

REACH for Rwanda

Reconciliation Evangelism and Christian Healing

We are pleased to bring you another update on the work of REACH, including testimonies of those impacted by their work, events and seminars that have taken place, new cooperative projects and efforts to expand the work of REACH into Burundi and DR Congo whilst strengthening links with other organisations. Again, we also want to thank you for your continued interest and support.

NEWSREACH SUMMER 2013

REACH PROJECT UPDATE

REACH Restorative Justice Shelter Project.

In the last edition of NewsREACH we mentioned a woman from **Ntarama** called Immaculate, who has been the first woman to benefit from a house in this area - her house is now almost complete. Immaculate has spoken about the impact the work of REACH has had on her community.



She said that she had fled to Nyamata **town** after losing most of her family members in genocide. She did not dare to go back to where she lived before because she didn't want to meet those people who played a part in killing her family. She had a lot of fear. However after her participation in healing and reconciliation seminars, she felt healed and was able to forgive them all.



When REACH invited another group made of released prisoners from Ntarama, Immaculate was one of the trainers. It is during this seminar that they were able to ask for her forgiveness. Immaculate forgave them and later on, they decided to build her the house in Ntarama in order to strengthen reconciliation. Immaculate is so glad that she will soon return to her former village free from fear and full of confidence, joy and love.

House building in **Kirehe** has stopped for the time being because of lack of funds for the project, however many of the participants in the project, both perpetrators and victims, have joined together in an income generating pig farming project. They are working as two unity groups selling pork to local and national markets, as well as each member having a pig to keep at home. One member donated a plot of land for one of the pig farms after learning about REACH from the local radio, hearing testimonies of forgiveness and reconciliation from people in her local area. The group members also continue to support each other through repairing and maintaining each others properties and cultivating the land together. This helps to strengthen the unity and reconciliation displayed between the two sides.

Seminars and Training

REACH continue to lead seminars and training in different provinces to promote unity and to teach people about reconciliation. 3 seminars were held in the first quarter of this year, involving over 150 participants in total.

Nyanza

This seminar was primarily attended by religious and local leaders, reflecting on the challenges they have experienced in leading people so affected by trauma. REACH were able to facilitate discussions analysing the difficulties faced by communities post-genocide and how important it is for church and government leaders to work together to promote unity and reconciliation.



Rwamagana

95% of the participants in this seminar were women who have been members of REACH for a number of years, but who have only recently taken part in the training offered. The majority are part of the REACH unity groups, making handicrafts and joining in the weekly prayer meetings. At the seminar various participants requested special prayers for healing, some asked for forgiveness, others repented for the hate they had towards their fellow neighbours, others managed to forgive and 5 of them for their first time received Jesus as their personal Saviour.



Kayonza

Nearly 60 members of the youth football teams and groups attended their first seminar in Kayonza, which addressed the history surrounding the genocide, as well as the role of churches in the conflict and the role of Rwandans in rebuilding their country through reconciliation and unity. As many of them were only babies at the time of the conflict, they looked at how as a younger generation they could rebuild their nation. The seminar impacted those directly affected by the genocide, but also demonstrated the continued relevance of reconciliation to those struggling with their own more recent stories where forgiveness was needed, as illustrated by the following testimony:

Clemence : Attending REACH training is great, I am in a family now where I can share my personal wounds in confidence without fear or shame. Please bear with me as I give my testimony. I want to share with you about my life struggles and painful stories. I am not sharing about genocide like many of you have, there are other problems that people are facing which are very difficult to overcome without God's help. I experienced domestic violence where I was working as a house girl. I was sexually abused by my boss who was an officer in the army as his house girl. He raped me several times and warned that if I tell anyone he will shoot me. After few months I found myself pregnant. I left the job and to cut my story short, the baby was born miraculously. I didn't get any help from this man, he didn't even come to see his child. Now my daughter is nine years old, and she is pretty and very bright. She always advises me for different things, I see her as a miracle from God, she tells me things before they happen, she is like a prophet. Her father disappointed me but I believe that one day he will meet his daughter.

