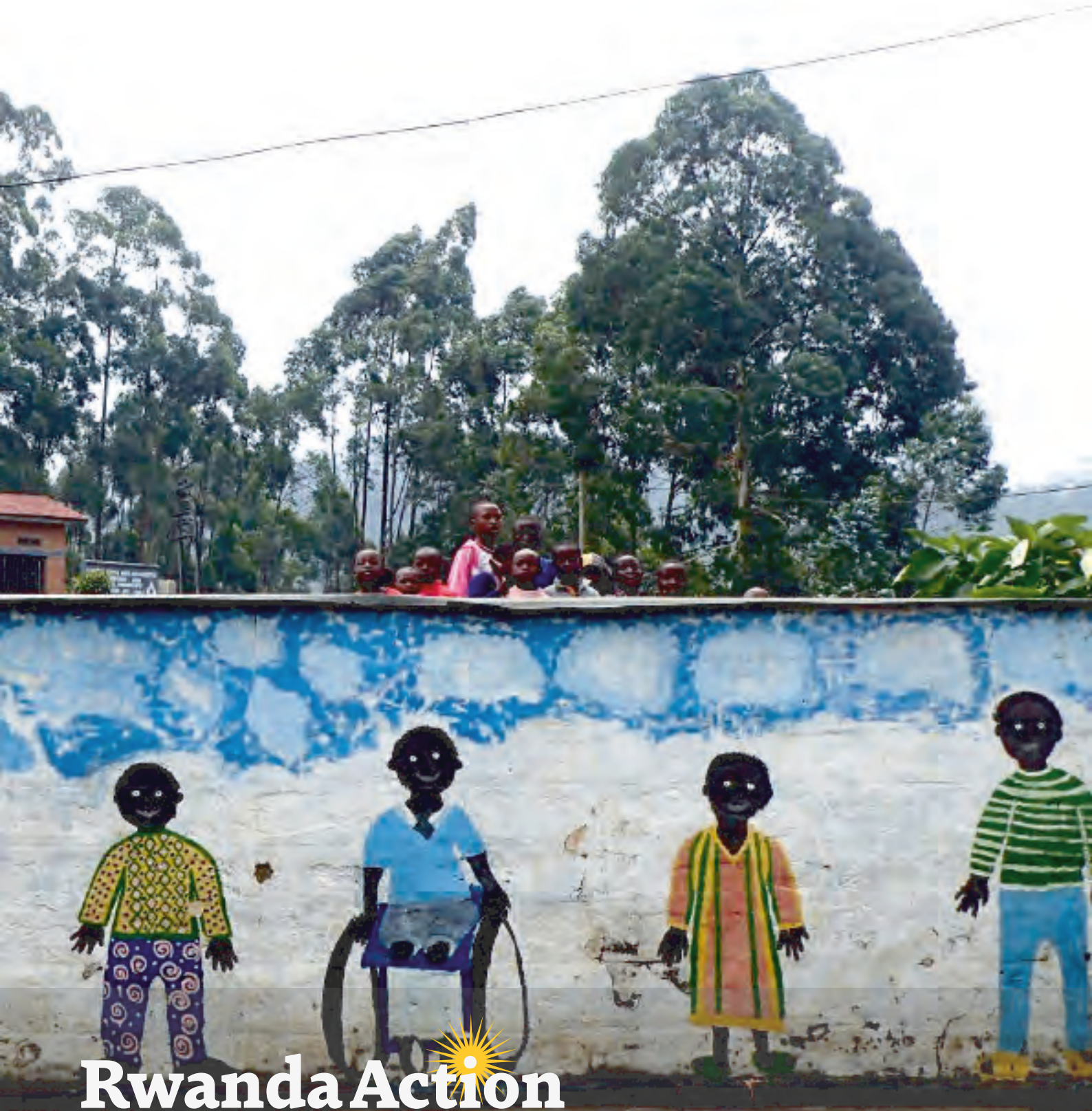


Impact Report 2019



Rwanda Action

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Introduction

David Chaplin OBE
CEO, Rwanda Action

2019 was a busy and successful year and I would like to pay particular tribute to our team in Rwanda, so ably led by Felicien. The commitment of the team and their understanding of the local context are fundamental to the success of our work. They have also been wonderfully supported by our UK Operations Director, Janyis Watson.

