



World Vision

RWANDA



**CELEBRATING 30 YEARS**  
**OF WORLD VISION'S WORK**  
**IN RWANDA**  
**(1994 - 2024)**

# COPYRIGHT AND DISCLAIMER PAGE

## World Vision Rwanda - 2024

World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities to reach their full potential by tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

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## National Director's Foreword

As we celebrate 30 years of impactful service in Rwanda, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the incredible journey that World Vision Rwanda (WVR) has undertaken in partnership with the people of this beautiful nation.

Our story began in 1994, following the devastation of the Genocide against the Tutsi. In the aftermath, World Vision swiftly responded with emergency relief to help those affected by the violence. As Rwanda began its journey of socio-economic recovery and transformation, WVR recognized the need for long-term solutions to tackle the root causes of poverty, injustice, and the growing threat of climate change.

Since 2000, WVR has focused on sustainable development, investing in transformative programs aimed at improving the well-being of vulnerable children and their communities.

Today, we are proud to say that we are actively engaged in 30 districts, reaching over 1.9 million children across the country during our current five-year strategic framework (FY21-25). Our interventions span critical areas such as Resilience and Livelihoods, Health and Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), and Child Protection & Education. These efforts are fully aligned with Rwanda's

National Strategy for Transformation (NST1 and 2), ensuring that we are working in alignment with national priorities to uplift communities and foster lasting change.

Over the past three decades, we have invested more than USD 625 Million into programs that have reached 8 Million vulnerable children, directly improving their lives through essential services and opportunities for growth. Our focus on Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), Child protection & Education, Health & Nutrition, Resilience & Livelihoods has empowered children, their families, and communities to break the cycle of poverty and build a brighter future.

As I reflect on these accomplishments, I am reminded that our work goes beyond statistics. Each child we have reached, family, and community we have empowered, represents impact, life transformed, and a dream realized. From providing access to clean water to equipping communities with the skills to adapt to climate change, every intervention has been a step toward promoting self-reliance and sustainability. The road ahead is still long, but the foundation we have built together is strong. As we continue to

walk alongside the Rwandan people, we are more committed than ever to addressing the challenges that remain, with a focus of ensuring that all children realize their full potential.

This book is a celebration of our collective journey, our shared commitment to improving lives, tackling injustice, and creating a future where every child can reach their full potential. I thank each one of you, the Government of Rwanda, donors, strategic partners, staff, and the communities we serve, for making this remarkable journey possible. Together, we will continue to broaden impact and transform lives for the next 30 years and beyond.

**PAULINE OKUMU,**  
National Director,  
World Vision Rwanda.



# SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Pauline OKUMU**

National Director



**John Rich Kireri**

Finance and Support Services Director



**Teddy Kaberuka Nzabirinda**

Strategy & Programmes Quality Director



**Malingoana Ramafikeng**

People & Culture/HR Director



**Innocent Mutabaruka**

Integrated Programmes Director



**Dez BYAMUKAMA**

Chief of Party, USAID Homes and Communities Activity (Uburezi Iwacu)



**Beatrice Ekallam**

Resource Development Manager



**Maria Kaitesi**

Communications & Public Engagement Manager



**Angele Uwituze**

Senior Supply Chain Manager



**Monica MUKAZI Butera**

Government Relations & Partnerships Advisor



**Emmanuel SEMPARA**

Risk Management & Legal Advisor

# WORLD VISION AT A GLANCE

## About us

**World Vision** is a global Christian relief, development, and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families, and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

World Vision's operations in Rwanda began in 1994, providing critical relief and rehabilitation to nearly three million people displaced by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. By the year 2000, the organization transitioned to long-term, child-focused Area Development Programmes, delivering impactful interventions in education and child sponsorship, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and economic empowerment for vulnerable households.

- **Vision**

Our vision for every child, life in all its fullness;  
Our prayer for every heart, the will to make it so.

- **Mission**

World Vision is an international partnership of Christians, whose mission is to follow our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

- **Core Values:**

- We are Christian
- We are committed to the poor
- We value people
- We are stewards
- We are partners
- We are responsive



## WORLD VISION'S JOURNEY IN RWANDA

### FIRST DECADE (1994 - 2004): EMERGENCY RESPONSE & REHABILITATION

**1.1M children impacted**  
through Emergency Relief, Peace  
Building, Health and WASH, Economic  
Development and Child Sponsorship.

### THE SECOND DECADE (2004-2014): TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**2.5M children impacted**  
through Peace Building, Emergency Response,  
Resilience and Livelihoods, Child Protection  
& Education, Health and Nutrition, WASH  
and Child Sponsorship.

### THIRD DECADE (2014 - 2024): INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT & RESILIENCE

**4.73M children impacted**  
through Peace Building, Emergency Response,  
Resilience and Livelihoods, Child Protection and  
Education, Health and Nutrition, WASH and Child  
Sponsorship.

Cross cutting themes: Advocacy, Faith and  
Development, GESI and Climate change and  
adaptation.

**TOTAL INVESTMENT FOR  
THE LAST 30 YEARS- \$ 625M**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights World Vision Rwanda's transformative impact over three decades of interventions (1994–2024), guided by its core values of Christian faith, commitment to the poor, valuing people, among others. These principles underpin its mission to empower vulnerable communities and improve the well-being of children.

World Vision started its operations in Rwanda during the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, delivering life-saving interventions to nearly 3 million people. Initial efforts focused on rescuing vulnerable children, providing shelter, medical care, and emotional support in orphanages. As health systems had collapsed, the organization tackled life-threatening illnesses like malaria and malnutrition, while simultaneously fostering hope among survivors.

In later years, efforts shifted to rebuilding livelihoods and promoting reconciliation. Thousands of homes were constructed, and rural farmers were supported with agricultural inputs and training. Healing and peacebuilding workshops equipped survivors and perpetrators to navigate grief, forgive, and rebuild trust. Programs like PRAY (Promotion of Reconciliation among Youth) reintegrated orphaned children into families and communities, addressing their psychosocial needs. World Vision also supported refugee repatriation and reintegration, benefitting over 200,000 individuals.

In 2000, World Vision transitioned from emergency response to long-term, child-focused Area Development Programs (ADPs), prioritizing health, food security, education, and HIV/AIDS interventions.

### Key interventions included:



**Health:** Building health facilities, training professionals, and improving access to care.



**Food Security:** Promoting soil conservation, seed multiplication, and cooperative farming.



**Education:** Rebuilding schools and ensuring access for vulnerable children.



**HIV/AIDS:** Raising awareness and providing treatment and support for affected families.

The organization also supported economic growth through Vision Fund initiatives, enabling families to stabilize livelihoods while fostering social protection.

With a team of over 290 staff, World Vision continues to work across 30 districts, through Area Programmes and special projects, in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda and support from various Development Partners.





For three decades, World Vision Rwanda has transformed lives across the nation, investing over **USD 625 MILLION** in programs that promote the well-being of children and their communities.



Over **8 MILLION** vulnerable children have been reached through several of our development programs, including Peace Building, Emergency Response, Resilience and Livelihoods, Child Protection and Education, Health and Nutrition, WASH and Child Sponsorship for the past 30 years.



## THE FIRST DECADE (1994–2004): EMERGENCY RESPONSE & REHABILITATION



### EMERGENCY RELIEF EFFORTS

World Vision's work in Rwanda began at a pivotal moment in the nation's history, dating back to April 1994. Already active in neighboring Uganda, World Vision entered Rwanda even before the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) forces were able to end the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. The organization's initial emergency and relief interventions commenced in April 1994 in Byumba (now Gicumbi), Gikongoro (now Nyamagabe) and Bugesera districts.

As one of the first humanitarian responders, World Vision collaborated with the Government of Rwanda and other Development Partners (DPs) to deliver critical frontline support to destitute communities, focusing particularly on vulnerable children, many of who had lost their parents during the genocide.

Due to widespread destruction of infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, the orphanages became multi-purpose facilities, serving as both shelters and medical treatment centers. Nurses collaborated closely with the organization to care for children. In those early days, the World Vision team was primarily composed of Rwandan volunteers who worked tirelessly to respond to the urgent needs of the affected people. The volunteers

were compensated with food stamps and later most of them were formally employed.

Valentine Nyirandahimana, one of the longest serving World Vision staff members, who was there at that time recalls, "Everything in the country had been destroyed—homes, schools, and hospitals. We had to do work with what was available. It was vital to ensure children had a safe place to sleep and a team to care for them."

The whole health care delivery system was non functional because health facilities had been destroyed, health care workers had been either killed, displaced or in exile. This led to life threatening illnesses such as dysentery, malaria, and severe malnutrition not being attended to. Many children succumbed to these conditions and it was heartbreaking because many young survivors were burying their peers. Because of these challenges, World Vision also began to provide medication, medical equipment as well as training for available healthcare personnel. Perhaps the biggest challenge was the loss of hope among affected communities. As such, World Vision embarked on a journey of designing interventions that could fascinate renewed hope.



### REHABILITATION AND LIVELIHOOD RECOVERY

After addressing the immediate medical and relief needs, World Vision embarked on a journey to rebuild lives and restore livelihoods. Thereby, the organization shifted its focus to the long-term rehabilitation of Rwandan communities devastated by the genocide. This involved constructing homes by providing materials such as roofing sheets while local residents contributed labor and other available resources.

