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***PROJECT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ASSIST YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
PROMOTION AND CHILDREN SHARING CENTER IN EASTERN REGION***

*Plan for Improving the Situation of Rwandese
Children in Difficult Circumstances*

Nov. 2005; Feb. 2007

Introduction Summary for ASSIST-RWANDA Organisation

ASSIST -RWANDA was founded in July 1999 as a result of a generalised outcry of many young Rwandans (especially girls and boys heading families), in the aftermath of the genocide war of 1994 and the subsequent economic situation. Its major tasks were to respond effectively to the needs of these young people, who had fallen victims of a situation that was not of their own making.

ASSIST -RWANDA programs involves (in general terms), attending to their needs by supporting and promoting their plans and aspirations, advising and counselling,. Within the background of fostering mutual respect and support, ASSSIST -RWANDA raises an awareness of the dangers of the prevalent hazards that the Rwandan youth face, with special consideration of the vulnerability of unsupported youth Vis a Vis the HIV/ AIDS pandemic.

ASSIST -RWANDA responds to the current Rwandan socio - economic situations that directly or indirectly affect the Rwandan youth. It takes into consideration the big numbers of young Rwandans who are deprived of opportunities to acquire school based skills because they are orphans, have profound or mild disabilities, and end up as dependants to distant relatives, or more often than not, are exploited in different ways by older people.

Morbidity and disability are characteristics of many Rwandans in deprived communities in which these young people live, where the level of health conditions and nutrition are low. These characteristics are apparently the causes and the consequences of poverty in the communities and are therefore the major origin of their difficulties. ASSIST-RWANDA has been prompted by over 10% - 12% of Rwandans who have disabilities (The Rwandan Republic, World Bank project, 1998, p.40-41); and over 90 % of its population that still live in poor rural areas and surviving on subsistence agriculture. This situation has given rise to over 65% of them who still live below the poverty line, and the Poor Rwandan economy that still has to service over 65% of its GNP that represents external debts (Rwanda E F A Plan: Version 021218, p. 9).

ASSIST -RWANDA is specifically concerned with the Plight of Rwandan Orphans. It was actually conceived, launched and remains the only Rwandan NGO largely run by orphans despite their numerous limitations. Though it is estimated that the 1994 genocide war could have left over 400 000 orphans and over 190 000 of them still live in child run homes; HIV/ AIDS continues to claim victims among these young vulnerable people, as it continues to create even more orphans with the death of parents. The Rwanda HIV/AIDS prevalence is currently estimated at 13%, compared to 1.3% in 1986 (Programme Nationale de Reduction de pauvreté 2002, P. 25).

ASSISST -Rwanda activities have also been prompted by a high number of young people who are unschooled. **Though about 72.2 % of young people account for the national primary school enrolment, over 27.8% (in 2000) do not go to school and the rate of dropping out at primary school age is still rising (over 17.5% in 2001, according to Rwanda E F A Plan 2002, p. 18). Whereas about 64.8 % of pupils are enrolled at the right age of Primary school level, only 16.2 % of the girls reach primary 6, as compared to 19.4% of the boys (Education for all Action plan for Rwanda, 2002, p. 15). Though Handicap International had put the number of Rwandans with Disabilities to about 600 000 in 1995,** the statistics concerning the disabled youth are not yet available and there are no provisions for them in *government* aided educational institutions. Only about 337 lucky young people go to special schools supported by missionaries.

Concerned that the youth are the future of Rwanda, and an alarming number are endangered, ASSIST -RWANDA is already working directly or indirectly with the following targeted categories of youth:

- Children who are unsupported (Orphans, especially those who lack the basic needs and are in charge of homes)
- Street Children locally known as “Mayibobo”. (Resulting from genocide of 1994, rural poverty push factors as well as HIV/AIDS)
- Children with disabilities and other Special Educational Needs
- School dropout due to different causes like children from poor families, rural urban migration.
- Disabled children

Mission and Objectives of the Organisation

ASSIST -RWANDA was started in order to help the young Rwandans in difficult circumstances to address numerous problems they face, owing to the situations seen above, and the following are some of its objectives.