2020 is proving a more difficult year with disruption to many of our programmes. However, we have used the lockdown as a time for reflection and careful planning.

One decision we have reached is to change the name of the charity from Rwanda Aid to Rwanda Action. We feel this new name better reflects the way in which we work, that is in partnership with the community and the government. We have also

prepared a new website and we would be delighted if you were able to find a moment to explore this: www.rwanda-action.org.

Our mission to empower communities to reduce poverty is even more critical post-COVID, and we remain wholly committed to that task.

However, we do feel we can sharpen up the way in which we measure our impact. We are determined to ensure that all our interventions are validated by rigorous and substantial evidence. If we can clearly demonstrate that our programmes are achieving their targeted impact, then we will be in a strong position to encourage the community and government to adopt and run with them, thus achieving scale and sustainability.

We do not envisage substantial changes in the field, but we have decided to give geographical focus to our work in farm training, tree nurseries and enterprise. This will make effective monitoring and

We are determined to ensure that all our interventions are validated by rigorous and substantial evidence.



evaluation much more achievable, and give us, we believe, a convincing package for the government to adopt and replicate.

In addition to this we are delighted to be on the point of starting the new Alivera Village. This is an important project which will not only provide exciting opportunities for young people with disability, but will also open the eyes of the wider community to the fact that, with the right kind of support, these youngsters can live full and rich lives. As all the funds for this project have

been in place for some time it seems right to press ahead as soon as circumstances allow.

So, amidst all the gloom we aim to offer a bright beacon of hope.

Best wishes,

David Chaplin OBE
CEO, Rwanda Action



Our approach

To reduce poverty, we work with the community to identify the most pressing challenges.

- Together we devise and pilot innovative solutions to those challenges
- Through careful monitoring and evaluation, we produce the evidence to show that these solutions are working
- We encourage and help the community and government to adopt and run with these solutions
- This gives our work scale and sustainability.

Our spending

Our expenditure in Rwanda in 2019 was **£288,842**. Our expenditure in the UK (mostly for staff costs) was **£45,722**. Our total expenditure in 2019 was therefore just under **£335,000**. The following pages set out the impact we achieved with this spending.

We work with the community to identify the most pressing challenges.



01 Building communities

We reduce poverty where it is most acute

In Nyamasheke and Rusizi districts, where Rwanda Action works, 63 percent of the population live in extreme poverty (\$2 or less a day).

ENTERPRISE

The majority of people in Nyamasheke and Rusizi survive on subsistence farming, but with limited, hilly land, and a fast growing population, this does not provide a secure future. In particular, many young people see no prospects in farming, and there is growing drift towards towns. Many of those young people who complete schooling (and even further education) are unable to find employment. The same problem applies to those who complete vocational training.

Our solution

We provide training and support to help young people transform their skills and talents into gainful employment or successful business enterprise, and reduce the local dependency on subsistence farming. This programme runs in partnership with the Unit of Business Development and Employment Promotion.

Our impact

This programme was initiated in 2013 and has supported **31 projects**. It provides a positive impact for **555 primary beneficiaries** and **2,065 secondary beneficiaries**.

In 2019 we concentrated on supporting **12 existing projects** and **6 new projects**, and assessed start-up projects for future funding and

support in 2020. The financial outcomes for these 18 projects are summarised in table 1. An average business initiated by Rwanda Action in 2019 received a grant of approximately **£900**, had an income of **£2,800**, expenses and distribution costs of **£2,250**, and reported a profit of **£530**.

In addition, **6** projects failed, **2** projects have moved to other regions, and **1** passed their equipment or facilities on to other associations. **4** successful projects have graduated and are self-sustaining.

Feedback from the district authority indicated that projects initiated by Rwanda Action tend to be more successful in terms of sustainability and are in turn able to apply for bank loans and larger sources of funding.



The Abakundana Milling Machine Co-operative has 40 members, all living with HIV. The milling machine, bought with support from Rwanda Action, continues to provide income for the group and has enabled diversification into biogas, crop plantation and shoemaking. Overseen by the co-operative leader, Valerie, the group has won further grants for enterprise development and has graduated from the Rwanda Action enterprise programme.

