



2023

# Newsletter

**FHR** Friends of  
Handicap  
Rwanda

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## Special education and Vocational training.

At Umutara School for the Deaf, there are currently 150 students enrolled in the current academic year, with 15 in nursery and 81 in grades 1 through 6.

Additionally, there are 54 students attending our technical school and learning professions such as sewing, construction, and hairdressing.

The past academic year ended in May 2022 with students in grade 6, taking their final national exams, 8 out of 10 students passed, despite having limited access to information and resources that most other students have.



***“Of the students who graduated from the vocational school, 17 have found employment, with some working in Construction, Sewing, Hairdressing, and others still searching for job opportunities”.***

## Deaf and blind children outreach

The Children Outreach Program is one of the initiatives of Friends of Handicaps that focuses on visiting families with children with disabilities, particularly in rural areas of the eastern province of Rwanda.

**This program aims to provide education and equal opportunities for children who are often stigmatized and not valued in their communities.**



The outreach program is conducted twice a year and has successfully brought 9 out of 27 children in nursery and first grade to the schools. However, many of these children's parents do not participate in their education and some children end up dropping out of school due to financial difficulties and negative attitudes towards disability within their families.

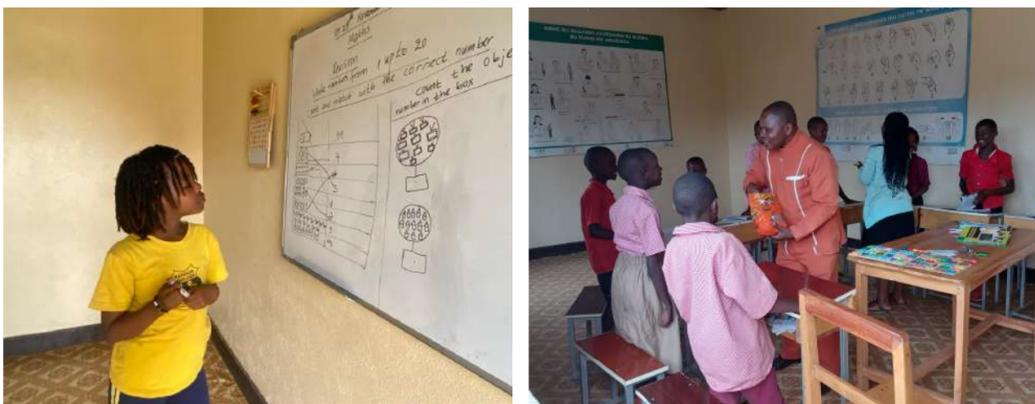




## Gentle teaching training

In October 2022, Dominique Ndagijimana, president of Friends of Handicaps (FHR), and Mrs. Eleanie Kamana traveled to Sweden to visit the Manillaskolan School for the Deaf.

The purpose of this trip was for both schools to share about deaf education in Rwanda, explore ways to increase cooperation in education, and work together on advocacy for private deaf schools in developing countries.



As a result, FHR identified a need for more sign language and gentle teaching training for staff at the Umutara School for the Deaf, motivated by the Manillaskolan school.

In January 2023, FHR is planning to provide this training and we are currently raising funds and gathering volunteers to support the program. During their trip, Dominique and Eleanie visited a Baptist church in Aschaffenburg, Germany to seek support for the sustainability of the Umutara School for the Deaf.

The church donated four cows that will provide a source of income for the school through the sale of milk and fertilizer, and will also supply milk to young children at the school to improve their nutrition.



## Benjamin visits the Friends of handicap Activities

In November 2022, Benjamin Kubwimana, our development lead at FHR, visited our schools in the eastern province of Rwanda.

In September of this year, he implemented a child sponsorship program to help families provide education and support for students at our schools and community centers.



During his visit, he met with the families of the 51 students still on the waiting list for sponsors and was encouraged to continue working on securing their enrollment for the next academic year. Many of these families have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflicts in Ukraine, which have disproportionately affected children with disabilities.

