

Rwanda Education Assistance Project




Annual Report 2023

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FROM OUR FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I have had the privilege of traveling to Rwanda since 2006. In my trip this year in November, we held our first community film night. Over 200 community members jammed our renovated community center to watch for the first time in their lives a movie. We featured the Lion King translated into the local language of Kinyarwanda.

Between laughter and gasps of surprise, the audience watched as the story unfolded from tragedy to triumph. After the movie, REAP's dancing and drumming troupe, composed of some of the youngest community members, performed traditional dancing and music to the delighted laughs and prideful shouts of the community.

This visit highlighted the core of who we are: uplifting one impoverished rural community at a time by mobilizing local leadership, sparking the creativity and resiliency of youth, and galvanizing sustainable entrepreneurship.

We are proud to share of many accomplishments and stories in our 2023 annual report. I extend my gratitude to our donors, our board, and, most importantly, our Rwandan staff that stewards on programs on the ground.

Ed Ballen

Founder and Executive Director



MISSION

REAP's mission is to create an **integrated** and **innovative** approach to community development that improves education and literacy, fosters socio-economic well-being, and strengthens public and mental health with the

Five pillars of our Community Development Model



“Uplifting rural communities one at a time, from a cycle of poverty and intergenerational trauma to a cycle of hope and opportunities.”



COLLECTIVE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

Education and Literacy



Early Childhood: 20 children graduated. We increased the enrolment by 25% and offered 13 scholarships. 68 students received yearlong English reading instruction using Ogstar, a gamified and multisensory application. 136 parents improved knowledge, attitudes and practices in nutrition, parenting, child protection, and maternal health.



High school scholarships: To date, 80 students have graduated. These students are either in college, employment or run their own businesses. We provided an additional 25 scholarships this year.



Mobile Library: We added three additional partner churches (7 in total). Over 400 children and parents engaged in various literacy activities. Saturday School: Over 300 children passed the national exam with a 25% increase in pass rate from last year, and 98 of whom went to schools of excellence.

Food sufficiency and nutrition



80 farmers have collected 4,000 seedlings and created household vegetable gardens to combat malnutrition, stunting and food insufficiency.



REAP's model farm produced \$300 net profit in addition to giving away free seedlings to community farmers.

Public and mental health education



Over 600 community members increased their public health knowledge and accessed vaccination and birth control services.



Entered a collaborative partnership with Uyisenga Ni Imanzi, an organization that specializes in mental health. They trained our entire staff in mental health and social-emotional skills.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT OF OUR WORK

Inclusion and Equity



Over 300 community members in REAP-supported savings groups (mostly comprising unemployed women) reported improved financial management for better livelihoods.



6,750 people reached by our student clubs in a campaign on sexual and reproductive health education. 550 reusable napkins produced and distributed to neediest girls at the Duha School. 150 reusable sanitary napkins produced and distributed to poor local women.



The Duha Girls basketball team won the District-wide school basketball championship. REAP built a basketball court two years before.

Job creation and Entrepreneurship



Formed, equipped and trained a community cooperative which produced and sold 430 school uniforms.



Musha Alumni Association was created, equipped and trained in photography, filmmaking, fashion design and computer skills.

**Over 6,000
lives directly
impacted.**

STORIES OF RESILIENCY

Peninah Ndayisenga

(A translated interview between a REAP staff member and Peninah Ndayisenga, one of REAP's graduates)

