturing and guiding those entrusted to you. We must continue to learn, understand, and embrace new challenges as the world evolves, allowing those we lead to grow alongside us.

If asked whether I'd choose to be part of Kosmotive for the next 10 years, my answer would be a resounding yes. Working here has helped me discover my passion and given my life a new purpose. Every day, I reflect on how I can improve and strive to be my best self. Blandine, thank you for shaping me, giving me a platform to live my passion, and always inspiring me.

You are not just a founder or entrepreneur; you are a visionary leader who nurtures future leaders, founders, and entrepreneurs who will drive Rwanda's next movement. Happy 10th Anniversary to all of us.



ACQUELINE *NIYOMAHORO*

Communications Associate

As someone passionate about communication, I encourage my fellow colleagues to embrace and enjoy every moment in this supportive environment.

Let's continue to promote Kosmotive products and services as much as we can! Though my journey here has only spanned a little over 12 weeks (about three months), it has already been transformative, enjoyable, and deeply impactful. As we celebrate Kosmotive's achievements over the past decade, we honor the contributions of individuals, donors, companies, Rwandans, friends of Rwanda, and the support of the Rwandan government.

It is both a time to reflect on our past successes and to look ahead to a promising future.



QUINTO MEDIATRICE *AKAYO*

Sales Manager

Kosmotive itself is more than just a company—it is an amazing team that fosters a sense of belonging. KosmoPads, in particular, became a personal solution for me. I used to purchase reusable pads from Uganda, which were expensive. When I discovered that KosmoPads were made right here in Rwanda, I felt a deep sense of pride in being Rwandan.

As a former Sales Manager, my journey began in September 2022. Initially, I was curious about the kind of team I had joined, but within days, I realized it was truly extraordinary. The experience I've gained here has exceeded my expectations and has allowed me to deepen my knowledge of sales management.

On this 10-year milestone, I want to thank our CEO for creating KosmoPads, for offering young women and girls, and men, job opportunities in Rwanda.

To my colleagues, let's keep nurturing our golden hearts, continue working with dedication and love, and remain proud of what we do. This journey has been remarkable, and our incredible team has stood together through both tears and triumphs. As we look back on our shared memories and experiences, we celebrate each moment and reflect on the lives and changes that have shaped KosmoPads and Kosmotive as a whole.

These stories carry powerful lessons of determination, growth, and purpose. Hear from our production team as they share their journeys and how they define Kosmotive and its impact on their lives.



BERTIN *NSHUTINZI*

Production Support

Starting my journey at Kosmotive in 2021 was challenging, as I was new to working in a place dedicated to creating products that support girls. Although the beginning was difficult, I am now deeply connected with my colleagues and proud of the work we do. Together, we are striving to ensure that girls stay in school by addressing the shortage of pads that can support them during menstruation.

Reflecting on my three years with Kosmotive, it is inspiring to celebrate a decade of impact. I am particularly moved by the support Kosmotive has provided to young girls through KosmoPads, helping them avoid missing school due to a lack of menstrual supplies. When I think about what life would have been like if I hadn't joined Kosmotive, I imagine that I might have pursued technical skills elsewhere. But being here has made me proud of the difference we make. My greatest hope for the future is for our business operations to expand to other countries, so even more girls can benefit, and for Kosmotive activities to reach every district in Rwanda to ensure easy access to KosmoPads. To my colleagues, I encourage us to continue working hard and to keep striving to make a difference.

Reflecting on Bertin's journey at Kosmotive is also deeply meaningful. His dedication to ending period poverty is truly inspiring.

It prompts us to ask ourselves how our workplaces have contributed to our personal growth, life balance, and family well-being. For many of us, the answer is clear: the impact has been profound.



ALICE KABARERE

Seamstress

Working at Kosmotive for the past two years has allowed me to support my family, provide for my child, and save money. Kosmotive is known for producing high-quality products, including nursing pads that help mothers manage breast milk leakage while at work or engaged in other activities, preventing stained clothing.

As I reflect on Kosmotive's 10-year journey of impact—on both my life and the community—it has been a rewarding experience. Kosmotive has significantly contributed to my personal and family development. Through this organization, I have gained valuable knowledge, had the opportunity to travel, and learned skills such as sewing, overlocking, and working with snaps, all of which have shaped who I am today. To my colleagues, I offer this advice:

Let us continue to work together, caring deeply about our tasks, and maintaining a spirit of commitment and collaboration. If I were to imagine life outside Kosmotive, I would probably pursue a career as a tailor or a farmer. Looking ahead, I hope to see Kosmotive grow by expanding the number of employees, establishing a factory, and opening branches both locally and internationally. I truly believe that this vision will become a reality in the near future.



