Rukundo
INTERNATIONAL

2021 Annual Report

A Year Of Impact

2021 Top 10 Achievements:

0 Teen pregnancies among our Girl's Empowerment participants reported!

2 New floors' masonry work completed at Rukundo's Primary School

10 Scholars graduated *(1 doctor, 2 nurses, 2 midwives, 1 salon owner, 1 plumber, 2 tailors, 1 mechanic)*

61 Goats born in our Women's Co-op *(113 total living goats)*

58 Vulnerable students supported to reach their full potential through our scholarship program

136 Students enrolled at Rukundo Preparatory School

203 Students graduated from our Girls' Empowerment Program *(1,577 total graduates)*

892 kg Beans harvested from our 2020 bean project to combat food insecurity

1,124 Beneficiaries supported with emergency COVID-19 relief aid

1,599 Homeschool visits to Rukundo Preparatory School students conducted

And countless thanks for your support!

Rukundo International

Our Purpose

Founded in 2014, Rukundo International strives to empower Kabale, Uganda's most vulnerable populations through educational and economic opportunities that create pathways to self-sustaining communities. Rukundo means "love" in the local Kiga language. We act as partners & advocates to ensure that rural communities in Kabale will have the essential resources to reach their full potential.

Our Approach

RI helps orphans, financially distressed families, and at-risk youth. While there is work to be done in many places around the globe, we chose to focus on rural Uganda, where children and families are significantly impacted by poverty and the inability to access quality educational resources. We offer programs including pre-primary and primary education for over 130 children, hygiene, nutrition, clean water, economic & educational empowerment for women and girls, and scholarship opportunities.

A Note from our Founder, Andrea Sedlock

As 2021 comes to a close, Uganda is experiencing the longest school closures in the world, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As you've likely experienced in your own country, school and business closures had negative effects. You might imagine the devastating impacts felt in an area where most of the community lives in extreme poverty. But, we are hopeful! Rukundo Preparatory School is scheduled to reopen to in-person learning in January, 2022, for the very first time in almost two years.

There are not enough words to THANK YOU for your support. Your generosity kept us afloat during these most challenging times. You supported our staff with their salaries, provided our students with homeschooling services during the extended lockdown, supplied our vulnerable community members with emergency COVID-19 relief packages, and your donations will allow us to re-open our doors.

We are looking forward to making up for lost time in 2022, and we hope you will join us as we continue to empower and educate the most vulnerable in Uganda!

Sincerely,
Andrea Sedlock
President & Founder

2021 – A Most Difficult Year

As the COVID-19 global pandemic continued throughout 2021, the associated lockdowns, stretching for almost two calendar years, reversed significant progress made over the last decade to alleviate poverty.

We watched helplessly as thousands of schools and businesses in Uganda closed. Many teachers left the profession. Students outside of Rukundo Preparatory School lacked access to any educational materials. Children dropped out of school, many never plan to return, and countless turned to dangerous child labor to survive. Deaths increased, leaving even more orphans unlikely to rejoin schools due to a lack of school fees and materials.

Teen pregnancy and early marriage rates skyrocketed. Sexual and domestic violence and drug and alcohol use escalated. Families who already live "day to day" continue to suffer from increased food insecurity and decreased incomes.

Despite these challenges, with your help and our dedicated team at Rukundo, we continue to make a difference in the small, rural communities we serve. However, many others still need assistance during these times. We hope this report demonstrates that your dollar makes a difference and inspires you to share the life-changing work we do with your friends, colleagues, and family members.

Rukundo Preparatory School

Expanding Rukundo Preparatory School

Despite Rukundo Preparatory School (RPS) being closed for the entirety of the 2021 calendar year, we have made incredible progress with our school expansion project. With your generous donations and a $25,000 grant, we completed the foundation for the entire first and second levels of our primary school building, including casting the concrete slabs, constructing the columns, and laying all the brickwork! Once completed, these two levels will house five additional classrooms, plus a library and computer lab.

