

INSPIRE!africa 2024 Year in Review

Projects we supported in 2024

Below is a summary of projects we supported in 2024. Please refer to [INSPIRE!africa website](#) for more detailed descriptions of the projects. These projects are supported in partnership with our Rwanda partner organization, Survivors Fund (SURF). We have partnered with SURF since our inception and continue to work with them because they understand the needs of Rwanda's survivors and continue to evolve their programs to meet their changing needs.

Vocational Training Program

Many youths who finish secondary school and do not get a government scholarship to attend university are left with no choice but to stay at home and help with farming or other manual work. The vocational training program provides skills training to such youth to give them a chance of a better future while filling the skills gap. Many industries face shortages of skilled labor. Vocational training helps close this gap by aligning training programs with market needs. This benefits not only the individuals but also the local economy. Some of the training that was provided included; barista, culinary arts, hair dressing, and auto mechanics.

- 15 second generation survivors received support for vocational training. Of those 10 survivors obtained employment after completion.
- The cost of attending a vocational training program is only \$650 USD including travel to school and school materials.



- *Diane and Magnifique are the young ladies supported by INSPIRE!africa to attend vocational training in hairdressing. They have learned a lot during the vocational training and utilized it to get jobs after graduation.*

“I am very happy of completing one year of the vocational training. Before attending, I was jobless after completing high school. My life was in danger since my mother could not afford to pay for university to enable me get a well paid job. I thank SURF for choosing me to attend this training where now I am very employed and get paid on monthly basis. I am able to help my family and myself”

Helpline

The legal and counselling Helpline was established in August 2013 to provide support for young survivors of the genocide and related vulnerable young persons with legal and mental health challenges, regardless of their location in Rwanda. Funding for the Helpline has been contributed principally by INSPIRE!africa.

By providing one of the only free and accessible legal and counselling support services countrywide, the Helpline fills a necessary gap in support for vulnerable young people with outstanding legal disputes or suffering from trauma. The service helps those who are unable to

afford to take their legal cases to court or who lack the confidence or ability to find someone to talk to about a mental health issue.

The Helpline was launched with the intention of primarily providing telephone-based support. However due to demand, the Helpline has become an all-encompassing legal and counseling support service including outreach visits to schools and universities to raise awareness of legal rights, as well as the services available through the Helpline, to young people across Rwanda.

- From January to September 2024, 662 calls were received by the Helpline. Individuals were seeking assistance with issues related to land disputes, family conflict, civil and criminal issues
- 80% of the legal cases were resolved
- 544 Counselling cases were received. Issues addressed included PTSD, depression, anxiety and stress



- *“I am very grateful for the support of legal issues related to our land we had in my family. Our land was taken and given to other people when we were very young. After the genocide we were taken by different families and not living together, as a result we had no one to follow up on our legal cases. In 2000 we started claiming our land rights but we failed many times. Later we heard about Helpline on the radio and I called the Helpline, then I met with Lawyer Damascene to discuss the issue.*

He helped us a lot through meeting with local leaders and the district Mayor. In January 2024 the case was successfully resolved and the land value is around (\$ 30,000 USD)” - HABANABAKIZE Elio (31 years old) and his five brothers and 1 sister

Entrepreneurship Loans

Supporting local entrepreneurs and small businesses is crucial for economic growth. Survivors Fund (SURF) works with AERG, a survivors youth association to provide training in entrepreneurship and business start-ups. After the training, the youth develop their business plans and are supported to access finance to implement their business ideas. INSPIRE!africa contributes to the business loan fund. SURF has worked with micro finance institutions in Rwanda to provide small loans to youth with good business plans using a loan guarantee fund.