DELPHINE YANKURIYE

Seamstress

"I used to be afraid of failure, I would have been to the bottom of the pits, were it not for Kosmotive. But my journey here began with challenges, as I initially produced low-quality pads. However, I have since improved my production skills and have experienced personal and professional growth through the knowledge I have gained here. Over time, I have become more confident, and Kosmotive has played a major role in helping us break free from poverty by providing access to hygienic products. For me and my family, this has been life-changing. In addition to this, we now have access to insurance and durable pads, which offer a significant improvement in daily life.

Kosmotive has also empowered me to speak confidently in public and to express myself without fear. Looking ahead, I believe the next level for us at Kosmotive involves joining forces within our workplace to seek out customers who will purchase our pads, promoting the quality of our products, and maintaining sustainability with the materials we use. What I know about Kosmotive is that it is a company dedicated to producing hygienic products for young girls and women, particularly during their menstruation.

The reusable pads we produce can last for two years, and we also manufacture nursing wear that helps breastfeeding women maintain cleanliness.



FORTUNEE *UWINGENEYE*

Seamstress

I have been privileged to work at Kosmotive for two meaningful years. My journey began with challenges, as this was my first job and my first experience sewing hygienic products.

Despite the difficulties, through consistent effort and dedication, I am proud to have gained the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in my work.

Reflecting on Kosmotive's last 10 years, I can say it has been outstanding. The industry was and continues to be a vital resource, particularly for young girls in rural areas who cannot afford disposable pads each month. The use of reusable pads offers an 80% saving, making a significant difference.

Moreover, Kosmotive has positively impacted my life by providing me with a stable job that has enabled me to support and improve the well-being of my family.

Looking ahead to the next 10 years, I would love to see Kosmotive expand its market and establish kiosks selling pads in all districts of Rwanda, ensuring greater accessibility for everyone. I cannot imagine where I would have been without this job, as working at Kosmotive has greatly improved my financial stability and overall quality of life. If I could offer any advice to my colleagues, it would be to continue collaborating, raising awareness about what we do, and marketing our products effectively so that we can achieve worldwide growth together.



LILIANE *NIYOYIGENERA*

Janitor

I have been working at Kosmotive for a little over two months, and the journey has been truly rewarding. This well-paying job has significantly improved my quality of life, and I have gained many positive experiences during my time here.

Kosmotive's impact has made accessing reusable pads easier, helping us save the money we would typically spend monthly on disposable ones.

If I were not working at Kosmotive, I would likely have been working in a market. For our next phase of growth, I believe we should expand the workforce, train new team members, and cultivate their skills to contribute to the company's continued success.

My advice is to learn the importance of saving, foster our financial growth, and commit to supporting our beloved company, Kosmotive, in achieving its goals.



JACQUELINE *MUSHIMIYIMANA*

Janitor

My time at Kosmotive has also been invaluable in teaching me teamwork and building strong relationships with my colleagues. These skills have helped me grow, both in my professional work and personal life. I work as a janitor at Kosmotive, which produces essential pads and other hygienic items for women.

During my year and 12 weeks here, I have witnessed how Kosmotive has helped many people, from modest backgrounds to those in influential positions. To keep this legacy alive and thriving, we must continue working effectively as a team.

To my fellow workmates, my advice is to strive to work together, support one another, and face challenges as one united team. If I were not at Kosmotive, I would likely have pursued work as a trader somewhere in Rwanda. I feel honored to be a part of this incredible journey.



ANGELIQUE *TUMUKUNDE*

Cook

Ever since I joined Kosmotive, my life has transformed. This company genuinely cares for and values its employees. I have been working here for over five months as a cook, responsible for the welfare of the entire team. Kosmotive is a company that produces sanitary pads for women, helping countless individuals in the community.

For example, if I had to continuously purchase disposable pads every month, it would be very costly for me and for many other women in the community. With Kosmotive's reusable pads that last up to two years, we have access to a cost-effective, long-term solution.

