

## PROECCO

### Promoting Off-farm Employment and Income in the Great Lakes Region through Climate Responsive Construction Material Production

#### Project description

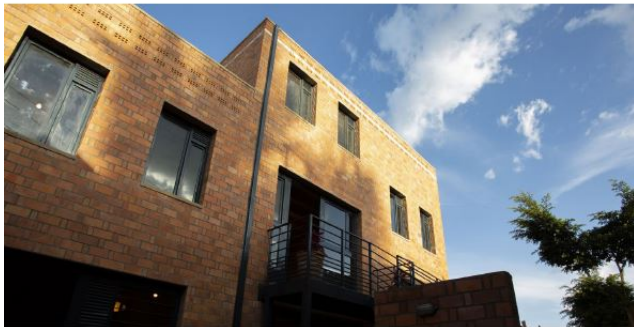
Since 2013, Skat has been implementing the PROECCO project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Rwanda, Burundi and the South Kivu region of the DRC. The overall goal of the project is to create off-farm jobs and increase income for rural youths through the production of environmentally-friendly and socially-sound Modern Bricks, blocks and tiles, thereby supporting the growth of the construction sector as a driver of economic development and rapid urban growth of the main cities in the region.

The year 2018 was a game changer for PROECCO. Following the successful launch of affordable housing prototype made of Modern Bricks in 2017, an 8-in-1 affordable urban housing demonstration block was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Switzerland in the suburb of Kigali City and received a warm reception by government institutions seeking an affordable and land-optimised solution for informal settlements in the cities. It was welcomed also by the housing market and by private and public investors.

74 construction projects using Modern Bricks as well as the Rowlock Bond (RLB) technology promoted as a parasitic and cost-efficient construction method have been launched and more than 270 apartment units have been built to date. These projects created more than 4,700 jobs in Rwanda only in 2018. The spontaneous reaction of investors and urban planners was made possible thanks to the civil engineers, architects, and technicians trained by PROECCO.

Furthermore, PROECCO continues to promote a shift in brickyard owners' mind from a backyard business to a more entrepreneurial approach. The idea of optimising market opportunities, minimising risk, and improving products is still rather new to the sector in the region. PROECCO managed to create a group of pioneers over the last five years. Now is the time to scale up the quality and quantity of production in order to multiply the intended impact for future generations in a self-sustainable manner. The journey of industry transformation has only just started.

For more information, please contact Fatou Dieye@skat.ch, Daniel Wjstojak@skat.ch or Juerg Christen@skat.ch or visit <http://skat.ch/portfolio-item/the-proecco-programme/>



Skat developed highly functional housing designs in a simple, rational and elegant shape, made of high quality material. The so called Swiss Cube is a housing block which can fit on a 20m x 20m plot.

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#### Cost-efficient production of modern bricks and employment opportunities

"After nearly five years, I am proud to see that Modern Bricks finally receive recognition as a cost-efficient walling material for housing construction; many people have adopted the technology." More importantly, Nicole argues, the people whom we trained in brick production and construction skills have consistently found jobs and remain employed. "It is very encouraging and rewarding and I feel honored to see them working in decent, well-paid jobs". Thanks to those who committed to their production, the market for Modern Bricks is steadily growing across our entire intervention zone.



Nicole Niwe, Leader of the Technology and Labour Group and team member of PROECCO

#### Alexandre started working in the brick sector after he participated in the brick production and mechanical training organised by PROECCO

Alexandre BIZIMANA, a 26 years old from Rutsiro district, Rwanda is the youngest of 6 brothers and sisters. He lives with his mother and his elder sister. His mother cultivates beans, banana, maize, sweet potatoes, and colocase (taro potato). He has been working on the production of Modern Bricks since he first participated in the brick production and mechanical training organised by PROECCO in 2014.

The basic mechanical engineering training from his technical high school enabled him to build up his skills in a niche of the building material sector. His diligence also helped him find work in several brickyards as a reliable support to the production line. He acquired brick molding skills, quality assurance, and experience in the maintenance and operation of machines used at the brickyards. While supporting his mother and siblings, he managed to save money and pursued his studies in mechanics. Currently he is employed in the first test case of on-site brick production for a construction project as a field team leader with 9 technical mobile team members. He is waiting to receive his advanced diploma in mechanics in June 2019.



Alexandre Bizimana during his work as a field team leader.

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Caption:

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