Additionally, we purchased a nearby plot of land to continue expanding our school as we strive to serve more and more Ugandans in need. Our goal is to, one day, build a new dormitory for those students that do not live within walking distance. Until then, we're using the land to grow crops for the two daily meals we provide
our students.

Putting Our Students First

In March 2020, schools were closed by the government of Uganda due to COVID-19 and only reopened a staggering 21 months later. During this period, our teachers walked door-to-door to deliver workbooks and homeschooling services to every single one of our students. To date, the staff at RPS has conducted almost 3,000 home visits and delivered over 1,000 workbooks to ensure that no child falls behind on their studies.

Titus is a 2nd-grade student at RPS. During the initial COVID-19 lockdown, beginning in March of 2020, Titus could be found loitering around the village and was beginning to misbehave. However, once our homeschooling program launched, his teacher, Gordon, began visiting him twice each month. We provided workbooks and counseling services to Titus, and he then began staying home to do his school work. Titus was unable to complete the first workbook he received in June 2020, receiving a low grade of just 58%. However, teacher Gordon continued his visits, and Titus improved significantly as the lockdowns stretched throughout 2021. On the last workbook that Titus completed in September 2021, he received a 97%! We were the only school in our district to continue homeschooling services throughout the entirety of the lockdowns. Your donations truly made a difference!

Women's Agricultural Cooperative

Our Goats Have More Than Quintupled!

In October 2019, we launched our women's goat project, gifting a goat to each of the 22 members of our Women's Agricultural Cooperative. Goats are a reliable source of supplementary income and improved nutrition by providing manure to gardens, which is essential in this almost exclusively agricultural community. Today, the original 22 goats have had a combined total of 92 surviving kids – bringing the total goats to 113, making our program multiply five times in a little over two years. We're so proud of this program – and it's completely self-sustaining!

The women also created a savings group to provide extra financial support and security during the pandemic. The savings group accumulates funds for the participants, helping these women who do not have access to a bank and are finding it hard to make ends meet, especially during the extended lockdowns. Our members have been able to buy household items, goats, chickens, and fabric with the funds received from the group. We're proud to see our women benefiting from this life-changing group and their collective efforts to support one another during these difficult times.

Women's Agricultural Cooperative

We are excited to report that we graduated our first two beneficiaries from the goat program, Margret and Evas! They met the requirements of having seven goat offspring, of which they donated two back to the organization, allowing us to grow this program to new beneficiaries and impact even more families. They were very appreciative of the organization for the goats, which they reported having improved their standards of living in different ways, including:

- providing manure for their gardens, which previously had infertile soils;
- fulfilling their dream of owning a domestic animal;
- supplementing their limited incomes;
- Fostering responsibility for their children, who have been busy looking after the goats, especially during the school closures, instead of loitering with other children.

As a result of the program, Margaret's monthly income has increased almost three times, and Evas' five times! In addition, Margret reported an 80-fold increase in her savings and no longer has to work weekends to make ends meet.

Girl's Empowerment Program

Our Girls Continue to Thrive

With young girls at home, due to school lockdowns, they're even more at risk for early pregnancy and marriage, domestic violence, or contracting HIV.

Our Girl's Empowerment Program (GEP) aspires to change this. The GEP aims to help young girls learn their self-worth, develop safe habits, avoid peer pressure, and gain experiences and skills to stay in school and achieve financial independence, protecting them from HIV and early pregnancy and marriage. To continue offering this transformative program during the pandemic, we developed new ways to execute GEP by providing girls with workbooks to learn from their homes and supplying materials for participants to start small entrepreneurial projects.