To restore livelihoods, the organization supported rural farmers with food supplies and agricultural support in forms of seeds, seedlings, seed multiplication mechanisms and training on soil conservation and other farming techniques. These initiatives enabled communities to attain food sufficiency and later food security.



### WORK WITH REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

From 1996, World Vision collaborated with the Rwandan Government to repatriate Rwandan refugees who had fled into Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and reintegrate them into their communities.

Simultaneously, the unrest in Congo caused an influx of Congolese refugees into Rwanda, necessitating the establishment of a refugee response. These Congolese refugees were hosted in various camps such as Gihembe (now closed), Mahama, Kigeme, Nyabiheke, Kiziba, and Mugombwa as well as transit centers including Gashora, Nkamira, Nyarushishi and Kijote. This particular response has existed to date, in collaboration with Government of Rwanda (MINEMA), UNHCR and other Development Partners. needs of active camps across the country.

Facts: Across the 30 years, World Vision has supported over 300,000 refugees through reintegration and rehabilitation initiatives.





## HEALING, PEACEBUILDING, & RECONCILIATION

Recognizing the psychological trauma and emotional wounds caused by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, World Vision started implementing healing, peace building, and reconciliation programs. Through these programs, the Organization trained all staff to become agents of healing. Within the same period, the organization implemented Personal Development Workshops (PDW) that focused on three key components dealing with bereavement, emotions, and forgiveness.

The PDW helped participants to navigate their grief, manage emotions, and embark on a journey toward forgiveness and renewed hope. Survivors were encouraged to forgive themselves for feeling guilty of being alive when their loved ones were killed. Additionally, perpetrators, including those in prisons, were supported to acknowledge their actions and take steps towards seeking for forgiveness.

At a later stage, survivors and perpetrators who participated in the program often emerged as peace ambassadors, sharing their experiences to foster unity within their communities.



### Promotion of Reconciliation among Youth (PRAY): focused on supporting Children to Heal.

As children began recovering physically, World Vision focused on their reintegration into schools. Efforts included supporting orphaned children still living in their homes through essential material aid, school enrollment, and home visits. For children in orphanages, the organization prioritized reconnecting them with their families where possible. In cases where families could not be traced or where children could not remember their origins, they were placed with foster families. Child-headed households received tailored support to ensure their survival and that of their siblings.

By 1997, orphanage programs were phased out and efforts were directed towards community and family-based support, which then became the key strategy. However, children who had been supported within their biological or foster families, continued to exhibit

alarming signs of distress. Many dropped out of school, others sold their scholastic materials, or displayed other concerning behaviors. This prompted the World Vision team, in 2001, to design PRAY in order to support them closely and enhance their well-being.

Although the children had been supported within their biological or foster families, they continued to exhibit alarming signs of distress. Many dropped out of school, sold their scholastic materials, or displayed other concerning behaviors that prompted the World Vision team to closely monitor their well-being.

In 2001, World Vision extended its reconciliation efforts to youth and children, introducing psycho-social support tailored to their needs. This approach ensured that the organization's work addressed not only basic needs but also the deeper emotional recovery required for sustained well-being.



**IMPACT STORY:  
FROM PAIN TO PEACE:  
A STORY OF RECONCILIATION  
& RENEWAL**

The nightmarish chapter of Alice's life reached its darkest moment in 1994, during the genocide against the Tutsi that engulfed Rwanda. As the violence raged, Alice and her husband desperately sought safety with her mother and extended family in a church. But their refuge would be short-lived. "I left my family behind, not knowing it would be the last time I would see them," Alice says, her voice heavy with sorrow. The church was soon attacked, and the family members Alice had tried to protect were killed mercilessly. She fled with her baby, seeking shelter in a nearby wetland, but the killers soon found her.

Alice was brutally attacked and left for dead. One assailant struck her with a wooden club, another slashed her temple with a machete, and another pierced her shoulder with a spear. The most horrific of all was when one of the attackers butchered her baby, who had been strapped to her back. "I had prayed not to die in the marsh. I begged God for help," Alice recalls, her voice trembling. She was gravely wounded, and the loss of her child, her last connection to her family, nearly broke her spirit.

After surviving the horrors of the genocide, she was rescued by the Inkotanyi soldiers on May 5th, 1994. But survival was only the beginning of her difficult journey. Severely injured and weighing just 24 kilograms, Alice felt the weight of her grief and trauma. "I had no life left in me," she admits. "I had lost everything—my family, my baby, my dignity, my faith in humanity."

In 1995, Alice's life began to change when World Vision stepped in. They provided food, shelter, and medical care, and most importantly, they offered emotional support to help Alice begin the healing process.

However, it was their trauma healing program in 1999 that truly transformed her. "World Vision gave us a space to share our pain, to speak our truths. They listened to



Alice in front of a fruit tree that her and Emmanuel planted together as a symbol of their shared commitment to reconciliation.

us with compassion, and it was through them that I began to heal," Alice says. It was here that Alice began to rebuild not just her physical health, but her spirit. Through a World Vision program, Alice learned to forgive, a concept she had never thought possible. With World Vision's support, Alice slowly began to trust again: first in herself, then in others.

**A Path to Healing and Forgiveness**

Alice's journey was far from easy, but the support she received from World Vision played a pivotal role in her recovery. As part of the program, she participated in a reconciliation initiative where survivors like herself met with those who had committed the atrocities against them. One of the men who had tried to kill her—Emmanuel—came to her and apologized. His act of remorse was a turning point for Alice.

"I agreed to his apology on three conditions: he had to show me where my family was buried, he had to name those who helped him, and he had to apologize in front of my family," she says.

Emmanuel fulfilled every condition, and together they planted fruit trees, a symbol of their shared commitment to reconciliation—as they had been encouraged through a World Vision training. Through this act, Alice found a way to forgive, and the healing began to spread beyond her.

World Vision's support didn't end with emotional healing. The organization continued to provide material support to Alice and her family. In addition to food and clothing, they helped her rebuild her home, giving her iron sheets to replace the leaky roof. They also provided livestock and training, which allowed Alice to create a stable income. With their support, she was able to provide for her children and give them the education they deserved. "World Vision didn't only give us food, they gave us the chance to rebuild our lives," Alice says. They sponsored two of her children, ensuring they had the educational tools they needed to succeed. Today, one of her children is studying abroad, another is pursuing a Master's degree, and her youngest recently got married.

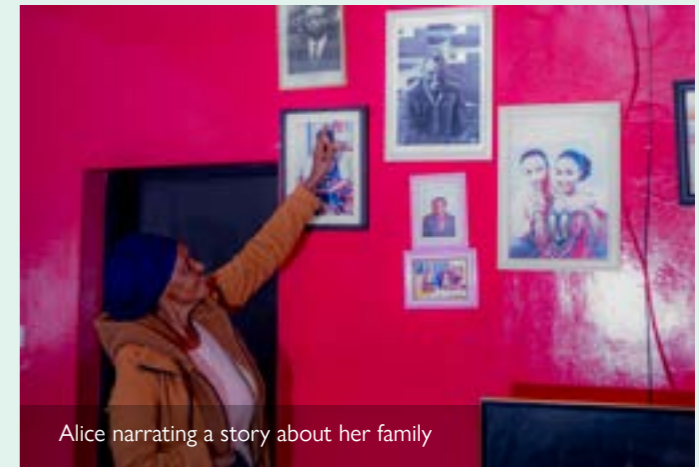
"For close to 30 years, World Vision has been like a parent to me. They stepped in not only for me but also for my children. They sent them to school and supported them even when my husband passed away. World Vision has been a true partner in my life after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, a steady source of hope and support that allowed my family to grow and flourish," she says.

Through the years, Alice and her family have triumphed. Alice was able to heal, forgive, and ultimately rebuild a life she had once thought was lost forever.



**World Vision didn't only give us food, they gave us the chance to rebuild our lives World Vision didn't only give us food, they gave us the chance to rebuild our lives.**

-Alice



Alice narrating a story about her family



Alice in front of her house



**IMPACT STORY:  
WHEN ALL HOPE WAS  
LOST, WORLD VISION  
SHONE A LIGHT IN  
NICOLE'S DARKEST  
HOUR**

On a calm Monday morning, we set out for an interview with Nicole, eager to hear her story. A last-minute change of plans led us to a different house, as she asked us to meet her there instead of her own home. Her sleek and shiny black RAV4 was parked outside the gate when we arrived. Nicole greeted us warmly, her excitement clear, and introduced the woman hosting her, a professional writer helping her put together a book about her journey with World Vision. It was a striking coincidence; we had come to hear Nicole's story with World Vision, and here she was, sharing it through her own book.

When Nicole opened the gate to welcome us, her warm smile belies the depths of sorrow and resilience that had shaped her life. Today, she is a thriving businesswoman, the proud mother of an adorable little girl, and an inspiration to many. But her story begins in unimaginable darkness! A child orphaned by the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, left to care for her five younger siblings in a crumbling house shared with animals.

