

Annual Impact Report 2024-2025



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1. Introduction

Throughout 2024-2025, Rwanda Action has continued to build on its strong foundation of community-driven development in the districts of Rusizi and Nyamasheke in Rwanda's Western Province. Guided by our mission to alleviate poverty and promote inclusion, we have deepened our engagement with local communities and government organisations while working towards expanding the reach and effectiveness of our programmes.

Our three pillars of focus remain central to our approach.

1. Effective education in state schools through teacher training and continuous professional development
2. Poverty relief in communities through training and equipping associations of farmers and enterprise groups of young, unemployed people
3. The education, training and support of children and young adults with disability.

This report shows measurable progress, with increased participation across all areas; in teachers trained through CPD, growing numbers of small businesses launched through our enterprise initiatives, and improvements for people living with disability in family homes, in state schools, and through workplace opportunities.

Organisationally, Rwanda Action has continued to evolve. Following the leadership transitions in 2023, our management teams in the UK and Rwanda have worked collaboratively to embed a culture of development and accountability. Reviewing our

policies and safeguarding procedures strengthened our operations, and our certificate of registration from the Rwandan government, until the end of 2026, affirms the value and legitimacy of our work. We continue to explore the best way of moving the charity forward to ensure its long-term impact and sustainability locally.

This report demonstrates the positive impact of project delivery and also of strategic reflection and growth. We are proud of what has been achieved and grateful for the partnerships, local and international, that make our work possible.

2. Mission

To relieve poverty by empowering communities

3. Approach

We work closely with local communities and authorities in South-West Rwanda to identify the most pressing challenges. We then work collaboratively to devise and pilot solutions to those challenges that are so effective that they are adopted and replicated by the local and national government. Consequently, from relatively modest investment, we are able to achieve a very considerable and lasting impact.

4. Funding

July 1st, 2024, to June 30th 2025	
Income	£202 859
Expenditure	£237 129
Balance	£146 855



5. Our year in numbers

Building Communities



139
young people trained
and supported
across 19 enterprises



14,000
saplings distributed
to communities and
farm association



267
Farm Association
members
First hybrid milking goats born



2 new School
Vegetable
Gardens
ensured no child
went hungry

Inclusion



1,000
teachers trained on
classroom inclusion

45

young people
with disabilities
supported with
residential care
and training



18 new
SENCOs
trained

Education



18
Lead
Teachers,
trained



400
school-based
mentors, who
trained...



2,000+
teachers to
improve
teaching for...



200,000
students



118% average increase in exam results
in TLI schools after 3 years.

6. Building Communities

We believe poverty relief programmes are more efficient and sustainable when they are tailored to the needs of local communities. Building Communities is a pilot initiative designed to empower communities to do just that.

We work with small administrative areas called 'Cells'. These are areas of four or five villages and around 4,000 people. Each has its own administrative structure, making them ideal for us to:

1. Co-design a bespoke set of interventions that are best suited to the needs of the community.
2. Establish a clear baseline to measure the success of the interventions.

Collaborating with district officials, we identified and began working in the cells with the highest proportion of people living below the poverty line in both Nyamasheke and Rusizi.

To do this the trial focuses on developing three different areas of work:

1. Farm Associations – to increase food security and incomes. These support younger farmers, especially single mothers. Members are trained for six months in organic farming and livestock care, given a goat, and they establish a kitchen garden at each member's house.

2. Enterprise Groups – to build employment opportunities and incomes. These support young, unemployed people to learn vocational skills with six months of training followed by support to develop their business.

3. Community Projects – to promote sustainable communities. These additional initiatives are tailored to the specific needs of each cell and include elements such as school kitchen gardens, drinking water provision and tree nurseries.



MONITORING

In 2022, at the outset of the project, we set baseline data through a survey of around 200 of the poorest representatives of the cells, assessing living conditions based on 10 key elements of the Grameen Out of Poverty Indicators (a set of measures which indicate poverty levels). These are used to track progress.

The trial started at the beginning of 2022. The aim is to cover six cells by the end of 2026. In 2025, we began working in our fourth cell, Gasayo, whilst maintaining our work in three others: Kinyaga, Save, and Rugabano.



