



# ZOE

Empowerment beyond charity.

## A Summary Report on Second Year Groups in Rwanda

*May 2017 - April 2018*

*The following report was written by ZOE Rwanda staff. It provides an overview of the activities and achievements all 16 groups have experienced during the second year of the ZOE empowerment program. These groups began meeting July 2016 and include 403 households with 1,290 children.*

### PRIMARY TRAININGS HELD DURING THE PAST YEAR

[Note: The first year of ZOE's empowerment program is training intensive. During the second and third years, ZOE provides less formal trainings while members of the groups take a more active role in advising each other. The ZOE program facilitators and group mentors provide assistance as required or requested.]

**August 2017: Income Statement.** All heads of households attended. They learnt how to calculate the profit or loss of their business to determine if the business is profitable enough; if they need to change businesses or take steps to improve their business; and how to create the most sustainable and profitable projects.

**April 2018: Training on Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS.** All heads of households attended. The objective of the training was to create awareness on the reproductive system and the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS. In collaboration with medical clinics in the community, the youth were offered the chance to take a voluntary, HIV status test. They learnt all HIV risk factors so that they can take control over them.

According to a survey conducted by ZOE staff for these groups, it was found that 65% of the girls had unwanted pregnancies before entering the ZOE program, as a result they had babies at a young age. Some of them even had more than one baby by the age of 18. Also some had already contracted HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Awareness of reproductive health and birth control methods were the key knowledge that they have been missing to avoid unwanted pregnancies.

### ACTIVITIES IN AREAS OF ZOE EMPOWERMENT

**Agriculture and food security:** The families in this region have had a significant improvement regarding food security because they applied standards according to ZOE's empowerment program which include having a store of dry food (beans, maize, cassava flour, wheat, soya bean) and a vegetable garden/farm of food crops which are cooked fresh such as potato, sweet potato, banana, fruit trees, fresh cassava, and arrow root among others.

All households plant vegetable/kitchen gardens and 390 households are planting crops individually. There are also 13 families that have joined together to rent land for farming; at harvest time they take some for family consumption and sell some and share the money. There has been two farming seasons and the harvests have been generally good. However, the season of March-June will give poor harvest because of the flooding that devastated crops.



In addition to growing their own food, the families are able to buy food thanks to the profits make from their businesses, vocational projects, and livestock projects. In terms of food security and nutrition, 90% of families are food secure, they can eat two or more meals per day. Ten percent reported that they are sure to have at least one meal every day and by chance they can find two meals per day.

**Livestock management:** Apart from the pigs distributed by ZOE (403 pigs for 403 families), each family bought at least one to five more animals on their own. The groups’ merry-go-round funds played a crucial role in allowing youth to save to buy animals. The number of families keeping each type of livestock is as follows: hens, 383; goats, 264; pigs, 85; rabbits, 52, cows 14; and sheep 6.

**Income generating activities(IGAs)/businesses:** After the training on income statement, youth received grants to boost existing businesses which started previous year with the support from ZOE. Most began individual businesses, but some joined with other groupmates to conduct joint income projects. The youth who attended vocational training received start-up kits to begin their respective businesses.

| <b>Individuals’ IGAs</b>      |           |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Sorghum juice selling         | <b>34</b> |
| Animal selling                | <b>31</b> |
| Fruits and vegetables selling | <b>95</b> |
| Boutiques                     | <b>14</b> |
| Bicycle taxi                  | <b>18</b> |
| Retails selling               | <b>29</b> |
| Food store                    | <b>29</b> |
| Nuts and eggs selling         | <b>14</b> |
| Banana juice selling          | <b>3</b>  |
| Shoes selling                 | <b>2</b>  |

| <b>Individuals participating in Group IGAs</b> |           |
|--|-----------|
| Sorghum juice selling                          | <b>28</b> |
| Bicycle taxi                                   | <b>5</b>  |
| Food store selling                             | <b>35</b> |
| Shopping bags weaving                          | <b>23</b> |



| <b>Vocational Training</b>                            |           |
|---|-----------|
| Tailoring   | <b>13</b> |
| Knitting  | <b>8</b>  |
| Hairdressing  | <b>7</b>  |
| Masonry   | <b>2</b>  |
| Vehicle Mechanics                                     | <b>2</b>  |
| High school level training (professional and regular) | <b>70</b> |



**Health and hygiene:** Since the youth have received training on hygiene and disease prevention, the following improvements have been recorded:

- They drink boiled and clean water
- They live in clean homes
- They put on clean clothes
- They built latrines (ZOE provided roofing materials, groupmates provided labor help)
- They no longer sleep on dry grass or old clothes; instead they made wooden beds that stand above ground and ease the cleaning of the bedrooms
- With the support of ZOE, four houses were built

The youth in these groups still face challenges of having to walk long distances to get water and high transportations costs to reach the health centers which are a distant from the communities ZOE serves.

**Networking:** There is a quarterly forum organized for all groups to discuss the outcomes of the program and share stories and experiences of the best IGAs/businesses. This forum helps the groups to learn from each other.

**Community service:** During the past year, all youth 18 years and above participated in community work organized by the government where they cleaned public places, rehabilitated the local roads, cleaned the water sources, boreholes, channels and planted trees on the slopes of mountain and hills.

**Special events:** June 16<sup>th</sup> is the Day of the African Child. The OVC happily celebrated it as they are no longer stigmatized thanks to the ZOE program. They also celebrated Christmas where each group organized a party of singing, dancing, and praying followed by refreshments.

**Awards:** ZOE received the Certificate of Merit of best practices in achieving the performance contract at district level.

**Challenges:** Heavy rain and hail damaged crops. This hindered agricultural production and caused food shortages. The ZOE youth were encouraged to put more efforts in doing businesses and raising livestock to overcome this challenge. ZOE provided top up grants for their businesses.