Over the past 10 years, Kosmotive has positively impacted many lives—both for those who work here and for those who do not. Their healthy, reusable pads provide a sense of security and confidence when used. Kosmotive's commitment to supporting young girls from low-income families further highlights its dedication to creating meaningful change. Working here has helped me overcome unemployment, and with my job, I now have access to health insurance, which gives me peace of mind knowing I can receive timely treatment when needed.

Looking forward, our goal should be to continue working hard to achieve even more growth and reach. If I weren't working at Kosmotive, I would likely be at home helping my parents. Lastly, my advice to my fellow colleagues is to keep working together, support and understand each other, and always maintain a spirit of teamwork and collaboration."



JMV **ISHIMWE**

Production Support

“I have been privileged to work at Kosmotive for a year and a half, operating the button-snapping machine. Kosmotive not only produces women’s pads and wear but also promotes the development of Rwandans and has a global impact through its efforts. Being part of this company has given me a valuable experience grounded in love, support, and hard work. Importantly, Kosmotive strives to empower women, which makes our mission even more fulfilling.

In my time here, I have observed that Kosmotive’s employees work collaboratively, provide excellent service to everyone they interact with, and maintain a drive for excellence. Looking to the future, I believe Kosmotive’s growth and impact could be further strengthened by involving women’s health specialists like doctors to bring even more expertise to our mission.

If I weren’t working here, I would likely be farming, without knowledge of the positive impact Kosmotive has on so many lives. As we celebrate a decade of impact, my hope is that we continue working together every day, practicing kindness toward one another, avoiding hurtful words, and focusing on what will elevate the company to greater heights.”



ANNUARITHE **NYIRANGIRIMANA**

Seamstress

I am a seamstress at Kosmotive, a position I have held for two years. In the course of my career, I have made great friends. This celebration of 10 years is a great achievement.

I wish Kosmotive continued growth and success in everything. For the next phase of growth, Kosmotive should be reaching out to all districts with a sensitization campaign for KosmoPads, and the benefits of growth of the company.

If I was not working here, I would be struggling with odd jobs here and there. My advice to colleagues is to work together as a team and to understand each other and support each other when needed.



ALICE *MANISHIMWE*

Seamstress

I have been working with Kosmotive for five years and two months, and as we celebrate 10 years of impact, I find myself reflecting on my journey since joining the company. When I started five years ago, I felt less empowered, lacked self-confidence, and struggled with saving money.

Today, I am proud to say that Kosmotive has empowered me, building my confidence and self-belief. When I doubted my ability to produce and distribute pads, Kosmotive showed me that I could. This experience has enabled me to access affordable pads each month without compromising my savings. Looking ahead, I hope to see a growing, passionate team at Kosmotive eager to expand the reach of KosmoPads.

If I were not working here, I would have missed the chance to see the pads I am helping to produce. I wouldn't have developed strong collaboration skills, built my savings, or gained the confidence for public speaking and self-expression. To my colleagues, I would advise unifying helpful ideas and raising awareness about KosmoPads among our friends. Over its 10 years of existence, Kosmotive has positively impacted countless lives and contributed to our country's development. The organization has created jobs, reducing the unemployment rate, and supported students at risk of missing school because they couldn't afford sanitary pads.



ASSOUMPTA *IZERE*

Production manager

I have been working here for two years. Everything is so far so good with me and my job. I am in a position of saving money from my monthly income and studying new skills to support me accomplish my tasks enough and I am happy that I am not unemployed.

In addition to helping women stay healthy and clean during their menstruation, Kosmotive enables saving money easily because one packet of reusable pads can be used throughout two years compared to spending on disposable pads every month. Therefore, spare more money to buy other important things.

It is an honor being one of Kosmotive employees. The advice I can share with my team is with the help of God, let us continue to work hard without looking back. May the Lord guide and support us on our journey.

Because we are providing a great solution for many people, helping some of women achieve their dreams that way we are already heading towards our goals, thank you and happy 10 years of impact and transformation.