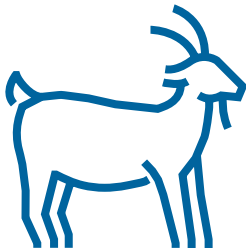
Quality of Housing especially roofing



Ownership of beds, mattresses and mosquito nets



Establishment of productive kitchen gardens



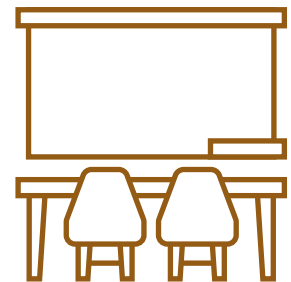
Ownership of livestock



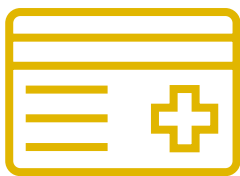
Paid employment



Access to clean water



Children's access to early learning and schooling



Access to Mutuelle Health Insurance



Access to a sanitary latrine



Care and Inclusion of children with disabilities in their homes, in schools and in the workplace

Our team regularly follows-up and reports on progress, working closely with local leaders. This allows us to identify and overcome challenges within the community, while providing evidence that our initiatives are benefiting these communities.

FARM ASSOCIATIONS

The benefits of the farm association model have been growing year-on-year. To date, 267 members have been trained in organic farming, crop rotation, and care of livestock.

The associations save income collectively, allowing them to invest in more farmland and to increase their financial security. Combined, the farm associations have saved over Rwf 8 million (£4,500) up to 2025, and generated over Rwf 4 million (£2,500) of income from livestock alone. This income means the members can afford crucial health insurance and can better support their families.

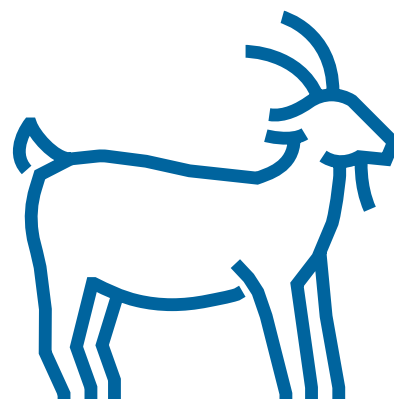
THE DAIRY GOAT PROJECT

Since 2022 we have been working to introduce dairy goats to Rwanda, starting in Save Cell. This industry is underdeveloped in Rwanda. Yet dairy goat herds could make a substantial impact on poverty, thanks to their nutritious and valuable milk and meat, as well as their relative simplicity to farm. It is a key element of our plan to develop sustainable organic farming associations.

We sourced dairy bucks (male goats), which are very rare in Rwanda, to breed with local goats. We want to produce hybrid goats, which yield high quantities of milk and produce more valuable meat.

In the five Farming Associations in Save Cell, the 61 farmers were each given a doe, which they mated with a pedigree Sanaan dairy goat buck, producing 50/50 dairy goats. This year we have started the process of breeding these 50/50 goats to produce kids which have a higher proportion of dairy goat genes.

Breeding takes time. We need to gradually increase the proportion of dairy genes in the goats without over-relying on the same males. By the end of 2026 we expect that our farmers will be able to milk their own goats.



ENTERPRISE GROUPS

We have trained over 200 young people since the programme started and supported them to form 20 enterprise groups across a range of skills from carpentry to baking. Maintaining the groups' momentum has proved more challenging than anticipated, but we are learning quickly. The most significant challenge has been in retaining members. Each group now maintains a smaller core membership of 139 dedicated members across the groups.

We have learnt that smaller enterprise groups are likely to be more effective, and that we need to adapt our selection process to better ensure we select the young people who have the drive and determination to succeed. We are offering additional training and support to our established groups to help them flourish and are reviewing how we invest in enterprise groups in the future.



TUGANEHEZA

Started in 2024, The Tuganeheza Sewing Group in Save Cell has five members, and this year they generated hundreds of pounds worth of income, despite having two of their five sewing machines stolen soon after they completed training.

Undeterred, the group has invested in additional skills training and they have plans to obtain two more machines to bring them back to full capacity, as well as using their income to invest in further business and marketing training.