- ✓ **Help young people in difficulties due to oppression and discriminatory experiences, victims of poverty and deprivation, as well as those who are unsupported notably orphans in difficulties to access skills and conditions of life and hope;**

- ✓ To instil self confidence and self reliance in the young vulnerable people, and awaken in them a spirit of self and community development;
- ✓ Provide health education services, guidance and counselling services to all the beneficiaries of ASSIST-Rwanda with specific attention to those who are at risk or experienced sexual and other traumatising abuses, as well as those who witnessed violence and conflicts, with specific attention to the demobilised young soldiers;
- ✓ Help young people with disabilities develop daily living skills and basic technology skills that would lead them towards social and functional integration (with sensitiveness to the most vulnerable especially girls);

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ASSIST-RWANDA ORGANISATION

ASSIST-RWANDA as an Organisation has registered a number of achievements since its formation in 1999. These achievements are hereby indicated bellow:

- ▶ First and foremost, ASSIST-RWANDA Organisation obtained LEGAL ENTITY on 18th July 2003 as stated by the Ministerial Decree No.063 of the day. The organisation has a head office in Kigali City, Kicukiro District near Alpha Palace hotel.
- ▶ The organisation managed to consolidate its activities in Kigali City and extended them to former Umutara Province (now Eastern Province) and Ruhengeri Province (now Northern Province) each with operational branch offices.
- ▶ ASSIST-RWANDA has helped 800 (eight hundred) child headed households (CHHs) in the area of employment provision. Each household is represented by one person (orphan) who is employed as office cleaner and messenger. These beneficiaries are paid monthly salaries and are found at *ORINFOR*, *ICTR (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda)*, *National Post Office*, *NHRC (National Human Rights Commission)*, *Immigration and Emigration Office*. Other areas where these beneficiaries worked are: *Prime Minister's Office (PRIMATURE)*, *Health Un Limited (BBC-Urunana)*, and *ITT (International Travel and Tours)*.
- ▶ The organisation has helped 300 (Three hundred) of its beneficiaries in Youth Employment Promotion Program (Cleaning Services Project) to get bank loans which helped them to start small income generating projects as a way of poverty reduction among CHHs. Moreover, these loans are used to sponsor their private courses in driving, mechanics and hair dressing. These loans were obtained from UCT banks, INTAMBWE Co-operative.

- ▶ The organisation trained 170 (one hundred seventy) beneficiaries in Cottage Industries. They were taught how to manufacture candles, shoe polish, bar and liquid soap. This project is situated at Nyagatare in the Eastern Province and was funded by the British Embassy in Rwanda.
- ▶ The above mentioned beneficiaries are involved in production units intended to generate income to sustain themselves and organisation's activities.
- ▶ The organisation established a Bee-Keeping Project at Nyagatare and Kahi in the Eastern Province. Like Cottage industries, this project is intended to uplift the living conditions of CHHs.
- ▶ Other projects that were established by ASSIST-RWANDA Organisation are Tailoring and Knitting. They were funded by Service Allemand de Développement-DED. The projects are training and income generating in nature. They are found at Nyagatare in the Eastern Province.
- ▶ The organisation acquired 7 acres of land from former Umutara Provincial authorities. The land is found at Nyagatare and is intended for the construction of ASSIST Youth Employment Promotion and Children Sharing Centre. The foundation stone was laid by the State Minister in the Ministry of Public Service, Skills development and Labour. Technical plan for the Centre is already made. The Centre will include among other things vocational skills training. Ref. The details above.
- ▶ ASSIST-RWANDA acquired a house from former Umutara Provincial authorities which was renovated by the organisation. It is situated at Nyagatare Provincial authorities and is currently used as Production Unit for cottage industries.
- ▶ Furthermore, ASSIST-RWANDA Organisation played a significant role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This was done by increasing awareness through workshops and Seminars. Both beneficiaries and staff were equipped with the basic tools that enabled them to effectively participate in the National campaign against the scourge. On 5th August 2005, the organisation obtained official document from CNLS permitting it to legally participate in this activity. A number of Anti-AIDS Clubs were formed by the organisation. Many beneficiaries had voluntary tests so that they can know their status.
- ▶ The organisation has offered counselling facilities to many people with various mental problems including our beneficiaries. This activity was normally conducted at our offices and sites. The beneficiaries regained self confidence, positive life styles and hope.
- ▶ The organisation also participates in Child Rights Advocacy. This is done through Seminars and media; organisation's cultural troupe plays a vital role in sensitising the public on child rights through music, dance and drama.

► Last but not least, the organisation has maintained good external relations with donor agencies, government and institutions. This made the organisation to be known and open its horizons.

