



The Learning Centre

The Learning Centre, offers classes in English, computers and business skills to young, poor and vulnerable teens and adults

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“English will change my future and life will be good. This moment I enjoy very well because I can read... the Learning Centre had opportunity for me to study computer. Thank you very much.” *Xavier – 40 years*

“I think learning English is very important to me because it prepared for my future, it will facilitate to study at university, it will facilitate to get a job, it will facilitate my business activities.” *Fanny – 20 years*

“How has the Learning Centre helped me? I can learn English and meet new friends and laugh and feel happy.” *Evelyne – 13 years*

In 1994 almost a million people were killed in the Rwandan genocide, leaving at least 800,000 orphans. Orphans face considerable burdens, such as caring for young siblings in child-headed-households, and they often under-perform at school, making it harder to break out of the cycle of poverty. Remarkably, the orphans refuse to see themselves as victims, but as survivors. They share the view that they were saved for a reason, and have a duty to rebuild their country and to help other orphans.

The war devastated many aspects of Rwanda’s infrastructure, including the school system, and 80% of teachers were killed. Although elementary education is free, the quality is disappointing and class sizes of 70 are common. Consequently there is a great need for remedial education and literacy training. This is why the Learning Centre is so important.

The Learning Centre, located in Kigali within the facilities of Solace Ministries, offers classes in English, computers and business skills to young, poor and vulnerable teens and adults. Many of the students are orphans of the Rwanda genocide and are also heads-of-households. Currently 40 students attend classes each day at the Learning Centre, many walking 2-3 hours each way to benefit from this free education. Soon the Centre will be able to accommodate more students due to an expansion that is underway.

The Learning Centre welcomes visitors to volunteer their time and skills throughout the year. INSPIRE!africa volunteers taught at the Learning Centre in July, 2008. During our visit, we asked the students to answer the following 2 questions:

Why is learning English important to me?
How has the Learning Centre helped me?

You can see by reading their responses that the students believe that learning English is the key to opening up opportunities for creating a better future.

“Learning English is very important to me because first, English is spoken by many people, everywhere they use English. Second, to learn it is to develop your intelligence because you know a lot of things from abroad, with English you get different friends, you know what is going on all over the world using radio, reading newspapers and watching TV.” *Eric – 24 years*

“We have some computers with internet access in our Learning Centre which is very important to me.” *Joseph – 32 years*