“I used to spend my days making charcoal in the village... I live alone with my child, struggling to provide for us...I joined the welding group and said to myself, ‘I will work with others and make doors and other items for people.’ I’m grateful for the knowledge I’ve gained and I promise to work hard with my peers so we can improve our lives.”

- Diane, president of the Umurava welding group

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

WATER POINTS

Two new, free water points have been established in the villages of Gitwa and Muganza, in Gasayo Cell. The Villages told us that accessing clean drinking water was a challenge because nearby clean supplies cost money, pushing people to use unclean water sources. We reconstructed 2 water points which pipe clean ground water to 242 households and established a mixed-gender community management committee.



“On behalf of the village leadership and all residents, I would like to thank our development partner, Rwanda Action...especially for the reconstruction of Mikungu water point. Today, our people are able to fetch clean water, and we are truly grateful.”

- Ngirinshuti Protogene, the village leader of Gitwa

TUZAMURANE MUHINZI TREE NURSERY

In Kinyanga Cell we worked with the local government to set up the Tuzamurane Muhinzi Tree Nursery, which produced 16,000 seedlings this year. Over 14,000 of these were distributed to the community to provide food, promote soil retention and give shade, which are crucial for the sustainability of the farmland in the hilly landscape.



SCHOOL VEGETABLE GARDENS

In Gasyao we have created two school vegetable garden programmes, at Kanyinya and Rubona Primary schools. We found that one third of children at these schools could not afford lunch. The gardens harvested enough to ensure that all the students can be fed. The harvests continued to be sold over the summer holidays, helping make the gardens sustainable.

“Kanyinya Primary school had a small plot which was able to produce one week’s worth of vegetables each term. Through Rwanda Action’s support, we have more land, which will give vegetables for the whole term. It is great help, which will improve children health and school performance.”