Table 1: Average financial outcomes for the 18 enterprise projects supported by Rwanda Action in 2019

Cohort	Projects	Grant	Income	Expenses	Distribution	Balance
Pre-2019	12	1,179,711	4,362,575	2,390,753	1,335,580	627,946
2019 start	6	1,118,404	3,448,150	1,772,800	1,003,000	652,850

Average per project. Amount in Rwandan Francs (FRw). 1 million FRw = approximately £800.



The Rusizi Fruits Company (left) grow and buy fruit to make juice drinks (the passionfruit and hibiscus juices in particular are highly rated!). The company is owned by six men and three women, has four additional employees, and a further 75 secondary beneficiaries through their families. After an assessment Rwanda Action helped strengthen the business with training and a grant towards a juice making machine. They have started to harvest tree tomatoes and passion fruits from their plantation, and have developed a business plan to expand to nearby provinces.

By providing training and funds in 2019, Rwanda Action helped form the first welding business on Nkombo Island, a settlement dependent on fishing and only connected to electricity in 2011. Abashyizehamwe (meaning solidarity) has 12 young staff and 52 secondary beneficiaries. By supporting businesses in the most remote parts of Rwanda, we help build more resilient communities (COVID-19 placed Nkombo's 15,000 inhabitants in total lockdown, unable even to fish).

FARM TRAINING

In Rwanda around 85 percent of the population survive on subsistence farming. Most farm less than a hectare of land, with infertile soils on steep slopes. Current farming techniques struggle to feed and occupy a rapidly growing population. Increasingly young people see no future in farming and gravitate towards the towns, where jobs are in short supply.

Our solution

Rwanda Action trains people to farm more effectively and productively, so providing a better diet and income for their families. Farmers are encouraged and trained to form associations and co-operatives. These can operate as successful businesses and so help to develop the rural economy.

Working in the community and in close association with the Sector authorities, we provide training in sustainable organic farming and livestock husbandry. Each trainee commits to training at least two others in their community or association, and the Farm Training Manager and Farm Training Assistant provide follow-up for all trainees, visiting them at least once a year for three years.

Our impact

During 2018-2019, the Rwanda Action agronomist trained **8 agronomists**. Each agronomist has been given training materials and – together with the support of the Rwanda Aid agronomist – in turn trained a further **36 Social and Economic Development Officers (SEDOs)** as

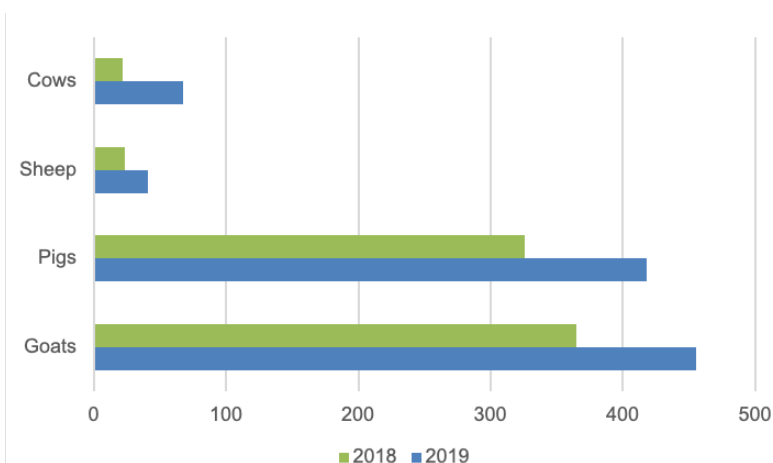


Figure 1: Increase in livestock between 2018 and 2019.

agronomists. The SEDOs have each trained 10 farmers in their local area, reaching a total of **360 farmers**. Each farmer has been provided with essential equipment.

Trained farmers have been tasked with training 3 neighbouring farmers. In due course 1080 farmers will have benefited from the training. In total **600 farmers** have been trained during 2018 and 2019.

SEDO assessments and Rwanda Action spot checks are used to monitor uptake of new methods, skills and techniques. We have seen strong uptake of kitchen gardens, erosion control with agro-forestry, introducing water holes and planting vegetables (between **70 and 90** percent of farmers on Rwanda Action spot checks). The use of compost has been moderately successful (**around half** of farmers), but further work is needed to embed the used of liquid manure, plant fertiliser and organic pesticides (between **10 and 25** percent).

