

Thank you!

We are very grateful to Eckhart and Karin Schnur of CFI (Germany) who have worked tirelessly over the past 3 years to get the Ihumure Vocational Training Centre off the ground and running successfully.

Eckhart and Karin are finishing their posting with CFI and we pray God's abundant blessing on them for their future.



We would also like to welcome Norbert the IVTC's new Technical Expert who has recently arrived from Germany to take over from Eckhart.

Ihumure Vocational Training Centre

There are now 60 students at the IVTC including 10 students that World Vision have sent and paid for.

Our expectation has always been that the IVTC will become self-sustaining with Comfort Rwanda & Congo still contributing to the sponsorship of individuals. With this in mind we will be concentrating our efforts for the IVTC on the vital sponsorship programme unless specific urgent need arises.



COMFORT

RWANDA & CONGO

a little can change a life

Summer in Africa

Comfort Rwanda & Congo has had a very busy summer with a number of school and church groups visiting Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The groups visited projects all across Rwanda and into North Kivu to see first hand the progress that has been made, the hope that has taken root and the need that still remains. Brief summaries from various projects are included in this newsletter...with more to follow.

Karengere - a new survivors group

This year, for the first time, we ventured to the south west of Rwanda to the community of Karengere in the Nyamasheke District. Ben Kayumba of Good News International is originally from the area and he had identified the community as one in need of support. When we arrived we found the atmosphere in the group reminiscent of the first meetings with other survivors' groups a number of years ago. We met in the room of the local clinic and although the room was packed with people it was silent and subdued. It was obvious that many of the people were still really traumatised and carrying a lot of pain. In the 21 years since the genocide they had received very little help or encouragement.



After introductions, welcomes and some worship the local Pastor, **Azariah Ruterana**, shared his thoughts, *"You know the genocide that took place in Rwanda, when we tried to start building our new lives there was no-one caring or helping us up to this day. We have old men and widows, middle aged widows, orphans – we have no-one who has brought us a message of comfort and hope. ...continue on p2*

cont. from p1... We still have many challenges as a consequence of the genocide – physical, emotional and social wounds – they have never been treated in a real way. So we believe this is a good beginning and that you will bring hope for the future.”

Several of the group shared their traumatic experiences, still very raw, from the genocide in 1994 and we listened carefully for nearly 3 hours.

NYIRASABIMANA Marie-Therese

I am a Hutu who was married to a Tutsi. They killed my 6 children, my husband, my aunt, my nephew. I survived by hiding in abandoned houses and banana plantations. My relatives were the men who killed my family. One child survived by hiding under the bed. Now at last we feel we have somewhere we can be accepted. Because I am a Hutu the Tutsis did not accept me and because my husband was a Tutsi the Hutus did not accept me, but in this group i am accepted.

Cecille

I had 9 children 2 grand-children and a husband and they were all killed. I stayed for many hours with the dead bodies. I am homeless and have no place to stay. I'm getting old and can't do much for development so I have always a headache and I always see the dead bodies in front of my eyes.

Uwimbabazi

Thank-you that you are an organisation that praises God. Unless you spend 2 weeks here you will never hear all the testimonies. During the genocide I was in Kigali and the RPF rescued us and took us to Byumba. I lost 7 children and my wife and my extended family. I can't stop speaking without thanking God for good government and thanking you who came today who care about us and give us a safe place to share.



We were delighted that even over that short time the atmosphere began to shift, faces that had been expressionless became more alive and a light started to return to peoples eyes. Yet again we find that allowing people to tell their stories is one of the most important things that we can do.

Concert by Children of Liberty Praise Band

The C.O.L project is growing fast. There are now just under 50 children who are being helped and supported.

The group have formed a band and choir and recently held a concert to a packed audience at Mbula Secondary school. It was wonderful to see these



Children of Liberty band

children, who have been so traumatised, praising God expressing such joy. Some of you may have seen the video produced by Elim featuring a teenager called Esther (<https://vimeo.com/121784097>) We met Esther again and she is doing very well.



Esther

Batsinda - Street Kids Rescue

Help is beginning to reach Batsinda we now have 15 sponsors and the project is taking shape.

We are working on the best way to create a sustainable Street Kids Rescue project here and would value your prayers as we look for a good base and the best partners. We also



Sleeping rough



Recording names

need to build good relationships with the local authorities (the night before we visited 10 of the children had been put in jail for petty crimes). We have been able to record the names of the children and distribute some food & clothing but longer term change though spiritual transformation and education will be key. We

are grateful for positive contact with the Batsinda health clinic. Staff there are keen to co-operate over the health of the kids and some children have already received medical attention.



New clothes