"We had nothing but each other," Nicole recalls. "I became a parent at a very tender age of 12, with no guidance, no resources, and no idea how to survive." Among her siblings was a premature baby weighing just over a kilogram. Nicole would scour the neighborhood for odd jobs-washing dishes, doing laundry, cleaning homes-anything to provide a meal for her family. Nights were harrowing; the rain flooded their home, forcing her to place the children on a rickety table to avoid the rising water.

But just when hope seemed out of reach, a chance encounter with World Vision changed everything.

Nicole first learned about World Vision through a local leader who visited her home. Their first gift was life-changing; a goat. "That goat brought us so much joy," she said. "It was the first time we owned anything, and it gave us hope." Although the goat was later sold to support her family, it symbolized the beginning of a brighter chapter. World Vision's support quickly grew. Nicole and her siblings were invited to participate in programs for orphans, where they received food, education, and emotional support. "When I walked into the World Vision office carrying my malnourished sibling on my back, I felt seen for the first time," she shares. "I realized we were not alone in our struggle."

World Vision arranged for Nicole to attend a vocational school, where she learned vehicle repair. Despite the challenges of balancing school and caregiving, World Vision stood by her, providing stipends for transport to school. "They didn't just give up on me," Nicole says.

When Nicole's malnourished sibling's health became critical, World Vision partnered with an organization to provide lifesaving care for him. This intervention freed Nicole to focus on her studies. Soon after, World Vision sponsors funded the construction of a new home for her family, a gesture that left her in tears.

"When I was preparing for my wedding, I wanted World Vision listed on my wedding invitation as my parent because they were the only family I had known. I was very serious about this decision. That is how much World Vision means to me. It took a lot of effort for people to talk me out of this decision I had made," Nicole says, her voice filled with emotion.

**A Legacy of Transformation**

Today, Nicole's life is unrecognizable from her early struggles. She owns her own agricultural business, drives her own car, has a house of her own, and has built a stable life for her two-year-old daughter Ineza. Her siblings are thriving too-some are university graduates, while others have pursued skilled trades.

"I used to wash dishes to survive," Nicole reflects. "Now, I am financially comfortable and even able to help others. My life has been completely transformed because of World Vision and its sponsors."

Nicole is also writing a book to share her story and inspire others. She dreams of empowering more vulnerable children, just as she was empowered.

**"Extend Your Compassion"**

As she looks back on her journey, Nicole offers a heartfelt plea: "There are many children still suffering like I once did. I encourage World Vision and other organisations/institutions to continue extending its compassion because it changes lives—just like it changed mine."

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-Nicole



## THE SECOND DECADE (2004-2014): TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



### CHILD- FOCUSED AREA DEVELOPMENT

By 2000, World Vision's work in Rwanda began transitioning from emergency response to sustainable development, aligning with the country's national strategic priorities. This marked the beginning of a new phase characterized by Area Development Programs (ADPs) focused on Peace Building, Emergency Response, Resilience and Livelihoods, Child Protection and Education, Health and Nutrition, WASH and Child Sponsorship.

World Vision's programming remained child-centered and community based, where the Organization implemented a range of programs designed to enhance the well-being and resilience of communities across the country:

- In the **health sector**, the organization supported the construction of health centers and posts, provided medical equipment, and trained healthcare professionals, including community health workers, to improve access to quality healthcare services.
- To strengthen **food security**, World Vision promoted seed multiplication, soil erosion control, agroforestry initiatives, and cooperative development. These efforts were complemented by the provision of livestock and the construction of valley dams to support sustainable agricultural practices and boost community livelihoods.
- In the field of **education**, World Vision ensured access to learning opportunities for vulnerable children by rebuilding schools, providing essential materials, and facilitating the enrollment of orphans and children from child-headed households.
- The organization also prioritized **HIV/AIDS interventions** through awareness campaigns, counseling services, and facilitating access to antiretroviral therapy. Families affected by HIV/AIDS received additional support, including food assistance and home care services, to enhance their quality of life.



## IMPACT STORY HOW KIBEHO TSS IS TRANSFORMING RWANDA'S YOUTH THROUGH TECHNICAL EDUCATION

In the heart of Kibeho, a community once burdened by limited opportunities, now boasts of a school of excellence. Kibeho Technical Secondary School (TSS) wasn't always a center of excellence. Its journey began humbly in 2013 as a Vocational Training Center with only short-term courses. Yet, through vision, partnership, and resilience, it has become a place of hope for young people across Rwanda.

Before its transformation, Kibeho struggled to offer its youth the practical skills they needed to escape poverty and build meaningful lives. Many families, burdened by economic challenges, saw education as an unaffordable luxury. The vocational center, though a start, lacked the infrastructure and resources to meet the growing demand for quality technical training.

In 2015, this narrative began to change, thanks to the intervention of World Vision. Recognizing the untapped potential of the school and the youth it served, World Vision invested in its transformation. Classrooms were built, a computer lab equipped with 30 modern computers was established, and boarding facilities—including dormitories and a dining hall were constructed. These investments turned a struggling training center into Kibeho TSS, offering three-year diploma programs that would prepare students for Rwanda's evolving economy.

"Through World Vision support, we now have a school that is now a foundation for success," says Jean Nepomuscene, the school's Headteacher. "World Vision

gave us the tools to inspire students and offer them a real chance to change their lives."

Today, Kibeho TSS offers specialized training in fields like electrical technology, plumbing, wood craftsmanship, manufacturing, and leatherworks. Students learn to operate cutting-edge tools and software, such as AutoCAD and ArchiCAD, ensuring they remain competitive in the modern workforce. The curriculum reflects the country's growing demand for skilled professionals, preparing graduates not just to find jobs but to excel in them.

For Claudine, a recent graduate, the impact of this education is deeply personal. "Before coming to Kibeho TSS, I didn't think I could have a career. Now, I'm confident in my abilities, and I'm excited about the future."

From its early days, over 470 students who completed short-term training secured jobs in their fields. Since becoming a three-year diploma institution, the school has graduated 395 students, many of whom have gone on to higher education or found employment in competitive industries. In 2023-2024 alone, 78 students, including 30% girls, passed national exams with outstanding results.

The impact of Kibeho TSS's success extends beyond the classroom. The school has become a source of pride for the community. World Vision's tree-planting efforts have transformed the campus into a lush, inspiring environment where students can focus on their studies and envision a better future.

"Kibeho TSS is educating students, and changing the story of entire families," says Niyonzima. "Every graduate who finds a job or starts a business uplifts their community. This is the power of technical education."

From a modest vocational center to a thriving institution, Kibeho TSS Has become a place where dreams take shape, skills are honed, and futures are built for the students.





## THE IMPACT STORY THE SON OF WORLD VISION: CULTIVATING DREAMS & TREE TOMATOES

When Emmanuel first started his farming journey, his life was marked by struggle and uncertainty. Living in Bugesera District, he relied solely on subsistence farming to feed his family, with little to no knowledge of how to improve his yield or protect the environment. His fields were eroding, and his crops were failing to meet his family's needs. The challenges were overwhelming, and farming felt like a never-ending battle against the land.

"At that time, I didn't know how to farm sustainably or make my farm more productive. I was just surviving, not thriving," Emmanuel reflects.

In 2015, Emmanuel's situation began to change when he partnered with World Vision. The organization introduced him to training in environmental protection, reforestation, and sustainable farming practices. His land, once struggling with wind erosion and soil depletion, started to show signs of hope.

"They changed my entire way of thinking about farming. I had never imagined the potential of farming for the market or the impact I could encounter by adopting sustainable practices. World Vision helped me create that vision and gave me the tools to bring it to life. They taught us the skills to regenerate our fields and turn our arid lands into fertile soil again," he says.

Armed with new knowledge, Emmanuel began to implement sustainable farming practices on his land. He became one of the first extension agents in his area, helping other farmers adopt techniques to combat soil degradation and increase crop yields. Through his tree nursery, which grew fruit trees like papayas, oranges, and tree tomatoes, Emmanuel not only provided his family with food but also began earning an income.

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"I never imagined I'd be able to send my children to school and take care of their future. But today, I can confidently say that I've educated my children, a chance at a better life," Emmanuel says, proudly reflecting on how his financial situation has improved.

As his farm expanded, Emmanuel shifted from growing only for subsistence to cultivating crops for the market. His tree tomato farm, which started with just 500 seeds on a 30x50m plot, quickly grew.

"Despite initial skepticism from my neighbors, I started supplying Kigali's markets with tree tomatoes, and soon, I was selling more than I ever thought possible," Emmanuel shares.

**World Vision gave me the tools to transform my life, my family's future, and my community.**

His yields increased, and within a few years, he moved his family from the first to the third Poverty Category ranking (Ubudhehe). His children now have school uniforms, books, and the resources they need for their education. Emmanuel also pays for health insurance in advance, securing his family's future.

Emmanuel's success has impacted not only his family but also his entire community. Known as the "Tree Tomato Guy" or the "Son of World Vision," he has distributed over 350,000 tree tomato seedlings to farmers across Bugesera and beyond. His efforts have played a critical

role in reducing malnutrition in the area. He said that the impact of tree tomatoes on his community has been incredible, as they no longer rely on produce from faraway regions.