When trainees have established a compost heap and productive kitchen garden they can benefit from livestock training. Our livestock programme has trained **31 associations** since 2008, supporting **1,044 beneficiaries**. Farmers are trained with animal husbandry skills, and farmers commit to pass on the first female offspring from their animal to another member of their association, as well as provide the necessary training for its care. This 'pass on' process has led to a **33 percent** increase in livestock between 2018 and 2019 (see figure 1).

Finally, we worked with an experienced trainer from Uganda to train **16 dairy goat keepers** in May 2019 as part of our Dairy Goats Programme.

“Now I can grow vegetables for my family and sell the surplus. The training was useful to me because I will no longer [need to] buy the vegetables.”

“Before Rwanda Action’s... livestock and organic training I did not have any animals and the crop harvest [was poor], after I received training in 2017 and [was] gifted [a] sheep... I have given one lamb to my association members, I bought also one cow and three pigs as [my] crop production increased.”

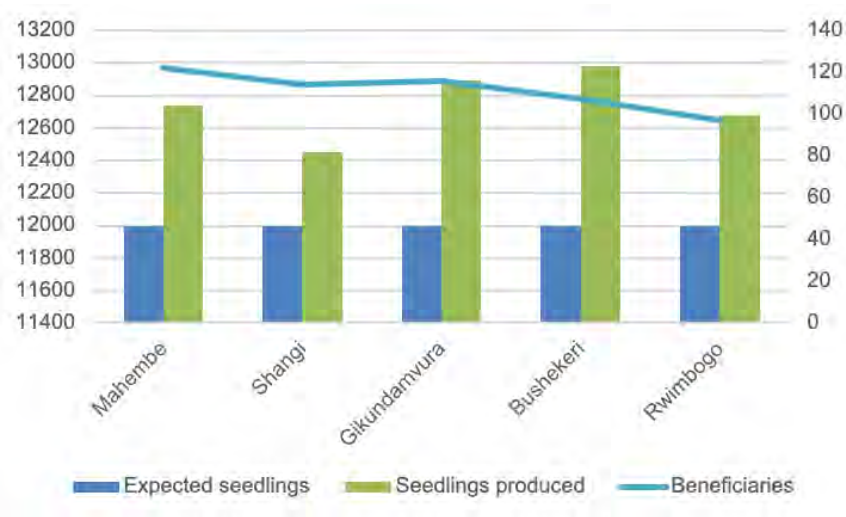


Figure 2:
Expected and actual yield, and number of beneficiaries, in five sectors.

TREE NURSERIES

Over 85 percent of the population in Rwanda survive on subsistence farming. Trees help people to become more self-sufficient through the use and sale of their products – timber, firewood and fruit – as well as soil improvement, better crops and health.

Our solution

Tree nurseries are requested by community members, who then provide the manual work in building the tree nurseries, transport of manure, transplanting seedlings, watering and keeping an eye on seedlings as they grow. Training

and follow up advice is given by Rwanda Aid staff. Our funds are used to purchase materials such as poles for the nursery structure, seeds, manure, transplanting pots and watering cans.

Each tree nursery costs around £900 per year to maintain and produces 20,000–30,000 seedlings; seedlings are a bargain at around 4p each.

Our impact

In 2019 we established 5 community tree nurseries in the districts of Rusizi and Nyamasheke. The Rwanda Aid Agronomist provided 4 days of training for

association members on tree nursery management and nurturing seedlings. The tree nurseries provided 63,740 seedlings – from avocados and eucalyptus to guava and macadamia – and reached 556 beneficiaries. The average yield was 6.2 percent higher than typically expected with the seedlings (see figure 2).

Education

We improve the quality of teaching and learning

We share the Rwandan government's conviction that this small, hilly and densely populated country cannot survive on subsistence farming alone. For the future it is critical to build a more knowledge-based economy.

SCHOOL-BASED MENTOR PROGRAMME

Whilst over 90 percent of children are registered for nine years of free schooling, there is a high drop-out rate. Reasons for this include poverty, large classes, poor resources and a sudden switch to English as the medium for teaching, but our experience tells us that the main reason is the absence of enough well-trained teachers.



