

Kigali, April 1st 2020.

"Now is the time not for fear but for courage, not for despair but for hope, time to stand together like one beloved family, time to stay connected and share our resources with joy"

Update and a request from the Revd Philbert Kalisa

As I've been watching the news, I know that everyone is equally shaken and afraid of Coronavirus, regardless their circumstances or country. This is a universal pandemic disease. At this difficult time, I am thinking of you, and all of our friends around the world who are suffering. I know that citizens of rich countries where health care is advanced, are suffering and dying the same way that poor countries are. As a result, therefore we strengthen our unity, and encourage and support one another because we are one beloved community.

As a pastor and founder of REACH, I have been praying and sharing encouragement to give hope to the thousands of REACH members across Rwanda, who I have been supporting for over a decade. Still, I struggle like anybody else to understand what to do with this disease and how lives have and will be lost, I often feel overwhelmed, powerless and have few words to say. At this time, I ask the question, what can I and we do in faithful service to our community? REACH communities are working to provide support for those who live on the margins in Rwanda, those who have lost their daily means and now cannot feed their families.

As you are a friend of REACH, I am asking for your help and partnership to feed local families in Kigali at this difficult time. Your support will make sure that families can regard the law and stay at home, and prevent the spread of disease. REACH is an organisation that works for unity, but we cannot talk about peace when people have no food. Without justice there is no peace. Without food, no one will stay home if their children are starving.

The situation in RWANDA

In Rwanda everything is closed but basic food stores and pharmacies. Schools, churches, shops, hotels, restaurants, businesses, public services and transportation are all closed. There are no flights in and out of Rwanda, the borders are closed, no one is allowed to go from one district to another, except those who sell food. Apart from buying food or collecting water, no one is allowed to move from their home. Children are at home, often in a very small space; parents are at home helpless to meet needs and there is no work to be found.

As I am writing this, Rwanda has 70 confirmed cases of Coronavirus and over 1,000 people are in quarantine while being tested for Coronavirus. As a result, many, many people have lost their jobs and businesses. A large percentage of the population live hand to mouth (casual laborers,) earning each day what they need to live.

From moto drivers (Kigali has over 30,000 motorbike taxi drivers who have lost their livelihood) to so many people in the basic service industry, all work is stopped, many families are now left with no food, money or other basic needs such as soap to wash and fight the disease.

Hospitals are under resourced, many people in need cannot get to hospitals easily because public transportation has been suspended, and no food is provided to hospital patients. Families, who would otherwise provide food for their ill family members cannot afford it or cannot reach them.

There is no official infrastructure to support vulnerable people. Institutions like churches and non-profits have started buying and distributing food as best as they can, but there are so many families in need, who have no food, especially those who live in Kigali and other towns, as they have no crops or a farm.

The situation at REACH

REACH Center for Unity and Peace (Kiberinka Cultural Center) was required to close under Covid- 19 government regulations. All 32 staff have gone home and are now jobless, they cannot feed their families or pay their bills. These staff members are like family to me and my heart feels the pain of not being able to provide. The loss of income for Kiberinka is a big challenge for REACH because almost 85% of our REACH operating budget was from the Kiberinka business and we continue to have ongoing expenses. There is no salary for anyone, including myself. Your prayers are needed at this difficult time.

As all physical movement and contact is now restricted in Rwanda, I have relied upon WhatsApp and other social media to send words of encouragement to hundreds of REACH communities. In this time of immense challenge and uncertainty, we remember and believe that now is the time not for fear but for courage, not for despair but for hope, time to stand together like one beloved family. This is the time to stay connected and share our love and our resources. We are taking that action here in Rwanda.

