

## YOUR ANNUAL UPDATE FROM RWANDA

We wanted to share some exciting progress made possible in Rwanda—thanks to support from you!

The effects of the 1994 genocide can still be seen today in Rwanda. Many people live in poverty, and children's rights, especially for girls, are limited. Children have limited access to quality education, healthcare, clean water and basic sanitation. More than 50% are still using dirty water from streams, dams, valleys or swamps.

Throughout fiscal year 2020, with the help of your sponsorship, we were able to provide over 5,000 people with health insurance, alleviating the burden on people who are unable to afford basic healthcare services. Vulnerable families received construction supplies like iron sheets and doors to improve their homes. We also strengthened child protection by creating a safe and child-friendly environment which free of abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect.

We are grateful to you for making these changes possible. We know you will enjoy reading on to see how your generosity is changing the lives of children, like your sponsored child, across this region.



## OUR IMPACT

**IN BUGESERA, 4,400**  
STUDENTS RECEIVED  
SCHOOL MATERIALS

**3,291** PEOPLE BENEFITTED  
FROM HEALTH INSURANCE  
IN GATSIBO

**153** YOUTH LEARNED ABOUT  
SAVINGS AND LOAN  
ASSOCIATIONS IN NYARUGURU

**IN NYARUGURU, 950** GIRLS  
RECEIVED MENSTRUAL  
HYGIENE MANAGEMENT KITS



## PLAN INTERNATIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSE

COVID-19 is having devastating impacts all over the world. It is not only a health emergency, it is an education and protection emergency. Since girls are often worse affected during a crisis, Plan International is putting them at the heart of our response and long-term outlook. We have scaled up healthcare systems, food security, access to clean water, handwashing and awareness campaigns, and keep education in children's lives via radio broadcasts.

# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR YOUTH

One of the biggest challenges for the youth of Gatsibo is the high unemployment rate. Young people often lack the skills and resources to start and run their own businesses.

Girls who are not able to generate their own income are at risk of early pregnancy.

To empower young people economically, last year we supported 130 vulnerable youth through vocational training courses. We also provided start-up kits to encourage them to start their own businesses. In addition, we trained 100 girls, among them teenage mothers, with skills that enable them to generate their own income.

To reduce unemployment and enhance young people's saving skills, 75 village saving and loan associations were formed. These are groups of people who save together and take small loans from those savings. To support these groups, we provided trainings and tool kits for the members.



**TEENAGE MOTHERS EXPERIENCE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT BY LEARNING VOCATIONAL SKILLS**

## STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Quality, inclusive education is often limited in Bugesera, especially for poor and vulnerable families. We established Village Savings and Loan Associations to help parents invest in their children's education. We also helped children improve their own economic status by encouraging them to also join savings groups. These financial resources allow families to plan for their future.

We focused additional efforts on Early Childhood Development. We trained caregivers on the curriculum and helped leaders facilitate children's transition from preschool into primary school. In addition, we constructed and rehabilitated 5 Early Childhood Development Centres. We also improved facilities for older pupils, constructing and equipping girls' rooms in five target schools, serving 950 girls.

*"I am among the first pupils that passed through the Early Child Development programme and I am now in Grade four. I passed all my subjects with high grades and test scores. I attribute my success to Plan International, who gave me the opportunity to study."*

**Aline, 13, sponsored child**



# STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION

Sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination remain a threat to children in Nyaruguru, who face challenges at home and in the community at large.



THE "GIRLS GET EQUAL" CAMPAIGN WAS SHARED THROUGHOUT ALL SECTORS OF NYARUGURU

Our Child Protection programme helps the most vulnerable: girls, children living in child-headed households, children with disabilities and those from historically marginalised groups.

We worked with 146 adolescents and young people, including those with disabilities, to teach them about their rights to protection, and taught them how to safely discuss and challenge sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination. Now, the area has 4 safe spaces to be used for youth mentorship and discussion.

In addition, 225 children were empowered with financial training. Village savings and loan associations were established, and children gained important knowledge of financial management. Over 100 children and young people were able to increase their economic independence with access to saving clubs.

## SUPPORTING GIRLS HEALTH AND EDUCATION

In Gatsibo, girls do not have equal chances in their education, since gender stereotypes are still common. As parents often have to work, young children before the age of 6 are at risk of being neglected and cannot reach their full potential in development. Unsafe school environments also later lead to girls performing poorly and dropping out of school.

To protect and empower girls from a young age onwards, last year we supported their parents by teaching them about early childhood development. In centres built especially for this purpose, mothers and fathers learn how to share the care-work responsibilities for their children. They also learn about cooking nutritious food and practicing positive parenting. We also trained 1,225 young girls to know about sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence.

*"I was likely to leave school because my parents could not support me in my further studies. Plan International paid the school fees for me and I successfully completed Class 3 in secondary school".*

**Claudine, 16, a sponsored child**



# YOUR SUPPORT IS CHANGING LIVES

With your support, we will continue to protect children's rights so they are able to thrive.

In the coming year, we will continue to work with the children, families and partners across Rwanda:



- Focusing on early childhood education, literacy and improving educational spaces. "Back to School" campaigns will be organized, to ensure girls and other excluded groups can access their right to education.
- Providing training for youth in life skills to lead to healthy adulthood. In addition, we will support small-scale employment initiatives such as home gardens.
- Increasing sexual health and reproductive rights education for youth. Cleaning and hygiene kits will be distributed to schools and personal hygiene kits to children, along with guidance and materials to improve handwashing.
- Focusing on training girls with leadership skills, and providing opportunities for them to thrive. We will also train men to recognize and fight against violence towards women and girls.
- Working closely with other organisations in coordinating humanitarian assistance to respond to emergencies, such as flooding.
- Advocating for children's rights, with special attention to vulnerable families and children affected by crisis.

These are just some of the many ways your kindness will continue to touch the life of your sponsored child and other children. We would not be able to do this without supporters like you!

## MESSAGE FROM PEACE MUKABAZIMYA

Programme Area Manager,  
Bugesera and Gatsibo



"Our projects make important contributions that impact the lives of children and youth, and help them realize their rights. This is only possible because of your support for our work. On behalf of Plan International and the children of Bugesera and Gatsibo, we thank you so much for your contribution and support!"

## MESSAGE FROM JACQUES BAKUNDUKIZE

Programme Area Manager, Nyaruguru



"Your contributions have improved the lives of the most vulnerable sponsored children and their families. We are expecting to keep adding value to the lives of the community by providing radios to all families so children can continue to study during the Covid-19 pandemic. All this work would not have been possible without your help. Thank you!"

