

First year report from Rwanda on all groups which began meeting July 2025

The following is an overview of the trainings and resources all youth and children in this class of 20 empowerment groups received during their first year in the Zoe Empowers Rwanda program. There are 550 households with 1,679 orphaned and vulnerable youth and children in this cohort of groups.

DREAM TRAINING AND FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Training on Dreams (July 2025): Through the Dream Chart training provided by Zoe Empowers Rwanda, every head of household create a pictorial plan for achieving goals by illustrating their current struggles and future aspirations. The Dream Charts are hung on walls at their homes to serve as a daily reminder for the whole family of their goals and thus to provide motivation to continue working hard.

FOOD SECURITY - Every household successfully planted a kitchen garden, fruit trees, and other crops.

Training on Food Security and Nutrition (August 2025): Through this instruction, the youth learned how to secure food for their families and how to prepare balanced, nutritious diets. They were taught and encouraged to adhere to Zoe's food security standards which require establishing a permanent, sufficient, and safe food supply. Specifically, each household in the Rwanda program is expected to maintain a stock of cereals (maize, rice, sorghum), a plot of tubers (potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava, taro), a stock of legumes (beans, soybeans, groundnuts, dry peas), a kitchen or vegetable garden, fruit trees, and livestock. Nutrition standards focus on preparing balanced meals using diverse, locally available food items.

Demonstration on Kitchen Garden Planting (September 2025): In collaboration with Zoe staff, a local government agronomist facilitated a practical training and demonstration on planting kitchen gardens.

Seeds Distribution (October & November 2025): Zoe distributed essential vegetable seeds such as cabbage, carrot, and beetroot, to all participating households in October and in November provided all households with fruit seedlings for avocado, tree tomato, and papaya.



Training on Advanced Farming Methods (February 2026): In collaboration with the government agronomist, all groups were trained on advanced farming practices and techniques designed to maximize land productivity and increase yields so they could produce surplus for income. Zoe also supplied the groups with chemical fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, and tools (such as watering cans) to support group agricultural projects in addition to their household level activities.

INCOME GENERATION – Every head of household has started an income generating activity.

Training on Income Generating Activities (IGAs) (September 2025): Zoe youth received training on how to identify market opportunities, evaluate viability, launch and manage a successful small business.

Grants for Small Businesses (October 2025): Following IGA training, Zoe provided participants with initial grants to establish their small businesses. Using profits from these businesses, all groups established a group fund where members save money and apply for rotational loans. These loans help participants boost their existing businesses, launch new projects, and assist their siblings in starting income-generating ventures.

Training on Animal Husbandry (February 2026): In partnership with the local government veterinary officer, all groups were trained on how to raise and properly care for livestock. Keeping livestock improves nutrition and food security (including providing manure for gardens and crops) while also serving as a form of savings and a way to generate income. All households are encouraged to keep some kind of livestock.

Livestock Distribution (March 2026): Zoe provided a small livestock animal of choice (a pig, sheep, or goat) to every family. Families used their business profits to purchase additional livestock, including goats, pigs, rabbits, and chickens. The local veterinary staff supported the initiative by providing vaccines and vitamins for all livestock.



HEALTH, HYGIENE, AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Health Insurance Provision (October 2025): All youth and children were assisted and funds were provided to register and obtain Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI). Thanks to the profits from their small businesses, the youth are now able to independently pay medical insurance premiums for themselves and their families.

Training on Hygiene and Disease Prevention (November 2025): Facilitated by Zoe staff, participants were educated on diseases resulting from poor hygiene and how to prevent them. Topics covered the prevention of malaria, skin rashes, jiggers, intestinal worms, and diarrhea.



Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS Training (April 2026): To prevent HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unwanted pregnancies, Zoe collaborated with local health centers to deliver targeted training. After training, youth formed anti-AIDS clubs to spread awareness within their groups and to the broader community.

HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT, RIGHTS, AND EDUCATION

Household Management Training (February 2026): Through household management training participants learned how to properly care for family property, distribute household chores among children based on ability, cooperate to meet collective needs, share resources, and practice effective conflict resolution.

Trauma Healing (March 2026): Zoe delivered a training session on trauma healing, focusing on how participants can safely express and process emotional trauma. The youth gained a deep understanding of the roots of emotional trauma and acquired healthy coping and recovery mechanisms.

Child Rights Training (July 2026): In partnership with local authorities, Zoe organized a training session on child rights. A civil registration officer educated the youth on their legal rights within their families, the community, and under the government. All groups participated in this educational session.

Rights to Education (August 2025): A total of 955 children from these groups were assisted with school uniforms and essential educational materials, enabling them to attend primary and secondary school regularly. Additionally, Zoe is providing school fees for 12 participants who have been successfully reintegrated into secondary school within the Mwendo Sector.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTHENING

Through group prayers integrated into every meeting, Zoe youth have cultivated a strong faith in God. This spiritual practice helps them rebuild hope and confidence. Furthermore, these group prayers foster a profound sense of being loved by God, instilling a firm belief that He has a positive plan for their future and their families. The youth from this cohort of groups organized a community Christmas celebration.

Highlights of Anticipated Resource Distributions and Trainings for the Second Year

Housing and Sanitation Support: Families requiring house construction, home repairs, or toilet construction will be supported with building materials, including iron sheets, nails, windows, and doors.

Group Project Enhancements: All groups managing collective agriculture income-generating projects will receive additional farming inputs to boost and scale their farming projects.

Top-up Grants: All participants will receive top-up grants to expand their initial businesses. This is expected to drive higher profits, thereby strengthening their table banking funds and individual savings.

Continued Educational Support: School reintegration efforts, alongside the provision of school fees and materials, will continue into the second year at a 50% cost-share subsidized by Zoe.

Vocational Startup Kits: Youths participating in formal vocational training programs or local apprenticeships will be equipped with vocational startup kits upon completion for running their businesses.

Financial Literacy: In the second year, specialized training focusing on generating and interpreting financial income statements will be conducted. Youths will also gather according to their projects so that training can feature people successful in similar businesses who will share their experience and best practices.