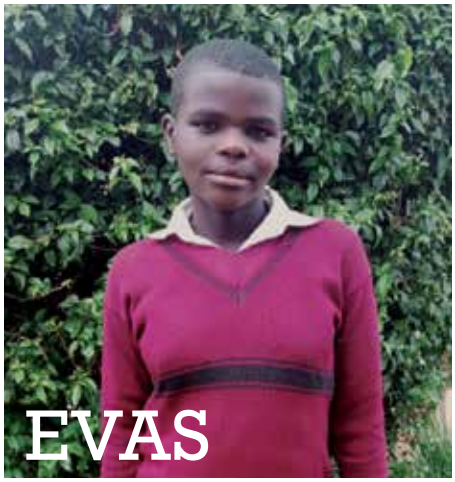
Among our seven partner schools, all 203 participants launched entrepreneurship projects and successfully graduated from the program.

Many parents commend the GEP for keeping their girls safe during the lockdown period, where other young girls succumbed to early pregnancy, marriage, or sexual violence. At her GEP graduation ceremony, Merab's father, a brick maker, shared his struggles. He has two daughters, and everyone in the village insults him, saying he wastes his money and time educating them. He thanked the RI staff for the support his daughter received from the GEP, which allowed her to continue studying and kept her busy during the lockdowns. *"It was such an encouragement to me to know that I am making the right choice to educate my girls."*

Between March and September 2020, there was a 367% increase in pregnancies among girls aged 10-14: from 290 to 1,353 in 25 randomly selected districts across 16 regions of Uganda.

We're proud to share that 0% of girls in our program were part of this statistic.

Girl's Empowerment Program



As part of the program, RI provided Merab with materials to make baskets and training on how to manage her small business. Merab has worked hard to expand her project from basket-making to two other projects. She first sold her baskets and purchased eggplant seeds. She then planted and sold eggplants, eventually saving enough to buy a piglet! To put this into perspective, a piglet costs approximately 60,000 Ugandan shillings, and Ugandan adults in our rural communities earn roughly 5,000 for one full day of work. Her father is so proud of her, and they spend time together working in her garden.

Another 2021 GEP graduate, Evas, received a chick to launch her microbusiness. Evas managed her project well and eventually bred and sold enough chickens to purchase a goat! She stated, "I am so excited and happy to be in the GEP!" For her, the importance hits close to home. Evas has a sister in the same grade as her but who attends a different school that isn't our partner and doesn't offer the GEP curriculum. Therefore, during the almost two years of lockdowns, her sister was idle at home while Evas was busy with her GEP workbooks and projects. Evas is looking forward to returning to school in 2022 when the lockdowns lift, while sadly her sister has lost hope and dropped out.

95% of 2019 and 2020 GEP graduates reached for follow-up have maintained their projects for more than one year, enabling them to earn an income and learn the importance of financial independence. For girls in Uganda, these invaluable lessons make a difference in their livelihoods and futures. Even a small income can provide the means they need to finish school and avoid the risks of teen marriage and pregnancy.

Through this life-changing program, we're proud to empower these bright young girls with the tools they need to reach their full potential.

Congratulations to Our 2021 Scholar Graduates!

Angella
Midwife

Doreen
Fashion Designer

Esther
Cosmetologist

Evelyn
Nurse

Gift
Midwife

Isaac
Mechanic

Joram
Plumber

Juliet
Nurse

Merab
Clinical Officer (Doctor)

Phionah
Tailor

Congratulations to Our 2021 Scholar Graduates!

Feature Scholar
Doreen

Thanks to a micro-loan Rukundo provided through the program, Doreen opened her business selling fabrics and second-hand shoes in her community. Her graduation package allowed her to purchase more fabric just in time for a lucrative holiday season!

"I am so happy for RI for the support towards my business, and it's through the loan that I was able to buy second-hand shoes, which helped boost my business. I get a lot of profits from shoes. With my graduation funds, I have bought more fabric, and I am sure I will get more customers from it. I'm thankful to my sponsor for the efforts and contributions towards my education and also to the RI President, who made the connections to ensure I could go to school. RI staff, thank you so much for loving me and taking care of me while at RI". - Doreen

Meet RI's First Graduate Doctor
Merab

We hope Merab's words will help you understand why your support for our programs means so much!

