





Vision

Promoting human dignity for all.



Mission

To help people in need by promoting their integral human development, inspired by evangelical charity.



Values

Hope, Dignity, Preferential option for the poor, Justice, Solidarity, Fraternal cooperation, Integrity and Communion.



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Foreword

Dear Stakeholders;
Dear Staff members;

At the beginning of this year 2024, Caritas Rwanda is delighted to present the report of the activities accomplished in 2023, thanks for your support and collaboration. This report consolidates the achievements of the diocesan Caritas, Caritas Rwanda, and the religious congregations involved in welfare and charitable activities across our country.

At the heart of the Church and the society, we serve together, guided by the values of solidarity, sharing, shared responsibility, participation, respect for the principle of subsidiarity and common objective. This is what Caritas is.

We thank you for your invaluable contribution, both technical and financial, towards the achievement of our mission and we encourage your continued support throughout the year 2024.

Digitally signed
By Caritas
Rwanda (Secretary General)
Date: 2024.03.06
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Father Oscar KAGIMBURA
Secretary General of Caritas Rwanda

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Introduction

This report is a compilation of achievements of Caritas Rwanda, 10 diocesan Caritas and those of the Catholic religious' congregations operating in the field of welfare and charitable activities, health and development. During the year 2023, as it is the same case for other past years since 2020, the interventions of Caritas Rwanda and its partners were guided by its 2020-2024 strategic plan. The various achievements are reported following the 8 specific objectives of that strategic plan, namely:

OS1	Capacity building for mobilization and resource management
OS2	Raise awareness on the identity and mission of Caritas
OS3	Improve the living conditions of vulnerable people
OS4	Reduce the impact of humanitarian crises on affected populations
OS5	Contribute to access and availability of affordable and quality preventive, promotional, curative, palliative and rehabilitation health services
OS6	Contribute to the country's efforts to slow down the galloping demographic growth by regulating births using NFP methods according to the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church
OS7	Improve the nutritional status of pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 6, with emphasis on the <i>1,000 days of possibility opportunities between pregnancy and the second birthday</i>
OS8	Increase the economic capacities of vulnerable people in the context of sustainable development

Achievements per specific objectives and underlying results

OS1. Capacity building for mobilization and resource management

I.1. Increased capacity for managers and staff

The staff of Caritas Rwanda and diocesan Caritas were trained in different areas of intervention of Caritas and according to the identified needs. For the good management of the institution, different meetings of the Board of Directors and the General Assembly were held.

I.2. Improved partnership with stakeholders

Mainly, various regular meetings with local or international partners were held. In addition, Caritas Rwanda paid statutory contributions to Caritas Interantionalis and Caritas Africa.

I.3. Improved financial mobilization and management capacities

There have been initiatives of income-generating activities for self-financing, including the acquisition of equipment and shares and the renovation of houses for rent. Dividends from

investment initiatives have started to flow into operations (case of RIM which gave dividends for the financial years 2021 and 2022).

I.4. Improved monitoring, evaluation and reporting capacities

During this year, there have been updates of monitoring and evaluation tools, mid-term and annual evaluation workshops of the operational plan, as well as initial and final evaluations of projects and programs. Annual financial audits were carried out.

OS2. Raising awareness on the identity and mission of Caritas

2.1. Ownership of the Caritas mission by pastoral staff

As part of raising awareness in the community to contribute more in caring for vulnerable people, community sensitization meetings on Caritas orientation and advocacy have reached 25,760 people including universities, primary and secondary school students, members of local and parish communities, as well as those of basic church communities.



Photo 1. Raising awareness on Caritas orientation, INES Ruhengeri, November 2023

Strategies used to achieve this outcome include:

- The organization of the World Day of the Poor, Caritas Day and Caritas Week in the parishes;
- Capacity building for 117,062 volunteers and staff from all dioceses throughout the year 2023;
- The coordination meeting between Caritas Rwanda and Diocesan Caritas for exchange of experiences and knowledge;
- Community awareness and mobilization through media including Kinyamateka, Radio Maria and Pacis TV;
- Raising awareness for schools and Universities;
- Inviting religious communities (their superiors) to participate in sharing/exchange meetings.

These visits and other means used contribute in raising awareness in the community about Caritas orientation for better self-care in communities. To achieve this, below is the list of activities carried out:

- Organizing awareness meetings in schools;
- Organizing training for members of parish committees and in schools;
- Supporting and participating in Caritas days;
- Organizing meetings during the highlights of the church;
- Visiting beneficiaries on the field, especially during special events;
- Raising awareness during the month of charity and mercy and collect aid;
- Contributing to advocacy for people in need;
- Sensitizing major seminarists on Caritas spirit and their role in raising awareness in the community as future Caritas chaplain priests at the parish level.

The above-mentioned activities have served to raise awareness in the community about taking care of their vulnerable people up to the school level without waiting for help from outside.

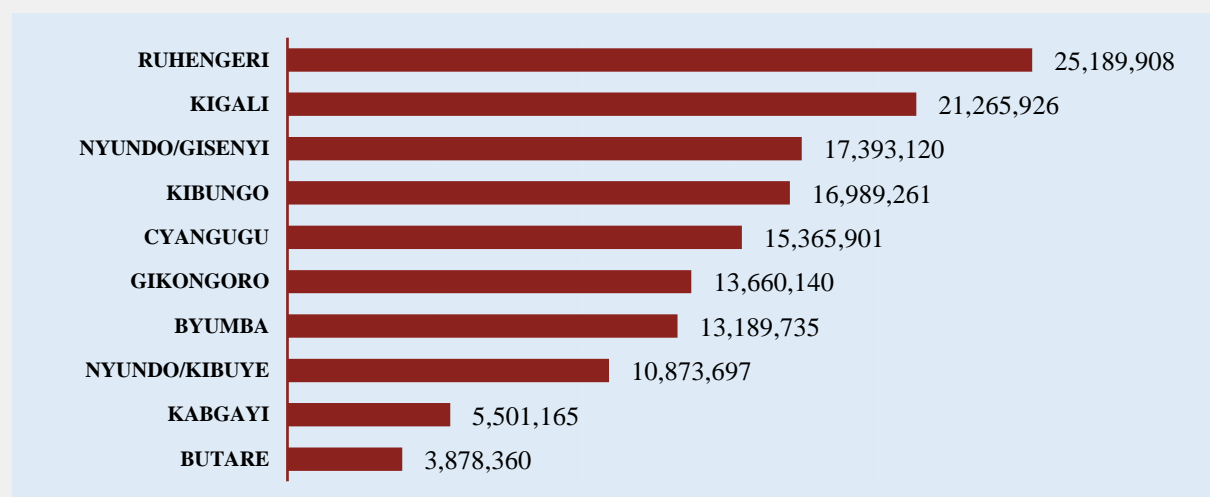
The collection in the highlights of the Church contributes to the assistance of their vulnerable people in a timely manner at the parish level and this facilitates mutual aid within the community. The diocesan Caritas have facilitated the activity of completing the structures of the parish Caritas and those of schools.

2.2. The community is committed to caring for vulnerable people

There have been advocacy activities in favor of vulnerable people, community awareness raising on the establishment of funds and making fundraising during the highlights of the Church and especially during the month of charity and mercy which takes place in August of each year, as decided by the General Assembly of Caritas Rwanda in 1997.

In total, 2,547 people including volunteers participated in the mobilization for the collection of the month of charity where we collected a sum of Frw 143,407,212 as well as other items that were organized within the dioceses.

Graphic 1: Collection during the charity month (in Frw)









This collection for charity and mercy month was made possible through to the generosity of Caritas partners, starting with Christians and other people of good will.