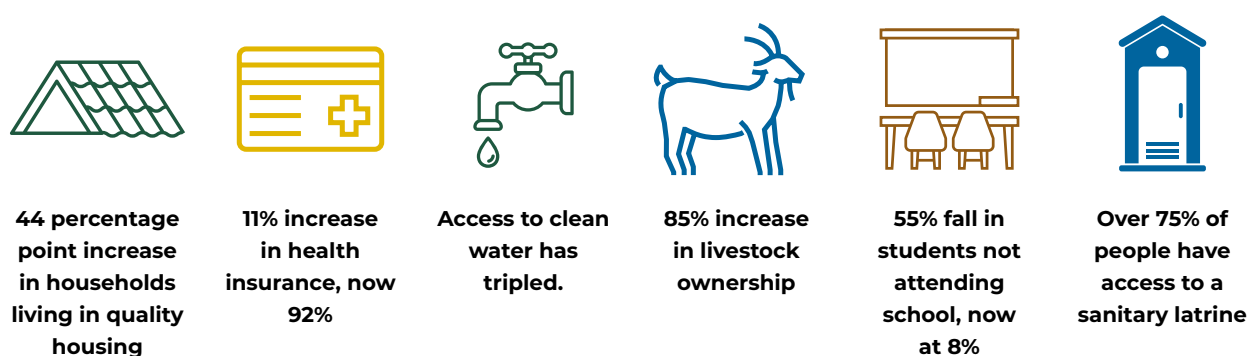
- Director of EP Kanyinya

PROGRESS AGAINST THE GRAMEEN POVERTY RELIEF INDICATORS

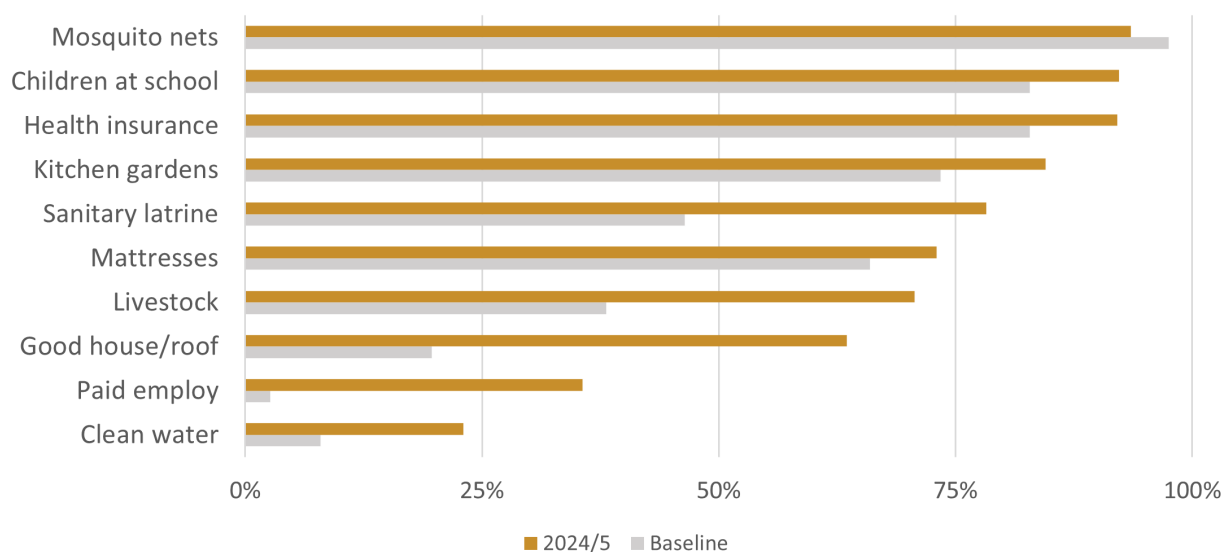
Our aim is that these actions, from tree nurseries and clean water, to upskilling young people, supporting entrepreneurship, and growing more food sustainably, will each play a small part in increasing the improvement of the prosperity of the cells as a whole, one which is greater than the sum of its parts. And, through the Grameen Poverty Relief Indicators, we have started to see early signs of exactly this.

This random selection of around 200 households in the three villages of Kinyaga, Save and Rugubano shows significant progress.

In each cell, the driving force of the improvement has been the quality of the house and roof rising by 44 percentage points, and the number of households with people in paid employment jumping by 33 percentage points to 36%. Additionally, ownership of livestock, and access to clean water and a sanitary latrine play an important role in this. In some areas, such as improved employment and access to livestock, improvements may relate to direct action taken by us. However, improvements in homes and sanitation are early indicators that wider impact is emerging within the cells where we operate.



Percentage of Kinyanga, Save and Rugubano Households Reporting Access to Grameen Indicators in 2022 (baseline) and 2025



We are excited by these early positive indicators, but the crucial aspect is the longer-term trends, and we will continue to monitor these as the Building Communities Programme develops.

7. Inclusion

Rwanda Action is developing a framework for the inclusion of children and young people with disability in the home, in school and in the workplace. Our aim is for this framework to be so effective it will provide a template for effective inclusion nationwide.

THE HOME

We deliver wrap-around training for caregivers of disabled children. This is centred around supporting the family to understand the disability, and to develop strategies to support and include the child. The training also supports the child's teachers to develop inclusive teaching methods and later follows up with families to check on their progress at home.

In 2025 we trained 11 families at our residential training centre in Rusizi.

“The skills we got from your training are incredible. It has... changed the way we teach and treat students with disabilities. Now inclusion is our key mission in our school.”

- SNECO teacher

THE SCHOOL

We want children with disabilities to be included in mainstream schools, providing them with an education that meets their needs and abilities.

SNECO

This year we have selected and trained a further 18 Special Needs Education Coordinators (SNECO) in Rusizi, meeting our target to train one SNECO in each of the 33 sectors across the two districts.

SNECOs are responsible for promoting effective inclusion in the schools in their respective sectors, supported with careful training and monitoring, understanding disability, inclusive education, differentiated teaching and basic classroom sign-language.

We are proud of our SNECO teachers. In the past year, SNECOs in Rusizi have gone on to deliver training to over 1,000 teachers and other staff across their respective schools, upskilling them in approaches to inclusive education. These teachers are responsible for educating over 100,000 students.



SNECOs in training at Butabamo



learning sign language

JB is a deaf primary school student in Gikundamvura, Rusizi district. He can lipread but made little progress at school and was often in trouble. Teachers thought he was disobedient and stubborn.

In October, one of JB's teachers attended our special needs training. He learned strategies for communicating with deaf children, using images and sign language, classroom adaptation, and how to use differentiated teaching in mainstream class.