"Greetings full of appreciation and smiles. I am so happy! Finally, I am graduating. I earned a bachelor of clinical medicine and am a community health graduate, which doesn't seem real! Rukundo International made my dream come true. You people, you are lifesavers. Every time I close my eyes and look back, I imagine what would have happened to me if I didn't meet you, Ms. Andrea, and the whole Rukundo team? Oh, no, I don't want to think about it; it will ruin my mood. I'm failing to get words to express how thankful I am to you. Should I cry or laugh? I've to laugh. If I cry, trust me, they will be tears of joy. Look at me now; I am no longer hopeless, just ready to face everything that comes my way. I promise I won't let you down. Honestly, it's a bit challenging, realizing that sometimes, someone's life depends on me, it's quite scary, but I love what I do. I can't thank you enough for loving and supporting me, a mere girl from Kabale, Uganda. Love and thanks, Merab."

We're so proud of all our graduates, and we can't wait to see what's in store for their futures as they pursue their dreams!

Scholars and Community Programs

You Stood By Our Scholars During the Global Pandemic!

Despite the challenges introduced by COVID-19, we strived to continue to fully and holistically support the children in our programs. We continuously monitored the well-being of of all 58 Scholars enrolled, providing printed study materials, mentoring, and counseling services. We delivered supplemental food and household supplies to our most vulnerable scholars, and eight families received goats to give them a more sustainable income.

Partners Needed

Did you know that in Uganda, children with sponsors who support their education are 42% more likely to finish secondary school than those without and 83% more likely to graduate from university? We are looking for more partners to help deserving children continue their education. Know someone? Please spread the word!

Community Programs

Though schools in Uganda remain closed due to the COVID-19 lockdown, our Rukundo Preparatory School continued to serve as a meeting place for outreach programs that support the communities in Kyanamira with much-needed healthcare, relief items, printing services, meals, and fun activities.

Annual Medical Clinic: 200 Attendees

Prioritizing health in a time needed most! Rukundo International carried out our 2nd annual community medical clinic to help those in vulnerable communities who find it difficult to access medical services, made even harder due to the global pandemic. On October 27, 2021, in partnership with Rugarama Hospital and Kyanamira Health Center III, we provided medical care free of charge to 200 people in the rural communities surrounding our school. Some of our services provided included:

- HIV testing
- Cervical cancer screening
- Hepatitis B screening
- Dental care services (cleaning and extraction)
- Eye care services
- Immunization of children
- HPV vaccination
- Deworming of children
- Screening for hypertension and
- General medical care.

Graduates from our medical scholar program helped tend to patients during this annual camp.

Rukundo INTERNATIONAL

Eyeglasses Distribution

Thanks to generous donors, the eight individuals who needed eyeglasses but couldn't afford them have now received the gift of clear sight! Our neighbors were so appreciative and urged RI to continue supporting this vulnerable community.

"I am Augustine, 49 years, from Kyanamira. We heard an announcement over the radio that Rukundo International would be providing free medical services, and I came for eye care and Hepatitis B screening and vaccination. I am happy that I got all the benefits. They screened my eyes, and the doctor advised me to buy glasses, but I didn't know how to get them. I am very happy because, after screening and treatment, they gave me eyeglasses and a book and I was able to read! I am thrilled to regain my vision. I thank Rukundo International for always bringing rare services to our community," says Augustine.

Goretti from Kyanamira, who had come for tooth extraction, says, "*I am happy because the doctors were professional, and I didn't feel any pain. I had a prolonged toothache, and God has answered my prayers through Rukundo International. I didn't have money to go to the hospital, and I came running when I heard the announcement that there would be free medical services. Thank you for relieving my pain.*"

True Christmas JOY!

