

### **First year report from Rwanda on all groups which began meeting July 2022**

*The following is an overview of the trainings and resources all youth and children in this class of 20 empowerment groups received during their first year in the Zoe Empowers Rwanda program. There are 472 households with 1715 orphaned and vulnerable children in this class of groups.*

**Income Generation:** To ensure the heads of household could quickly develop dependable sources of income to support their families, Zoe held classes on basic business management skills in August and September 2022. In September and October 2022, after their business plan was approved by their group, each head of household received a grant to start their business. With the profit from their businesses, each group created a fund (table bank) to which the participants contribute regularly. The participants can apply for loans from this fund at a low interest rate to boost their businesses and create new businesses for themselves and their siblings.

**Food Security:** In October 2022, Zoe provided the first training on food security during which the youth were encouraged to adopt Zoe's food security standards. This generally involves each household having a stock of cereals (maize, rice and sorghum), a plot of tubers (potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava, and taro), a stock of legumes (beans, soybeans, groundnuts, and dry peas), a kitchen garden or a vegetable garden, fruit trees, and livestock. Zoe also facilitated training with government agricultural officials on planting kitchen garden. After which, every household received assistance as need so they could plant a kitchen garden, fruit trees, and crops.

In February 2023, Zoe provided all the households with additional vegetable seeds such as cabbages, carrots, beetroots, and onions. Zoe also provided inorganic fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides for group agricultural projects. Around this same time, all groups were trained on raising livestock by Zoe staff and government livestock officials. In March 2023, Zoe provided small livestock (a pig or goat) to every family in each group. With profits from their businesses, youth have purchased additional livestock including goats, pigs, rabbits, chickens, and cows. The local staff in charge of veterinary services provided vaccines and treatment to all livestock.

**Health & Hygiene:** In April 2023, the groups received training on HIV/AIDS prevention, STD prevention, and reproductive health by Zoe staff and local health officials. They have used their trainings to be advocates in their communities on HIV/AIDS prevention. In May 2023, the participants were trained on disease prevention including malaria, skin conditions, jiggers, and intestinal worms. In September 2022, Zoe provided initial funds for every household to purchase Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI). Now, thanks to the businesses each head of household started, they have the money to cover this expense. Prior to insurance coverage or because additional care was required, Zoe assisted 23 children with emergency support and medical treatment.

**Child Rights:** Initial training provided soon after recruitment centered on teaching the children what constituted abuse so that Zoe program facilitators could better assess which children needed assistance. They also learned about their legal rights to national identification (like birth certificates), family property, and education. Children who were not legally registered and thus could get an identity card were assisted to obtain documentation.

**Education:** A total of 877 children in primary and secondary school have been assisted with school materials and uniforms so that they could attend school regularly.

**Housing:** Families in great need of house construction/repair or toilet construction have been supported with building materials including iron sheets, nails, windows, and doors.

**Spiritual Strengthening:** Through group devotions offered at every meeting, the Zoe youth have come to feel a connection with God and their faith has been restored. They now believe that God has a better future planned for them and their families.

**Second Year Plans:**

- Resources will be provided for group income projects.
- Funds will be provided to groups so that individual have money to boost their initial businesses and to strengthen their table banking fund and savings.
- School reintegration and provision of school fees and materials will continue in the second year.
- Youth with vocational trainings through apprenticeships and formal vocational courses will be supported with start-up kits.