The teacher shared his training with other teachers at the school. JB now sits at the front row in class; his teachers use signing and visual aids.

JB started participating in class and this year achieved grades among the highest in his class.

SESNIE

SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

We have also created our first three **SESNIEs**. We are working with authorities to see one SESNIE in each of 33 sectors.

The staff in these schools will receive special training including sign language support, and the schools will be accessible, including the toilet facilities.

Having successfully trialled our first SESNIE at St Bernadette School in Ntendezi, adjacent to the Alivera Centre, we won the approval and admiration of the Rwanda Education Board.

In Nyamasheke we worked with St. Catherine's Primary School in Kagano to create one of our first SESNIE schools in the district, thanks to significant support from a generous donation by Loveaid Foundation, South Korea.



We have created three new SESNIEs this year, one in Nyamasheke and two in Rusizi.



The road to the school was not accessible



Steps were a significant access issue for many classrooms

The road to the school was not accessible, as you can see (above), and steps were also common around classrooms. This year we started work by improving walkways and building access ramps into classrooms. The school still needs some further modification, but the progress has been rapid.



Improved walkways around the school site

SPECIAL UNITS

We have built three **Special Units**, including one at our new SESNIE school at St. Catherine's, for children whose intellectual disabilities prevent them from coping with mainstream classes.

This is a smaller class, taught by a specially trained teacher and following a modified curriculum. Our aim is for most of these students to attain sufficient skills to enable further vocational training, leading to paid employment and a more independent life. For those children unable to achieve this, our aim is that they are better equipped to contribute to home life.



The Special Unit classroom has been constructed, the toilets have been renovated, and new rainwater collection has been installed.



The classroom opened in September with a government-funded trained Special Unit teacher now in post.

BENITA

Seven-year-old Benita is a St. Catherine's student. Her physical disability made it hard for her to navigate between classrooms, with steep steps and narrow hallways. Requiring assistance affected her confidence and independence. Participating in group sports and exercise was also challenging because of these barriers. She often had to sit on the sidelines and watch her classmates, leaving her frustrated and excluded.



AUGUSTIN

At 11 years old, Augustin lives close to St. Catherine's, but is unable to attend school. Like dozens of other children in his area, he needs ramps, accessible toilets and an accessible classroom. His family are eager for him to have the opportunity to learn and grow.

The new Special Unit will change all of this. Once open, he will be able to attend school and fully participate in the education he deserves.



We also created new Special Unit facilities in time for the new academic year at Pera Primary School, Bugarama (above), and at Rwahi. They were built in time for the new term in September.

We want our inclusive education to act as a template for schools across Rusizi and Nyamasheke, and ultimately across Rwanda, as it seeks to achieve its Inclusive Education 2050 ambition. We are proud that the Rwanda Board of Basic Education has already recognised the significance of our work.

This year they sent us a letter to commend our work, not just on inclusive education, but all of our education programmes. We are incredibly honoured and will continue to strive for this shared goal.

“Rwanda Action is currently developing an effective framework for inclusive education, which shows great promise as a model... for replication beyond Rusizi and Nyamasheke”

- Dr N. Mbarushimana
Director General, REB



THE WORKPLACE

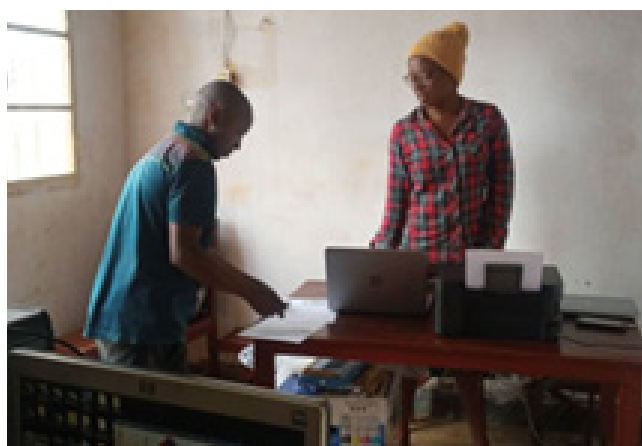
Rwanda Action's aim is always to offer support that will one day not be needed. The Alivera Village is no exception. It is home to the Alivera Centre, which offers training and residential care to people with disability for up to one year, leading to paid employment in the community. There are workshops in carpentry, craft, hairdressing, ICT and office work, knitting and sewing. The Village also has a farm and restaurant.