94 percent of headteachers reported a discernible improvement as a result of the school based mentor programme

Our solution

Rwanda Action piloted and developed an innovative school-based mentor programme which provides in-service training for teachers with a special emphasis on learner-centred teaching and careful assessment and differentiation. We have gradually expanded this programme and over the years have built strong relationships with headteachers and the local authorities in our two districts. We have selected and trained lead teachers in each of the 33 sectors and with our support they have trained school-based mentors in all the schools in their respective sectors – reaching **250 schools** in total.

Our impact

Drop-out rates for schools with a school-based mentor (SBM) were **2.4 percentage points** lower in 2019 than the year before, and **5.1 percentage points** lower for those with a lead teacher (figure 3).

Schools with a SBM have seen a **decrease** in the time teachers spend talking, and an **increase** in pair or group work (figures 4 and 5). A significant proportion of these teachers would have received no training since their qualification if it wasn't for the SBM programme.

When compiled into a weighted average, exam scores in schools with a lead teacher registered the greatest increase from 2018 to 2019 – **7.6 percent** (figure 6).

94 percent of headteachers reported a discernible improvement as a result of the SBM programme; for those with a lead teacher this rose to **97 percent**.

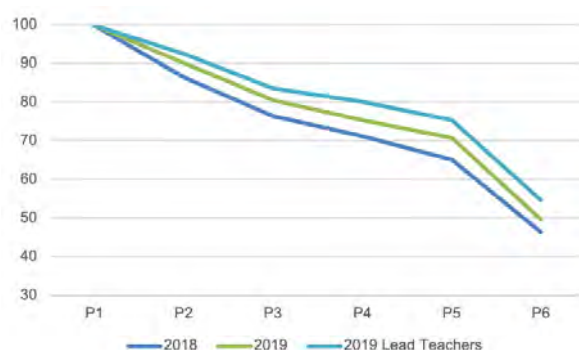


Figure 3: Proportion of remaining students in SBM programme. P1-P6 represent primary school years. Each line is a cohort (those who graduated in 2008 and 2009, and the subset with a lead teacher trained by Rwanda Action). A higher line represents a lower drop-out rate.



Figure 4: Time spent in classrooms on different activities, 2015 pilots (7 schools).

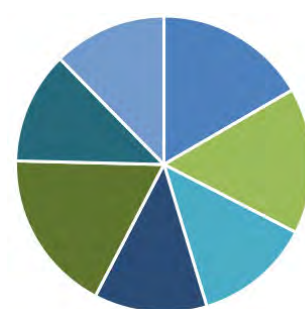


Figure 5: Time spent in classrooms on different activities, 2019 sampled lessons (240 schools).

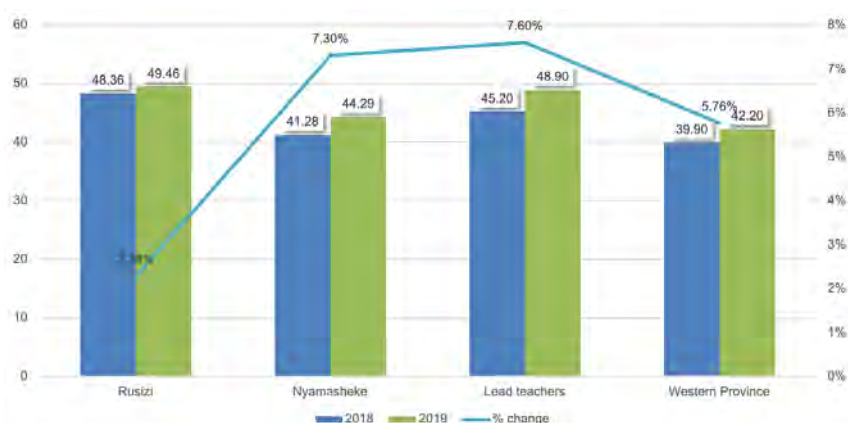


Figure 6: Bars show the weighted average of cohort examination results in 2018 and 2019 (a score of 100 is equivalent to every student scoring top grades). The line shows the percentage improvement in 2019 from 2018.



FINANCIAL SPONSORSHIP

Many bright and able children and young adults are unable to study without financial assistance.