Over the course of our journey, we have interacted with numerous organizations with whom we have established mutually-beneficial partnerships. We have also notched up several awards, which are a testimony of some of our achievements and milestones. These include:



HIGH PROFILE AWARDS AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITIONS VALIDATE OUR EFFORTS

**The Youth Connekt Africa
Award 2019 Girls in Innovation**
By UNDP, 2019

**The Invest2Impact Africa as the
Women's Empowerment Award**
By Invest2Impact Africa, 2019

**Young African Leaders Business
Plan Competition Award**
By USADF, 2020

Information Saves Lives Award
By Internews, 2020

**Award through the Social Impact
Incubator Program**
By The Segal Family Foundation, 2021

**Award through the Next Health
Accelerator Program** *By Intrepid
Entrepreneurs Foundation, 2021*

**Award through the rapid response
grant** *by Urgent Action Fund-Africa, 2021*

**Award through the Women
Entrepreneurship for Africa
Program** *By The European Union, 2022*

Business Partnership Facility Award
By The King Baudouin Foundation, 2022

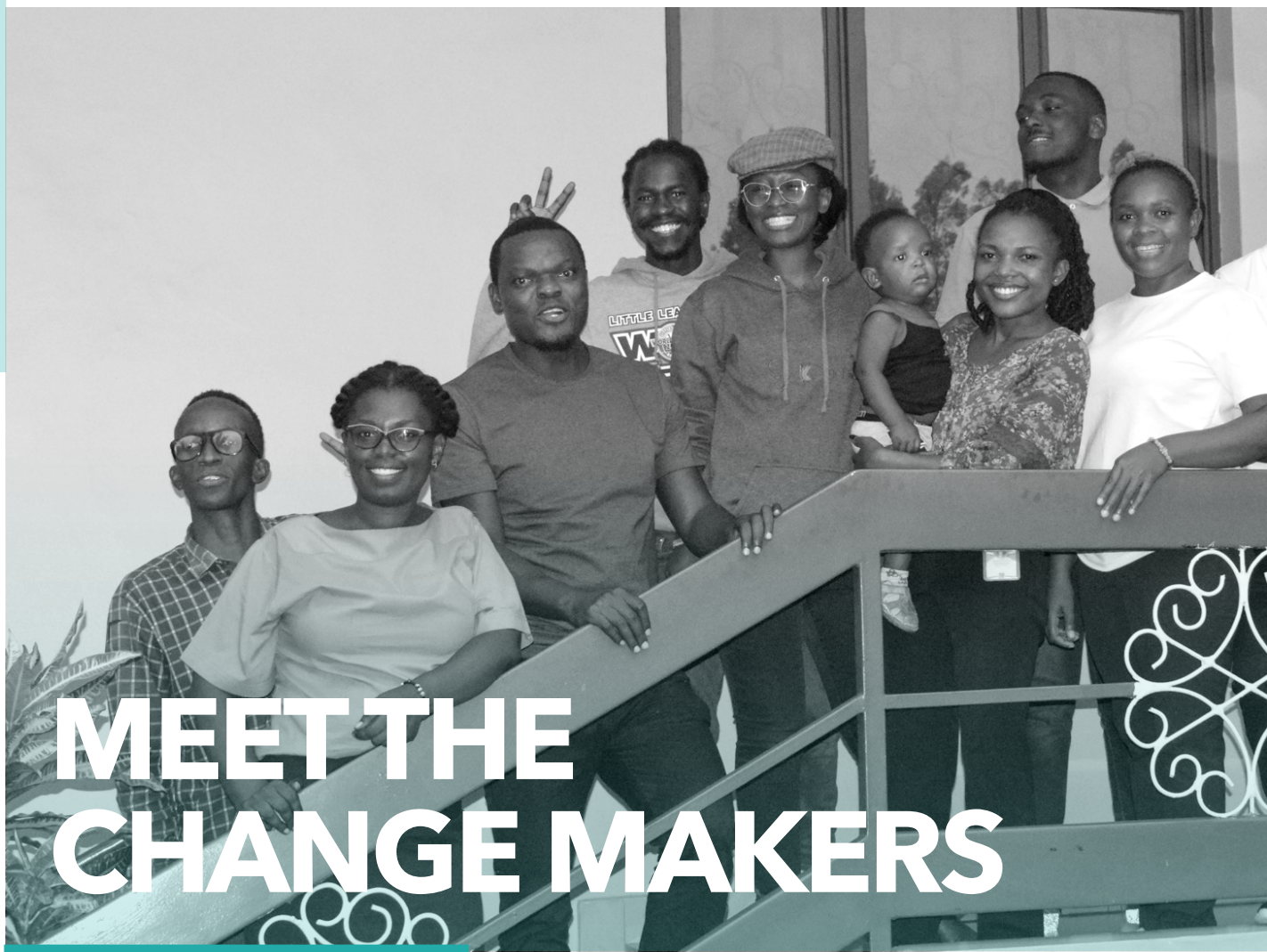
**Award through the Gender Lens
Program** *By Villgro Africa, 2023*