OS3. Improving the living conditions of vulnerable people

3.1. Vulnerable people are cared for.

The satisfaction of the primary needs of needy people is achieved on different activities carried out, including assisting the elderly; the schooling of vulnerable children, assisting single mothers, supervising street children, occasional assistance to the vulnerable, assisting the vulnerable with disabilities, assisting prisoners, and assisting the vulnerable to access housing.

	<p>Assisting elderly people</p> <p>376 people were assisted with a budget of Frw90,986,385 through full support by religious communities or occasional assistance by basic church communities in all dioceses (except Cyangugu and Nyundo/Kibuye).</p>
	<p>School enrolment for vulnerable children</p> <p>This assistance includes school fees, school materials, transportation fees and school monitoring. It covered 52,534 beneficiaries with a cost of Frw 3,485,080,271.</p>

	Assisting single mothers 3,143 people were assisted in all dioceses with a budget of Frw 85,749,570.
	Caring for street children 1,160 street children were cared for in the Archdiocese of Kigali, the Dioceses of Butare, Kibungo, Cyangugu and Gikongoro, with a budget of Frw83,684,054.
	Occasional assistance to vulnerable people 166,663 people benefited from various aid in all 10 diocesan Caritas with a budget of Frw 305,225,621.
	Assisting vulnerable people with disabilities 1,866 people were assisted with a budget of Frw 419,855,284 in all dioceses.
	Assisting prisoners 10,584 prisoners were assisted with a budget of Frw81,252,249.
	Assisting vulnerable people to afford housing and investment 5,691 people benefited from support for building and rehabilitating houses in all dioceses with a budget of Frw 203,913,67. In addition, 1,600 households (PAC and Graduation) assisted with a budget of Frw2,070,000,000 to undertake income-generating projects.

Success story

Advocacy for assistance to people with disabilities



Caritas advocacy efforts transformed the lives of people with disabilities. After receiving the wheelchair, UWINEZA Laurence testified:

“Before, I would face many challenges related to moving around my surroundings and especially concerning my daily activities. The wheelchair will become an extension of myself, allowing me to move comfortably and travel to various surroundings without restrictions. In addition, the wheelchair will have a positive impact on my overall well-being. By reducing tiredness and promoting better position, the wheelchair should improve my overall comfort and quality of life. In a nutshell, the wheelchair should have a transformative impact on my life as an amputated wife. It will allow me to participate in various activities and overcome physical barriers”.

Success story

Maniraguha Qeen, mother of ERIC Tuyishime, aged 8 years, supported by a wheelchair testifies

USAID Gikuriro Kuri Bose advocacy efforts have transformed the lives of many people with disabilities. Individuals who were previously marginalized and excluded have regained their independence and opportunities. They can now participate in education, employment and community activities, contributing to the social and economic growth of the country.

“The wheelchair will provide my child with a physical disability with increased mobility and independence. This will enable him to attend school regularly and participate in classroom activities, thereby supporting his educational development and social interactions with his classmates. Most importantly, the wheelchair will have a positive impact on my child’s emotional well-being. It should reduce feelings of frustration and dependency, allowing him to focus on his abilities and interests rather than his limits”.



3.2. Self-care behavior change

Raising awareness of specific groups (Caritas facilitators, parents of OVC -orphans and vulnerable children) and beneficiaries in general on self-care was carried out at the level of the Parishes and refugee camps of Mahama (Kibungo), Kiziba (Nyundo/Kibuye) and Nyabiheke (Byumba/Gatsibo). After the awareness-raising, some vulnerable people were able to group together in associations or work personally and carry out activities that generated income that contributed to changing the situation from poverty to resilience for the most deprived. These people are supported and advised in their activities. We have concrete examples, some of them are mentioned in the impact testimonies.

OS4. Reducing the impact of humanitarian crises on affected populations

4.1. Mastery of tools used in disaster prevention, response and reduction

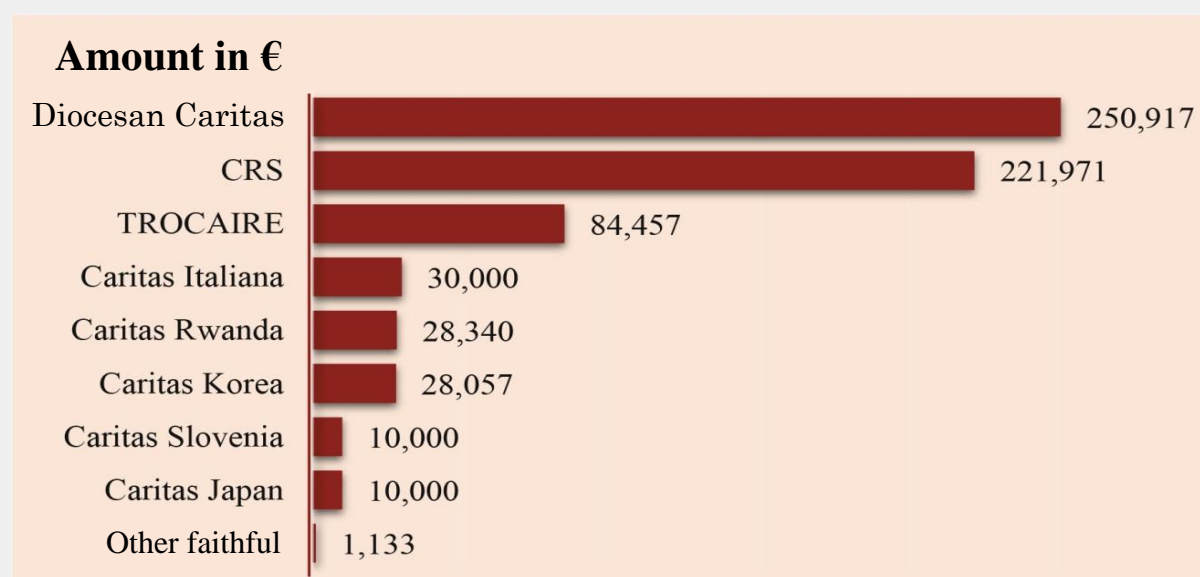
The training of 117,074 volunteers and staff members was organized and carried out at the level of Caritas Rwanda and some dioceses, especially during disasters. The contingency plan was developed for the prevention, reduction and response to emergencies but it is not yet validated.

4.2. Emergency responses include actions to strengthen the resilience of affected communities

One of the most important activities for this result is to facilitate the community to identify its needs and implement development initiatives. Concerning this result, Caritas Rwanda in coordination with its various partners including Caritas network members, humanitarian

organizations and the Government of Rwanda strengthened the resilience of people affected by floods in Rwanda for rapid recovery and social reintegration.

In this context, Caritas Rwanda implemented the EA17/2023 (Emergency Appeal) Project, with € 664,875 coming from network members and the local community as follows:



Activities implemented from the launch of the Project in June 2023 until its closure are as follows: selection and training of the field staff members, identification and registration of target households, distribution of hygiene kits and food kits, money transfer, monitoring and evaluation of the Project.

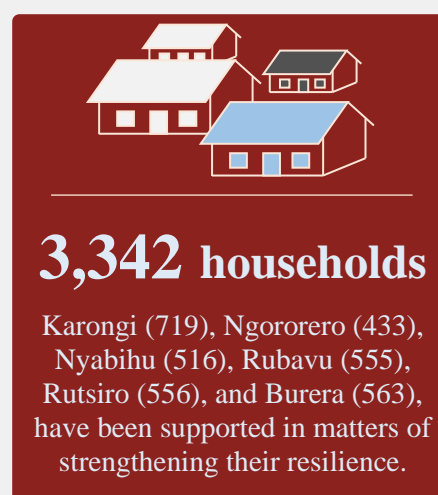
The targeting of beneficiaries was carried out following well-defined criteria such as and lists established by local authorities have helped to avoid duplication; this collaboration has improved the service provided in the context of trust.