**Without World Vision's support along with its partners and the Government of Rwanda, our children would still be suffering from malnutrition.**

With World Vision's support, Emmanuel purchased a three-hectare farm and installed solar-powered irrigation systems on four hectares. This technology has allowed him and other farmers to grow crops year-round, even during the dry season. Emmanuel's story has caught the attention of local leaders, parliament members, and other high-ranking officials who visited his farm. He now shares his experiences widely proving that Bugesera's lands can yield abundant harvests with the right knowledge and tools. "World Vision gave me the tools to transform my life, my family's future, and my community," Emmanuel says,

reflecting on the profound impact the organization has had on his life.

Through World Vision's partnership, he has not only improved his own life but has uplifted his community, showing them that hope, sustainability, and prosperity are within reach.

"Without World Vision's support along with its partners and the government of Rwanda, our children would still be suffering from malnutrition. Our lands wouldn't be as green, and trees would be scarce. But now, we have a bright future ahead," Emmanuel says, his voice filled with hope for what the future holds.

Since partnering with World Vision in 2015, Emmanuel now prioritizes sustainable farming and environmental protection, cultivating indigenous species like Grevillea and Umusave (*Markhamia lutea*), and shifting from subsistence farming to a market-driven approach. This change has brought financial independence to his family but has also empowered fellow farmers in his community. Today, thanks to this partnership, his community has abundant firewood, poles for crops, and livestock fodder, enabling them to produce more milk and other resources. Above all, they now have hope for a brighter future, one where the land is restored, and the next generation can thrive.



# THE THIRD DECADE(2014–2024): INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT & RESILIENCE



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CHILD SPONSORSHIP

In Rwanda, World Vision is a key partner in safeguarding children's well-being and enhancing access to quality education through targeted interventions.

In child protection, World Vision Rwanda implements programs aimed at preventing and addressing abuse, exploitation, and violence against children. These efforts involve establishing community-based child protection mechanisms, raising awareness through impactful campaigns, and advocating for stronger child protection systems and the promotion of children's rights. By working closely with local authorities, community leaders, and families, the organization addresses root causes of vulnerability, including poverty and harmful social norms, thereby fostering safer environments for their growth and development.

In education, World Vision focuses on improving access to quality learning opportunities, particularly for children from marginalized and vulnerable backgrounds. A key priority is enhancing literacy skills among young learners to ensure foundational learning outcomes. Through these efforts, children in refugee and host communities have benefited from literacy interventions, and have access to ICT tools for teaching and learning.

World Vision also supports inclusive education that is designed to accommodate diverse learning needs and Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs aimed at laying the groundwork for lifelong learning.

To equip youth for the future, World Vision provides skills training and startup kits, enabling them to complete a practical skills curriculum. In refugee camps, youth receive scholarship packages, offering them a pathway to a brighter future.



## RESILIENCE & LIVELIHOODS

World Vision, in collaboration with Government of Rwanda and Development Partners, empowers families and communities to enhance their incomes, build economic resilience, and break the cycle of poverty. Through the Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) Program, the organization provides a structured pathway for extremely poor households to transition out of poverty by engaging in productive activities. This program has supported households, equipping them to adopt sustainable livelihoods, increase resilience, and actively contribute to local economic and community development.

World Vision also builds capacity of farmers on modern agricultural techniques, so that they can apply improved, sustainable and Climate-Smart Agricultural farming methods. The organization also supports savings groups, enabling people to save collectively and amass capital for income-generating activities, further stabilizing household economies. The organization also provides households with productive assets like cash and livestock.

To promote sustainable practices and climate change adaptation, World Vision has introduced initiatives such as agroforestry, tree planting, and school greening for environmental conservation. Off-farm economic activities, including value chains in horticulture, pig farming, poultry, and maize production, have contributed significantly to economic growth of households and communities.

This integrated approach ensures that families and communities are equipped with the skills, resources, and resilience needed to thrive economically while contributing to environmental conservation and sustainable development.



**548,609**

Number of people accessing saving groups

**\$11.1222 M**

Amount of saving (saving groups)

**410,000**

Number of households supported in agriculture and livestock activities

**149,073**

Number of HH reached by UPG (Ultra Poor Graduation) intervention

**105,238**

Number of households received support for productive assets

**14 million**

Number of planted tree for environmental conservation

**210,992**

Number of households participated in technical (livelihoods and business skills) trainings

**\$1,630,256**

Total sales from Horticulture, pig, Poultry & Maize value chain

Data as of 2017 to date.

## HEALTH AND WASH

In collaboration with local communities and the Government of Rwanda and Development Partners, World Vision's Health and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) program is dedicated to improving access to clean WASH services for the most vulnerable communities to enhance Health and Nutrition outcomes.

Some of the health specific initiatives that World Vision has been involved in include; Maternal and Child Health Promotion, SRH and Rights, Health Systems Strengthening, Prevention of Malaria and Pneumonia, capacity building for CHWs, and working with Health and Hygiene clubs to promote health and Behavior change at school level.

The WASH program ensures that households can access clean water within a maximum 30-minute round trip. World Vision constructs water points with a focus on sustainable local management and maintenance, ensuring long-term impact. The program extends its reach to schools and healthcare facilities, directly improving the daily lives of students, staff, and patients.

In addition to water access, the program has significantly improved sanitation and hygiene by providing improved sanitation facilities across households, schools, and healthcare centers. These interventions contribute to better health outcomes, reducing the prevalence of waterborne diseases and fostering healthier communities.

In Nutrition, World Vision's has implemented models such as Positive Deviance/Hearth (PDH) which aims at rehabilitating malnourished (identified as underweight) children in the context of their own homes. The Timed and Targeted Counselling (TTC) is a behavior change communication approach that encompasses a wide range of life-saving health practices through appropriately timed messages delivered using interactive storytelling targeting families of young children, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.



### IMPACT STORY A WATER POINT BY WORLD VISION THAT SPARKED TRANSFORMATION

Every morning, just as the sun began to rise, Grace and her children would begin their journey at around 5:00 AM. They carried empty jerry cans and walked down the dam to fetch water, braving the morning coldness of the early hours. It was an unpleasant hour-and-a-half round trip, a routine that had stolen the joy from their mornings.

Her children weren't looking forward to mornings, because every dawn reminded them that they had to wake up to their worst chore-trekking that long distance-in search of water. Their feet grew weary, their spirits even more so, yet they had no choice but to follow their mother's determined steps.

Grace, the 33-year-old mother of three kept hoping that someday, she and her children would have water somewhere close in her community, so they wouldn't have to endure the exhaustion, the long walks, and the daily struggle for something as essential as water.

"We used to wake up before the sun to talk the long trip in search of water. My children often arrived late at school because they had to fetch water first. It was mostly sad for me to see my children suffer, and I hoped that someday they wouldn't have to walk that long a distance, for water. I hoped they would get to school early and well-rested like other children who had easy access to water," she said. The mother of three and her children had no other way to survive, they had to endure the daily struggle of trekking that draining long distances for water, a basic need they couldn't leave without.

However, in 2022, Grace and her children's struggles came to an end. They no longer had to wake up at dawn or endure the long walk to fetch water. Clean, safe water was finally brought close to their home. The days of exhaustion

and waking up before the chickens crow were behind them. World Vision constructed the MINAGO Water Supply system in Gatsibo District, and the water points that Grace and her family fetch water from, is one of so many that are connected to this water supply system. The 99.8 Kilometer Water supply system serves over 27,000 local residents with clean water. Grace and her children are one of thousands of families whose lives have been transformed by this.

"Now I have water in my compound. It takes me less than a minute to get water when I need it. Since we got this tap here, our lives and health are much easier. We prepare our meals on time, and keep our home and bodies clean all the time. My children are clean-but most of all they were relieved that they didn't have to wake up so early and take the long trek to go fetch water. Our lives have surely been transformed, thanks to World Vision," Grace says, with her face lit with joy.

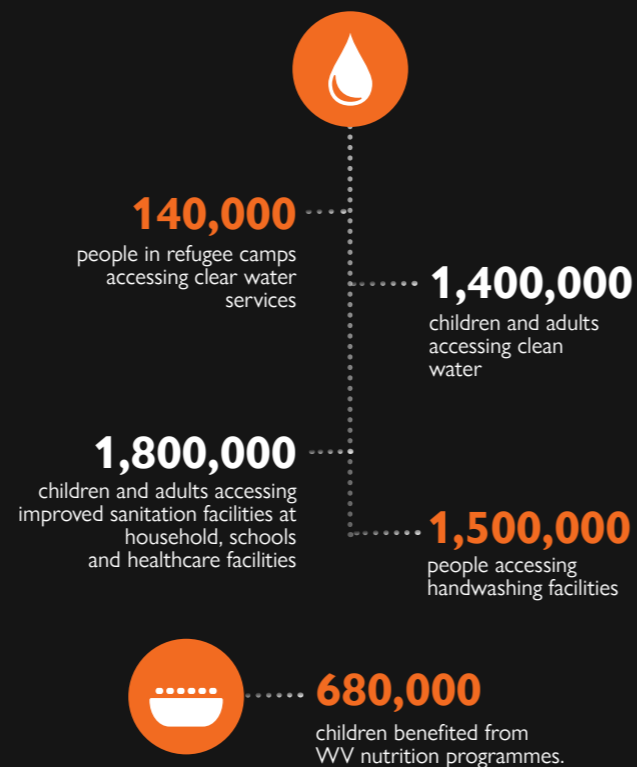
Grace added that many people in her community shared in her pain, and now joy. Many of them had similar burdens brought about by lack of access to water but now their community is thriving. She mentioned that having easy access to water has also improved their livelihoods, as it has created more time for mothers to engage in other productive activities hence improving their economic well-being, and family conditions.