My child knows the truth and she appreciated my openness to her, she loves Jesus, and she always prays for her father and for our future. Though she is little, she is stronger than me and she has been asking me to forgive her father and pray for herself to be strong and trust God. Today I forgive my former boss who abused me and I thank God for my daughter. I thank REACH for inviting me to come here and to receive this wonderful teaching, I pray for REACH to be able to reach more people like me who are struggling.

Water Tank Project

Following a joint retreat between REACH staff, an organisation called REMA in Burundi and Ugandan friends of trustee Sally Botteley seeking to develop peacebuilding in the region, a group of 10 women from a unity group in Kirehe attended 2 weeks training in water tank construction. The training was led by Diana Tibenderana, from South Uganda, and her 2 colleagues. The first three tanks were built by the 10 trainees for 3 members of the Abavandimwe Unity group. The intention is that the 10 who were trained will now teach others who did not have a chance to be trained in the initial group. Reach in Rwanda would like to thank Diana and her 2 colleagues who initiated this project and for their two weeks stay in Kirehe with one of the group members

The beneficiaries of the water tank and women of Abavandimwe group appreciated the project and spoke about how it will help them so much with collecting rain water at their homes since they live in an area with insufficient water. They also said that this work will develop their confidence because women do not normally do construction.

One of the women said "It was my first time to put on trousers but I managed to put on trousers and climb ladders".

To see that they can build tanks with their own hands and skills will have a huge impact on their lives. The people in Kirehe community also appreciated the project and hope that the tank project will be extended to them at lower costs. We look forward to this project and pray that this will support the Abavandimwe Unity group members to get water, and also some income generation as they build more tanks for others in their communities.

We are specifically looking to raise funds to support this project so if your church, house group or other community group would like to raise enough money to fund a tank please email for more information.

Soap Making

The soap making cooperative is doing really well and they are now looking to expand to produce liquid soap and body lotion. They need financial support to send 4 people on a training course to make the liquid soap but these can then train other members of the group. They now have a well established market giving soap to a local hospital, following an ongoing donation to enable the hospital to give soap to their poorest patients who cannot buy this for themselves.



Kayonza Groups

The Urumuri rw'ubumwe (light of Unity) choir has now bought some land in Kayonza town where they can build up income generating activities and they continue to pray together and support one another, composing more songs. The traditional culture dancing group of Kayonza is now getting better and better and has recruited some new young girls and boys. They are also now getting more invitations to perform at weddings and other ceremonies not only in Kayonza but also in other districts of Rwanda, and are successfully generating income from this. The group of football players have also been meeting and planning how to recruit younger boys and girls, to train them in reconciliation and unity as well as in the sport.

The youth center of Kayonza has now got electricity which will help it become much more effective, and enable the office there to use equipment and the internet. The young people are in turn also benefitting from the electricity supply when they come to use the centre for entertainment and for the work of their groups.

Work with Neighbouring Countries

REACH staff recently attended a five-day retreat held at Kigozi resort camp, Kirundo, Burundi. The retreat was organised jointly with two other organisations, REMA from Burundi and YEM from Uganda and in partnership with Sally Botteley who supported financially and played the key role in its running and organisation. After meditation on the verse of Jn. 7: 37-38, members chose the name of the joint organization as "Streams of Living Water". It will be exciting to see how these organisations can work together in the future.



Funding

We would like to say a huge thank you to those who support the work of REACH financially, this is invaluable support that enables the projects to continue. If you are interested in setting up a direct debit, supporting with a one-off donation, or raising money for a particular project then please get in touch - your help and support is much appreciated.

PRAYER

Please continue to REACH in your prayers. Particular prayer points from Philbert are below:

- Pray for the REACH ministry, its members, staff, partners and the activities.
- Pray for enough funds to run more seminars for healing and peace building
- Pray for the provision for a REACH vehicle to enable staff to reach more areas.
- Pray for REACH plan for expanding its work in Burundi and DRC.

CONTACT US

REACH for Rwanda
P.O.Box 16105
Sutton Coldfield
B73 9UD

Sally Botteley—Secretary of REACH for Rwanda

Tel: 0121 308 0220
Email: info@reach-for-rwanda.org
Website: www.reach-for-rwanda.org
Registered Charity No. 1057238