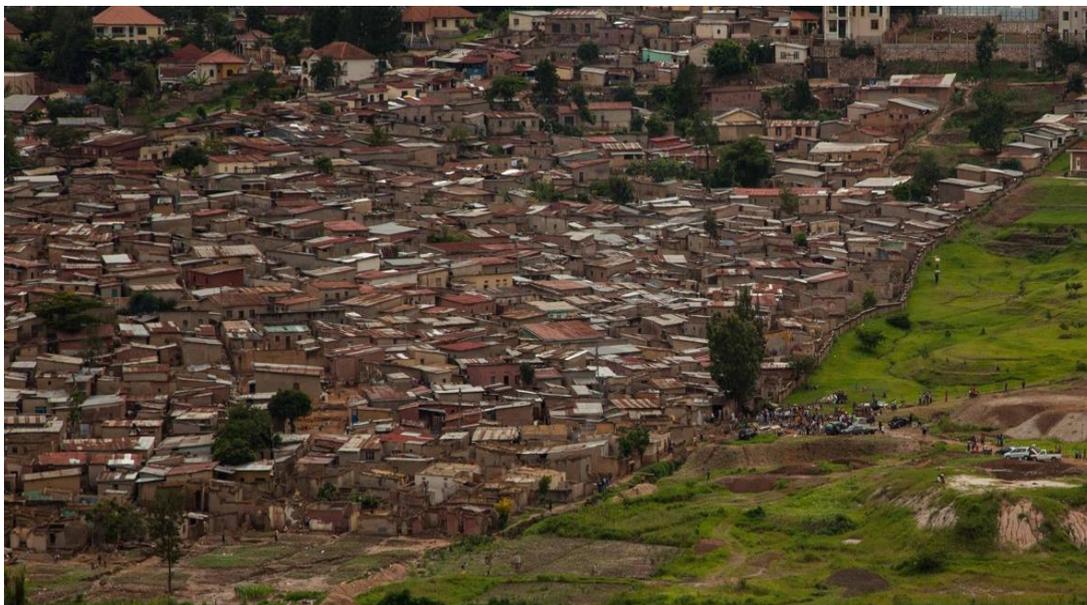
Local efforts for hope and Sharing: REACH Food for the Hungry

Over 100 REACH members have been sharing stories and praying for our families, communities, nation and the world. As we exchange news, we are aware that many families are struggling to get food because jobs have been lost and food prices are very high.

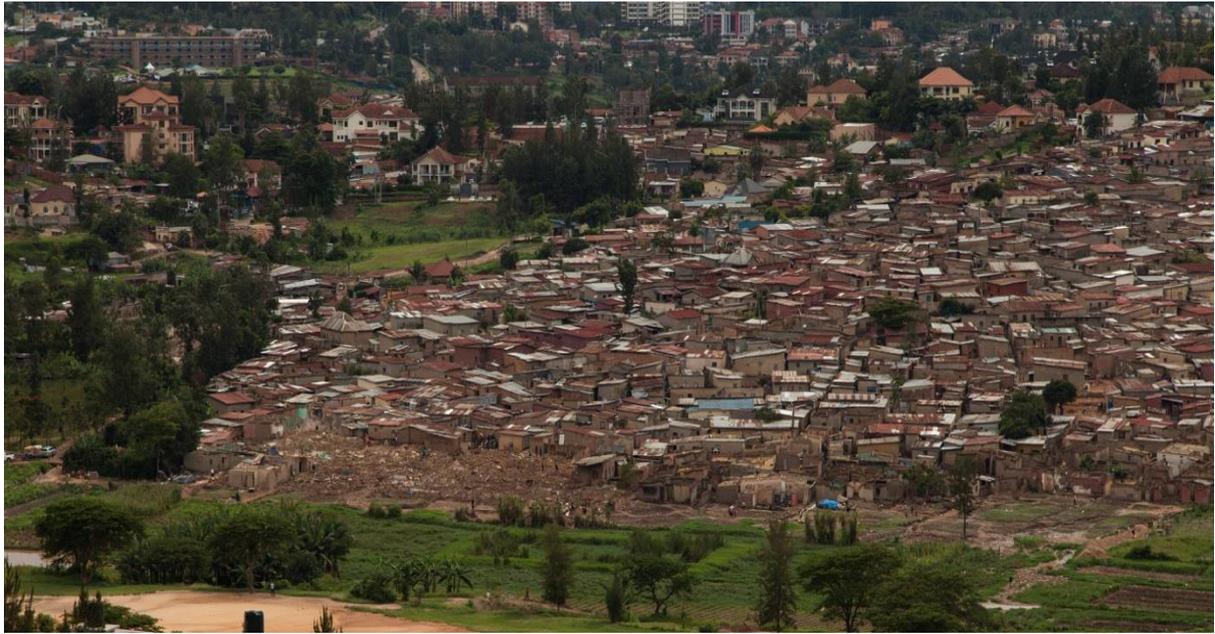
In Kigali itself, it is estimated that **there are 700,000 families now who have no food at all**. This is only the second week since jobs were closed down and people told to stay home and the fear and hunger are growing. Despite our own challenges, REACH members are bringing what they have and sharing money to buy food for families who are struggling.