Between 2018 and 2024, World Vision, in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, provided clean water to over 1.4 million people across the country. With the Government contributing 40% of the investment and World Vision 60%, this joint effort made it possible for families to access clean water right in their communities, changing their daily lives in ways they once only dreamed of.



**“World Vision has relieved us of the burden we once carried. This faucet has changed our lives, giving us dignity and hope.”**

- Grace



Data as of 2018 to date.





## CHILD PROTECTION & EDUCATION

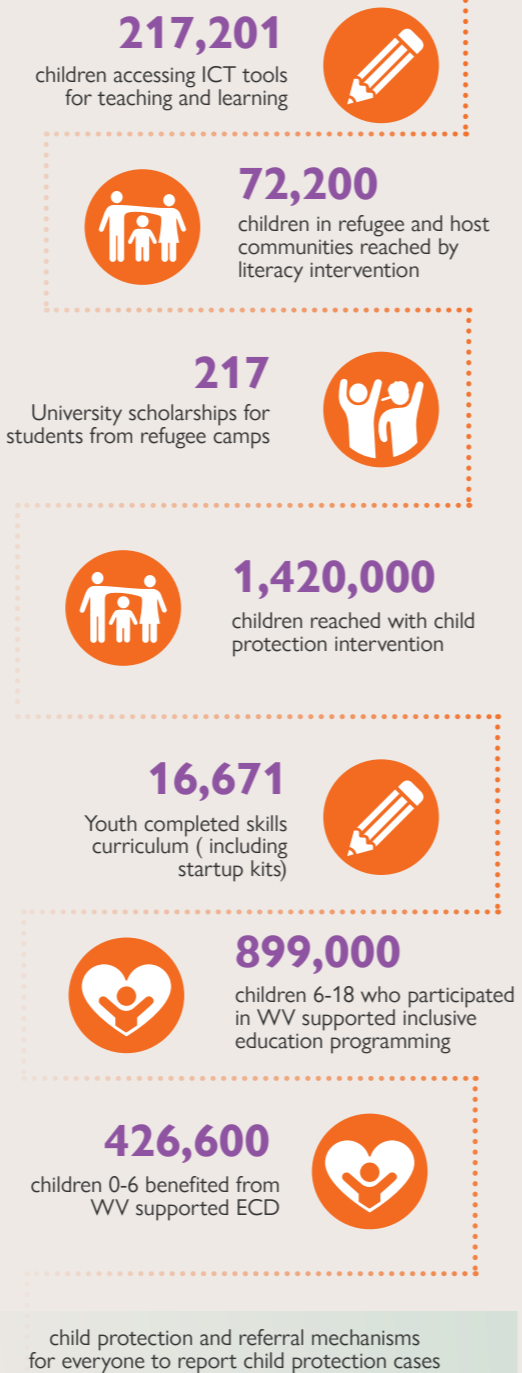
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To equip youth for the future, World Vision provides skills training and startup kits, enabling them to complete a practical skills curriculum. In refugee camps, youth receive scholarship packages, offering them a pathway to a brighter future.



**World Vision in partnership with the Rwanda National Police established the Child Helpline tool free number 116.**

Data as of 2021 to date.



## IMPACT STORY DENISE'S VISION NOT DETERRED BY VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Denise is a 17-year-old bright and bubbly girl who lives in the eastern part of Rwanda. Her dream is to become famous, an inspiration, and a support for the most vulnerable. This amazing sense of purpose Denise has, was stirred by a journey of healing she walked after losing her sight.

Denise became visually impaired in a sequence of unfortunate accidents. The first incident happened when she was a tiny girl. She was playing near the woods and a friend accidentally struck her left eye with a sharp stick. A few years later, while Denise was feeding livestock at home, a goat thrust its horn and hit Denise's right eye too. This was deeply and painfully life-changing for Denise. Additionally, her family was facing a new and unexpected challenge of supporting a child with dual visual impairments. Seeing the physical and emotional pain Denise was going through was heartbreaking for them. As if that wasn't enough, they had to take care of high medical bills, despite already living in poverty. Amidst this heavy distress, unfortunately, Denise lost her mother too. She lives with her father and young sister who has a neurodevelopmental disorder.

"I was so sad to have lost my sight for both my eyes, and I had no hope of receiving proper treatment because my family was living in poverty," said Denise. World Vision took in Denise as a registered child and also supported her family in various ways. World Vision first of all catered for Denise's medical needs. She was supported by skilled doctors and therapists, to ensure both physical and emotional recovery. Due to this medical support, Denise learned to navigate the world around her using a cane, transforming her perceived limitations into stepping stones toward independence.

Furthermore, World Vision facilitated Denise to pursue her studies by providing support. She was provided with educational materials such as braille books, laptop, tactile diagrams, and auditory aids which profoundly transformed her learning into a sanctuary.

She said; "I found solace and means of expression with this form of learning. The support I received from World Vision opened my eyes as it helped me to see the beauty of life again, beyond my impairment."

World Vision's support extended beyond education. They covered the cost of her surgeries, some amounting to millions of Rwandan Francs, and ensured she never missed a medical appointment.

World Vision also uplifted Denise's family through Livelihood Training programs and small business support, which greatly improved their economic well-being. Hope for a brighter future for Denise and her family was immensely restored.

Denise is deeply grateful to World Vision for being her steadfast companion in her journey from adversity to hope and triumph. Not only that, but WV has also inspired Denise to make it her life purpose to help others. She says; "World Vision believed in me and my potential and I am committed to paying it forward. My goal is to study until I get a PhD, and to help other vulnerable people."

Today, Denise is a thriving teenager with dreams as big as her heart. She has developed communication and interpersonal skills, mastered languages, and discovered her passion for singing, songwriting, and theater. Her talents have already earned her recognition. She was a second runner-up in the Kigali Public Library Writing Competition, an achievement that brought her immense pride.

"My dream is to become a psychologist and an actor," Denise shares. "I want to use my experiences and talents to inspire and counsel others." For Denise, World Vision is like her family. "They have been like parents to me, filling the gap left by my mother's passing and supporting me in ways I never imagined," she says. "Thanks to them, I live with dignity, hope, and a future full of possibilities."



“  
They've given me a future  
I never thought possible.

- Denise Mushimiyimana



## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

WV Rwanda has continued to collaborate with the Government of Rwanda, UNHCR, and other development partners in responding to emergencies as well as fostering long-term and sustainable solutions for refugee and host communities. This work has been done in all refugee camps and their host communities across Rwanda. Currently, Education, WASH, and Livelihood interventions are being implemented in 5 refugee camps of Mahama, Kiziba, Nyabiheke, Kigeme, and Mugomba, as well as 4 Transit centers of Nkamira, Gashora, Nyarushishi and Kijote, serving over 140,000 refugees.

### Impact Highlights

- 2,800 refugee learners in ECD receiving porridge
- 9000 secondary school-going refugee learners have their school feeding fees paid for
- 192 refugee youth have benefited from the DAFI scholarship program
- 60,000 refugees and 10,000 host communities receiving clean water
- Over 123,000 refugees in Camps and Transit centers have been provided with disability-inclusive improved sanitation facilities and services
- 128 Savings Groups established among refugee communities with savings of over \$227,000



## EMPOWERING REFUGEES THROUGH EDUCATION, TRANSFORMING LIVES IN NYABIHEKE CAMP

For countless children who escaped violence and chaos in neighboring countries, Nyabicwamba Groupe Scolaire school, found in Nyabiheke Refugee camp has made it possible for them to rebuild their lives and attain a decent education.

For years, children in the camp faced insurmountable barriers to education. Families struggled to afford tuition fees, and many students had to abandon their dreams of learning to focus on survival. Resources were scarce, and the hope of breaking free from the cycle of poverty seemed distant.

But the journey to this sanctuary was not easy. For years, children in the camp faced insurmountable barriers to education. Families struggled to afford tuition fees, and many students had to abandon their dreams of learning to focus on survival. Resources were scarce, and the hope of breaking free from the cycle of poverty seemed distant.

World Vision, in partnership with UNHCR and the Ministry of Emergency Affairs, stepped into this void, committed to transforming lives through education. Since 1996, World Vision has been a steadfast ally to refugee communities, covering tuition fees, providing essential school supplies, and ensuring the most vulnerable children have access to quality education.



For 22-year-old Elijah Technology expert, World Vision's support was profound. Coming from a family that could barely meet their basic needs, the thought of paying school fees was unimaginable.

"Without their support, I wouldn't have been able to finish my studies. World Vision lifted that burden, allowing me to focus on my education," Elijah said.