The selection criteria were: Having children aged from 0 to 5 years; Households headed by a woman; Households including elderly people; Households headed by children; Households with children suffering from malnutrition or at risk; Households having people with disabilities ; and Households that have not already benefited from similar assistance.

4.3. Community Mobilization during cases of Humanitarian Crises

As part of implementing the EA17/2023 Project which made it possible to provide assistance to vulnerable people affected by the floods in Rwanda for rapid recovery and social reintegration, communities were mobilized on collections. This activity was carried out at the beginning of May 2023 during the disasters caused by heavy rain.

The collections include money and material goods (clothes, food such as porridge flour, maize flour, beans, etc). The number of supported households is around 3,342 (see the provided image) with a budget of around Frw821,120,625 (exchange rate of 1,235 Frw per €1). In partnership with local authorities and diocesan Caritas of Diocese of Nyundo/Gisenyi and



Nyundo/Kibuye, Caritas Rwanda provided a financial support to families affected by floods to allow their rehabilitation. That money was transferred to their mobilemoney accounts, where 625 households received Frw 50,000 each one, while 2,717 others received 92,000¹ each one. After receiving this financial support, beneficiaries managed to meet their needs including refurbishment their houses and buying food.

Success story

From street to the public service job, the case of Jean de Dieu NSANZABERA



Jean de Dieu NSANZABERA, from Inteko Village, Nyamagana Cell, Remera Sector, in Ngoma District, passed the national exams twice (2003-2004 and 2004-2005) but did not have the means to pursue his studies in the assigned school ‘Saint Aloys’. Being disappointed, he developed a mindset of rebellion and joined a group of street children.

In a meeting after the community work (Umuganda), the authorities announced that there was insecurity caused by street children who used drugs, including one who passed the national exam but was unable to go to study due to lack of means. A mother named Marcelline met Jean de Dieu and made advocacy towards the basic church community of workers, who paid his school fees, with support from the diocesan Caritas. The child started studying in the second term but such fact did not prevent him being the first in his class at the end of that term.

After the ordinary level exams, Jean de Dieu obtained impressive results and was affected in Groupe Scolaire de Kabare, where he graduated with a scholarship to the National University of Rwanda. After his university studies, he worked for the Missionary Sisters of Charity (Calcuta) of Kibungo for a low salary. During this period, he had the opportunity to pursue his studies at master’s level in the National University of Rwanda at Gikondo and he is currently Director of Statistics in Ruhango District. He is grateful for this chance and he pays school fees for his two younger brothers and two other poor children as a sign of recognition.

¹ This double standard was caused by the fact that the small assistance received at the beginning was distributed to the most vulnerable while they were still in the IDP sites to meet basic needs. Simultaneously, Caritas Rwanda was making the emergency appeal for social reintegration. After receiving another assistance and following the agreement with partners, the amount was increased to ensure social reintegration.

Success story

From refuge to the conquest of the green mountains, my distant country

Laurence, a 48-year-old Congolese refugee, embarked on a journey to revitalize the agricultural sector in her community in Kiziba, Rwanda, a rural area in Rwankuba.

A small farmer on 0.5 ha struggling for the daily survival of her family, she was selected in 2022 by Caritas RWANDA as part of Graduation Project, funded by UNHCR and implemented by Caritas RWANDA since 2020 in Kiziba refugee camp, as a refugee and member of a poor and eligible family who was supposed to join the program like others. The objective of the Project is to strengthen the dignity of the beneficiaries and free them from dependency and humanitarian assistance. The program provides beneficiaries with access to financial means and economic opportunities. Laurence followed all the required steps, including identification, financial literacy, business plan, income-generating activities, and received a grant of Frw 80,000 to start the income-generating activity she had chosen.

She went on to say that Caritas Rwanda has helped her to boost the economic development of her family and ensure her livelihood, as the farmer diversified her food crops, not only increasing her income, but also contributing to the overall nutritional diversity for the eight members of her family, as well as promoting the practice of saving, as her cumulative income now stands at Frw 100,000 while her farming activities are worth Frw 2 millions. Her success has inspired neighbouring Rwandan communities and she has served as a role model for many people who are keen to adopt similar sustainable practices, leading to the formation of a cooperation that has facilitated the sharing of resources and knowledge; 50 Rwandans have been employed by this farmer. As demand for organic products increased, the farmer established partnerships with local markets, which enabled her to secure stable and profitable market access.



Photo 2. Laurence was visited in her agricultural activities. Karongi, November 2023

OS5. Contribute to access and availability of affordable and quality preventive, promotional, curative, palliative and rehabilitation health services

5.1. Accessibility, availability and quality of health services

The main activities that contributed to the achievement of result 1 were related to the promotion of health through prevention, comprehensive patient care, community sensitization to encourage membership in the community health insurance, capacity building of catholic health structures, especially in terms of leadership, governance and management, the celebration of the World Day of the Sick, the rehabilitation and/or construction of health infrastructure, the repair and purchase of new medical equipment, and finally, community interventions for prevention, rehabilitation and access to palliative care.

Finally, construction projects, rehabilitation of buildings, and the purchase of medical equipment continued, thus improving health services.



The beneficiaries affected are two million five hundred and seventy-nine thousand six hundred and eighty-five (**2,579,685**).



During the year 2023, the rate of use of health services in approved catholic structures reached **89,8%**.

5.2. Prevention and community management of communicable and non-communicable diseases

The best options for controlling communicable and non-communicable diseases are interventions that have a clear track record of being cost/efficiency, which are also cheap and easy to implement in all health systems, and at multiple resource levels, especially when resources are limited. In addition, these interventions must be culturally appropriate in all countries. Therefore, there is a need to scale up the fight against all these diseases by maintaining gains and scaling up prevention and treatment. To achieve this goal, six priority areas are identified: HIV/AIDS, malaria, hepatitis, tuberculosis, neglected tropical diseases and vaccine-preventable diseases.



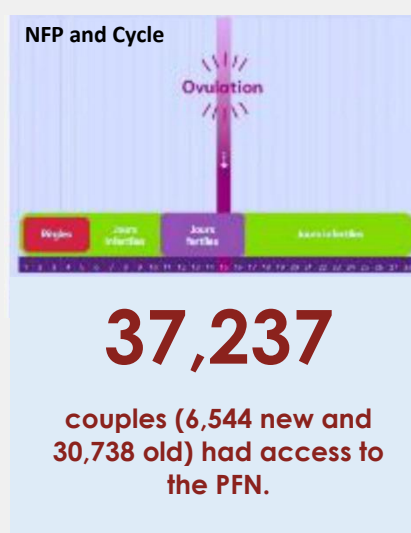
1,989,35
people benefited from comprehensive care.

OS6. Contribute to the Country's efforts to slow down the galloping demographic growth, by regulating births using NFP methods according to the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church

6.1. Accessibility and adherence to quality services offered through the NFP Natural Program at the FOSA level

During the year 2023, 37,237 couples (6,544 new and 30,738 former) managed to have access to natural family planning (NFP) methods and to the monitoring at the Catholic FOSA and community levels, due to the support of NFP providers and educators at the parish level. 238 community mobilization days on NFP were supported and organized at the parish level throughout the country.