**Award through the Making More
Health Accelerator Program**
By Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim, 2023

**Award through the Making More
Health Scale-up Program**
By Ashoka and Boehringer Ingelheim, 2024

Women Empowerment Award
By the Bayer Foundation, 2024

**Award through the global
innovators Programme**
By The Expo City Dubai Foundation, 2024

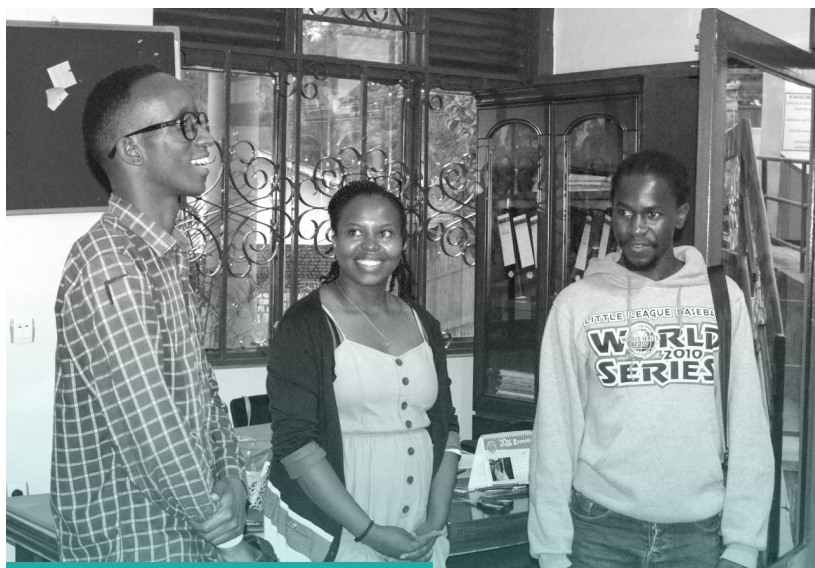


MEET THE CHANGE MAKERS

A couple of weeks back we introduced the “Kosmotive Exchange Learning Program” to foster knowledge sharing and collaboration between changemakers from different countries.

The program presents us with an opportunity to learn from our best practices, engage in discussions, and explore potential partnerships that will enhance provision of health services in the community.





To kick off the program, we hosted a team of six changemakers from East African countries notably Uganda, Kenya, and Rwanda. These changemakers were Kosmotive Exchange Visit Batch 01. They came with different energies, expertise, and commitment, which was a boon to the entire Kosmotive team.

With all these brilliant minds gathered under one roof, we experienced firsthand how Africa's changemakers possess the power to end period poverty and improve access to menstrual, maternal, and child health products and services across rural and urban communities in Rwanda and throughout the continent.

Our vision is a world where every girl and woman has access to reproductive health information and sustainable menstrual hygiene products, and where every parent has access to maternal and child health information and essential healthcare services—achieved through passion, empathy, and creativity.

Kosmotive exchange Learning program



LUWATE MICHAEL MOSES ROMEO

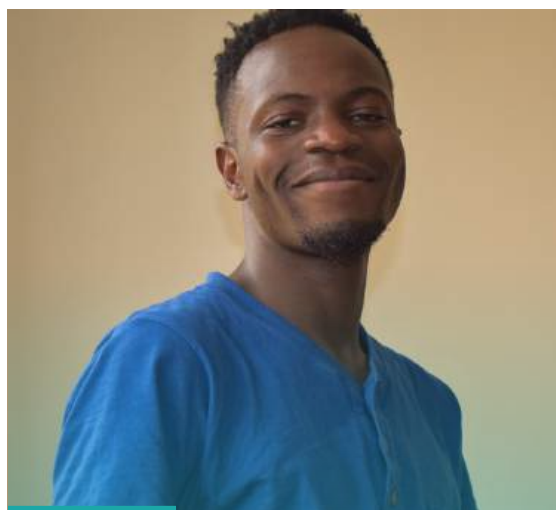
Is a dedicated **social Agripreneur** focusing on improving agricultural practices and climate resilience in Uganda. As the founder of Eco-farm Innovations, he empowers small-holder farmers through sustainable farming methods and financial literacy. Romeo is passionate about creating positive change in his community and fostering environmental sustainability.

