

Generation RISE



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

www.generationrise.org

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INTRODUCTION

A message from our Executive Director

From my team at Generation Rise, our school partners, and incredible supporters, I am so grateful to have witnessed the extraordinary progress of so many girls and parents during 2022. Over the course of the year, we focused on empowering girls and creating opportunities for them to pursue high education, equipping them with the skills and tools to overcome structural and cultural barriers, break the poverty cycle, and become changemakers in their communities.

This report highlights our contributions to increasing the representation of girls in higher (i.e., tertiary) education as well as in entrepreneurship. We are humbled to see girls working hard, performing well and winning government-sponsored scholarships, but at the same time, we at Generation Rise know more support is needed to ensure that all girls - especially the most vulnerable - have equal access to opportunities and that their hard work does not end in vain. Given the systemic challenges faced by historically marginalized groups, our future efforts will focus on advocating for effective and sustainable ways to improve girls' access to education as well as a renewed interest in addressing barriers to higher education. In addition to our core program, *Her Voice Matters*, which empowers girls to aspire and achieve their dreams, we plan to launch an innovative scholarship program to award our brightest students with a stipend to purchase required materials and equipment for university - a common barrier for marginalized girls wishing to pursue higher education. The scholarships will also include mentorship and career guidance to support them as they navigate this new phase of life.

A special thank you to the Segal Family Foundation, World Connect and Global Giving for their continued support, as well as our incredible supporters, friends, and families who have been with us on this journey. We could not do this without you.

Solange Impanoyiamana

Executive Director, Generation Rise



RESILIENCE AND JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

Towards higher education



Through our core program, *Her Voice Matters*, girls received leadership training and mentorship, enabling them to recognize their power and ability to make their dreams come true. Despite the great progress Rwanda has made in advancing gender equality and access to education for girls, negative social and cultural norms remain the biggest threat to girls fully enjoying their rights and being active members of their communities.

Our program is designed to address this educational gap as well as destructive norms, to ensure progress can really be made. Monthly workshops coupled with mentorship allowed 120 girls to learn, discuss and reflect on their goals and paths to realize them. Our trainings provided space for them to not only acquire new skills and knowledge, but also to analyze how their leanings can translate to their day-to-day lives. For instance, after learning about power dynamics, the girls realized that they have power within themselves, and therefore, no one can hold them back from dreaming and achieving their ambitions. During the year, their trainings focused on leadership, gender and power dynamics, sexual reproductive health and rights, effective communication, goal setting and seeking out opportunities.

In addition to workshops, the girls were mentored by volunteer teachers trained by Generation Rise staff during weekly reading sessions. The sessions took place in safe spaces established at each partnering school. The girls appreciated having time to interact with their teachers and the support and guidance they received throughout the whole year.

"Before joining Generation Rise, I did not feel comfortable approaching any of my teachers, but now we have time to interact and discuss the challenges we are facing and how we can overcome them. I no longer see them as only teachers, they are also my advisors."

Key results

Our long-term school partner, Gahanga, considers 2022 the best academic year in its history. For the first time, all 55 Senior Six students passed the national exams - the biggest milestone of the year. Generation Rise started working with Gahanga High School in 2018 and ever since, we have been teaming up to achieve this major milestone. While this is undeniably a big achievement, ever since Generation Rise formed a partnership with Gahanga, we could see how much the school's leadership was committed to working together to support girls and improve the education system. It took a lot of effort and hard work from the school, parents, stakeholders (like Generation Rise) and the community at-large, but this testimony shows that despite the challenges under-resourced schools face, when students, and especially girls, are supported to overcome their challenges, the gender gap in public education will be addressed.

Does it get better than this! On top of the above achievement, Her Voice Matters participant, Josée Ayinkamiye, scored the highest marks - 60 out of 60 aggregation - and is the best performer at her school. Josée follows two other Her Voice Matters graduates, Louise (class of 2020) and Ruth (class of 2021) who were also the best performers of their schools and received government scholarships. Below Josée's shares the story of her big achievement and how Generation Rise supported her to get there.

A brighter future



My name is Ayinkamiye Marie Josée. I was born in 2001 and have both parents. I'm the youngest of eight children and live in Kicukiro district, Gahanga sector, Mulinja cell in the suburbs of Kigali. I completed my primary level in 2015 and secondary level in 2022 at a public school in the semi-urban, G.S. Gahangal.