PROJECT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF ASSIST YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION AND CHILDREN SHARING CENTER IN EASTERN REGION

The Mission:

The mission of ASSIST-RWANDA is constructing of a ***YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION AND CHILDREN SHARING CENTRE*** is mainly to help vulnerable, needy young people living in difficult circumstances with special emphasis on Child headed households in promoting entrepreneurship. They will be helped to have a spirit of creativity, self – confidence and commitment to work for success in life. Centre beneficiaries will be offered various services involving the following:

- The targeted group in the Centre will be taught basic and vocational skills; help them to acquire teamwork and organisational skills, so that they team up into strong and competitive income generating ventures. This includes Mechanics, Welding, Carpentry, Catering, Tailoring and Cottage industry (soap,candles, making) etc. These skills will enable the youth to get employment and even establish their own projects relevant to the skills obtained. The beneficiaries will be helped to design various project proposals, obtain funds for starting and implimenting them.
- Experience and analysis made by ASSIST-RWANDA personnel in the Eastern region that is to say Umutara, Kibungo,Kayonza,Gatsibo,Rwamagana, Bugesera and Kirehe Districts demonstrated that there are many young people who suffer from various degrees of psychological trauma; depending on the experiences they have gone through like war and forced early marriage. Hence guidance and counselling is one of major services that will be offered to the youth and children in the Centre, with the objective of building their self-confidence and harmonious relationship with one another and their communities. In addition to this, Centre beneficiaries will be offered recreational services in form of sports, music, dance and drama.
- Since ASSIST -RWANDA is committed to promotion of human rights, children and youth Centre, will be taught their basic rights (rights to education, to life and health, to shelter and protection etc...) This will be done in line with advocacy for the vulnerable and marginalized young people. This will be associated with judicial assistance.
- The Centre will also offer instructions on unity and reconciliation. The beneficiaries will be helped to do away with all forms of sectarian and ethnic tendencies that had

characterised the Rwandan society, and build a spirit of mutual benefits and support, that characterises the Rwandan youth peer culture, as a way forward towards self confidence and meaningful success in life. Here, special attention will be given to the young generation (children & youth who are the future leaders of our Nation).

- Not only will the Centre target children and youth in the area of unity and reconciliation, but the general public as it will be community based. Community leaders and elders will be sensitised on the values of unity and reconciliation by use of the philosophy of conflict resolution since many still harbour divisive ideologies some of which are genocidal in nature. To this extent the Centre will play a significant role in promoting the national policy of unity and reconciliation after the horrors that befell on our country in 1994 (war & genocide). Dialogue clubs will be established and operate in the Centre as instruments for creating environment of peace in our country. Moreover, these clubs will help in ironing out the divisions and sectarian tendencies that characterised Rwandan history and society.
- Since our Country is heavily affected by HIV/AIDS pandemic, the Centre will play a vital role in sensitising the public on how this scourge can be prevented. In this regard testing and counselling will be conducted. The centre will include a dispensary that will provide retro-viral drugs to those infected by the virus. The dispensary will also help in treating other simple medical problems.
- The Centre will also play a significant role in promoting the government policy of decentralisation. Various seminars and workshops on good governance, better service delivery, participatory democracy, sustainable development, poverty reduction and all relevant elements that can empower the basic community from its grass roots.
- As it's stated in modern terms that 'we live in the global village', the Centre will play a significant role in promoting ICT (Information Communication Technology). The accessibility to information will include among other things the Internet and library. Various books, news papers and magazines will be put in place. The world is developing very fast, hence we can't reasonably participate in this realm without enough information in and around it. In this regard, the Centre will give special attention to the young generation both at school age and in profession. In this way, the Centre will lead to an informed population not only in the Eastern Region, but the Country as such.
- The Centre will have the program of Environmental protection. As it's well known, the Eastern Province of Rwanda has some areas like Umutara which should have special attention in as far as environmental protection is concerned due to its prolonged droughtiness. People will be encouraged and helped to plant trees and prepare water reservoirs to help in irrigation, providing water for animals (cattle) and domestic use.

The Centre will also have a Meeting Hall where various workshops and seminars useful to children and youth will be conducted. These seminars will also address on gender equality, child protection and human rights .Other structures will include:Offices for Centre administrators, a Restaurant, Rooms for accommodation and recreational grounds for sports (foot ball, volley ball and net ball).add enviromenta and gender issues.)