During the program, Michael's emphasis on the Kosmotive Exchange Learning Program was an incredible experience. He also had glowing praise for the Kosmotive team's hospitality in Kigali. "We toured various places, enjoyed delicious meals, and gained profound knowledge about menstrual health, the journey, and the process of making reusable pads," he said. "It was a rich learning experience filled with fun and engagement. Thank you Kosmotive for the wonderful opportunity to learn from you."



JOVULEAN ITUNGO

is a **nurse, wife and mother of three**. She is the founder and Chief Executive Officer at JM Medicare. JM Medicare offers medical services and products to communities in Nakifuma-Naggalama town council, Uganda. She is also the founder of Rossana Health Convoy, a social enterprise that supports children's education by tackling issues like Menstrual Hygiene Management. Jovulean is also the co-founder of Sharu Skills Nest, which specializes in training young people in ICT, Tailoring, Agriculture, and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. As a medical professional with a commitment to improving the health sector, being part of the program was a learning experience for her. She also understood how other changemakers deliver solutions in the health sector, and had an opportunity to connect with the staff at Kosmotive.



STEVE MISATI

is a **marine conservationist and climate justice advocate based in Mombasa, Kenya**. He is the founder of Youth Pawa, an organization that works in nature restoration projects, ocean conservation, and community empowerment. He is involved in the ocean space on a wide scope from marine ecosystem restorations, to coral reef conservation, ocean and beach clean-ups, and community empowerment. Tracking his efforts and realizing how big a change he has made keeps him and everyone motivated. While facing challenges that might lower his motivation, he ponders about the difference his efforts make in his community, environment and ocean, and therefore keeps moving.

Speaking about the Kosmotive program, Steve said: "The bar was set high by the Kosmotive team. I cannot wait to learn more, connect in-depth, and have fun as a group. Kudos to the Kosmotive team, and may they continue with the amazing work they are doing for the girl child."



DIMMA MUHAMMED MAWEJJE

is the founder and team lead at **Mawejje Creations, Uganda**. An exceptional visionary leader, Mawejje's social enterprise is revolutionizing the fashion industry in Uganda by using plant-based substances and textile waste in the fashion industry.

This promotes sustainable and circular fashion practices. Mawejje is also a remarkable speaker, facilitator, content creator, passionate writer and communicator. He is the co-founder of Commune Fabric, which connects designers and creatives with sustainable textile solutions. Additionally, he is a former advisory board member at Because Accelerator & ICT4Education, and a trainer/facilitator at Kyusa - an organization that empowers young people to create sustainable livelihoods.

He says the opportunity to visit Kosmotive opened doors to the next level of growth. "This was determined on the very first visit, which happened when we came to the CXC Homecoming event, which was hosted by Joseph Kagabo.

Fast-forward, engaging with the entire team was massive. Everything was right where I wanted it to be, from production to administration, welfare and coordination," he says. Mawejje adds that the Kigali night-life was memorable with a variety of culinary delights at his disposal. Such included Pilau and Musazza. "This program should be opened to different changemakers from different countries across the world so as to foster collaboration, trust and wellbeing," he concludes.



NAKALEMA PHIONAH

is a **social worker, entrepreneur, and a founder of Reach Her There**, a Uganda-based organization that champions for the interests of the girlchild.

"As someone who has encountered numerous challenges on the path to success, my experience at Kosmotive inspired me. In each team member, I saw unity and selflessness, a welcoming and loving spirit," she says. "I noticed that as a director/founder, one does not have to be feared by employees.

One only requires to be respected and loved. Every activity we explored during our visit at Kosmotive was good."

The
journey of
self-mastery
begins with
learning....

FELICITATIONS



“Blandine Umuziranenge is a true all-rounder. In her company Kosmotive, she has used all her knowledge and skills to promote the health of young girls and women during their most sensitive phases.”

STAY Alliance, Germany

“The realisation that 18% of girls are missing school because they don’t have access to period products inspired Umuziranenge to put her fashion design skills to good use and experiment with making reusable period pads out of fabric, which can last for two years.”

– Imagine 5

“Kosmotive not only addresses the stigma surrounding menstruation but also empowers women economically. By involving women in the production and sale of reusable sanitary pads, Kosmotive fosters a sense of pride and power among its beneficiaries.”

– Arizona State University

“Kosmotive supports good health and well-being by giving women sustainable menstrual hygiene products as well as generating income from improving other women’s health. So far, Kosmotive has improved the health of 120,760 women.”

