



ZOE

Empowerment beyond charity.

A Summary Report on Third Year Groups in Rwanda

January 2017 - October 2017

The following report from the ZOE Rwanda office provides a summary of the past year's activities and achievements experienced by the working groups that began meeting in January 2015. The 34 working groups currently encompass 1,397 households and a total of 3927 children.

Trainings

New Farming Techniques, February 2017: All 1,397 representatives of families attended a meeting facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture where they learned about new farming techniques, such as using certified seeds, fertilizing soil using a combination of organic and chemical fertilizers, keeping cattle at home for collecting manure and also for environment protection, using pesticides to prevent crop disease, and how to use a land consolidation approach to improve agricultural productivity. The groups adopted land consolidation and created group projects of planting food crops and cash crops as common plantations. With ZOE and government collaboration, the children receive land for their plantation and technical advice. ZOE additionally provided seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides.

Income Statement, May 2017: All the households learned how to evaluate their businesses by analyzing the profits compared to their capital costs. Also, the youth learned to assess if their income project returns responded to their daily needs or not. The result of this evaluation prompted them to make various adjustments, such as changing the business when profits were too low compared to their needs, expanding the business by adding more items, changing the place where the business operates in order to gain more customers, and adopting new strategies of marketing.

Cooperatives, July 2017: The members learned how to form and manage cooperatives for business progress and sustainability. They also identified advantages of cooperative projects such as sharing tax responsibility and house rent, gaining a larger customer base, responding to social needs, and accessing financial resources.

Food Security

In this third year, all **1,397** households planted some kind of food crop including bananas, beans, sweet potatoes, cassava, soy beans, sorghum, maize, and Irish potatoes. This past season was good for planting and each household harvested enough produce from their crops to provide for their family and have surplus to sell. Additionally, 98% of the families planted kitchen gardens of vegetables like cabbages, amaranths, beetroots, onions, and carrots. (Kitchen gardens can be replanted every three to four months.)

Members of ZOE groups worked together to invest in big plantation projects during both the March and September planting seasons as follows:

- 2 groups planted soy beans
- 5 group have banana plantations
- 9 groups have farms of maize, beans, and potatoes
- 3 groups planted cassava
- 4 groups invested in rice farming



Because of their income projects and agricultural activities, 1327 out of 1397, or 95%, of the households are now food secure. This means they eat at least two nutritionally balanced meals a day.

Livestock

Picture on the left is an example of goat multiplication increasing a family's wealth. Picture on the right shows how the distribution of cows, a symbol of status, becomes a community event.



During the period of January to October 2017, thanks to small businesses and merry-go-round funds, the children were able to buy the following livestock: 72 goats, 703 rabbits, 118 hens, and 439 pigs.

Meanwhile, the pigs which were previously provided by ZOE produced 2,375 piglets in total (during 2015, ZOE provided families with 698 pigs and 699 goats). In addition, 12 families received four cows which they will breed and share with other group members.

Current Income Generating Activities

Income activities in which multiple youth work together:

- 4 canteen* projects involving 11 members
- 2 restaurant* projects involving 6 members
- 3 animal selling projects involving 10 members
- 4 sorghum juice making and selling projects involving 25 members

**A restaurant serves full meals while a canteen is a small shop that serves drinks and snack items (like sambusas, pancakes, donuts, and bread). Sometime a canteen might also sell small items like toothpaste, brushes, soap, tissues, pens, etc. Usually their appropriate place of operation is near a school, clinic, or church.*

Individual small businesses:

Boutique selling: 52	Agri-business: 463
Restaurant: 26	Fruits selling: 195
Canteen: 26	Animal selling: 75
Sorghum: 39	Firewood selling: 15
Banana juice: 27	Cell phone services: 20
Food store: 152	Motorbike taxi: 10
Vegetables selling: 205	Bicycle taxi: 40



Because of the success of the income projects, the youth have been able to extend their projects and create new investments such as buying land for planting crops and building houses, purchasing livestock (cows, rabbits, goats, and hens), buying bicycles, building houses, and sending siblings to vocational training classes.

With group and ZOE financial assistance, 140 youth received vocational training and start-up kits for the following trades:

Tailoring: 72
Welding: 1
Mechanics: 2
Haircutting: 32
Carpentry: 13
Masonry/construction: 16
Driving: 3
Wiring: 1



Health, Housing and Education

- 42 children provided assistance to cover medical treatment fees
- 72 families supported with iron sheets for toilet roofing
- 15 families supported with additional health related items like mosquito net, plates, blanket, pans, cups and basins
- 60 families supported with house construction and 42 families supported with house repairs (ZOE provided construction materials, such as iron sheets, nails, doors and windows)
- 62 children assisted with school fees



Members of a group receiving their pans and water containers.



Other youth with house building materials.

Challenges

There are a large number of children who want to be assisted with house construction, yet there is a limit on funds available for this. Through small businesses, these families with no house are able to rent homes until they are able to construct their own home. Previously, they had to pay for shelter through their labor which was an impediment to their financial and social advancement.