It is also important to note that the year 2024 will coincide with the last year of the Strategic Plan for Family Action 2019-2024 of the Catholic Church in Rwanda, which will help us to carry out its evaluation and establish another five-year plan that will guide the Natural Family Planning Program.



6.2. Integration of NFP methods into the FP program

This result is aimed at strengthening the capacities of the NFP service at the FOSA level, the collaboration / Partnership between Caritas and the stakeholders intervening in the field of

Family Planning and finally the active participation at the level of the National Technical Team of Family Planning of the Ministry of Health.

OS7. Improving the nutritional status of pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of 6

7.1. Nutritional status of pregnant women and children under 6

In Rwanda, the malnutrition remains a major concern. According to the RDHS 2019/20, 33% of children under 5 are stunted. This means that more than a third of young children need more nutrition, health and WASH services to prevent stunting and other forms of malnutrition that affect their development. Stunting is the result of several factors; thus, to address this challenge, Caritas Rwanda continues to implement an inclusive nutrition and early childhood development program.

During the year 2023, three thousand five hundred and fifteen beneficiaries (3,515) were concerned at the community level.

7.2. Quality and equal access to early childhood development services for all beneficiaries

The activities that contributed to the achievement of this result are mainly related to the establishment of quality and equal access to services for early childhood development at village level and the monitoring of children under 6 years old integrated into the related services.

During the year 2023, **611,703** children under 6 years old **from 21,585** operational ECD were reached out with different services.

Success story

Contribute to access and availability of affordable and quality preventive, promotional, curative, palliative and rehabilitative health services



The provision of an ambulance to Rukara Health Centre (HC) by Gahini Hospital in July 2023 was the right response to the transportation challenges facing patients in accessing primary health services at the time of referral to the hospital, it contributed to the reduction of death cases due to late referral to the hospital.

The annual usage rate was increased of 17% compared to the previous year.

In addition, the offer of this ambulance to Rukara Health Center has been of great contribution to the increase in the income of the concerned HC, where each month, due to the rental of this ambulance, the HC earns on average Frw 1,680,000.

Success story

Accessibility and adherence to quality services provided through the NFP Program at the level of health facilities are increased as well as the integration of NFP methods into the FP program

Mr. Jean Pierre NIYONSENGA, aged 28, married to UWASE Pauline, also aged 28, parent of a child, from Kicukiro District, Masaka Sector, Mbare Cell, Kamashashi Village gives us a testimony.

I first learned about the concept of “Natural Family Planning” on Radio Rwanda during a theatre performance called “**INKINGI Y’AMAHORO**”. Interested by this program, we followed it every day to learn more. On the basis of this theatre, we found the Natural Family Planning (NFP) services near our residence, Masaka Health Center (HC), where we went to get more information on NFP.

When we arrived there, we interacted with Mrs. Mukandengo Spéciose, who works at the Health Center in the NFP department and she told us in detail about all the family planning methods, but she emphasized that Masaka HC only offers natural methods. Without hesitation, after getting the information, we opted for following the trainings on natural methods. That day, we went back home both interested but with a little fear because we still did not know which natural method we should choose among the natural methods that we were told about.

Upon returning to the HC, after a counseling session provided to couples that wish to use natural methods, we chose the Menstrual Cycle Necklace method also called "Urunigi rw'Ukwezi k'Umugore" in Kinyarwanda as a natural method of family planning. During our first discussion, the provider told us that each natural method, the same as in artificial methods, the choice of the method to use is imperatively guided by the eligibility criteria. Mr. Jean Pierre Niyonsenga confirms that since October 2023, they have been using the Menstrual Cycle Necklace method and plan to have their second child after four years. The couple is happy to share the experience of their marital life with their peers so that they also can enjoy the benefits of using natural methods such as the sound collaboration existing in their household, which was not the case before and praises Caritas Rwanda for funding **Inkingi y'Amahoro** which inspired them.

Success story

The nutritional status of pregnant women and children under 5 is improved

Many factors including food insecurity, poverty, limited access to health care, behavior change, ignorance and lack of family planning make acute malnutrition a persistent problem that affects many children. To address this problem, Gikuriro kuri Bose (GKB) collected data on the total number of affected children in the intervention area and supported vulnerable families to undertake a 12-day rehabilitation session to achieve full rehabilitation from acute malnutrition, involving health professionals, community volunteers and local leaders.



Our child, having suffered from malnutrition for a long time, we were devastated, ashamed and shocked in front of other mothers whose children were growing normally. Although we were receiving milk from the Health Center, our child showed no signs of improvement. This is why we decided to join forces and organize a 12-day rehabilitation session. The family of Bizimana Jean de Dieu and Mukamana Béatrice testifies this experience, as shown in the photo above on which they are feeding their child.

In order to adopt a holistic approach, GKB collaborated with Rulindo District and developed a comprehensive programme encompassing different components, such as nutritional supplements, health services, community education and economic empowerment initiatives. The financial support helped to effectively provide nutrient-rich foods, such as Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF), milk, as well as locally available nutritious foods to the affected children, thus meeting their nutritional needs.

It is important to note that 200 children, who were previously suffering from severe malnutrition, began to show signs of improvement. Their weight and height began to increase, and their general health improved significantly. The programme focus on monitoring and continuous follow-up allowed the rehabilitation process to continue until the children were fully recovered.

“Seeing our child regaining his smile and energy is the greatest gift in the world. We will always appreciate this second chance at a healthy life. We now understand the vital role that Gikuriro Kuri Bose has in the fight against malnutrition,” said Mukamana Beatrice, mother of Ashimwe Iratuzi Bruno, from Tumba Sector, Rulindo District, in May 2023.”

Success story

Quality and equal access to early childhood development services



The US Ambassador to Rwanda visiting GKB Project activities on the field in Rulindo District

Gaseke Early Childhood Development (ECD) facility is in Gaseke Village, Barari Cell, Tumba Sector, Rulindo District. It started as a single unfinished and uncomfortable room. Through the combined efforts of community contribution and financial support from *Gikuriro Kuri Bose* Project, the facility was rebuilt and transformed into an integrated care centre with two classrooms, an improved kitchen, a three-door latrine block and a two-room office for the village leader.

Niyonizera Sandrine, one of the 7 educators at the center, recalls the old facility which was small, unfinished and dusty, without decent latrines, kitchen or utensils to prepare porridge. She states that due to the unfavorable conditions mentioned above, most parents refused to take their children there. She added that after the transformation work of this house, *Gikuriro Kuri Bose* Project provided kitchen utensils to help safely prepare porridge and food for the children. *Gikuriro Kuri Bose* has also trained educators who are now qualified enough to provide integrated ECD and nutrition services to the 18 boys and 21 girls attending the center. The improvement of the facilities, coupled with the effective services provided to the children in follow-up, their parents and the community in general, has been appreciated by Rulindo District, which has decided to include it in its performance contracts.

In addition, the site was chosen to host the visit of Mr. Eric Kneedler, the US Ambassador to Rwanda on his first visit outside Kigali. The visit was specifically aimed at observing the USAID-Rwanda partnership in development activities and also to meet with their partners, including the persons in charge of USAID *Gikuriro Kuri Bose* implementation. VNS/SILC members and parents of children attending Gaseke ECD centre appreciate the continued financial and technical support provided by *Gikuriro Kuri Bose* and pledge to continually provide their contribution for the well-being of their children.

OS8. Increase the economic capacities of vulnerable people in the context of sustainable development

During 2023, the remarkable collaboration with the community led to the implementation of various activities carried out in three key areas: (i) improving agricultural and livestock production, (ii) strengthening the socio-economic welfare of the community and vulnerable households in particular, and (iii) resilience to climate change impacts.

