

## Ubuntu “Grace” Ndora Empowerment Group, Rwanda

*Reports from two separate ZOE trips by people who visited the Ubuntu Group*

### Wednesday June 29, 2016, Ubuntu Visit

After a stop at the tailors to pick up the ordered clothing items, and arrange for a few needed alterations, we headed out to the Ubuntu group. We passed the banana plantation of the Urumungu group. They make \$1200/week selling bananas to the nearby factory that makes banana wine.

We stopped at the village market and visited the second year Ubuntu group members who sold there. We met the following:

**Clarisse and Olive:** selling pineapple and pumpkin

**Joselyne, 18:** selling vegetables

**Josephine, 19:** selling tomatoes and eggplant

**Jean de Dieu, 18:** selling sorghum

**Olive, 18:** selling rice and peanuts

**Roseanne, 17:** selling beans- she makes a 4000RWF/ day profit



We then headed to the group meeting. Patricie, the chair, addressed the group thanking God for us and our safe travels. They were happy to see visitors. We introduced ourselves and we all danced together. . Alexi, representing the Sector director addressed the group thanking us for the partnership and how they have tried to help ZOE’s work in the community.

Patricie thanked God and prayed. The children sang again before we began the following testimonies.

**Olive, 18,** has six siblings. She had so many problems before ZOE- hunger, homelessness, and a school dropout. She tried to do domestic work. ZOE took her from loneliness. She has been taught many things- IGA, domestic animals, business skills, household management. Now we have our own businesses she said. All of us now have work to do.

**Valens, 18** has five siblings. He lost both parents and dropped out of school. ZOE provided vocational training. He is doing construction training. Now his future is in his hands. He wanted to thank the Emmanuel class.

**Joselyne, 18,** has three siblings. She dropped out of school. ZOE gave her tailoring training. Her current business in the market has allowed her to get her siblings back in school and provide for the family.

**Jean de Dieu, 18**, sells sorghum in the market. He worked for food before ZOE. His siblings left him to become street kids. He got a pig from ZOE in addition to his grant for his sorghum selling business. It is hard to get sorghum to the market. He was able to buy a bicycle from his profits so he can sell at any market he wants now. He has started constructing his own house. Thank you to the Emmanuel class- you have been a great parent. His two siblings have come back home.

**Clarisse, 20**, has three siblings. Before ZOE she had many problems. ZOE taught her Jeremiah 29:11. She is convinced if she follows that verse, she will be successful. They could not attend church as street kids but can now. You have taught us to dream and set a goal for a bright future. Her dream sheet: 1. She wanted to look nice. 2. She did not like abuse. 3. She was sad being a street kid. 4. Her dream was to have her own business and take care of her siblings needs. She ended by thanking God and the Emmanuel class.

The group then sang a traditional song and got us to join them in dancing.

### **Monday, August 8, 2016, Visited Ubuntu Group**



ZOE program staff members Beata and Celine joined us as we visited Ubuntu who are in year two of the empowerment program.

A few boys in the group run a bike taxi co-op, and Ezekiel gave Popie and Jessie the experience of a 200 RWF ride! We purchased eggplant, cabbage, carrots, onions, avocado, sorghum, and sweet potatoes from Clarence (20), Olive (17 with 5 siblings), Josephine (19 with 1 sibling), Jocelyn (19 with 3 siblings), and Valens (17 but Epiphanie does not believe him). Each child makes between 1,000 and 1,500 RWF per day. The market in their town is open two days each week, and the children travel to other markets the other five days of the week to maximize income. Epiphanie made us a delicious lunch for Tuesday with our vegetables!

Next to the market we visited Justine and Theonille who are currently receiving tailoring training from an adult mentor. Banana juice and sorghum drink are available for purchase next door.

We attended a group meeting led by chairperson Olive and hear that many children labored for food prior to ZOE and felt hopeless.

Valens is 17 years old with five siblings. He was homeless before ZOE and could only fetch water for 100 RWF per day because neighbors felt he was too small to hire for food. Many days he did not want to get out of bed. Today he sells vegetables while receiving vocational training in construction.





Claude is 17 with five siblings (14, 12, 12, 8, and 7 years old). Before ZOE he collected firewood in the forest to resell and was beaten for stealing others' wood. He could only make 200 RWF (25 cents) per day selling wood. He did not believe what ZOE told him and quit the group because he wanted to be given food. He was so disappointed because he could only focus on his hunger. When he saw other kids getting pigs from ZOE he started to believe and was asked to re-join the group. He was given a goat by the group leadership to welcome him back, and the group currently shares food with him because he is still in need of additional help. Once he is

more stable, he hopes to earn a ZOE grant and establish a legitimate retail wood selling business.