As a young girl from a family with limited resources in a simple community, I experienced common challenges that hinder many girls during their education. For instance, before going to school or doing revisions, I had to do house chores, like fetching water and firewood, which left me with limited time to focus on my studies or even read a book. There were many barriers to my education, like having limited school materials, high school fees, and little time for revisions.

In 2021, when I was in S5, I was selected to attend Generation Rise's Her Voice Matters program at our school, I was glad to be part of the program mainly because of the support and trainings that were offered to us. It boosted my desire to solely focus on my studies and aim for excellence. The sessions were more than just words spoken, they were raw and full of inspiring personal experiences from both my peers but also the leaders such as Enatha Mukantwari, who eventually became my role model. I was so inspired by Enatha's story, which she shared with us during our trainings, as well as the stories of Her Voice Matters graduates like Louise and Ruth who showed me what hard work can accomplish. I told myself, "If Louise and Ruth could do it, I too can." Feeling supported and determined than ever because of Generation Rise, I felt empowered to study to the last level and ultimately earned the top position at our school on 60/60 aggregates. Now I feel confident pursuing my dream to become a lawyer and contribute to the development and well-being of my community.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

An enabling environment for girls' empowerment

In our society, a patriarchal system is all we know. It would be nearly impossible to challenge that system if we only focused on young girls and boys. The greatest learning of the past couple years was that if we want to see more girls overcome negative social and gender norms, we need to get parents and the community at-large on board too. They must also understand the importance of closing gender gaps as well as their role in making this dream become the reality.

This year, Generation Rise conducted a training of trainers (ToT) with 40 parents. They were trained to use existing community-based structures such as an evening community forum for parents (*umuganda*) to facilitate dialogue on the importance of supporting girls' education and positive parenting, whereby each parent pledges to treat both girls and boys equally. These parents also acquired knowledge on gender-based violence (GBV) laws and existing protection mechanisms so they can effectively support and advocate for their children and communities. During the ToT, five representatives were elected to help coordinate and plan future outreach events in their communities.

Honored to serve my community

I am happy to have this opportunity to learn how to support my daughters and educate my fellow parents in my community. Even before participating in this workshop, I used to talk about how Generation Rise helped my family a lot. Since my daughter, Claire, joined the organization, I've noticed my relationship with her improve. She is more comfortable talking to me and sharing what she is going through. I was so surprised to learn about all the struggles and challenges girls face while attending school, especially adolescent girls who come from poor families. We now talk a lot and I am happy that I learned how to be there and stand up for my daughter whenever she needs my support.

- Genevieve, elected parent representative



Partnerships, learnings and collaboration

Generation Rise was selected with five other organizations and social enterprises - Empower Rwanda, Rwanda Women's Network, Resonate, Impanuro Girls Initiative and Kosmetivo- to participate in *Tech2empower Rwanda Impact Challenge* organized by Wake, a women's



alliance for knowledge exchange. The challenge was 30 days of in-person and virtual learnings, work and exchange with four advisors who are passionate about and committed to supporting communities around the world. During our sessions we focused on ways to improve how we communicate Generation Rise's impact using various tools.

The challenge provided a great learning opportunity as well as platform to share and learn more about what our fellow community leaders are doing and how we can collaborate to serve young girls and women in our respective communities. We cherish collaboration at Generation Rise and are grateful for moments like this that remind us we are not alone on this journey.

Special thanks to our amazing advisors, Nathalie, Cecile, Aekta and Sowmya who took time to learn about our work and joined us on this journey!

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS NETWORK

Generation Rise is one of the founding members of Young women-led organizations. The network is funded by Kvinna till Kvinna and its main objective is to increase the technical knowledge of its members and sponsor joint initiatives to improve the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of youth in rural areas. Generation Rise has attended several workshops hosted by the network, which allowed us to acquire deeper knowledge on SRHR and the skills and strategies to carry out effective advocacy.



GROWING OUR TEAM

We hired a Youth Engagement Facilitator!

Our team welcomed Constantine Uwiringiyimana (third from the left in photo) as our new Youth Engagement Facilitator.



A graduate of Her Voice Matters, Constantine is deeply committed to empowering her fellow youth in the community.

Join us in welcoming her to her new role!

Contact Information

For more information about Generation Rise, our current programs, volunteer and internship opportunities, or how to donate, check out our website www.generationrise.org or contact us directly at:

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*On behalf of the entire team at Generation Rise, thank you
and happy new year!*