This year we appointed the Village's first business manager, James. His expertise is helping the Village take more business-oriented steps, which will lead it towards a self-sustaining future.

The knitting and sewing groups have sourced new opportunities to sell to local schools and even in the UK. Likewise, the Craft workshop is selling high-quality work in the UK. Further plans are in place to increase access to the growing tourist market.

This year we have provided training for 45 apprentices with disabilities, 50% above our target. They have gained skills in craft, hairdressing, ICT, knitting, sewing and shoemaking. Twenty-two graduated this year, with 13 going on to establish their own businesses or access paid employment, with our other graduates being supported to do the same.

People like Simeon, Francois and Eviva.



Simeon is now running his own shoemaking business. Francois has graduated and has established his own tailoring business.

Eviva has graduated and set up her own business providing office and online services. This income allows all three of them independence, essentials such as health insurance, and to support their family.



Our farming apprentices have been trained in crop production and organic, sustainable land management, as well as vertical stack gardens and keyhole kitchen gardens, because productive land is so scarce in Rwanda. Aside from skills development, the farm helps to ensure the Village is self-sustaining for food, feeding the 48 resident children and 32 resident trainees and staff, and generating income.

We had three farming graduates this year, Isaac, Nadia and Iranzi, and they were supported with seeds, tools, materials and a pregnant goat upon graduation.



Iranzi has set up a vegetable farm, keeps goats and has plans to buy a cow. She's able to buy clothes and support her family. Isaac and Nadia are in similar positions, and are developing plans to grow their farming businesses further. They have since each become known in their respective villages for their expertise.

8. Teacher Training

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Rwanda Action has been developing a framework for effective Continuous Professional Development for teachers since 2014. It offers regular, local, in-service training in small groups, which is proving extremely effective.

Rwanda Action has selected and trained 33 Lead Teachers, including 18 in the past year, to cover every sector of the two districts. They are responsible for training over 430 government-appointed School Based Mentors (SBMs) working across the 305 primary schools in the districts.

The SBMs in turn train and monitor more than 5,000 teachers in their respective schools.

This approach has meant that this year our training has reached the teachers of over 200,000 students attending the 305 schools across both districts.



Teachers attending the weekly school-based CPD training at GS Mushaka, Rwimbogo sector, Rusizi district.

“Teaching at the right level is solving problems of pupils’ performance and learners’ retention”

- Head Teacher

“I support my mentees through regular classroom observations, feedback sessions, co-planning lessons and peer teaching.”

- School-based mentor



“This initiative has contributed to a marked improvement in educational attainment in both Nyamasheke and Rusizi Districts.”

- Dr N. Mbarushimana –
Director General, REB



THE LEARNING INITIATIVE (TLI)

This year we completed our flagship three-year education programme, The Learning Initiative (TLI) working in 36 of the lowest-attaining schools across both districts to promote teaching at the right level. TLI focused on two teaching practices:

- Formative assessment - assessing children while learning is happening, rather than at the end of the topic.
- Differentiated teaching – variation in teaching approaches to meet the needs of individual children

Year 6, or P6, leaving exams are a benchmark national test we used to track overall progress. The results of TLI far exceeded our expectations in almost every area. Grades improved far faster in TLI schools over the three years than the average for other schools in the districts, so much so that in 2025 TLI schools caught up to the regional average pass rate, having been among the very lowest