The agricultural services and support provided have greatly benefited to a wide range of beneficiaries estimated at 285,945. These services include comprehensive training programs and informative study tours, which were conducted using the innovative field school approach. In addition, the distribution of essential agricultural inputs such as livestock, seeds, cuttings/seedlings and fertilizers has played a vital role in empowering the local farming community.

In addition, emphasis has been put on socio-economic strengthening, where the community has been mobilized to establish savings and credit groups. Thus, 642 groups with 15,804 members (5,631 men and 10,173 women) were established and supported. This approach involves the community saving/collectively saving money and the latter is granted as credit to the members of these groups to carry out/develop income-generating activities. Caritas, in collaboration with its generous donors, also facilitated vocational training opportunities, allowing individuals to diversify their sources of income.

The promotion of agroforestry (223,000 seedlings), the installation of improved stoves (1,459 households supported) and measures to combat erosion have played a key role in strengthening resilience to climate change. In many sites and regions, local communities set up tree nurseries, and Caritas provided material support and expertise required to carry out the activity of producing seedlings of different plant species. To combat erosion, progressive terraces were diligently maintained, accompanied by the planting of fixing grass and the regular cleaning of anti-erosion pits. These activities were made possible through the collaborative efforts of Caritas stakeholders, dedicated volunteers and generous benefactors.

8.1. Improvement of agro-pastoral production capacities

In order to improve agricultural production, various measures were implemented: the establishment of experimental fields to facilitate the development of improved agricultural techniques (optimization of seeding density, implementation of mulching and plowing practices, and appropriate use of fertilizers), the distribution of essential agricultural inputs including avocado and banana seedlings, as well as sweet potato varieties rich in vitamin A and fortified organic seeds of all kinds. These inputs are not only used for multiplication purposes, but are also provided to disadvantaged and vulnerable households in need.

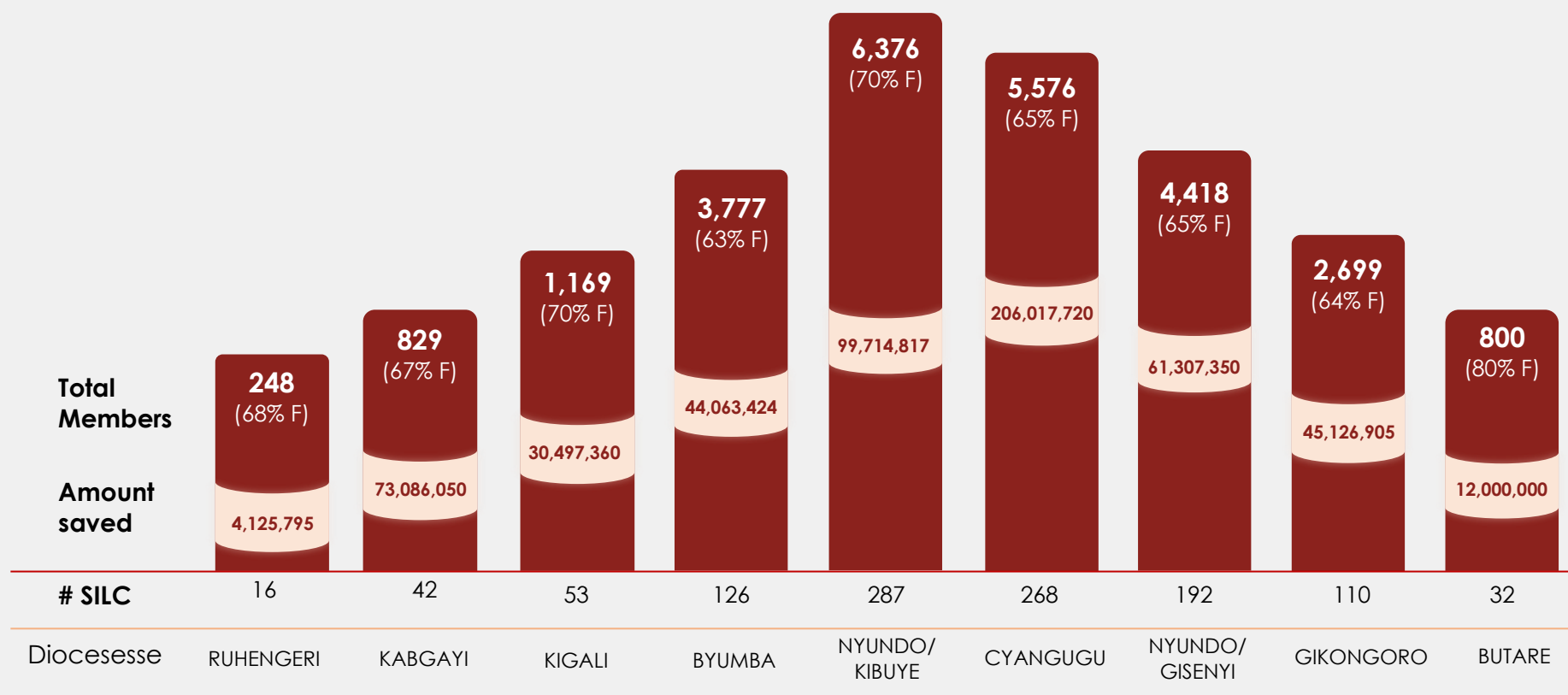
Throughout the year, alongside comprehensive training sessions on livestock management, including animal feeding and health, Caritas Rwanda and its partners also facilitated the distribution of cows, pigs, goats, sheep and chickens. This initiative has three objectives: (i) to provide households with organic manure to improve agricultural productivity, (ii) to enable them to access animal-based foods (iii) as well as to have a source of sustainable income.

Sow with her piglets and a heifer currently pregnant for 3 months received in October 2022 by HABINSHUTI Joseph from Kankuriyingoma Village, Murama Cell, Kamabuye Sector, Kamabuye Parish, Bugesera District.



Financial and rural entrepreneurship capacity-building

Concerning financial capacity-building for vulnerable people benefiting from Caritas support, we created 642 savings and credit groups with 15,804 members (5,631 men and 10,173 women), of whom 10,664 have income-generating activities. These groups are aimed at financing the income-generating activities of the most vulnerable, such as small-scale trade in food and other products, handicrafts, hairdressing salons, vegetable production, etc.).



With the pooled funds through savings, members of these groups have access to small loans to start income-generating activities as mentioned above. It has been obvious that some relatively more prosperous saving groups members have managed to obtain grants and finance their income-generating activities. The “100 weeks” project implemented in the Catholic Diocese of Ruhengeri is a concrete example.

As part of diversifying their source of income, 477 youths followed vocational trainings including tailoring, welding, masonry, electricity, shoemaking, plumbing, etc. Through these trainings, youths are equipped with practical expertise in various fields, enabling them to pursue rewarding careers in their chosen sectors of activity.

Upon completion of the training, participants receive NESA-approved certificates, as well as start-up equipment and materials. Helping new vocational training graduates launch their businesses by providing them with start-up kits enables them to effectively apply the skills they gained.



Training in the sewing profession at Saint Vincent Youth Center



Reception of sewing materials from Nkanga Parish

8.2. Strengthened resilience to climate change

Efforts to build resilience to climate change were supported by a range of activities to promote agroforestry, establish improved cookstoves, undertake radical/progressive terraces and install cisterns/water tanks to collect water from roofs of houses.