Our solution

We support students with tuition fees and other assistance, including sponsorship and mentorship provided by external organisations. In 2019 this included **8 girls** in secondary school supported by the Commonwealth Girls Education Fund (CGEF), **11 students** (6 girls) at secondary school and university sponsored by the Madrinha Trust, and **80 students** undertaking vocational training on the remote island of Nkombo funded by Rwanda Action, in one of five trades: carpentry, masonry, tailoring, electricity and welding.

Our impact

All 8 girls supported by CGEF have progressed well in secondary school and three completed their studies in 2019. Of the 11 Madrinha-sponsored students **3** completed university education, and **1** has graduated from secondary school (the remainder continue to study). **90 percent** of the vocational training students on Nkombo Island completed their internships; sickness, poverty and the remoteness of the island prevented full completion.

“[I am] studying mathematics, chemistry and biology at secondary school... I have worked hard so as to obtain good marks for this year 2019. My future plans are the following: to continue my studies at university, to help poor families, to fight against gender based violence [and I] wish to become a doctor in the future.”

SCHOOL KITCHEN GARDENS

Our school kitchen garden scheme was born out of the huge need we have seen for children to be able to have more than the one meal a day they often survive on. Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' clearly shows that if a child's basic physiological needs are not met, then they will be unable to achieve to the best of their abilities. Hungry children struggle in school.

Our solution

Rwanda Action established vegetable gardens in two schools. These gardens are tended by the children, helping them to learn the basics of agriculture. When the vegetables are ripe, they are picked and, with the help of parents, turned into soup for the children to have at lunch times. We have since expanded the scheme to more schools in Nyamasheke and Rusizi.

Our impact

Yield has increased in each season, and all of the **2,215 children** across the two schools were fed at lunchtime and thus able to continue studying in the afternoon.

Vegetables harvested during the school holidays were sold and the money (848,445 FRw, or approximately £670) was used to help keep children in school.



NEW CLASSROOMS

Since 2009 Rwanda Action have helped to build and equip **72 classrooms** and **14 toilet blocks** and washrooms enabling hundreds of children to benefit from an improved learning environment. In 2019 we built **4 new classrooms** to UNICEF child friendly standard, and a **new toilet block** for pupils.



Disability

**We improve the care,
inclusion and
opportunities for
children with
disability**

Disability is often misunderstood in Africa, leading to suffering. Parents often blame themselves for the challenges their children face and many children are hidden away, some even abandoned. Very few are able to access education and employment.

Our solution

Our conviction is that every young person is special and precious. The Alivera Centre, built on the site of a former petrol station, provides residential and outreach training and care in support of children with

Class	Students	Progress made in 2019
Class 1 at the Alivera Centre	7	5 of 7 children made good progress
Class 2 at the Alivera Centre	5	All have made progress
Semi-inclusive learning units in primary schools	12	All have made progress
P2 (primary school)	6	5 have made good progress
P3 (primary school)	1	No progress made
P4 (primary school)	5	4 made good progress
P6 (primary school)	7	All have completed P6 and 2 have continued at secondary school
TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training)	7	6 have graduated and 1 studying
Secondary school	5	2 have completed S6, 2 have made good progress and 1 failed
University	2	Waiting for results

Table 2: Progress of the 57 children at the Alivera Centre's residential programme in 2019

disability. It was inspired by a girl called Alivera who sadly lost her young life to epilepsy. We were determined to try to prevent this happening to other children with disability.

We provide training for parents, teachers and carers so that disability will be better understood, and children will be cared for and integrated in their homes, in school and in the community.

We have found that with the right kind of support many children do well in mainstream schooling. We are working with the primary school adjacent to the Alivera Centre to

become a School of Excellence for Special Needs and Inclusive Education and we hope that this will inspire other schools to make better provision for including and caring for children with disability.

Our impact

We supported **57 children and young adults** at the Alivera Centre's residential programme in 2019. Table 2 sets out the progress these children have made. 54 percent were male, and 79 percent aged under 18. We provided education support to 51 children at various education institutions – from support for deaf children at primary school to physical support for students in vocational

training. The remaining 6 are intellectually disabled and aged over 18; we provide support at the Alivera Centre for this group. The Centre **reintegrated 9 children** who have received support and are now able to continue their lives in the community.