Problem Statement:

- ✓ As stated in ASSIST-RWANDA's mission in proposing the construction of a Youth employment promotion and Children Sharing Center, there are many vulnerable children and youth orphans in Eastern Region who did not manage to go to school due to lack of school fees. Most of these orphans result from HIV/AIDS and 1994 war and genocide. ASSIST-RWANDA thought about constructing a Sharing Centre for these orphans so that they can be taught various skills that can enable them get employment, hence sustain themselves. These skills are mentioned in our mission statement.
- ✓ There is a high level unemployment especially among the youth in Rwanda, Eastern Region. Hence, vocational skills that will be taught to them will indeed reduce the level of unemployment. That is why this element was inserted in the name of the Center (Youth Employment Promotion).
- ✓ As you may be well aware, Eastern Region. is one of the areas in the country heavily affected with HIV/AIDS. The current rate of HIV infection is 8%, which is very high compared to other areas. As a result, ASSIST-RWANDA will use this Centre in conducting workshops and seminars in sensitizing people especially children and youth on HIV/AIDS and how it can be prevented. This will be associated with lessons on Reproductive Health. People will be encouraged to go for VCT, those found to be HIV positive will be offered counseling services and medical care available.
- ✓ It's also evident that Eastern Region. is behind in as far as ICT is concerned. As you are aware our world in moving fast in the field of information-communication technology. ASSIST was prompted by this need when involving ICT department in ASSIST Youth Employment promotion and Children Sharing Center.
- ✓ Last but not least, we can't end without mentioning that Sports and Recreation are necessary especially for children and youth. After realising that there are very few playgrounds in Eastern Region. especially at Umutara district where the Centre will be constructed, we saw it reasonable to include various playgrounds in the Centre to support sport and recreational activities.

The impact of the transformation CENTRE

As seen in our mission and problem statements, ASSIST Youth Employment Promotion and Children Sharing Centre will indeed have a positive impact not only on Eastern Region., but on the country as such. This can be viewed in the following points:

- Many youth in Eastern Region. will be trained in various vocational skills (mechanics, welding, carpentry, catering and tailoring).
- There will be a reduction in the level of unemployment among the youth of Eastern Region..
- The level of poverty among Eastern Region. will be reduced since they will be having skills which will enable them get employment, hence get financial income for self sustenance.
- There will be a reduction in HIV infection in Eastern Region. especially among the youth and children since they will have been sensitised on the HIV/AIDS infection and how it can be prevented through the seminars and workshops conducted at the Centre.
- There will be easy availability of counselling services in Eastern Region. since the Centre will supplement the existing ones.
- There will be reduction in STD (sexually transmitted diseases/infections) and premarital pregnancies in Eastern Region. due to lessons and workshops on Reproductive Health provided by the Centre.
- Youth in Eastern Region. will have easy access to both sports and recreational facilities provided by the Centre.
- Since the Centre will have the promotion of human rights and advocacy on its programmes, people especially children and youth will know their rights and obligations as citizens, hence live in peace and dignity.
- There will be a spirit of unity and reconciliation among the young generation of Umutara Province since this is one of the key elements on the Centre programmes.
- The youth and children will gain knowledge on ICT hence have access to advanced technology in communication and information since its on Centre programme.

Conclusion:

Considering the mission ASSIST-RWANDA has in constructing of a Youth Employment Promotion and Children Sharing Centre in Eastern Region. and the impact it will have on the area and the nation in general, we can assert that its construction is worthwhile. The idea has come at the most opportune time as we move our country into the vision 2020 when we expect the country to be significantly developed. We therefore, call upon you to support ASSIST-RWANDA organisation in this noble cause geared toward the helping vulnerable children and youth living in difficult circumstances.



*Laying foundation stone by Madam Angelina Muganza, minister of state in the ministry of public services, Skills development and Labour.
Accompanied by Secretary General in the ministry of Youth, culture and sports on 31/03/2005*

CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY BUDGET

TABLEAU RECAPITULATIF

No	LIBELLE	MONTANT
A.	Travaux préliminaire	4 300 000
B.	Salle Polyvalente	53 572 180
C.	Bureaux	15 529 976
D.	Logements (immeuble à étage)	116 372 384
E.	Restaurant et Cantine	25 603 590
F.	Bibliothèque	8 185 340
G.	Infirmière	12 035 750
H.	Salles de classe	34 162 472
I.	Bloc sanitaire de la salle polyvalente	8 997 090
J.	Bloc sanitaire pour la formation professionnelle	4 820 960
K.	Aménagement extérieur	27 280 000
	TOTAL GENERAL	310 859 742
		555.101,33USD or 444.084,00 €

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