

RWANDA

From the start of 2005, Afrinspire began funding a Rwandan organisation ASSOCIATION MISERICORDE in their programme to keep 300 Rwandan orphans in school. The scheme was set up in 2003 with help for the first two years from an American charity, who still support ten orphans. Afrinspire is now sustaining the major part of this programme.

The 300 orphans are in fourteen different schools in Kigali and other districts. Pictured here are a group from Rugarama School in Kigali. Some orphans live with grandparents or guardians and some in houses together. Association Misericorde has four social volunteers who visit the children. There are two volunteers in each of two zones. One volunteer follows the school progress of the children and one volunteer visits their homes and follows their health and social situation. The volunteers know the children, identify their requirements, pay the school fees, keep records about each child and counsel the children (over 11's) when times of trauma occur.



Since the last presidential election in Rwanda, primary education has been free of charge. However because the salaries to teachers are low, the schools expect the parents to supplement these by paying some small fees to the school. School materials are not provided by government as happens in the UK. Parents need to provide their children with exercise books, pencils and pens. There are also the clothing needs of the orphans to consider. Uniforms are obligatory, but because of poverty many attend school without them. Misericorde selected the most vulnerable orphans and seeks to help them as a parent would. Over 1000 applied to be on the scheme originally launched for 60. By faith 300 were selected.



The cost to support one orphan is £30 per year, which is equivalent to £2-50 per child per month. This is well below the child sponsorship cost of £15 per month often used by some larger charities. Afrinspire has been seeking individual child sponsors and large donations. It has been encouraging to see people opting to sponsor one, two or more orphans. A number of sizeable larger gifts have also helped reach the overall amount of £5,200 which has been transferred so far this year. **The target for assistance is £9,000 for the year**, but since Afrinspire can only provide what is given by supporters we could commit to this only by faith. Pastor Bunini writes "We are pleased with all you are doing for us. I told you that the problems in Africa are so many we will appreciate whatever you will manage to do."

Most children do not reach secondary school and have large gaps in their educational history

due to the huge disruption in the country a decade ago. Misericorde is trying to support some children into secondary school and is helping 38 orphans at the moment. The fees are £20 per term.

Association Misericorde has been visited by three Afrinspire trustees, in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Misericorde sends full sets of receipts for all the payments for the orphans. Afrinspire has an invitation for a team to visit Association Misericorde each year.



Pastor Gahungu Bunini and his wife, Azaria, came from Eastern Congo to Rwanda in 1994. They established a church in Kigali and in 1998 Association Misericorde. Bunini has inspired several self-help groups for widows, orphans and AIDS victims in Kigali. He has a role as the general secretary of the Alliance Evangelique du Rwanda (AER), the Rwandan equivalent to the Evangelical Alliance in the UK. The AER has been supported by Tear Fund since 1996.



Rwanda is a small landlocked country in Equatorial Africa on the western arm of the Great Rift Valley. It is a watershed between Africa's two great river systems of the Congo and the Nile. It is the most densely populated country in Africa, with every available piece of land under cultivation. It is dramatically mountainous and famous for the Virunga range of volcanoes in the north, of which the highest peak is Karisimbi at almost 15,000 feet. Almost every Afrinspire team gets to see the volcanoes when they visit Rwancereere in the border region of south west Uganda. Staying on top of the 8,000 feet high mountains you can see Muhabura Volcano standing out in the distance. It is sometimes clear, sometimes shrouded in mist and often has a small cloud floating around the summit. Without dispute an awesome and beautiful sight.