

INSPIRE!africa 2025 Year in Review

Projects Supported in 2025

Below is a summary of projects we supported in 2025. We support these projects in partnership with Survivors Fund (SURF) in Rwanda. We have partnered with SURF since our inception and continue to work with them because they understand the needs of Rwanda's survivors, they continue to evolve their programs to meet the changing needs and they are accountable.

Vocational Training Program

The Vocational Training program is about empowering youth and focuses on youth who have grown up in poverty and lack the opportunity to pursue higher education or stable employment. We have chosen to target our support to youth who were born of rape during the genocide as they live with unique emotional challenges and stigma.

This year, 17 youth received training in barista skills, culinary arts, hairdressing, tailoring and auto mechanics. Of these 17, 11 have secured employment, and the other 6 have started their own small businesses. Thanks to our donations, these youth not only have employable skills and the ability to support their families but participation in these courses provided them with emotional healing, community belonging, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Helpline

INSPIRE!africa has been supporting the legal and counselling Helpline since it started as a pilot project 14 years ago. We continue to support it because we have seen how it is a lifeline for many. The Helpline is free, confidential, and offers compassionate support to anyone in Rwanda. It is especially beneficial to those in remote areas who cannot easily access professional services.

This year 157 people called the Helpline seeking legal assistance. In addition to providing legal assistance, the Helpline also provides trauma and mental health counselling. Decades after the genocide, many survivors, including second-generation survivors, still face emotional wounds and unresolved grief which affects their wellbeing. 725 people called the Helpline for mental health counselling this year. The success rate for resolving these cases is about 90%.

Entrepreneurship Loans Program

Many young survivors have dreams and ideas but lack access to capital or business skills to bring them into reality. INSPIRE!africa donations provide entrepreneurship training and small business loans to help youth turn their ideas into sustainable livelihoods. Before receiving a business loan, participants must complete a comprehensive entrepreneurship training program, so they are well-prepared to manage and grow their enterprises.

This year, 10 young entrepreneurs were supported by INSPIRE!africa funding, 13 jobs were created and 30 dependents benefitted.

Housing Renovations

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

This year we supported the renovation of one home that was on the verge of collapse. Now the widow living in the home with her 2 dependents have a safe and comfortable place to live and a renewed sense of dignity.

Solar Lights and Energy Efficient Stoves

Solar lights are powered by small solar panels and come with a USB telephone charging accessory as well as insect repellent capabilities. These lights provide households in rural areas where electricity is limited or nonexistent with a greater sense of security, and more study time for school children. Energy efficient stoves mean that families can live in a smoke-free home, spending less of their limited income on charcoal and less time waiting for food to be cooked.

As of November, 60 families had received a solar light and an energy efficient stove, and many of these were distributed directly to the recipients by our Rwanda trip volunteers. More families will be receiving lights and stoves before year end.

Fundraising Activities

19th Annual Fundraiser

Building on the success of the 2023 and 2024 fundraisers, on November 15, we hosted our third Coffee House Fundraiser at the Scarboro Community Centre.

The volunteer participants on our spring Rwanda trip made a presentation about the projects they visited and explained how our donations have been put to work. Karen Anderson sang and entertained us with her acoustic guitar, Christine Karebwayire provided her famous Rwandan tea and Rwandan coffee was served. In addition, a video from Sam Munderere, Chief Executive of SURF, was featured providing updates on the impacts of our donations. Finally, we had an African market once again with items purchased from the Tujumbere Women's Cooperative during our spring trip to Rwanda.

The total from fundraising efforts this year was \$64,000. This included the \$4,000 we received in advance of the spring trip for solar lights and stoves. With the final installment of the bequeath we received in 2023 (\$46,000), our fundraising total for 2025 was \$110,000. For more information on the bequeath, see below.

Board Updates

- In May, 7 volunteers joined 2 Board members on a 2-week trip to Rwanda. During the trip participants toured the country of Rwanda, visited many of the projects we support, build

relationships with many genocide survivors and taught English to survivors at Solace Guest House.

- 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.
- In 2023, INSPIRE!africa received a \$136,000 bequeath from a supporter who had passed away. It was agreed with SURF that this money would be allocated over 3 years. The final installment of \$46,000 from this bequeath was added to this year's fundraising efforts.
- 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 directly by cheque or EFT, through Canada Helps, Paypal Giving Fund and Facebook Fundraisers. The website includes links and descriptions of the ways donors can contribute.
- The Board notes that 2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Numerous INSPIRE!africa supporters attended the commemoration event sponsored by the Rwanda community and Jae Cowie, our Treasurer provided remarks on our behalf during this event.
- We continue to be proud to say that 100% of the money we receive in donations goes directly to support survivors in Rwanda. None of it is used for our administration, as those costs, which are minimal, are paid from a separate funding source.

Our final words come from our partner Survivors Fund (SURF);

“Thanks to INSPIRE!africa’s continued generosity and trust, these programs have transformed the lives of survivors, restoring confidence, safety, and purpose where it was once lost. On behalf of Rwanda’s survivors, thank you for your compassion and steadfast commitment to rebuilding lives and inspiring brighter futures.”

2025: Link to financial report