The government is doing what they can to distribute food but is not able to provide for all. This is where we come in.

As I ask God what is it that I am called to and that REACH is called to do at this time, on my heart are some of the poorest communities in Kigali. These are families live just below the Kiberinka Cultural Center, in the valley we view directly across from the Kiberinka restaurant. Here, 1,450 families live in two dense urban villages called **Kangondo I and II**.



These are informal settlements with humble, makeshift buildings that house casual workers and their families. The villages were being demolished by developers, leaving people in even more desperation. The work has only stopped because of the coronavirus. Because of the shut-down of most businesses now, people living here cannot find any way to earn anything. These vulnerable people are now facing starvation. There are many children and without this food, the greatest threat to their life will be hunger, not the coronavirus.



With your help, REACH can make sure these families have food to stay alive, and to stay as healthy as possible. Once this support is available, according to local protocol, REACH will set up a committee composed of their leaders, and representatives of our local government authorities, local churches and REACH board members for the purchase and distribution of the food. It is our aim to feed 500 families for a period of 3 months if possible.

We believe that demonstrating love and compassion is our role at this time. Connection and cooperation with community and partners locally and globally is the heart of REACH work. We also believe that noble work for a good cause will strengthen the relationships and friendships of our community.

Please especially remember the people Rwanda in this month (April) where we will commemorate the 26th genocide anniversary. This is the time where we are remembering over 1million people brutally killed. Pray especially for survivors' families that the Lord would comfort them and bless all who work for unity and reconciliation. It is a time of re-living trauma and may be especially difficult if we are fearing for lives again.

As we move toward Easter this month as well, we desire to be present with life giving nutrition and the good news of God's love at a critical time. Thank you for your support for the people of Rwanda and the work of REACH through prayer and through generosity.

Yours truly.

Philbert

Budget

This budget is built using information taken from the advice of local government authorities. While it may not be possible for us to provide at this level, we have a commitment to stretch resources that come for this need as far as possible and to save as many lives as we can. We submit this for your reference. If we do not receive this level of funding, we assure you we will do all we can to wisely serve as many as possible with whatever resources come.

With \$170 we can feed a family of six people for one month and provide soap and sanitation necessities for less than \$6 per day.

Descriptions	Quantities	Cost in Francs	Cost in \$USD
Rice	25Kgs	30,000	32
Beans	30Kgs	27,000	29
Maize flour	20Kgs	16,800	18
Porridge	15Kgs	15,000	17
Milk	30 litters	13,500	15
Sugar	20Kgs	20,000	22
Cooking oil	10kgs	10,000	12
Soaps & hygiene to prevent disease	For hands, body, clothing and household	18,000	19
Salt	5kgs	5,000	6
Total		155,300 RwFrs (exch rate 913.5)	\$ 170 per month per family

Budget to feed 500 families in Kangondo I and II for three months.

Description	Monthly budget for 1 family of six people	Monthly budget for 500 families	Three months budget for 500 families
Costs	\$ 170.00	\$85,000.00	\$ 255,000.00
Reach administration expenses 5%	\$ 8.50	\$ 4,250.00	\$ 12,750.00
Total	\$178.50	\$ 89,250.00	\$ 267,750.00

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