Elijah excelled in his studies, and with the support of vocational training programs facilitated by World Vision, he discovered a passion for technology. Today, he works at an Irembo branch near the camp, assisting clients in navigating Rwanda's online government services platform.

"I never imagined I would work in tech. Education gave me the chance to dream, and now I am helping my community

access essential services," Elijah said. His role at Irembo is significant, connecting refugees and citizens alike to critical government services, from tax payments to permits, ensuring they can fully participate in Rwanda's digital transformation.

Aline, another graduate of GS Nyabicwamba, is equally grateful for the opportunities World Vision provided. After completing her ordinary level of education, World Vision stepped in to support her tuition, books, uniforms, and other necessities.



"World Vision paid my school fees for three years when my family had no means to support me financially, and now that I've completed high school, I'm waiting for my results to plan my next journey. I dream of joining a university and I am confident that with this educational support, my future is bright. I thank World Vision for walking with me on this journey," said Aline.

GS Nyabicwamba's impact extends far beyond individual stories. With World Vision's support, children in Nyabiheke Refugee Camp now have access to education that nurtures their potential, strengthens their communities, and empowers them to break free from cycles of hardship.

World Vision's work in refugee camps is rooted in the belief that every child, regardless of their circumstances, deserves the opportunity to learn, dream, and achieve. World Vision supports by providing Education interventions, among others in the six refugee camps, and transit centers across Rwanda. World Vision collaborates with UNHCR and the Ministry of Emergency Affairs in implementing educational and other development interventions in refugee camps.





## SOWING HOPE AND REAPING TREASURES THROUGH A MAIZE PLANT

In Bugarama sector, where lush maize fields span as far as the eye can see, farmers once faced an uphill battle with every harvest. Despite cultivating over 60,000 tons of maize annually, much of their hard work would go to waste due to poor storage, spoilage, and lack of market access. It was a cycle of loss and frustration, dimming the hopes of many who depended on farming for survival.

In 2018, a remarkable partnership between World Vision and Gatsibo District planted the seeds for transformation. Today, the Gatsibo Agro-Processing Plant has become a hope for farmers, turning previously wasted maize harvests into a source of prosperity.

Today, the facility serves as a hub for processing and preserving crops, ensuring farmers' produce reaches markets in optimal condition.

When the facility was first constructed, it served as a simple storage space for cereal crops. "Initially, it was just about giving farmers a safe place to store their harvests while waiting for buyers," recalls Munyandekwe, the Managing Director of the plant. However, the pressing need for a more sustainable solution became clear.

Recognizing the untapped potential of the abundant maize harvests, World Vision and Gatsibo District took a bold step. They transformed the facility into a state-of-the-art Agro-processing plant. "It was heartbreaking to see so much maize go to waste," Munyandekwe says. "This plant was designed to change that narrative, to preserve crops and ensure they reach markets in the best condition." Equipped with crop drying and storage services, the plant became an answered prayer for local farmers. Harvests that would once spoil during the rainy season are now safely dried and stored. Flexible payment terms allow farmers

to pay for the services after selling their produce, easing financial strain and fostering trust.

"For the first time, farmers have a reliable market," says Munyandekwe. "They no longer have to worry about losing their hard-earned harvests to spoilage."

The facility has also taken on the role of a connector, linking farmers to buyers and other Agro-processing businesses when its own capacity; 5,000 tons, is exceeded. Farmers now farm with confidence, knowing their efforts will be rewarded. Families can invest in their futures, educating children, improving their homes, and reinvesting in their fields.

Munyandekwe is quick to credit World Vision's role in this transformation. "World Vision financed these buildings and provided the foundation for this plant to succeed. Without their support, this wouldn't have been possible. They gave us the infrastructure; we only brought the machines and vehicles."

The Gatsibo Agro-Processing Plant shows how thoughtful partnerships can empower communities to rise above challenges and achieve lasting progress. Today, Gatsibo's farmers no longer toil in vain. They sow their seeds with hope, knowing that their harvests will contribute to a prosperous future for their families and their district. As Munyandekwe rightly puts it, "This plant shows farmers that their work matters and that their futures are worth investing in."

The partnership with Gatsibo District provided essential infrastructure but also empowered farmers to thrive by offering reliable storage, processing, and access to markets. This collaboration has transformed agriculture in the region, turning challenges into opportunities



## DELIVERING HOPE: THE LIFESAVING LEGACY OF RUGARAMA HEALTH CENTER

In Rugarama village, the sound of a baby's first cry was once a risky gamble, not a joyful celebration. For years, mothers in Gatsibo District faced immense challenges in bringing new life into the world. The maternity wing of Rugarama Health Center was overcrowded and poorly equipped, with just two small rooms to serve an entire community, that is, one for waiting and one for deliveries.

"It was heartbreaking," recalls Basabe, the Deputy Head of Rugarama Health Center. "Mothers would labor in discomfort, often crowded into spaces not fit for safe deliveries. Some had no choice but to deliver at home, which increased complications and infections." The situation weighed heavily on the community. High maternal and infant mortality rates told a grim story of a system stretched beyond its limits.

World Vision Rwanda stepped in and they built hope, brick by brick. In partnership with the local government and community, World Vision answered the call for support. The organization constructed a state-of-the-art maternity building equipped to meet the needs of expectant mothers and newborns.

"We now have a standard maternity wing with distinct areas for waiting, delivery, and postnatal rest," says Basabe with a smile. "It's like night and day compared to what we had before."

The new facility also includes a family planning service area and an echography room, made functional by a donated ultrasound machine.

The impact of the transformation has been extraordinary. Where once only 30-40 mothers could be attended to each month, the health center now serves over 120 women monthly, even attracting patients from neighboring districts like Kayonza and Nyagatare. The changes have eradicated home deliveries in the area, aligning with Ministry of Health protocols. For mothers like Immaculée, a resident of Rugarama, this means peace of mind.

"I delivered all three of my children here," she shares, holding her newborn son. "With this new building, I could stay overnight and rest properly before going home. It felt safe, and I felt cared for."

Basabe reflects on the difference this makes: "Before, some mothers had to leave just hours after giving birth. Many babies got infections or worse. But now, they can stay and get the care they need. Lives are being saved every day."

He adds, "World Vision's support has been a gift to this community. Their dedication has drastically reduced maternal and infant deaths. Mothers and babies now have a chance to thrive."

What was once an overcrowded and poorly equipped facility has now transformed into a sanctuary of care, ensuring safer deliveries, comprehensive maternal services, and significantly reduced infant and maternal mortality rates.





## HOW ANNA'S DREAMS WERE TURNED INTO A REALITY THROUGH THE CORE PROJECT

In the lively town of Rusizi, Anna's future once seemed uncertain. Surrounded by the buzz of Rusizi town, where traders haggle in busy markets and motorbikes zip through crowded streets, 33-year-old Anna, a mother of two adorable children, often felt like an outsider to the hustle. Fresh out of high school, she had no job, no clear prospects, and no idea how to turn her life around. "I had no source of income, no way to contribute to my family. Our family was living in poverty. It was a really tough time," Anna recalls.

At the time, Anna was a young woman with no clear vision for her future. The doors to further education were closed, and the path ahead was shrouded in uncertainty. With no means to chase her dreams, her future felt like a distant, unreachable promise.

In 2015, a ray of hope entered her life. World Vision Rwanda launched the CORE (Creating Off-farm Rwandan Enterprises) Project, funded by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), in her community, offering training and support to empower individuals to take control of their futures. Anna seized the opportunity with both hands.

"The training sessions were a turning point for me. They taught us about saving, setting financial goals, and the importance of planning," Anna says. Determined to change her circumstances, Anne joined a savings group, even though most members were older women. Undeterred, she started small, saving a portion of the transport money she was given to attend the training sessions.

"I didn't care that I was sitting with women much older than me in the savings group," Anna explains. "I had a vision for my future, and I knew this was the first step toward achieving it."

Armed with new knowledge and discipline, Anne applied for a 50,000 Rwandan Francs loan and started a small

business selling cassava and beans. Gradually, she expanded her business and increased her savings.

The impact of her efforts was remarkable. With her brother, Anna built a new house for their parents and siblings, offering them a more stable and comfortable home. Today, she and her husband, Florantin, are building their dream home, just a short distance from their current rented house.

"All that I have today is because of what I learned through the CORE Project. I am proud of the woman I have turned out to be. I am now building my dream a seven-bedroom big house, in partnership with my husband, I currently run a thriving business where I sell new children's clothes. I can meet my needs and my children's needs. I support my parents and other family members. I attribute all these milestones to the CORE project that empowered me, opened my mindset, and gave me the skills I needed to make it in life," Anna says with joy.

Her journey has become a source of inspiration for others in Rusizi. Amid the town's fast-paced activity, Anne stands as a shining example and role model in her community.



CORE Project, funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), was designed to respond to the challenges of limited access to market information and limited access to financial services for women and youth, with the overall goal of significantly increasing household off-farm income for women and youth in the districts of Rusizi and Nyamasheke. The Project primarily targeted women, youths and predominantly Persons with Disabilities cooperatives with interventions designed to address market failures and improve business competitiveness. Key interventions included the skilling of youths, women, and Persons with disabilities with vocational skills, and the strengthening of women and youths' cooperatives.