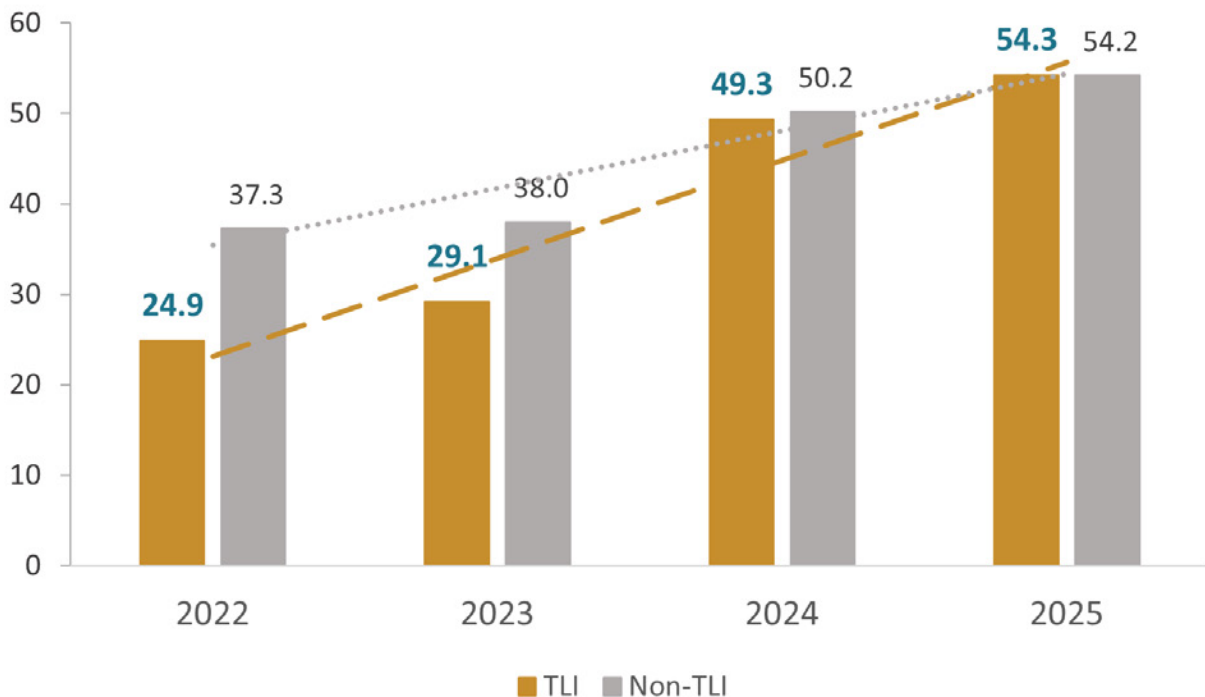
achieving schools at the start of the programme. In Nyamasheke, the average TLI school now outperforms the average school in the district.

In Rusizi the attainment gap between TLI and non-TLI schools has shrunk from 15% to just 1.5%.

Taken together, the 36 schools now show just a 0.1% difference in weighted average grades, compared to the non-TLI schools in the same districts. And, whilst grades at non-TLI schools have improved greatly over the period, attainment at TLI schools improved more rapidly, with their scores more than doubling (118%) over 3 years.

The results of TLI far exceeded our expectations in almost every area.

TLI school and Non-TLI school average weighted P6 test results



Ninety-four percent of schools in the programme showed improvement in their grades. Each of these schools improved their grades by at least 10 percentage points, with over half improving by 30 percentage points or more.

The improvements are not just in exam results. In the crucial aspect of retention - keeping students in school - TLI schools have steadily increased retention in the critical stage between Year 5 and Year 6, whilst the retention rate in other schools has declined.

In Nyamasheke, TLI schools closed an 11% gap in retention rates between year 5 and Year 6, and now out-perform most of their counterpart schools.

Analysis showed that TLI schools also spent more class time on interactive and group activities, and less in didactic teaching such as copying from the board or listening to the teacher. We found this was most pronounced in the schools with the greatest improvement in exam results.

Having visited our schools and seen our work, the Rwanda Board of Basic Education have thoroughly endorsed our programme, with their report recommending that many of our practices, including TLI's Teaching at the Right Level, should be considered for wider delivery across the country.



Kigali, on 27/01/2026
No: 0225/REB/01/2026

Country Representative
Rwanda Action
Rusizi

Dear Sir,

Re: Letter of Endorsement for Rwanda Action Activities in Rusizi and Nyamasheke Districts

The Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) is pleased to express its strong endorsement of the activities implemented by Rwanda Action in Rusizi and Nyamasheke Districts of the Western Province.

Effective education for all remains one of the Government of Rwanda's key priorities as articulated in Vision 2050. In this regard, REB recognises and highly appreciates the significant contribution that Rwanda Action has made towards supporting the national education agenda.