– Sustainable Earth

“In less than 10 years, the company aims to expand its initiative to all of Rwanda, Africa and even the world. KosmoPads contribute significantly to various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Especially SDG3 (health and well-being), SDG4 (decent education), SDG5 (gender equality), SDG8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG12 (responsible consumption and production).”

– Kingdom of Belgium

“Blandine’s passion for improving reproductive, maternal, and child health in Rwanda and across Africa is truly inspiring! Through the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme, Blandine’s business has flourished, accessing additional funding and technical support opportunities that have propelled her mission forward”

– Tony Elumelu Foundation

“Her initiative has provided over 65,000 schoolgirls in the districts of Gicumbi, Rulindo, and Rutsiro with reusable pads in the past two years. This has enabled them to attend school regularly without feeling self-conscious or embarrassed during their periods.”

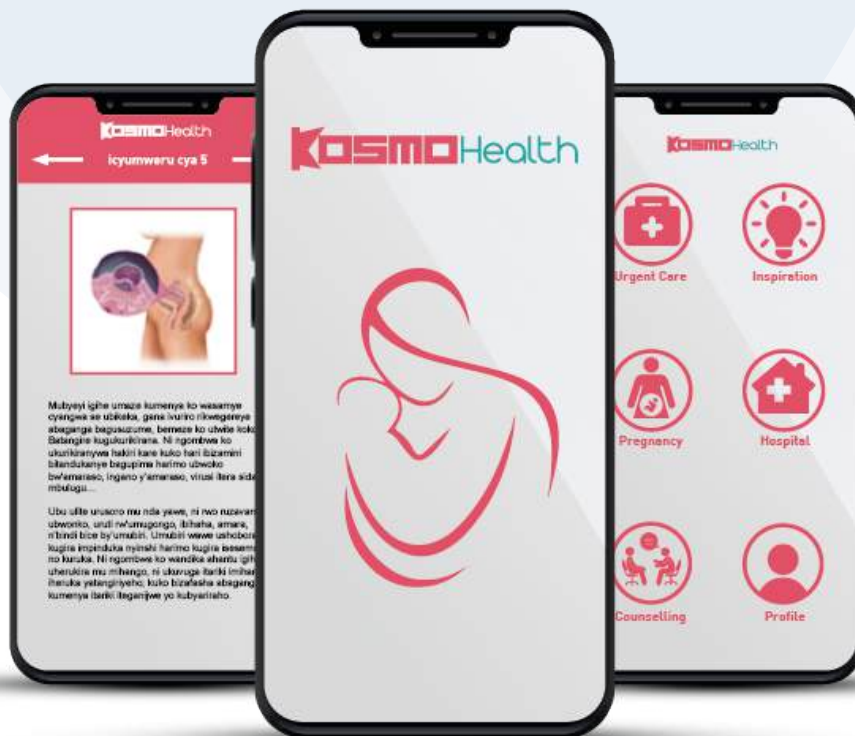
– Rwanda Today

KOSMO Health PLATFORM

A mobile resource for Menstruating girls and women, Pregnant women, and individuals seeking urgent care and home-based Healthcare services. The App allows users to book for remote consultation, and to register at any point in their pregnancy and receive advice and alert messages related to their pregnancy term

KOSMO Health HELPLINE

A toll free helpline for first aid support, advice for safe pregnancy, safe birth and child development, and access to home-based antenatal care



Before you Go

When you hear Kosmotive, think about a solution that's working to promote Menstrual Freedom for Girls and Women in Africa.

Kosmotive is a social enterprise I founded in 2014 to improve Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health in Rwanda and throughout Africa. Our goals include the provision of access to menstrual, maternal and child health information and self-care products, as well as sensitizing about breaking the stigma around menstruation to ensure that no one is held back because they menstruate.

Through Cosmos Magazine, KosmoHealth App and Help-line, empowering parents and girls through KosmoWearables (collections of maternity and nursing wear for empowering parents and enabling breastfeeding), as well as manufacturing and distributing KosmoPads (reusable sanitary pads for investing in girl's education, women's health and the planet, one pad at a time), Kosmotive promotes Feminine Freedom despite the Flow.

We strive to end period poverty since about 2 million girls and women in Rwanda miss school or work because they can't afford to buy menstrual products. This amounts to a potential GDP loss of \$215 per woman every year in our country.

This same issue of period poverty affects 1 out of 4 girls and women in sub-Saharan Africa, or 128 million girls who miss school each month due to period poverty. Even those who can access period products only have access to poor quality pads that are bad for the environment – 1 disposable pad pollutes our planet as much as 4 plastic bags.