Through the CORE project, jobs were created, and youths, women, and families were empowered among other achievements.



## ONCE A STRUGGLING FARMER, FRANCOISE NOW HOPS ON A PLANE FOR HER BUSINESS TRIPS

Imagine a woman who once woke up every day to the harsh realities of rural life, her hands weathered from tilling the soil, her hopes limited by the crops she could barely sell. Now, picture her stepping onto a plane, from her savings, her ticket to new business opportunities in hand, as she embarks on a journey to expand her empire. This isn't a fantasy! It's the extraordinary reality of Francoise, a 34-year-old mother of four, whose life was transformed by the CORE Project.

Once a vulnerable farmer with no savings, Francoise's story is one of resilience, growth, and the incredible power of empowerment. Today, she hops onto an Aeroplane for a personal business trip-with her hard-earned money. She is soaring, proving that no dream is too far when you are given the tools to succeed.

Francoise's journey didn't start with flights or business ventures. It began with the struggles of rural farming life in the hills of Rusizi. Each day, she woke up early, tending to her crops, hoping they would yield enough to feed her children. But there was never enough. Her farm produced just enough to survive, with no extra to save or sell. Financial security felt like an impossible dream. But all of that changed when the CORE Project, supported and funded by SIDA, came to her village. The project was about empowering people with the knowledge and tools they needed to transform their lives. Francoise was introduced to the power of savings and financial planning, lessons that would change everything.

Before the CORE Project, Francoise had no savings, no access to capital, and no understanding of how to set financial goals. She worked hard, but it never felt like enough. When the project began offering training on savings and goal-setting, Francoise was among the first to seize the opportunity. "Saving wasn't easy," she recalls. "But I learned that it wasn't about having a surplus. It was about making sacrifices today for a better tomorrow."

Francoise joined a savings group, starting with just 200 Rwandan Francs per month. It wasn't much, but it was a start. Over time, the group's contributions grew, and within

a year, they had saved enough to make significant changes. Francoise used her share of the savings to expand her farming practices. No longer just growing enough for her family's consumption, she began to grow crops to sell, earning more and providing a better future for her children.

But that wasn't the only change. In 2018, Francoise and nine other women formed the "Berwa Munyarwanda" Cooperative, inspired by the lessons of the CORE Project. They were determined to create a sustainable business, and together, they decided to open a wedding hall and catering service. The community lacked a venue for weddings, so they saw an opportunity. They started small, with just five saucepans and catering dishes, but with support from World Vision, they were able to grow their business. "World Vision through the CORE Project provided us with capital, and some materials, and together, we built a wedding hall and catering service that now supports all of us," Francoise says.

The cooperative quickly became a success, with Francoise and her fellow members earning income from wedding season rentals and catering services. "During the wedding season, we host at least three weddings a month," she explains. "Each wedding brings in some money, which is shared among the cooperative members. It has transformed our lives."

But the true proof of Francoise's transformation came just the night before we met her for this interview. She had boarded a plane to Kigali for a business trip. Francoise, once a vulnerable farmer with no access to capital, was now flying to the capital to explore wholesale prices for products to expand her business. The next morning, she flew back with her two-month-old baby, to meet us in her hometown, Rusizi.

"The change in my life has been incredible," Francoise reflects, her eyes lighting up. "I never thought I would be able to afford a plane ticket, but now I'm expanding my business to new heights."

Francoise's business doesn't stop at weddings. She also runs a grocery shop, adding another stream of income to support her family. From struggling to survive, she is now thriving as a successful entrepreneur, managing multiple businesses with the confidence and knowledge she gained through the CORE Project.

"The best part is that I'm not just supporting my family," Francoise says proudly. "I'm showing my children what's possible when you work hard, make sacrifices, and believe in yourself."

Through the savings and lending groups, the support from the CORE Project, and her determination, Francoise has created a future for herself that she once thought was impossible. Today, she is a businesswoman, a role model for women everywhere, proving that with the right tools and mindset, anything is possible.

## UBUREZI IWACU: ENHANCING LITERACY OUTCOMES THROUGH COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

In the remote corners of Gisagara, where books were once scarce and children lacked spaces to nurture their love for learning, a powerful transformation is taking place. Uburezi Iwacu, a groundbreaking project launched in 2021, is tackling critical learning barriers and nurturing the literacy movement. Through innovative approaches and dedicated support, the project is reshaping the educational landscape for thousands of children, especially in underserved communities.

Before Uburezi Iwacu, many children struggled with literacy, and their confidence faltered in classrooms and social settings. Schools lacked the necessary resources, and libraries were almost unheard of in rural areas. For children with disabilities, the barriers were even more significant, isolating them from opportunities to integrate and thrive.

But change arrived with the establishment of community libraries under the Uburezi Iwacu (Homes & Communities) project, funded by USAID. These libraries, equipped with books, digital resources, and technology, have provided a conducive environment for children's literacy, thus enhancing their reading and comprehension skills. A prime example is the Gisagara Center Community Library.

"This library helps young children to stimulate their cognitive abilities and improves writing, reading, and comprehension skills for those in school," says Mukeshimana, a passionate volunteer at the Gisagara library. "Children who once struggled to interact with others now come here, socialize, and even teach each other how to read. It builds their confidence to stand before people and adapt to society."

The community library serves as a bridge between Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centers, primary schools, and the wider community. ECD Centers bring young children to the libraries to spark early literacy, while primary school students enhance their reading and writing skills.

During holidays, the Gisagara library becomes a vibrant hub, buzzing with the laughter of 150 to 200 children every week. They immerse themselves in stories and educational games, nurturing skills that extend beyond academics.

"Children who were once ashamed of their low reading abilities now confidently read aloud and even write their own stories," Mukeshimana shares. "Before coming here, many couldn't read Kinyarwanda well. Now, they're flourishing."

Parents, too, are joining the movement, recognizing the value of reading and actively encouraging their children to visit the library. This growing enthusiasm signals the library's crucial role in reshaping the community's approach to education.

### Scaling Impact Across Rwanda

The impact of Uburezi Iwacu extends far beyond Gisagara. With activities in all 30 districts of Rwanda, the project is designed to ensure that every child enjoys a literacy-rich, stimulating, and safe environment at home and in the community.

Uwihanganye, the Project's Coordinator for the Southern and Western provinces, emphasizes the critical role of accessible reading materials: "To enhance literacy, we must address the scarcity of books and safe and conducive spaces for children's reading. These libraries provide a solution, offering children the tools they need to succeed."

By improving home literacy environments, creating inclusive opportunities for children with disabilities, and nurturing community engagement, Uburezi Iwacu is impacting children's lives.

The Homes and Communities Activity is a five-year literacy project that aims to ensure that all Rwandan children have literacy-supportive, stimulating, and safe home and community environments to enhance their education. This is being achieved through improving home literacy environments and learning opportunities for children with disabilities and increasing community engagement in promoting children's literacy. Targeting 889,983 children (226,706 pre-primary, 663,277 lower primary) and 829,097 parents and caregivers in all 30 districts in Rwanda, the activity contributes to improved literacy outcomes by the end of Primary 3 (P3). (Source: Project monitoring data).



## TRANSFORMING LEARNERS' LIVES THROUGH DIGITAL TOOLS AT NYAMATA TECHNICAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

Located in the beautiful Bugesera District, surrounded by spectacular green landscapes, lakes, and tall trees, Nyamata Technical Secondary School faced a major challenge. Despite the region's breathtaking beauty, the school's students were stifled by a lack of essential resources needed to turn their aspirations into reality.

The students, eager to learn skills like computer programming, digital literacy, and engineering, had limited resources. Without computers, laboratories for practical learning, or enough textbooks, their dreams seemed out of reach. But everything changed when World Vision stepped in, providing the support and resources that transformed their education, and their futures.

Nyamata Technical Secondary School (TSS) faced a battle that many schools in rural areas know all too well, a lack of resources. For years, the school's students struggled with outdated textbooks, no access to computers, and no laboratories to apply their learning. For those dreaming of careers in technology, engineering, or digital literacy, the road ahead seemed nearly impossible. However, the school's transformation began with a simple but powerful intervention.

Before World Vision's involvement, Nyamata TSS was a place where young minds were stifled by the lack of basic tools needed to unlock their potential. The students had no computers to help them learn digital skills, conduct research, or apply the theories they studied in the classroom. As a result, many students left school without the practical experience needed to succeed in today's competitive job market.

"The challenges we faced were real," says Raymond, a student of Nyamata TSS. "Before we had computers, everything was just theory. But now, we apply everything we learn. I can build websites, design graphics, and feel confident in my future."

This transformation wouldn't have been possible without World Vision's partnership with the school. In 2010, World Vision stepped in, providing modern computers to Nyamata TSS, an intervention that transformed the way students learned and prepared for their futures. What was once a place of theoretical learning becoming a hub for practical skills and innovation.

Obald, a level 5 student studying Networking and Internet Technology, reflects on the change: "The computers have been helpful. We use them for simulations, research, and working on assignments. These tools have opened doors for us in ways we never imagined possible."