Rwanda Action has played a commendable role in improving access to quality education through the construction of the special unit for learners with disabilities. In addition, the organisation has developed and implemented a highly effective system of in-service Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers. This initiative has contributed to a marked improvement in educational achievement in both Nyamasheke and Rusizi Districts. Furthermore, Rwanda Action is currently developing an effective framework for inclusive education, which shows great promise as a model that can serve as a template and catalyst for replication beyond Rusizi and Nyamasheke. This initiative aligns well with national and international commitments to inclusive and equitable quality education.

Based on the above, Rwanda Basic Education Board fully endorses the work of Rwanda Action and acknowledges its valuable contribution to the advancement of education in Rwanda. REB looks forward to continued collaboration in strengthening quality and inclusive education for all learners.

Yours sincerely,


Dr. MBARUSHIMANA Nelson
Director General



Cc:

- Honourable Minister of Education
- Honourable Minister of State for Education
- Permanent Secretary/MINEDUC

Rwanda Basic
Education Board

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“REB [Rwanda Basic Education Board] recognises and highly appreciates the significant contribution that Rwanda Action has made towards supporting the national education agenda”

– Dr N. Mbarushimana – Director General,
REB (extract from the letter)

We continue to work with the national education authorities in Kigali, especially the Rwanda Education Board and the National Examination and School Inspection Authority. We were proud this year to receive a strong letter of commendation from the Secretary of State for Education.

9. THE FUTURE

As our trial initiatives in teacher training, inclusion and poverty relief approach their conclusion, our aim is to ensure that the most effective ideas and practices are adopted and developed by the government at local and national levels. Already, we are seeing many aspects of our Continuous Professional Development programmes being included in the national teacher training programme, and in many ways, we are leading the way on inclusion and inclusive education.



A NOTE FROM DAVID

FUNDER SUPPORT

This year we have been privileged to welcome three of our most generous supporters to Rwanda, variously Ride for Unity, Loveaid (South Korea) and The Peter Cundill Foundation. They came on the basis that “seeing is believing” and this is what one of them wrote in our Visitors’ Book:

“We are humbled by our time with you. You operate with integrity and passion. A worthy organisation with grant potential to influence educational policy across Rwanda. Best of luck as you continue in your fine work.”

It is very special when the support is not just financial but personal too, and we all find the interest, advice and encouragement of our funders immensely helpful and heartening.

We have been working in Rwanda now for very nearly twenty years and I do believe we are seeing the fruits of this perseverance. Real change takes time, and we are not only seeing aspects of our teacher training programme being adopted and developed at the national level, but we are also seeing our work in support of inclusion beginning to gain real traction in the country.

It is also wonderful to see the fruits of our interventions at a personal level.

15 years ago, I was stopped by a little boy in rags in the street in Kamembe.

He tugged my sleeve and said, “Give me money.” I was tempted, of course, but I knew if I gave him money it might help him for a day or two, no more. So, instead we built Baho Neza Mwana (meaning ‘A Better Life for Children’), a project designed to help children off the street, build their confidence and self-esteem and get them to school. Where possible, we also determined to find the families and help them so that the children could return home. Hundreds of children have benefited from our project, and we were achieving a 75% success rate in keeping children off the street. In 2020 Baho Neza Mwana became the Rusizi Centre for Inclusion. It is now the focal point of our inclusion and outreach work.

I met the little boy who prompted it all when I was out in Rwanda a few weeks ago. He is called Strato. He has completed school and now runs a stationery and printing business.



A final word of thanks

We are incredibly proud of the work and commitment of all our colleagues at Rwanda Action. Their dedication to delivering (and monitoring) their work is the reason we can see our impact emerging. This year the impact has been truly heartening, from the early data indicating poverty alleviation in our Building Communities Programme, to the engagement with the Rwandan government on improving teacher training, right through to establishing better inclusion for children in schools – both in training and in bricks and mortar, and more.

We are enormously grateful for the generosity of our supporters. It is thanks to you that we are able to continue our vital mission to relieve poverty by empowering communities. Thank you.

Analysis was undertaken by Tom Readford, an independent impact specialist for the higher education and charity sectors.