A critical part of our approach is to provide training and support for parents. We held residential training for **47 parents** in November 2019 (49 were invited), and helped parents to understand their children, to provide appropriate care for the type of their disability, and – for those with children who are deaf or receive speech therapy – to communicate with their children.

Parents were assessed on their understanding of the content; the first group scored **93 percent** and the second group **81 percent**.

In addition, we hope that this training will help raise awareness and protection of disabled people in the community. The participating parents from were drawn from **8 different sectors** (sub-districts) in Rusizi, 11 in Nyamasheke, and the districts of Karongi and the Southern Province.

We have many wonderful stories to tell. For example, Elisabeth is at a fast-track secondary school and on course to go to university and Jon is a brilliant young artist.



“I thank the Alivera Centre for all [the] support provided to me. I did not get [the] chance [to] see my parents and I lost hope... when I reached at the Alivera Centre, I got all the support a parent can provide to his/her child. I am very happy [to] complete S6 [schooling] and if possible I will go to university.”

04 Street Children

We reintegrate street children into their family homes



“When I was on [the] street I lost hope in... life. When I arrived at Baho Neza Mwana I found everything: they reeducated me from the primary school [level], now I [have] finished S3 [level study] and I passed the National Exams. I had a serious illness, asthma, and Baho Neza Mwana is helping me with the treatment and paying the money needed to the hospital.”

Rwanda Action has worked in the districts of Nyamasheke and Rusizi since 2008. Our offices are based in Kamembe, the main town on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. As such, it is a place of transition which attracts a diverse population including some of the most desperate people living on the margins of society.

Children are driven onto the streets for a variety of reasons: the death of parents; absent parents due to family conflict, divorce, imprisonment; children born from prostitution; domestic violence; lack of food at home or the means to send children to school and children dropping out of school. Living on the street, children often seek very low paid work and can be forced into begging or prostitution.

In all that we do, we are determined to support those on the margins of society, especially children.

Our solution

We have developed a centre which aims to reintegrate street children successfully into family homes. Many of the children are hardened and traumatised by their early experience of life: our centre provides a stable,

supportive environment which builds confidence and self-esteem.

The centre is called Baho Neza Mwana, which means a good life for children. Children from the streets are fed and clothed and offered recreational opportunities and counselling. They also benefit from schooling or training as we find this is the most effective way of ensuring that they do not return to the street but build the knowledge and skills to lead full and independent lives.

Our impact

We take children to school, cover their school fees, and provide materials and uniforms. In 2019 we supported **127 children** in primary school and **45 children** in secondary school.

69 children benefited from residential support during the course of the year, a record number. Of these, **38** children were reintegrated in their homes. **31** families were given support, mainly in the form of training and land. In 2019 we welcomed **32** new residents to Baho Neza Mwana, compared to an average yearly intake of 23 since 2012. Since the programme began, we have supported **212** children (all but 6 are



69 children benefited from residential support during the course of the year, a record number.

male). **42 percent** have successfully 'graduated' and are now at home or school, **12 percent** have returned to the street, and we are working with the remaining **45 percent**.¹

68 street children received daily support from the village in 2019, enabling them to attend school and to return to their homes at night. These children are able to live with their parents because their families are near the village. We provided daily support for **4** new children in 2019, bringing the total number of day children to **85** since 2012 (67 percent boys). **82.4 percent** have successfully 'graduated' and are now at home or school, **8.2 percent** have returned to the street, and we are working with the remaining **9.4 percent**.

We also support young people from vulnerable families to access vocational training. Some lack money for completing their studies, and others were prostitutes. In 2019 we helped **41** children access training, mainly in sewing. To date we have supported **118** children (93 percent female); **78 percent** are now in employment, **10 percent** have returned to the street, and we are working with the remaining **12 percent**.

¹ Sadly, one boy died in January 2020.



Acknowledgements

Rwanda Action is extremely grateful for the help it receives from its wonderful supporters. Learn more about our supporters here: <https://www.rwanda-action.org/supporters>

Analysis undertaken by James Ransom, an independent researcher and doctoral candidate based at UCL Institute of Education, and a Research Affiliate at the University of Rwanda (email: james.ransom.16@ucl.ac.uk; website: jcransom.com).



Rwanda Action provided 3 tonnes of maize flour to help the most desperate 300 families on Nkombo Island during the COVID-19 lockdown.