To encourage the practice of agroforestry, specialized tree nurseries were established for grevillea, cedrella, calliandra and alnus acuminata. These tree’s species proved to be very adapted and were highly appreciated by the local communities. The Caritas family provided essential materials, and the community contributed various services, especially local construction materials, manpower, nursery management, including transplanting and watering activities. Agroforestry not only strengthens resilience to climate change (good fertility and biodiversity), but also offers the population many benefits (a sustainable approach to land management, and an integration of agriculture and livestock).

The installation of 1,459 improved cookstoves has proven instrumental in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. These innovative cookstoves have not only reduced emissions of harmful pollutants, but also improved energy efficiency, hence minimizing pressure on natural resources.



In addition, radical/progressive terraces have been implemented to combat soil erosion and improve water conservation. These terrace techniques not only prevent the loss of arable and fertile land, but also facilitate water retention, thus promoting sustainable agriculture.

As illustrated on this photo of a rainwater harvesting system for irrigating a pineapple plantation of the COVCARU Cooperative of Ruhuha/Bugesera, installing cisterns to collect water from the roofs of houses has proven to be a valuable strategy for water management. In the area of climate change adaptation, a rainwater harvesting system was set up to irrigate a pineapple plantation of 40,000 plants on 2 hectares.

COVCARU cooperative set up a solar pump system to efficiently spread water in the fields. These systems are environmentally friendly and cost-effective since they utilize renewable energy. In addition, they are useful in remote areas where access to electricity may be limited. Solar-powered pumping systems offer a way to manage water resources for agricultural purposes while reducing carbon emissions.

8.3. Agricultural and animal production

The implementation of agricultural techniques reached 25,750 farmers. This had an important impact on vulnerable households that were able to acquire livestock, thus improving their economy and diet. The adoption of rotational livestock techniques in particular made it possible to significantly increase crop yields and the number of livestock.

In addition, agriculture and livestock farming provided an occupation for people who previously spent their days doing nothing, often in the cabaret. This not only contributed to the economic growth of these households, but also improved their overall welfare. Households with small-scale farming recognized the importance of diversifying their sources of income, thereby mitigating the risks associated with dependence on agriculture.

The sustainable improvement in the socio-economic living conditions of poor households enabled these vulnerable households to become self-sufficient and resilient. By the end of 2023, many of these households had increased and diversified their production, thus ensuring food security for their members, while reaching an important milestone in their path towards self-sufficiency. The following testimony underlines the remarkable progress made:

Success story



Photo 3 Mrs. MUKAMUJENI Aurélie in her plot, proud of her avocado tree – contribution to the sound nutrition of her family.

Mrs. MUKAMUJENI Aurélie, a skilled farmer, has successfully undertaken the business. She is aged 56, she is from Muhondo Parish. Her residence is in Gahinga Village, Gasiza Cell, Muhondo Sector, Gakenke District.

With a large plot of land measuring 50 ares, Mrs. MUKAMUJENI used to practice subsistence farming. However, with the support from the EMMo program, TUGENDANE TWIYUBAKA, was able to significantly improve the productivity of her land. She currently grows maize, voluble beans and fruits, including avocado trees. These trees were provided by the EMMo program and have proven to be a lucrative source of income, reaching a price of Frw 200 per unit. In addition to loan repayment, her business currently easily gives her a monthly net profit of Frw 80,000.

Mrs. MUKAMUJENI's inspiring journey is a quintessential example of the transformative power of agriculture. Through the implementation of innovative techniques and the provision of essential resources, she has not only improved her farming practices but also diversified her livelihoods. This success story illustrates the important impact that targeted support can have on the empowerment of individuals in the agricultural sector.

To diversify her sources of income, Mrs. MUKAMUJENI Aurélie, opened a shop in 2019 thanks to a loan of 60,000 Frw obtained from SACP DUFASHANYE, of which she is a member. In 2022, she was able to expand her business thanks to a loan of Frw 500,000 from TWAMBUTSANYE SACCO in Muhondo. Her business is located in rented buildings in Muhondo Parish.

Success story

Support to self-managed savings and credit groups

The culture of savings and credit is rooted in the communities monitored by Caritas Rwanda and its partners, such culture is reinforced by the establishment of savings and credit groups that diversify the sources of income for its members, ensuring financial stability.

NSANZIMANA Philémon shares the importance of training in the design and management of income-generating activities (IGAs), which instilled in him the determination to never give up. Motivated by this new knowledge, Philémon decided to use his family's cultivable plot to grow tomatoes, a crop that thrives in his region. To finance this activity, he was granted a loan of Frw 73,000 from his VSLA, which he wisely invested in farming tomatoes and the result was an abundant harvest that generated an important profit of Frw 137,000.

“On this amount, I added Frw 27,000 that I had set aside to buy a bull and fodder for its fattening. After 6 months of fattening, I sold this bull at Frw 450,000 and I bought 2 more at an amount of Frw 300,000 (Frw 150,000 each). I abandoned the family plot and rented a larger plot from the neighbor at Frw 30,000. I invested another amount of Frw 137,000 for farming tomatoes, the production generated Frw 307,500. I sold one of the fattened bulls at Frw 350,000 to buy another one at Frw 200,000, this leads me to a capital of Frw 457,500.”

UWIZEYIMANA Olivier is a member of VSLA DUTERIMBERE RUBYIRUKO in Rusizi District, Kamembe Sector, Cyangugu Cell, Karangiro Village. At the age of 25, Olivier, who comes from a family of 11 children, took the courageous decision to ease the burden on his family. Not only does Olivier help his siblings to pay their school fees, as five of them are still studying, but he also takes care of the health expenses (CBHI) of his modest family, which lives on daily wage.



Success story

Before joining VSLA Group, Olivier had saved 500,000 Frw by working with a businessman. In September 2021, he joined VSLA DUTERIMBERE RUBYIRUKO Group, where he borrowed 300,000 Frw which he added to his savings to open a shop worth Frw 800,000. He then borrowed 119,000 Frw to increase the products available in his shop. He managed to repay all his debts and his shop, after two years, is now valued at 3 million Rwandan francs. For the future, Olivier plans to build a house worth 10 million Rwandan francs. This ambitious goal is a proof of his firm hope for a better future.



NAKURE Emerthe, a resident of Karongi District, Gashari Sector, Musasa Cell, Musasa Village, is a mother of a son named NIYONIZEYE NTOREYIMANA Fabrice. Before she was enrolled in the Tube Aheza Amazi Hafi Project, she was struggling to meet her son's basic needs or even pay for health insurance because she gave birth while she was still in her parents' home and the child's father was not contributing to his education. She says that she is now financially independent since she joined the Tube Aheza Amazi Hafi Project and underwent financial training through the savings group she joined. She borrowed Frw 40,000 from the savings group, added to Frw 25,000 she earned from the offspring of small livestock she received and started a small income generating business producing and selling local sorghum beer. She earns Frw 45,000 per month and has repaid all her debt.

The success stories of Philemon, Oliver, and Emerthe illustrate how savings and lending groups broaden the horizons of their members and foster a future-oriented mindset. One of the development features is the number of choices that the people have. VSLA groups undoubtedly have the potential to provide these choices to their members, a pathway for their development and that of their families. Given that Caritas Rwanda's mission is to help people in need and promote inclusive human development, there could be no better intervention than to help the participants in its programs to self-sustain through VSLA groups.



Environment

Throughout the year, a remarkable result was achieved since more than 116,320 agroforestry plants were successfully planted on several sites. These plants mainly include grevillea, cedrella serrata and alnus, thus contributing to the improvement of the natural environment. These plants contribute to overcoming challenges faced by communities residing in mountainous areas, who suffer from the consequences of landslides following floods that cause loss of life and livelihoods.