We still need to make 10 times our current impact to close the gap of period poverty in Rwanda, and about 100 times to make it across Africa... the more you join us in investing in girls' education, women's health, and the planet, the sooner we can close this gap together, one pad at a time!

We manufacture KosmoPads: eco-friendly, cost-effective, reusable sanitary pads that last for 2 years to provide underprivileged girls the ability to stay in school the whole year without missing classes during their periods, saving the planet from the effects of disposable pads as we improve women's health, and for young women and girls working in our factory to not only discuss their challenges about menstruation but also learn how to be part of the solution. As girls and women break the silence about menstruation and benefit financially from making and selling pads, they come to see their periods as a source of pride and power.

Since its launch we've reached 300k girls with our KosmoPads dignity kits preventing the use of 150 million disposable pads, which is equivalent to the pollution from 600 million plastic bags; or 3,600 tons of plastic.



CELEBRATING OUR SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS OVER THE PAST DECADE



HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF KEY SUPPORTERS

PERIOD OF FFF

- Jeanne D'Arc Usanase
- Donatha Nzitakuze

2014 CORE PEOPLE

- Ngarambe François-Xavier
- Theo Gakire
- Meilleur Murindabigwi

COSMOS MAGAZINE TEAM

- Felicien Gapfizi
- Abdulkalim Biseruka
- Saidath Murorunkwere
- Epaphrodite Ndungutse
- Deogratias Nzaramyimana

SEWING TUTOR

- Deogratias Ndindiriyimana

TECH2EMPOWER VOLUNTEER TEAM

- Alice Uwinema
- Christine Uwamariya
- Gatesi Jeanne Françoise

FIRST PERMANENT TEAM

- Alice Manishimwe
- Delphine Yankurije
- Diane Mukarukundo
- Opportune Uwacu Tumukunde
- Jeanne Francine Mujawimana
- Ange Iradukunda
- Yvonne Uwamahoro
- Edith Umuhoza

ROYAL VOLUNTEERS

Alice Uwinema
Suavis Christelle Iradukunda

ROYAL SUPPORTERS

- Remy Akuzwe
- Olivier Ingabire
- Mariette Mukarusine
- Marc Uwizeye (Rocky)
- Jean Jacques Mutabaruka

TECH2EMPOWER ADVISOR FIRST PATRON

- Jenna McGraw

PHOTO GALLERY

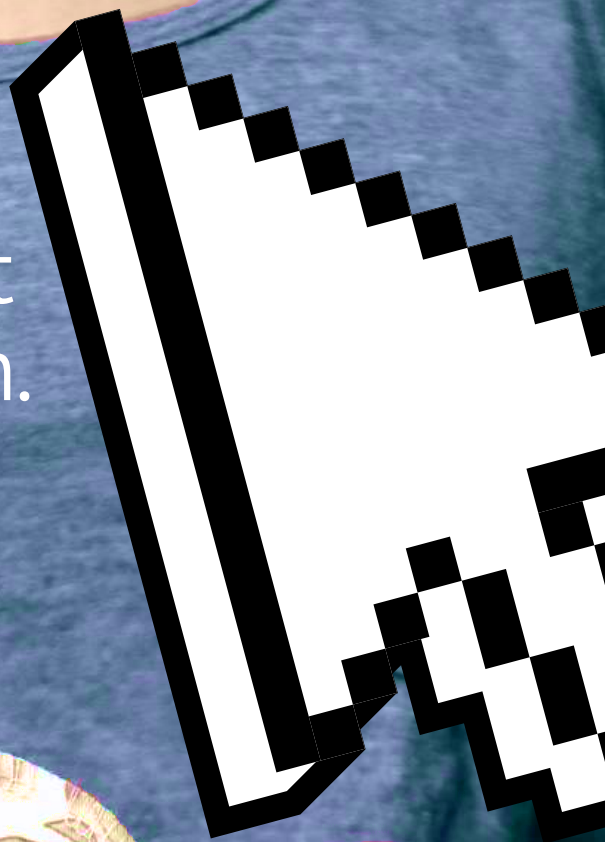







PHOTO GALLERY





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www.kosmotive.rw
and witness the great
strides we have taken.



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KOSMOTIVE
+250788536350
+250786305924
info@kosmotive.rw
www.kosmotive.rw