On December 19th, RI held a Christmas party for all children from the community, ages 3-14. We estimate that more than 500 kids attended! Many families cannot afford anything extra for Christmas, so we wanted to share the love and celebrate this special holiday together. Everyone shared a breakfast treat of milk, tea, and bananas, and RPS students led carols and performed a play of the Christmas story. Every attendee then received a feast of meat, rice, matooke (green bananas), ground nuts (peanuts), and sodas.

We finally had fun after almost two years of lockdown and no school! Rukundo hired bouncing castles, a trampoline, a portable swimming pool, toy cars, bicycles, and more! Many of the children had never seen, much less experienced, these types of amusements. Lastly, we distributed Christmas packages that included soap and lotion. The price of soap and other household essentials has more than doubled, and many rural families struggle to purchase soap for bathing and washing.

The children were all so thankful and left filled with joy and happiness!

We Provided COVID-19 Emergency Relief to Over 1,000 Individuals

Much of the rural Ugandan population where we work is financially insecure, living "hand to mouth," and families do not have the means to accrue savings. With the pandemic came the loss of jobs and significant price increases, which has worsened food insecurity. Thanks to your generosity, we supported 1,124 individuals with emergency relief.

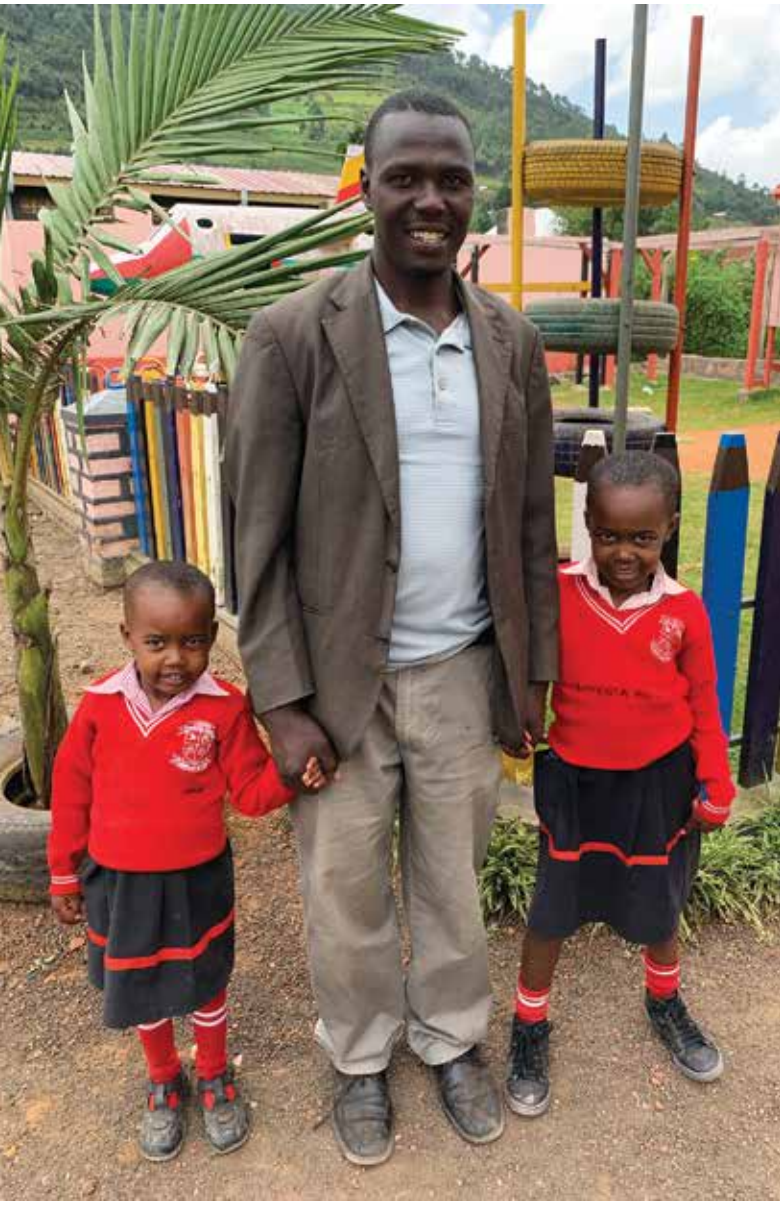
In 2021, we distributed:

- 146 lbs maize (corn) seeds
- 86 fruit baskets
- 172 bars of soap
- 172 packets of salt
- 1,896 lbs beans
- 1,896 lbs posho (corn meal)
- 2,910 lbs bean seeds
- 11,660 vegetable seedlings

Our Agricultural Package Distribution Continues to Make a Difference as Beans & Vegetables Thrive!

During the summer, we provided seeds, seedlings, fertilizers, and pesticides to each of the 130+ households with students enrolled at Rukundo Preparatory School (RPS) and in our women's cooperative. Our parents and women have worked hard in their gardens, using our agricultural training to care for their crops properly. The families were so happy and hoped to soon alleviate the current food crises in their homes by getting large harvests!

We Provided COVID-19 Emergency Relief to Over 1,000 Individuals



Eddy, the parent of RPS students Abigail and Arshly, thanked the organization for the agricultural package they received: "My children are now healthy because they enjoy vegetables and get proper vitamins. We now have greens at every meal, thanks to the agricultural package we received. We have harvested 20kg of spinach alone, thus saving money on purchasing greens which we don't even have due to prolonged lockdowns."

Women in our co-op also expressed their appreciation for the seedlings they received, which will help them improve their diet and supplement income. Some said that after harvesting, they plan to sell some of the vegetables to support their families with other basic needs, which they find hard to meet, like soap, salt, and books for their children to prepare for reporting back to school in January, 2022.

Financials

Did you know that Rukundo is 100% volunteer-run in the United States?

That allows for more than 90% of your donations to go directly to our life-changing programs!

Revenue

68%	$132,358	Contributions
16%	$30,750	Grants
3%	$6,383	Inventory Sales
13%	$24,413	Fundraisers
0.02%	$48	Investment income
	$193,952	**Total revenue**

Expenses

92%	$135,685	Program
7%	$10,142	Management & General
1%	$1,662	Fundraising
	147,489	**Total Expenses**

Financials

Capital Purchases 2021

$48,437	Construction
$6,392	Land
$1,440	Other long term school assets

Looking Forward

Rukundo International is committed to helping children and their families in Kabale, Uganda achieve brighter futures and reach their full potential. The COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges and setbacks for our community, which is why it's more critical than ever before that we continue our life-changing work. We're continually seeking new partners, corporations, donors, and volunteers that can help us empower Uganda's most vulnerable populations. Learn more and get involved today.

Our long-term goals:

- Expand our school by one classroom a year, until we have a full primary school through seventh grade (the final year of elementary school in Uganda)
- Add a transportation system to serve students that live outside walking distance from Rukundo Preparatory School
- Build a boarding residency for the children
- Continue to invest in high-quality, multi-disciplinary programs in Uganda to provide holistic education, economic opportunities, and community engagement
- Grow our Development and Communication Departments in the U.S. to continue to expand our programs and initiatives

Thank you for making a difference!

- Grants from The Kathryn B. McQuade Foundation & The Women's Microfinance Initiative
- 2021 Silent Auction Platinum Sponsor: Duo Media Productions
- 33% of our yearly revenue was supported by our monthly recurring donors, keeping our programs running!
- For our 20 staff in Uganda -- our organization wouldn't be possible without you!
- For the countless hours donated by our 100% volunteer-team in the U.S., a heartfelt thank you!

One of the best ways that you can support our important work is by becoming a $1/day donor. These donations are truly life-changing and, as we've learned over the two years...pandemic proof!

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