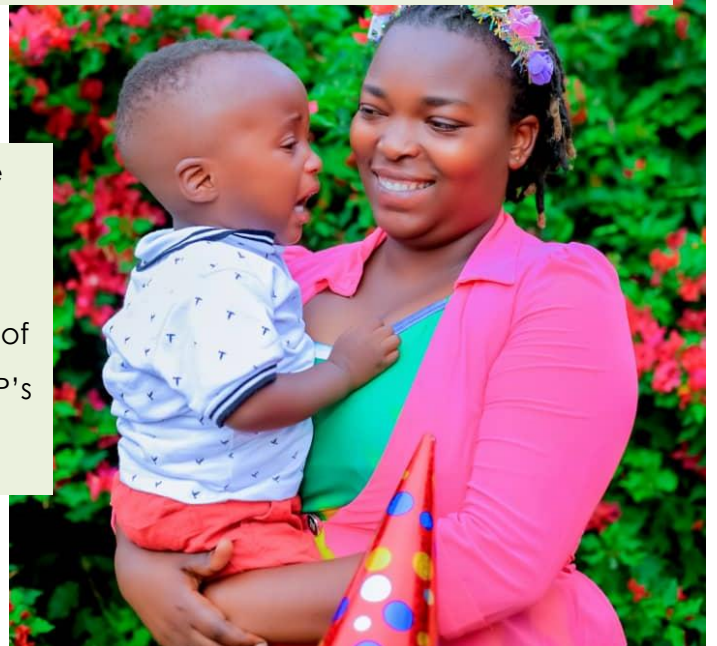
I am the seventh child in a family of ten. My father has been incarcerated since I was in grade five. This situation placed an immense burden on our mother, who took on the challenging responsibilities of providing for the family, ensuring we were fed, paying our tuition, and meeting other essential needs.

Due to the financial strain, I had to drop out of school for two years, working on neighbors' farms to contribute to our household expenses. However, in 2013, a transformative opportunity came my way when I received a scholarship from REAP. This opened the door for me to attend a prestigious school, where I pursued a major in veterinary studies. I successfully graduated in 2015.



Following graduation, I secured a position in an agro-veterinary pharmacy. Through diligent work, I saved enough money to establish my own pharmacy, a venture that I continue to successfully manage. The income generated from my business allowed me to construct a home for my mother and fund the education of my siblings.

I am proud to say that despite the challenges, I have persevered. I am happily married and blessed with a child. My journey, marked by resilience and determination, exemplifies the transformative power of educational opportunity, which is at the core of REAP's mission. I will forever be grateful to REAP.



STORIES OF RESILIENCY

Shakira Uwamahoro

Having faced adversity in her childhood, Shakira found herself entering into a premature marriage that unfortunately proved to be toxic. Her husband, often inebriated, subjected her to physical abuse and threats on her life. Eventually, she made the difficult decision to leave him, only to marry another man who lacked a home and land for farming.

In their pursuit of sustenance, Shakira and her new husband rented a modest two-roomed house and worked on others' farms to secure their daily bread. The scarcity of food resources led to their children becoming malnourished. It was at this juncture that they turned to REAP's nutrition and farming programs for assistance.



Participating in REAP's nutrition workshops and engaging in farming initiatives, Shakira transformed her backyard into a flourishing vegetable garden. This endeavor played a pivotal role in liberating her children from the grips of malnutrition.

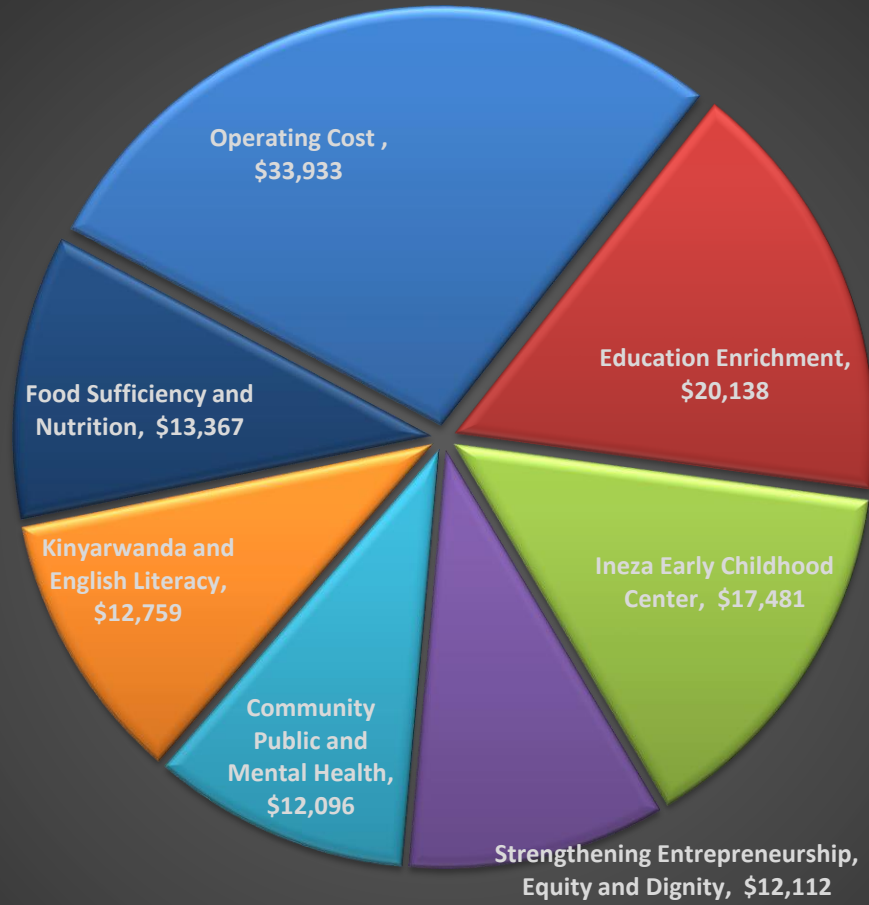
Additionally, she became a member of a REAP-funded community farming cooperative, where a 2-hectare farm is cultivated each season. This collective effort not only provides a source of income but also ensures a steady supply of vegetables to fortify her family's daily meals.