Learned lessons

Learned lessons

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The livestock delivery system, known as "pass-on" or "kuziturirana," has emerged as a crucial mechanism for individuals to acquire livestock. • The approach of farmers' organizations is proved to be a very effective strategy for reducing poverty in rural areas (facilitating access to agricultural inputs, credit and markets for their production). • The support to youth in SILC groups played an important role concerning their entrepreneurship mindset and behavior, which led to a substantial increase in family income. • To ensure the sustainable development of farmer organizations and especially that of their members, it is imperative to avoid material and financial donations, but to prioritise technical support and facilitation of self-promotion through effective advice and encouragement. • Before suggesting corrective measures to be integrated into the project management, it is imperative to consider cultural, economic and organizational factors. • Strengthening the Primary Health Care (PHC) system has a vital role in ensuring the access and availability of essential health care services to all. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As awareness of the Caritas mission grows within the community, so does the level of community involvement in caring for its vulnerable members. • Local and church authorities play a crucial role as primary partners in ensuring the success of activities. Consultation and collaboration with these authorities are essential for achieving our goals effectively. • The involvement of young people in pastoral work strengthens their involvement in caring for vulnerable people. • The mobilization of the community carried out by the parish priests yields significant results. • The involvement of partner organizations, social workers and Caritas volunteers in activities facilitated the implementation of activities. • The involvement of other religious organisations and other people of good will in the mobilization and sensitization for assisting vulnerable people enables assisting a great number of needy people. • The active participation of parish priests in the planning and execution of parish Caritas activities and the good collaboration with parish and diocesan Caritas facilitators allows to raise the awareness of the local community. |
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Challenges and Exit Mechanisms

Challenges	Exit mechanisms
Poor understanding of Caritas' mission (Many people do not associate Caritas aid/assistance to a sustainable development but rather consider it as a continuous emergency aid....)	To further promote awareness within the community regarding the mission and values of Caritas, to continue our efforts in community sensitization
Limited financial means	To establish means of self-financing and strengthen capacities for mobilization of resources and responses to calls for proposals, strengthen the mobilization of vulnerable people to create savings and credit groups
Recurrence of natural disasters	Operationalize Caritas Rwanda's contingency plan to use as a guide.
Volunteer mindset handicapped by the satisfaction of the economic needs of volunteers and the slowly growing youth and intellectual volunteerism	Sensitization of the community, schools and universities, continues to strengthen Caritas structures in parishes through the sensitization and training of new members of Caritas committees, strengthening synergy with other commissions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Some abuses of non-compliance with the convention on the side of local authorities (e.g.: recruitment, transfer of staff, the role of districts/sectors in the co-management of health facilities, etc.); ❖ Insufficient health staff, especially for health centers located in remote areas. The Ministry of Health assigns who often refuse to join the workplace. ❖ Delay in payment of health services provided to members of the community health insurance, with a negative impact on the availability (stock out) of medicines in some health facilities which do not have sufficient own funds; ❖ Insufficient funds at the health facilities level to accomplish their primary mission of health for all; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Advocate for the establishment, in partnership with the Ministry of Health of a technical committee for review and exchange on the implementation of the Convention, and inform the Leadership of the Ministry and the Catholic Church in order to make related decisions at the appropriate time; ⇒ Establish a policy/strategy for retaining health staff / Advocacy at the level of Health Committees to examine and make decisions about hardship allowances. ⇒ Continue advocacy and improve the process of advocacy and recovery of debts in community health insurance and other health insurances;

Challenges	Exit mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Inconsistent rates and protocols for managing diseases; ❖ Some old infrastructure (health facilities) no longer meets the standards of the Ministry of Health; ❖ Myths, rumors and wrong ideas about NFP at the community level; ❖ The funding based on FBP (family based planning) not yet available for NFP services, but only for “modern methods”; ❖ VUP volunteers for Early Childhood Development (ECD) receive a monthly allowance, which discourages other unpaid ECD caregivers; ❖ Food shortage among the most vulnerable families suffering from acute malnutrition causing relapses; ❖ The extreme poverty of people with disabilities limits their access to various social, health and economic services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Membership of the new IT tools for managing the Health Insurance Fund used by RSSB (case of District Hospitals); ⇒ Strengthening mechanisms for good management, self-financing and resource mobilization for health structures; ⇒ To make advocacy with the Ministry of Health to harmonize prices according to disease management protocols; ⇒ To make operational the Resource Mobilization Committees at the level of Diocesan Caritas aimed at development; ⇒ To strengthen strategies to make our health system and other sectors more resilient; ⇒ To strengthen awareness campaigns on the benefits of NFP at all levels by using all possible media channels: Radio, Drama/sketches, YouTube, etc.; ⇒ To continue ongoing advocacy to approve NFP indicators and finally receive performance-based funding; ⇒ To increase awareness among parents so that they take care of their children without help from elsewhere, as they are responsible for the welfare of their children; ⇒ To address the underlying causes of malnutrition; mobilize resources for the implementation of a comprehensive approach combining nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions is necessary to break the cycle of malnutrition; ⇒ Advocacy and mobilization of more resources for a specific project meeting the specific needs of people with disabilities.
Floods and landslides	Mobilization of various aids to rescue and rehabilitate displaced persons and persons who have lost family members and crops/livestock.

