

Ubuntu “Grace” Ndora Empowerment Group, Rwanda Year 2 – Profile of a Household

The following report highlights the activities and achievements of one family from your empowerment group. Although each child is unique, most of the children in the Ubuntu Group have faced similar challenges and are making comparable progress through the ZOE empowerment model. Included with this case study is some general information about ZOE’s “Dream” approach to helping children set their goals.

Head of Household: Patricie, 20

Siblings: Donatile, 15, Daniel, 14, and Jeanette, 10

Challenges: When she was just nine years old, Patricie’s father died leaving the family destitute. Although her mother is living, she is neglectful and unable to care for the family; so the burden of supporting the other children fell on Patricie. She did the best she could, but she was only a child. If anyone did hire her to work, they would exploit her by paying only a small amount of money or a few sweet potatoes. The family ate only three meals a week and had no resources to clean themselves or the house. As a result, the children developed intestinal parasites. Their home was badly in need of repair. They were isolated and stigmatized in the community because of their poverty.



When ZOE invited Patricie to join the Ubuntu Empowerment Group, she and her family began their journey out of extreme poverty. And it started with a dream.



Focus on: The Dream

Most orphans and vulnerable children entering the ZOE empowerment program face a daily struggle to survive. With their energy consumed by the need to find food for themselves and their siblings, there is neither time to think about the future nor reason to hope for something better. But through ZOE and your partnership, the children learn to imagine a new life and prepare to make it a reality.

During one of the early group meetings, the ZOE program facilitator leads members through an exercise called the Dream process where they explore their current situation and then consider what they want and how to get it.

After discussing hopes and goals with their siblings, the family leader creates a poster of responses to a standard set of questions from the ZOE program facilitator. To the left is an example of the Dream document.

The head of each family presents their Dream to the rest of the group members who express support and give feedback. These Dream documents help the program facilitators better understand the conditions of the children's lives so they can address specific needs or traumas suffered. The family keeps a copy of their Dream, often displaying it in their home to provide daily motivation as they strive to create their new life.

The following are the responses Patricie provided to the Dream questions:

- What makes you feel sad? *My father's death.*
- What makes you happy? *Having enough food.*
- What happens in the community that you do not like? *Child sexual abuse.*
- What is your dream for the future? *Having a goat; having a mattress to sleep on.*
- What will be your guiding principles to achieve your dream? *Work hard, socialize, love other children.*

Family Specific Achievements Because of Your Partnership

Food Security: For children who are literally starving, getting food is a priority. Many children coming to the first ZOE meeting bring bags hoping to get food to take home. Instead they get the promise of seeds and hoes so that they can grow their own food. (In emergency situations, ZOE will provide immediate assistance.) It is the beginning of their journey to sustainable food security.

Patricie, along with the rest of the Ubuntu Group, participated in agricultural training, learning what to plant and how to care for their gardens. Then she received seeds for a kitchen garden that she planted near her house. Now she has vegetables and beans to add to her meals of sweet potatoes, and the children are eating once a day instead of three times a week. Slowly, they are becoming food secure. Additionally, they received a pig from ZOE, after learning how to care for livestock. Pigs are good because they provide manure for the garden, have multiple litters each year, and get a good price in the market. With her group she will begin farming on the group's land this year, which will provide more income.



Health: Learning to clean their home and bodies, and obtaining related resources has been a focus this year for Patricie and her family. ZOE helped the children resolve their parasite infection. With the training and resources, the children are healthier and will be able to return to school this year.

Group Involvement: One of the most important aspects of ZOE's empowerment program is the group. No longer is Patricie alone and isolated. Now she has friends who visit her, help her with her garden, and even lend a hand to re-mud her home. She has discovered that she is not alone in her poverty; others understand her challenges and are there to celebrate her successes. Because of the devotions the group shares each week, Patricie has rediscovered her faith in God. Now she prays with them and attends church.

Income Generation: Patricie has focused this past year on improving her family's food security and health. In the coming year she will work to develop a business to further stabilize the family. She asks for your prayers that she will have the capacity to start a small business.

Patricie's journey out of poverty and despair has been made possible through your partnership. She considers you part of her family now and thanks God for you.