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Heifer Rwanda Launches the 2026 AYuTE Challenge with RWF 65 million for Youth-Led Agritech Solutions

Heifer International Rwanda has officially launched the **2026 AYuTE Challenge Rwanda**, inviting young Rwandan innovators to transform the country's agriculture sector through technology-enabled solutions. Building on the success of previous editions, the 2026 Challenge raises the stakes with a total cash prize of **RWF 65 million**, up from **RWF 50 million in 2025**, alongside tailored business development support and mentorship.

The AYuTE (Agriculture, Youth, and Technology) Challenge is Heifer International's flagship youth agritech innovation program. It is designed to identify and support scalable, youth-led enterprises that respond to challenges faced by smallholder farmers. Through innovation-driven solutions, the Challenge promotes increased productivity, higher farmer incomes, and stronger resilience across agricultural value chains.

As the Challenge enters its 2026 edition, it builds on a proven record of impact. Previous cohorts of innovators leveraged AYuTE support to strengthen operations, refine business models, expand market reach, and create jobs. The decision to increase the prize pool this year reflects both the growing ambition of youth-led agribusinesses in Rwanda and Heifer International's commitment to accelerating their growth and long-term impact.

The experience of past participants highlights what is possible through the Challenge. Reflecting on her journey, **Mugeni Niyidukunda, First Runner-Up** of the AYuTE Challenge 2025 and founder of Avocare Ltd—a Rwandan company producing premium, cold-pressed extra virgin avocado oil, and avocado-based products—shared how AYuTE support unlocked critical growth opportunities:

*"The AYuTE Grant has been a transformative catalyst for Avocare Ltd. It enabled us to expand our production and storage facilities, increasing our avocado intake capacity from **two** tons per day to between **six and ten** tons per day. The support also allowed us to establish a modern factory capable of processing up to five tons per day, create more than **thirty** jobs for youth and women, and strengthen partnerships with over **300** avocado farmers nationwide."*



Similarly, **Tresor Gashonga**, Founder and CEO of Incuti Foods and **winner** of the AYuTE Challenge 2025, described how targeted investment translated directly into measurable business growth:

*“The RWF 25 million AYuTE Fund investment was a momentous change for Incuti Foods. It enabled us to increase production capacity from **5,000 to 30,000** bottles per month, expand our customer base from **70 to 100** grocery stores, grow smallholder farmer partnerships from **50 to 100**, and create **18** new jobs mainly for youth.”*

Taken together, these success stories underscore the broader impact of the AYuTE Challenge. Commenting on the launch of the 2026 edition, Verena Ruzibuka, Country Director of Heifer International Rwanda, emphasized both the results achieved so far and the opportunity ahead:

*“The growth journeys of innovators like Mugeni and Tresor demonstrate the real, measurable impact the AYuTE Challenge delivers, scaling production, creating jobs, strengthening farmer partnerships, and building resilient agribusinesses. By increasing the total cash prize to **RWF 65 million** this year, we are raising the bar for what young innovators can achieve. We encourage ambitious youth with innovative solutions to the smallholder farmers’ farming systems to apply and be part of Rwanda’s next generation of agritech leaders.”*

Who Can Apply

The 2026 AYuTE Challenge Rwanda is open to youth-led local startups and innovators. Applicants must be aged **18–35**, based in Rwanda, and have developed a technology-enabled solution that addresses challenges faced by smallholder farmers and has strong scalability potential.

How to Apply

Interested innovators can apply online via the official application link: [Here](#)

Applications are now open and will close on 27 February 2026.

Media Contact

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