While in Rwanda, Benjamin was accompanied by Angeli Büttner, a new friend of handicap in Rwanda who was in the country for a water project with the German Embassy.

Angeli, a professor from Berlin, specializes in landscape and water management infrastructure. She used her expertise to evaluate the school's water tanks and wishes to rebuild them, ensuring that students can continue having access to water during the summer months when public sources can be scarce.



## Acknowledging our **Partners and Donors**



In this newsletter, FHR extends its gratitude to the Deaf Reach trustees for providing funding to support the Umutara School for the Deaf (UDS) during the COVID-19 pandemic and the conflict in Ukraine.

The first phase of this grant was provided in September, and the second phase is expected in March. This funding will help UDS to better manage the impacts of these economic challenges on the school.



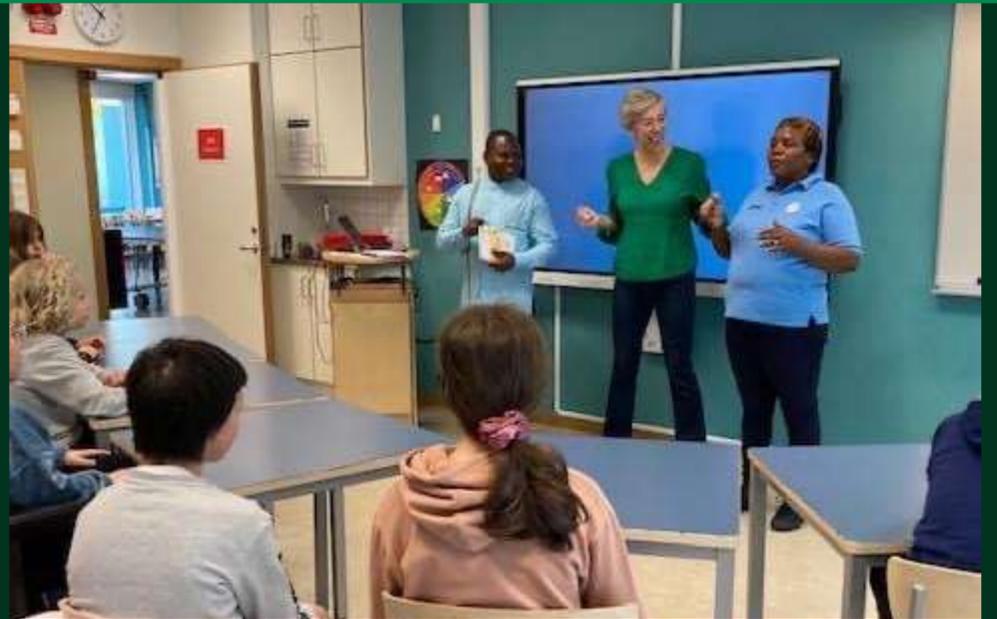
We would like to thank Sayap Africa in California for continuing to support us in advocacy and funding through our child sponsorship program.

We acknowledge our friends who have given their resources to sponsor 4 of the children who have now started their studies at FHR's Umutara School for the Deaf.

We thank Robin Ko, Angie and Guy Chadwell, Martin Vystavil, Kelsey and Jonathan Paolucci in California and Dr. Najafi Hamidreza in Florida. We acknowledge Yolanda and Rutiger, in the Netherlands, and Isobel Blakeley in the UK for their continued support in raising awareness of FHR and generous donations.

We extend our appreciation to the children and teachers of Manillaskollan Deaf School in Sweden for their contribution to our schools.

## FHR congratulates our Director **Dominique Ndagijimina** on his graduation



On December 9, 2022, Rev. Dominique earned a master's degree in non-profit organizational management and Community Development, which will be beneficial in improving the quality of life in the areas where Friends of Handicaps operates and will positively impact the level of professional work with both employees and donors.

**We congratulate Rev. Dominique on this accomplishment and the effort he put into advancing his profession.**





**Wishing Everyone a  
Happy New Year of 2023  
Full of Peace and Blessings**



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