MTN Rwandacell PLC (MTN Rwanda) in partnership with Inkomoko Entrepreneur Development (Inkomoko), has announced the top three Level Up Your Biz winners which coincided with the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW).

The top 3 businesses including Smart Class, The HappyNes and Urukundo Initiative walked away with Rwf1,000,000 each and were among the six businesses selected in June 2021 that underwent a 5-month accelerator business skills training.

Earlier this year, MTN Rwanda collaborated with Inkomoko to launch Level Up Your Biz to support youth-led businesses on their entrepreneurship journey in capacity building. This initiative, underpinned by MTN Rwanda's digital ambition, aimed to equip e-commerce businesses with practical knowledge and skills that will strengthen their innovative capabilities amidst an evolving digital world.

The multi-faceted Level Up Your Biz program also offered the entrepreneurs an opportunity to interact with industry experts via webinars, provided them with communication essentials and visibility of their businesses on MTN Rwanda's platforms.

During the awarding ceremony on Wednesday 10th November 2021, Mark Nkurunziza, MTN Rwanda's Chief Financial Officer congratulated winners and commended Inkomoko for provided support.

"It has been a long journey for these participants, and we are pleased to see the top 3 entrepreneurs emerging as the winners of our Level Up Your Biz program. In this ever-evolving world, digitalization has proved to fast-track business growth resulting in healthier margins and solid profits. We are also grateful to Inkomoko for their partnership in accelerating these businesses, further contributing to the development of the private sector," he said.

Following the competitive accelerator training, the three businesses scored between 1 to 5 on individual sub metrics:

- The business' financial management.
- The business' growth opportunity in term of market and current sales.
- The business usage of the consulting tools provided to professionalize the business and their involvement in the program.
- How the business is applying the learnings for their growth.
- Overall pitch presentation.

- The business’ long-term plan.

Commenting on the development; Sara Leedom, Inkomoko’s Chief Operating Officer said: “The most exciting part of this experience, for us at Inkomoko, has been connecting with these young Rwandan entrepreneurs, who are embracing innovation and adapting to digital solutions. Throughout the program, they have indeed leveled up and we are proud of their progress and their willingness to take on new challenges. Our partnership with MTN Rwanda has ensured that entrepreneurs grow even further in terms of their digital skills and knowledge by equipping them with business management skills and digital tools.”

The top 3 businesses span various sectors, from education to health and fashion.

Smart Class, led by Niyonizeye Abdulrahman, is an e-learning platform that connects students to mentors and provides them with an e-library for research.

Urukundo Initiative, led by Mick Ndashimiye, sells licensed health education board games that educate young people on sexual reproductive health and rights.

The HappyNes, led by Aline Uwase, is a retail business that sells leather bags, shoes online for international export and through Sunday market events they organize.

Speaking on his experience, Niyonizeye Abdulrahman, Smart Class’ Founder voiced appreciation to MTN and Inkomoko for ther support paving the way for his business to thrive.

“During the pandemic, we really struggled to get our business off the ground however with this win and the wealth of knowledge we have gained from the trainings offered by Inkomoko and MTN Rwanda, we have the tools to succeed. We are really grateful to Inkomoko and MTN Rwanda for their support and hope to partner with them in the future,” he said.

In closing, Nkurunziza highlighted that it is of great to see the top businesses emerge from various industries.

He encouraged Smart Class, The HappyNes and Urukundo Initiative to continue to be innovative and open minded and build their networks for the advancement of their respective sectors and country at large.

MTN Rwandacell PLC (MTN Rwanda) is the market leader in mobile

telecommunications in Rwanda. Since 1998, we have continuously invested in expanding and modernising our footprint and are the country’s No 1 network.

MTN Rwanda offers various innovative services to consumers and enterprises, including personalised voice, data, home and fixed connectivity solutions. The company is also the front runner in Mobile Financial Services in Rwanda delivered through its FinTech.