With a newfound income, she can afford to send her children to school, breaking the cycle of poverty and securing a brighter future for her family.

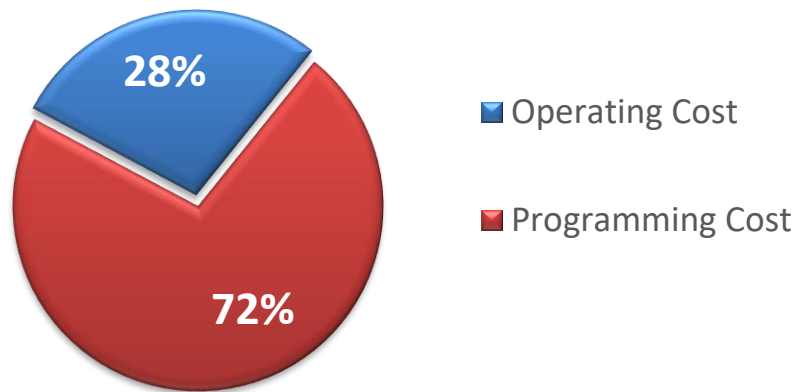


FINANCIALS

Where your money goes...



Programming versus Operating Costs



WHAT'S AHEAD...



PREVENTIVE MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

We are excited to be planning and implementing a preventive mental health counseling program. Our founder and executive, Ed Ballen has specialized in the field of trauma for over 40 years. We believe that all mental health services need to be designed and contextualized within the culture of Rwanda. In concert with this principle, we are,

Partnering with UYISENGA NI IMANZI, a nonprofit that specializes in mental health and socio-economic development. Our mental health initiative will be embedded within our tailoring program. The initiative is dedicated to strengthening resiliency of at-risk youth with a history of adverse childhood experiences, such as abuse, neglect, poverty, and being children of genocide survivors. Our goal is to break the cycle intergenerational trauma and build social emotional competencies for success.

Central to REAP's group program is the belief that youth benefit most from a natural environment, integrated into vocational training schools or afterschool programs. Employing a peer-to-peer model, the program aims to cultivate social and emotional competencies crucial for a healthy life. The strength-based approach fosters helping relationships among youth effectively, diminishes isolation and stigma, facilitating meaningful changes in attitudes, skills, and behaviors.

The Mutual Aid Model emphasizes the transformative power of relationships within the group, considering them as primary catalysts for change. These relationships are viewed as instrumental in shifting attitudes, motivating members to willingly abandon self-defeating behaviors. The model prioritizes the development of social and emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship skills, nonviolent communication, and responsible decision-making, all of which contribute to overall well-being, growth, and a sense of belonging.

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THANK YOU

Founder & Executive Director

Edward Ballen

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