



School Development Program

Impact Report



INTRODUCTION

In 2014, The Wellspring Foundation for Education submitted a report to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade & Development, at the conclusion of a 25-month contribution agreement that saw Wellspring's School Development Program (SDP) extended to an entire Rwandan school district. The report brought together the findings of a comprehensive study that sought to assess the tangible impact being made in 48 Rwandan schools through the SDP¹. This Executive Summary gives a glimpse of some of the key findings of this study, and demonstrates the positive impact that Wellspring is having on these 48 Gasabo school communities.

The report shows that it is possible to significantly improve learning outcomes and participation for children in poor urban and rural communities by investing holistically into the key stakeholders – leaders, teachers, parents, and local government – responsible for education in their schools.

CONTEXT

In the first decade following the 1994 genocide, the Rwandan government and the international community understandably prioritized relief efforts, which included restoring basic education functions and infrastructure. Since 2000 Rwanda has emphasized, and made impressive gains, in increased access to education. However, these gains have not been matched by improvement in the relevance and quality of education within Rwandan schools, and many Rwandan children are not learning at an adequate level. Wellspring exists to see this reality change.

WELLSPRING'S SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

VISION: To see all Rwandan children receive a quality values-based education that will produce creative, principled, and capable leaders to serve within all sectors of society.

Wellspring invests in all key stakeholders within each school in order to show the long-term benefit of its whole school approach to improving education. This systematic approach makes the program distinctive, as does its emphasis on building local capacity, its mobilization of local resources and assets, its use of local teacher multipliers to extend training, its emphasis on classroom modeling and mentoring, the contextual relevance of the training materials, and its measurement tool for assessing teacher performance and improvement.

REACH: Wellspring's experienced team of Rwandan teacher trainers delivered the program with:

- 288 teacher multipliers
- 96 head teachers and deputies
- 15 sector education officers (SEOs)
- 144 Parent Teacher Committee (PTC) leaders
- And by extension, 1147 teachers and nearly 60,000 students.

1 Since the production of this report, new figures have confirmed that Wellspring's work now impacts over 82,000 students and over 1,600 teachers in 49 schools.



OUTCOMES

There is strong evidence that all 48 schools are improving learning outcomes & participation of children.

STUDENTS:

- 74.4% of children are transitioning from primary to secondary (previously 58.8%)
- Completion rates are up to 99.4%
- 81% of school leaders surveyed indicated a belief that improvements in exam results have been due to Wellspring's School Development Programme
- 50% of school leaders also believe that their school's dropout rates have reduced significantly as a direct result of this programme

SCHOOL LEADERS:

- The quality of school leadership provided by the 96 head teachers and deputies proved a significant factor in how well each school improved its learning environment
- 91% of leaders feel their ability to monitor & support positive quality education has improved
- Leaders' confidence has risen from 76% to 97% as a result of working with Wellspring
- The number of lesson observations performed by school leaders in their classrooms increased from zero prior to the SDP to 360 lesson observations over the last 12 months

TEACHERS:

- The most significant measurable progress was in teacher performance, with an average 25% improvement across 8 indicators
- Teachers' total classroom practice observation score improved from 41.5% to 66.6%
- Male teachers' overall improvement was from 37.7% to 63.4%
- Female teachers' was from 45.3% to 68.8%

PARENTS:

- Wellspring has been encouraged by greater engagement and participation from the parent communities as they seek to support positive quality education for their children
- High participation and attendance rates, the increased level of ownership and school visits, a greater understanding of the positive role parents and guardians have in improving education, growth in gender sensitivity, and the number of tangible initiatives supporting improved learning are signs that investment into parents is paying dividends for overall learning

MOVING FORWARD

The partnership between DFATD and Wellspring has made a lasting difference that will continue for years to come. The achievements of the SDP in Gasabo Schools have already attracted interest at a national level. Wellspring has been invited to have significant input into developing a new competency-based national curriculum, due in part to expertise on values integration and in-service teacher training. Wellspring is also helping establish policies for teacher development and educational leadership, as well as considering partnership opportunities in neighboring countries such as Burundi and Congo.

Wellspring looks forward to building on the success of the SDP for greater impact in Rwanda and the Central & Eastern African region.



Mbandazi Primary School

21 Teachers & 1678 Students

Prior to Wellspring's involvement, only one Primary 6 student each year passed the national exams and moved on to secondary school. In 2013, after working with Wellspring, all but three students passed and transitioned to secondary school!

The relationship between parents and teachers has changed dramatically since Wellspring began working with them, equipping them to work together for the good of the children. Recently, after the headmistress' request for a soccer field on the school property was repeatedly ignored, teachers decided to invite parents to help them build the field themselves. 800 parents showed up to help! Now, they not only have a beautiful soccer field, but parents, teachers & students are working together to expand the school building.

Bweramvura Primary School

22 Teachers & 1365 Students

Bweramvura means "lots of rain" and this K-6 rural school is situated on a steep hill northeast of Kigali. It is a steep drive and during the rainy season it is a muddy and difficult one. But the reward is a beautiful clear view of the green hills and valleys of Rwanda. Most students walk 10km daily to get to and from school. The Head Teacher has shown strong leadership. Overall teacher performance has improved from 45% to 62%, and more than 20 students who dropped-out have returned. Students welcomed them back to school with gifts of books, pens, and clothing.

Gisozi Group Scholaire

51 Teachers & 2663 Students

Gisozi is a K-12 urban school built into the side of a hill in a busy area of Kigali, near a lumber and wood market. Many of the students come from impoverished families. Primary section multipliers are eager to implement quality education, but some teachers remain hesitant to learn new skills and methods. There continues to be collaboration between school leaders and teachers. Teachers work together to make creative teaching aids and to plan lessons. Teachers say educating is no longer just a job, but a privilege. One teacher said, "I can't express how I feel about Wellspring's training. If you witness me teaching my class you'll understand. You will see my joy."

Extra Support for 23 Year Old Student

Sylvester was teaching a Primary 5 class of 10-11 year olds, but also had a 23 year old student in his class who had never had a chance to attend school. This student desired to finish primary school, but felt increasingly discouraged as his classmates grasped new concepts faster than he could – and so he quit school to look for work. Upon hearing this news, Sylvester knew he had to convince his student to stay in school, and so he asked him what he wanted to do in the future. The answer: he wanted to be a mechanic. So Sylvester committed to working with this student to ensure he passed Primary 6 and could pursue mechanics. Sylvester said it was his training from Wellspring that made him realize the potential of each child. This student went on to pass the national exam and become a mechanical apprentice, and often visits Sylvester to thank him for seeing his potential.