



GIRLS' EDUCATION IN RWANDA AND ALUMNI NETWORKS:



INHIVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HEALTH POVERTY ACTION, COMMUNITY LINKS AND ADRA

OVERVIEW

JUNE 2020

In February 2020 our partners and the inHive team **handed over the results of the Rwandan Girls' Education Advancement Programme (REAP-2)** to education leaders, champions and allies in Nyaruguru district, in the Southern Province of Rwanda.

REAP-2 was part of the UK Government's **Girls' Education Challenge** portfolio, and inHive supported Health Poverty Action and partners by **connecting young people from rural, under-resourced communities with former students of their schools.**

The project, which **started in September 2017**, used several interventions to make significant progress in addressing some of the challenges that girls and boys face, creating synergies across these efforts.

In addition to establishing **alumni networks**, the project partners set up **school businesses** and **mother-daughter clubs**, spearheaded **remedial classes** and **community study groups**, and incorporated **school improvement plans** into the everyday practices of school leaders.



Teacher Bosco is a member of the school alumni committee at his school, which tried to help their students in one of the REAP-2 partner schools. August 2019

A **conference and a celebratory ceremony** with school children, teachers, carers, as well as the district and sector education officials and other key stakeholders concluded the REAP-2 project, after it contributed to the transformation of schooling in the 28 partner schools.

REAP-2 demonstrated to parents, school administrators and educators the **benefits of changing their approaches to educating** girls and boys by making them inclusive, safer, sustainable and practical. At the end of the project, all stakeholders committed themselves to **maintaining the new ways of working**, and public officials were keen to roll out new practices to more schools in the future.

QUICK FACTS

The project worked with **28 primary & secondary schools.**

28,177 girls & boys got education at our partner schools.

1,263 learners were supported by alumni financially & academically

Since 2017 we saw **71% increase in schools' engagement with their alumni.**

27 schools developed inexpensive ways to **record their alumni details**, which they did not have before.

With Support from



"After going back to school, I felt such a big difference. I was so proud to be in school because of that advocacy work by the alumni. Since then, I have never been sent home because I can't afford school meals."
Angelique, student

THE IMPACT

Many education leaders in communities with **high levels of poverty**, such as those where REAP 2 intervened, find it difficult to engage their alumni. From our pilot schools, **24 did not think about alumni engagement before the project started.**

This is caused by many barriers, challenges and misconceptions. For example, educated and skilled alumni often **migrate from their home villages** for economic opportunities in bigger cities like the capital Kigali. They are **far away and hard to involve**, especially as many **do not even know what they can do as alumni** and how they can support their former schools and each other.

InHive worked with Health Poverty Action team to design **formal training sessions for teachers, as well as informal support troubleshooting engagements** with school-based committees to **raise the awareness of the benefits of having alumni** actively engaged in the school community.

As we handed the project to the local stakeholders, the **mayor of Nyaruguru** himself said that he **learnt that he can support his school** through WhatsApp group he was part of with other alumni.

Many teachers, principals and parents also **do not have money for mobile data and airtime to engage alumni or to organize activities.**

That is why **saving groups** became integral part of many of the alumni committees. Working together to raise funds, the committees seek to sustain themselves beyond the direct project support.



As a result of the REAP 2 project, alumni became an integral resource in the education process for children across 28 schools, helping teachers, as pictured here, to provide higher quality and safer schooling.

"The interesting aspect of this project is that the alumni are now involved in very different activities and contexts: some are employed in government offices, some in different forms of business, in agriculture; some are leaders at community level. Most of them became a sort of role model for students in school and an inspiration for them to continue actively in their studies."

Innocent Rwahama, Technical Officer for Health Poverty Action

As a result of our awareness raising, **teachers at 23 schools found alumni engagement to be very or extremely important** and **all of the pilot schools felt that the alumni were helping with addressing the challenges** experienced at the school.

While some alumni were able to **contribute financially for school materials, supplies or uniforms**, more importantly, we refocused people's attention towards engaging alumni living in the community to contribute their talents and skills. including by:



- **Raising awareness** and conducting community outreach and advocacy. They contributed to **parents' increased involvement in children's education** and **understanding of the importance of girls' education**, resulting in dozens of students reuniting back to the classroom.



- **Teaching classes** or holding **motivational talks** about the importance of education to students, especially during holidays when alumni returned back to their communities.



- Participating in **school governance boards** and implementing school **improvement plans.**