For teachers like Josepha, the impact is just as profound. "Before, we struggled to teach students without the right tools," she explains. "Now, the computers complement our lessons. They help students practice what they've learned, and as teachers, we can focus on more assignments and projects. World Vision's support has made our jobs much easier and the students' learning much richer."

The new computers provided by World Vision have not only enhanced students' academic performance but have also given them the skills needed to thrive in Rwanda's growing edu-tech sector. With the country's national focus on innovation and entrepreneurship, Nyamata TSS students are now equipped to enter a rapidly changing economy with the digital skills necessary to succeed.

In a school once limited by a lack of resources, students now have access to a world of opportunity. They no longer just dream of careers in technology; they are actively building the skills to make those dreams a reality. The partnership between World Vision, Nyamata TSS, and the local community continues to provide hope for the future. With access to modern technology, the students of Nyamata TSS are poised to become the innovators, leaders, and problem-solvers of tomorrow.



## “WE WERE INVISIBLE, BUT WORLD VISION SAW US.”

For 56-year-old Marie-Rose, the words are heavy with gratitude and emotion. “World Vision gave us resources, but above all, it gave us hope and made us feel accepted, seen, heard, and cared for. They believed in us when no one else did. And that belief gave us the strength to believe in ourselves.”

Marie-Rose is one of the 60 members of the Dufashe abacu cooperative, a group of resilient women who have found strength in unity, hope in hardship, and power in their shared struggle. Established in 2004 in Rwanda’s Bugesera District, the cooperative was born from the anguish of hunger, poverty, and the deep scars left by the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. Many of the women in this group had been silenced by stigma, survivors of sexual violence and HIV, often forced to carry the heavy burden of shame alone.

“We started with agriculture because we had to feed our families, but it wasn’t enough,” explains Jackline,

the cooperative’s head. “We were stuck. But then World Vision gave us a machine, a machine that made pavements for construction. That was the turning point for all of us. Our lives were changed for good.”

The machine, seemingly small in its ability to make pavements, yet enormous in its impact, became the key that unlocked the future for the women of Dufashe Abacu Cooperative. For the first time, they could provide for their families in a way that felt dignified. They could sell the pavements, and with that income, they could begin to dream.

With their newfound financial freedom, they began to rebuild their lives. They invested in health care, affording regular check-ups and HIV medication. They sent their children to school, ensuring the next generation wouldn’t inherit the same struggles. No longer were they just survivors, they were thriving, empowered women who had taken control of their destiny.

For Marie-Rose, the change wasn’t just financial. “World Vision brought value to me as a woman. They showed me that I am capable, that I am enough,” she says, her voice steady but filled with emotion.

The transformation wasn’t only in the cooperative’s bank accounts. It was in their hearts, too. The women who once felt isolated, stigmatized, and powerless now meet regularly, sharing not only agricultural tips but personal stories. They lean on each other, offering emotional support as they navigate the painful memories of their pasts. Through their strength, they’ve built a network of care and solidarity, one that thrives on trust, respect, and mutual empowerment.

Today, the women of Dufashe abacu are no longer victims of their circumstances; they are leaders. They are entrepreneurs. They are mothers who send their children to school with pride. They are advocates for themselves, their families, and their communities.

World Vision’s role in its journey goes far beyond the resources it provided. It was never just about the machines. It was about seeing these women, hearing their pain, and giving them the tools to flourish. They helped the women reclaim their futures.

“Now, we don’t just survive,” says Marie-Rose, her voice firm with determination. “We lead. And we will keep leading.”

Dufashe Abacu cooperative, comprising 58 women and two men, has been in existence for over 20 years. Through selling pavers, using the machine provided by World Vision, they were able to build a commercial building, though not too big, it is rented out but one of the biggest beverage companies in Rwanda.



## CROSS-CUTTING AREAS

### Faith and Development

As a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation, we understand the power of faith for the lives of children, adults and communities. Therefore we collaborate and mobilise people who share common values of compassion, love and mercy and want to change children's lives. We believe every child has a right to reach their full potential, but we can't achieve these goals on our own. Believing that God works through all people, we collaborate with like-minded people in places where children are the most vulnerable.

### Advocacy

We believe in the power of one voice. From children and young leaders, to community leaders and citizens from around the world, it's time to rise up and call on local and national decision makers to do what is right, fair and just for all children.

### Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)

Advancing gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is critical to achieving World Vision mission. That's why we have prioritized GESI as a strategic imperative in all our work across sectors, including health; food security and livelihoods; child protection; education; and water, sanitation, and hygiene. We address GESI by working to ensure that the most vulnerable have equal and inclusive access, decision-making opportunities, and participation in society. As a child-focused, faith and community-based organization,

World Vision serves all people, regardless of nationality, race, religion or gender.

### Climate Change and Adaptation

World Vision's focus on climate change is centered on the need to enrich livelihoods through improved household food security, and enhanced responsiveness, resilience and recovery to natural disasters that plague household agricultural productivity.





## HOW EASY ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER TRANSFORMED NYANDWI'S LIFE

For years, the daily water-fetching routine was an exhausting burden for Nyandwi and his family. The long walk, sometimes up to an hour and a half—left his children too tired to attend school or even take care of their personal hygiene. In their struggle for water, they often resorted to using the damp grass in the early mornings to wipe their faces and bodies before rushing off to class.

“It was heartbreaking,” Nyandwi says, his eyes clouded with memories of those tough years. “We had no choice but to send our children out early in the morning to fetch water. They would come back exhausted, sometimes too tired to go to school. They lacked the energy to focus on their studies, and many times, they would go to school late, missing out on important lessons. It was a heavy toll on their health, their education, and their spirits.”

Living in Huye District, 60-year-old Nyandwi, his wife Esperance, and their four children, two of whom are girls, were caught in a cycle of hardship. Every day began before dawn, when Nyandwi's children would set off on their journey to fetch water. The walk was long and tiring, and even when they returned, it was never guaranteed they had enough to meet their needs.

Then, something incredible happened. World Vision, in partnership with the Government of Rwanda, brought hope to the village. The installation of a water pump in the community, just a short walk from Nyandwi's home, transformed their lives in ways they had only dreamed of.

The change was immediate and profound. No longer did Nyandwi's children have to wake up before the sun and walk long distances to fetch water. They now had access to clean, reliable water right at their doorstep. This simple, yet life-changing development meant that Nyandwi's children could take proper baths, attend school on time, and focus on their studies without the burden of exhaustion hanging over them.

“The difference is like night and day,” Nyandwi says, his voice filled with gratitude. “My children are no longer late for school. They now have time to study and relax, something they never had before. They no longer arrived at school exhausted or distracted when we got water within our home compound.”

The impact of clean water also extended beyond hygiene and education. With enough water at home, Nyandwi was able to renovate his house and start a kitchen garden, which improved the family's nutrition.

The water has provided his family with the resources to thrive, and Nyandwi now sees his children's future in a whole new light.

“My two daughters used to come home so tired from fetching water, and they would struggle to focus on their studies because of the chores waiting for them. But after having our own water tap through World Vision and government support, they could take a proper bath, do their schoolwork, and go to school looking clean and smart. It was a huge change for them, and I was so proud of their progress,” Nyandwi shares.

For Nyandwi, the arrival of clean water improved their livelihoods as a family. It gave his children the chance to be children again, to study, play, and grow without the weight of exhaustion holding them back. It gave his family dignity, health, and hope for the future.

Thanks to World Vision and the Government of Rwanda's partnership, providing access to clean water brought about an impact from one family, one community, and countless others across the country.

“Water may seem like a small thing, but for us, it has been life-changing,” Nyandwi says, a smile finally spreading across his face.



## OUR VISION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

World Vision is committed to ensuring long-term sustainability in its programs, including environmental conservation, community-led initiatives, and capacity building.

In alignment with WV global strategy, the overall goal of WV Rwanda in the next five-year strategy is to contribute to sustainable wellbeing of 2 million most vulnerable children by 2029. To achieve this goal, WV Rwanda will focus on the following technical programs: Health and WASH, Resilience and Livelihoods and Child Protection and Education.

Health and WASH program will focus on improving community well-being by providing access to clean water, promoting hygiene and sanitation practices, and enhancing healthcare services to reduce preventable diseases and improve overall health outcomes, especially among vulnerable populations.

The Livelihood and Resilience Program will empower vulnerable communities by providing them with sustainable income-generating opportunities, financial literacy training, and climate-smart agricultural practices, fostering long-term economic resilience and self-reliance.

The Child Protection and Education Program will focus on preventing and addressing abuse, exploitation, and violence against children. This will be done by establishing community-based child protection mechanisms, raising awareness through impactful campaigns, and advocating for stronger child protection systems and the promotion of children's rights. The Education component will focus on improving access to quality learning opportunities, particularly for children from marginalized and vulnerable backgrounds. A key priority will be to strengthen literacy skills in basic education (pre and lower primary) to ensure enhanced foundational learning outcomes.

Key additional initiatives will focus on increasing funding portfolio, improving donor relations, revitalizing child sponsorship, and enhancing external engagement with Government and strategic partners. To achieve greater impact and sustainability, World Vision will scale up innovations and efficiency through use of digital technology, strengthen evidence-based communication and performance; improve organizational culture and staff engagement.



## OUR COLLABORATING PARTNERS





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