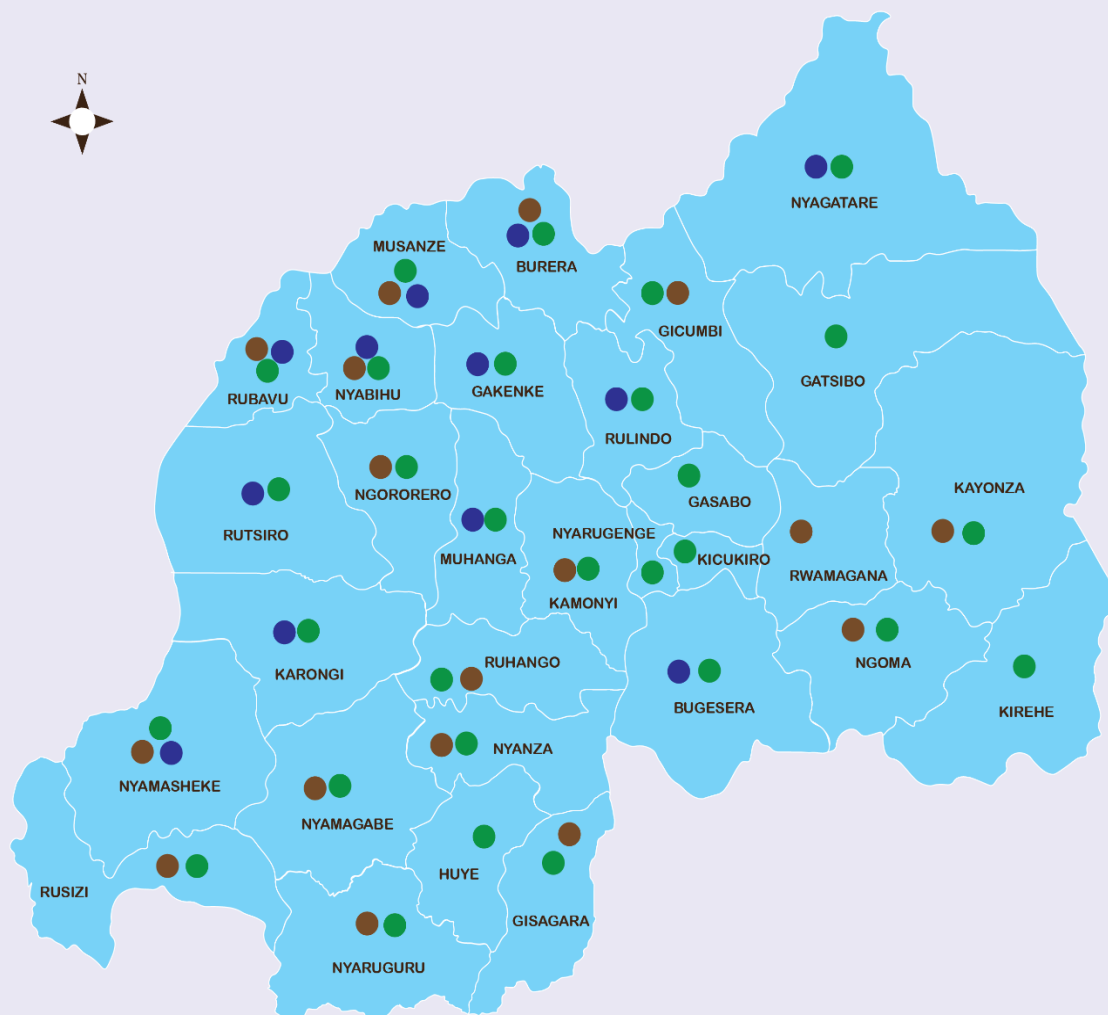
General Conclusion

Caritas has been working on implementing various interventions as planned, to support the strengthening of the health system to improve maternal, neonatal and child health indicators, promoting health and welfare at all ages, strengthening community engagement, and finally contributing to better access to quality health services.

The year 2023 has been a year of reinforced partnership between Caritas Rwanda and all health, development and socio-charitable actors. The collaboration of Caritas Rwanda and all stakeholders including communities has been the main key in achieving the expected results in all these abovementioned areas and it is committed to continuing to act in concertation with all partners for the welfare of the Rwandan population.

All activities undertaken have been excellently planned and executed in accordance with Rwanda policy and are aligned with the National Transformation Strategy (NST1), while integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These achievements have contributed significantly to job creation, food security, poverty reduction, as well as efforts for adaptation and mitigation of effects related to climate change.

MAP OF ALL PROJECTS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN RWANDA



MAP Legend



HEALTH

1. GIKURIRO KURI BOSE
2. ECD PROGRAM
3. RBF MALARIA
4. HEPATITIS B BIRTH DOSE
5. SOINS MÉDICAUX ET THÉRAPIES EDUCATIVES POUR LES ENFANTS HANDICAPÉS
6. PROGRAMME DE ECD & NUTRITION
7. SUPERVISION FOSAS
8. ASSURER HYGIÈNE ET ASSAINISSEMENT AVEC EAU PROPRE AU NIVEAU DES CENTRES DE ECD ET CONSTITUTION DES ECDS
9. REKA
10. RÉHABILITATION DU CENTRE DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES
11. RÉHABILITATION COMPLÈTE DU CENTRE DE SANTÉ DE MURUNDA
12. PROJET DE PRÉVENTION DE LA MALNUTRITION DE MURUNDA
13. APPUI AUX DIABÉTIQUES
14. PROJETS DE MALNUTRITION
15. PROGRAMME DE ECD
16. CONSTRUCTION DU LABORATOIRE
17. EQUIPEMENTS MÉDICAUX
18. AMÉLIORATION DE L'ÉTAT NUTRITIONNEL DES ENFANTS DE MOINS DE 6ANS
19. RÉHABILITATION À BASE COMMUNAUTAIRE (NUDOR)
20. RBF ENABEL
21. COORDINATION MÉDICALE



SOCIAL WELFARE

1. 100 WEEKS
2. KUNGAHARA
3. PROJET SOCIALE
4. SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS MONITORING AND SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION
5. SUIVI APRES PASAB
6. TEENAGE MOTHER PROJECT PHASE -2
7. TUBE AHEZA AMAZI HAFI
8. VUP-GIRINKA
9. IGIRE-Gimbuka



DEVELOPMENT

1. CEFOPPAK
2. Y4Y PROJECT
3. FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE DES FILLES MÈRES
4. GERA KU NTEGO YOUTH PROJECT
5. PAID-DUTERIMBERE
6. PAIPD
7. PROGRAMME CONJOINT DE MONITORING ET DE SUPERVISION DES DPE DE DISTRICTS DE NYARUGURU, DE RUTSIRO ET DE RUBAVU
8. PROGRAMME D'ENCADREMENT ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL DES JEUNES VULNÉRABLES DANS LES DIOCÈSES CYANGUGU ET GIKONGORO

2024 Operational Plan per Specific Objectives and Results

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT	EXPECTED BENEFICIARIES	BUDGET PLANNING
OS1. Capacity building for mobilization and resource management	R1. Increased capacities of managers and staff	-	3,940,922,360
	R2. Increased partnership with stakeholders	-	73,526,913
	R3. Strengthened financial mobilization and management capacities	-	114,898,564
	R4. Strengthened monitoring, evaluation and reporting capacities	-	104,567,768
Total OS1			4,233,915,605
OS 2. Raising awareness on the identity and mission of Caritas	R1. Ownership of the Caritas mission by pastoral staff.	23,319	39,651,000
	R2. The community is committed to caring for vulnerable people	178,779	155,485,180
Total OS2		202,098	195,136,180
OS 3. Improving the living conditions of vulnerable people	R1. Vulnerable people are cared for	166,775	4,777,570,500
	R2. Supported vulnerable people changed their behavior in terms of self-care and resilience	38,838	927,318,599
Total OS3		205,613	5,704,889,099
OS 4. Reducing the impact of humanitarian crises on affected populations	R1. Caritas staff members master the tools used in the prevention, response and reduction of the effects of disasters	2,947	14,996,000
	R2. Emergency responses include actions to strengthen the resilience of affected communities	4,185	16,000,000
	R3. The community is mobilized for collections in the event of humanitarian crises	2,542	90,260,000
Total OS4		9,674	121,256,000
OS.5. Contribute to access and availability of affordable and quality preventive, promotional, curative, palliative and	R1. Accessibility, availability and quality of health services are improved	3,449,047	20,460,736,910
	R2. Prevention and community ownership of communicable and	611,376	1,843,697,449

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	RESULT	EXPECTED BENEFICIARIES	BUDGET PLANNING
rehabilitation health services	non-communicable diseases are ensured		
Total OS5		4,060,423	22,304,434,359
OS.6. Contribute to the country's efforts to slow down the galloping demographic growth, by regulating births using NFP methods according to the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church	R1. Accessibility and adherence to quality services provided through the NFP Program at the health facilities level are increased	1,909,525	882,758,930
	R2. The integration of NFP methods into the FP program is ensured	10	980,000
Total OS6		1,909,525	883,738,930
OS.7. Improve the nutritional status of pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 6, with emphasis on the 1,000-day window of opportunity between pregnancy and the second birthday	R1. The nutritional status of pregnant women and children under 5 is improved	1,011,810	625,224,404
	R2. Quality and equal access to early childhood development services for all beneficiaries are ensured	637,919	720,298,357
Total OS7		1,649,729	1,345,522,761
OS8. Increase the economic capacities of vulnerable people in the logic of sustainable development	R1. Improved agro-pastoral production capacities	54,828	457,012,064
	R2. Strengthening rural financial and entrepreneurship capacities	35,238	47,495,950
	R3. Strengthened resilience to climate change	279,010	187,399,738
Total OS8		369,076	691,907,752
General Total		8,406,138	31,246,885,081