Young Citizens of Rwanda

Fostering Rwandan Orphaned Youth

Activities Report 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026

There are some strong biblical principles we live by, because they reach across the great social divide anywhere in the world. We just happen to be serving in Rwanda.

- *Speak for those who cannot speak for themselves; for the rights of all who are destitute.*
- *Learn to do right, seek justice, defend the oppressed; take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.*

Rwanda today: Progress and Continuing Needs

I've lived in Rwanda many years and I've seen a lot of changes and development, especially in the capital city, Kigali. I was curious to know how Rwanda was doing on the global developmental scale, so I asked Google:

> *"On the global developmental scale, Rwanda is classified as a developing, low-income country, but it holds a "medium human development" status, ranking 159th out of nearly 200 countries and 25th in Africa. Rwanda is regarded as one of Africa's fastest-growing economies, heavily recognised for its technological advancements, political stability, and improving quality of life."*

Conversely, YCR deals with the desperately poor and needy on a daily basis. With a population of nearly 15 million people, the facts remain: the needs are great and people are hungry. Malnutrition is a deeply rooted problem, especially in the rural areas.

Responding to Hunger and Poverty

- **Feed the Hungry Project**
- **Preventing homelessness**
- **Access to healthcare**

Our *Feed The Hungry (FTH) project*, which we started during Covid-19 is ongoing. Last year, we supported over thirty families (with an average of four children per family) with a selection of basic food items. This was made possible by donations from some of our closest friends in the UK.

We've saved seven families from being thrown out of their homes by paying their rent. We are still doing that for four families, who otherwise would be on the streets.

We help cover the cost of Rwanda's National Health Insurance scheme, known as *Mutuelle de Santé*, which is essential for accessing healthcare services. Although enrolment is required for every family, many are unable to afford the annual premium, which starts at 3,000RWF per person and varies according to a family's social and economic circumstance. Last year, we paid the insurance premiums for thirty individuals, enabling them to access healthcare through Rwanda's network of local health centres (Centres de Santé) and medical facilities.



One of the scores of sweaters knitted by our friends in UK. It's made this little one happy!

Education: Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

- **Sponsoring students at every level**
- **Removing barriers to learning**

YCR's **Gift of Education Programme** is by far our greatest activity. We believe the best, possibly the only way, out of poverty is through education. Last year, we sponsored over one hundred students at every level of learning – from Nursery to University, providing all aspects of their needs. The biggest hindrance to education is the cost of school fees and materials. YCR pays all school fees and provides all materials for our sponsored students, according to the funding we receive.

Partnership with Local Government

- **Working alongside Gasabo District**
- **Supporting high-achieving students**
- **Community engagement and awareness**

As an NGO in Rwanda, we are required to work closely with the District where we are located, in this case, Gasabo District. Once or twice a year, we attend meetings to learn what the District has achieved in the various sectors and to see where we can help to improve or fill more gaps. The District will contact us just before the new school year starts, to ask us if we have space for any more students. We always try to take on a few more: these are students who had performed extremely well in the National Exams but too poor to pay the school fees required by the government boarding schools allocated to them.

When District puts on an "Open Day" we try to attend because this is one way we can let the communities know exactly what we do and let them know how to access the services we provide.

Empowering vulnerable families

- **Encouraging self-advocacy**
- **Raising up "Warrior Mamas"**

As part of our **Assessment Process**, we ask families requiring our help to bring us copies of their household documents from the local authorities. Over the years, we have learned that many of these families, although documented, are afraid to visit the offices of the Cell or the Sector to ask for the service they need. So, it's been necessary to patiently teach and encourage our poorest and most vulnerable mothers to speak up for themselves. Often they fear to approach local authorities because they are made to feel that their problems are not important. The local authorities are there to deal with every class of society, whether rich or poor; the solution to a problem must first be discussed at village level before it can be addressed at the Cell or Sector levels. Our hard work and persistence is paying off: we now have quite a number of 'warrior' mamas, who will boldly and bravely take their issues to the various chiefs and expect to be seen and heard, and get results.

Lives transformed through our 'Gift of Education Programme'

Naome's story



My name is Naome Isezerano. I am Rwandan and one of YCR's student beneficiaries. I come from a less privileged family background. Before I met the YCR Family I was struggling to finish my secondary education. In 2019, I was in Senior 5 but due to high family debts and the absence of school materials like shoes, bag, notebooks, etc., I was preparing to drop out of school in the second term. I was tired of always being chased out of school in the period of exams and being mocked by my teachers and some students due to lack of school essentials.

During that time I lost all self-confidence, I was lonely and felt hopeless about the future; life was so hard for me, especially as a teenager. Then one day, I heard the announcement in church about YCR and what they do, so I encouraged myself to

go to their office and ask for help. After going through their assessment I was selected to be one of the students they would support. For me and my family it was a great joy and opportunity because now I was going to study and complete my secondary education, which was the most wonderful news to me.
With YCR's help I started to study hard day and night, because I was far behind other students, due to being regularly chased out of school by the administration. It seemed like in the blink of an eye I was sitting my Senior 6 National Exams (A'Levels)! My hard work had been worth it. I got really good marks but, unfortunately, I missed out on the Government's sponsorship to attend the University of Rwanda. I couldn't produce all the documents they required on time, so I lost that opportunity.

However, my new 'parent', YCR, stepped in and again agreed to support me through university. They were able to find a sponsor for me in the UK (I know her as "Auntie Lorna"). She paid for my registration, tuition, and the rent, so I

could leave home and live near to the university. She also sent money to buy food for me and my sister, who eventually came to live with me.

YCR brought light and joy into our family

Three years later, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Information Science, specializing in Logistics Management. Auntie Lorna supported me to the very end, paying for everything I needed to graduate well – new dress and shoes, graduation gown and a small party with friends afterwards and a photo shoot!

From the bottom of my heart I thank YCR for the love and support they showed me, and a very special "Thank you" to Auntie Lorna for caring for me, even though she had never met me. Together they brought life and light into our family. Now all of us have a hope for the future and we're able to face life positively.



Murakoze cyane! (Thank you very much!)

- **Overseas Guests**
- **The way forward**

I'm not exaggerating when I say that none of what we have accomplished this year would have been possible without the dedication, generosity, and love of our UK family, friends and sponsors. Thank you for believing in us and what we're doing for the beautiful children and youth of Rwanda.

We're especially thankful to those of our friends who have made the journey to Rwanda to visit our project. Your presence is always of immense value to us; we've enjoyed the time we've spent together sharing about future growth and development; engaging in discussions around how we could improve our various services to the community. Most of all, you never come empty-handed; you always bring suitcases upon suitcases of very useful gifts.



YCR remains committed to continuing its work among the poor and vulnerable for as long as we have the opportunity to serve. We are deeply committed to this work because we see its impact every day, not only in the immediate difference it makes in people's lives, but in the hope and opportunities it creates for the future. Through the support we provide, we are helping to give children, families, and communities the chance to build a brighter and more secure future.