- In 2024, 15 entrepreneurs were supported with a loan from the program.
- Value of businesses created: \$19,000 USD
- *“After completing my university, I looked for jobs for two more years, but I could not find one as the job market is very competitive, and I have started developing depression due to*



always thinking about my life and how I will survive. SURF supported me through entrepreneurship training and later I got a loan without collateral security to start my business of selling charcoal in my community. Today my business is progressing very well and I am able to get the basic needs without depending on other people. I am very grateful and thank you for supporting me.” - Jacqueline

Housing Renovations

Having accommodation or a decent place to stay means dignity and stability. Homes provided in the immediate aftermath of the Genocide are now in disrepair with many survivors unable to afford renovations.

- 2 families benefitted from renovations to their homes in 2024



“I thank SURF very much for helping us renovate these houses. After Genocide, most of the houses were built quickly to meet the emergency and were not strong enough to last for many years. Now those houses have become very old and are about to fall. This is why SURF is helping within their means to renovate one by one and we hope that all houses will be renovated” -

Uwimana, community leader

Solar Lights

Solar lights are powered by small solar panels and are provided to households in rural areas where electricity is limited or nonexistent. Solar lights come with a USB telephone charging accessory.



- 60 families received solar lights in 2024

“I want to express my happiness after receiving this solar light. I am among the other people living in the remote area where accessing electricity is not easy, and there is no plan near future to get it. We used to go to bed very early in the evening as we don’t have something to help us lighting our house and, children could not do their homework evening hours, but this solar light will change our lives, we used to pay a lot of money for mobile

phone charging, buying petrol for lighting the house, but all the money we used to pay I will save them and buy something else, and in the future to start small businesses generating income.”

Livestock

Based on discussions with SURF and Solace, our other Rwandan partner, we have decided not to continue purchasing livestock. While the idea of giving a pig or chicken to someone in Rwanda is novel, in short, our partner organizations have told us it is getting harder for them to be accountable for the livestock donations. Accountability for your donations is extremely important to us. In the place of livestock, and based on the recommendation of our partner SURF, we have added energy saving stoves to our donation list. These innovative stoves will provide a sustainable solution to food preparation for the poor living in rural areas.

Fundraising Activities

18th Annual Fundraiser – building on the success of the 2023 Fundraiser, we hosted our second Rwandan Tea and Coffee House, on November 16, 2024 at the Scarboro Community Centre. We were so pleased to see over 70 friends and supporters come out to the event. Two inspiring young members of the Rwandan community in Calgary, David Munyezamu and Josue Impano, provided their perspectives of Rwanda and the impact of the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi on their lives. Mark Cassano provided music, Christine Karebwayire provided her famous Rwandan tea and Rwandan coffee was brewed. In addition, a video from Sam Munderere, the Chief Executive of SURF, was featured providing updates on the Helpline and the Entrepreneurship programs that INSPIRE!africa funds.

We were able to have an African market once again with items purchased from the Tujumbere Women's cooperative by our friends who visited Rwanda in 2024.

We were so pleased to raise \$50,000.

Board Updates

- The Board continues to receive regular updates from our partner SURF about the projects INSPIRE!africa is supporting. With input from SURF, we continue to adjust the areas for our support recognizing that the needs and issues of survivors change as economic and health needs change.
- INSPIRE!africa was the recipient of a \$136,000 bequeath from a supporter who passed away last year. This generous donation will be allocated to our agreed upon projects over 3 years 2023, 2024 and 2025. This means approximately \$45,000 will be added to our fundraising efforts in these years.
- The Board continues to review the ways donors can contribute to the INSPIRE!africa Foundation to ensure that we are up to date with the various donation platforms, and are taking advantage of matching funds and new ways to donate. Currently donors can donate in the following ways: directly by cheque or via EFT, through Canada Helps, Paypal Giving

Fund and Facebook Fundraisers. The website includes links and descriptions of the ways donors can make a contribution.

- The Board notes that 2024 marks the 30th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

In a year where resources were tight for so many people, we are very grateful for our loyal and new supporters who enabled INSPIRE!africa to achieve these results.

2024: Link to financial report