

Rev. Philbert Kalisa
Reach Rwanda
Kigali, Rwanda

Dear Friends,

As you know, Rwanda, like other countries around the world has been trying to navigate the impact of Covid-19. Given the lack of infrastructure available, a quick and complete lockdown was necessary, bringing with it other challenges, financial, emotional, spiritual, mental and physical.

In that time, I have come to realise again that every human being is vulnerable in one way or another. ***Hunger is not only for food, but for connection, for relationship, for companionship, for healing and for love. We all share this hunger, and so I and the REACH community in Rwanda offer you our love and care, and with thankfulness, receive yours.***

Firstly, I want to say thank you! We are all so grateful to friends who donated money to feed the hungry Rwandans of the informal settlements, Kagondo I & II village, across the valley from Kiberinka Cultural Center. They were overwhelmed by your generosity, and we thank God that ***together over \$23,700 was raised.***

As a result, ***every one of the 780 people (200 families), has received vital food supplies,*** sustaining them whilst they have not been able to work, or leave their small homes. You have helped these families to keep going at this time of crisis.



The remaining balance of \$6,519 will be directed towards the families most in need at this time, with follow up food provision on May 15th.

I am delighted to share that Kiberinka staff helped in sorting food and packing for the Kagondo villages and they also received food for their own families. All families and



individuals were so thankful to you for your help, support and encouragement.

Rwanda Update - I am relieved to say that, because of the strictness of the lockdown, we have had no reported deaths from Covid-19 in Rwanda, and of the 259 cases, 124 have fully recovered. The government has trailed a partial, 2 week lift of the lockdown, with most people who have jobs, still working from home.

Markets are open with essential vendors, only 50% of registered traders. There are no motorcycles and bicycles, and limited public transport buses, vital for workers. Unnecessary movements are not allowed, including socializing, church services, weddings, bars, and sports activities are prohibited. Businesses must close by 7pm, with a curfew at 8pm. Borders continue to be shut and there is no movement between provinces.

Kiberinka, our Center also re-opened today with only five employees out of 28. No meetings are allowed to take place, no social activities, though the restaurant and hotel are open, but working very limited hours.

We continue to be concerned about families who are unable to support themselves because of ongoing lockdown restrictions at this time. If you have not had the chance to give and would like to, we and the communities we serve, would be grateful for your support. The need continues, as recovery begins.

Similarly, the work of REACH communities is on our minds and hearts. With limits on the use of Kiberinka Cultural Center, the business designed to support our REACH groups, we are seeking new ways to support our work, and be catalysts for unity and community at this difficult time. We appreciate your thoughts, and if you are able, your support.

As we think of friends around the world, we remember all who are struggling, and those who have lost people that they love. We pray for hope and strength as we move forward together.

With every blessing, Philbert