

This provides an update on World Vision's efforts to end extreme poverty by 2030 through Economic Empowerment.



## July 2017

Greetings!

World Vision is delighted to send you our Executive Briefing for Economic Empowerment. You are an integral part of our work to end extreme poverty by 2030, so we want to keep you updated on our progress!

In this issue, you will find:

- Update on THRIVE Rwanda from George Gitau
- Link to video interview of George Gitau by Christopher Shore
- Vision Trips Available to You
- Prayer Requests

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**THRIVE (Kwigira)\* Rwanda – An innovative development**

# game changer for Rwanda

By George Gitau

The majority of the people World Vision serves in Rwanda are farmers. We work in the poorest areas of the country, and in those places the small farm is where people work – mostly just to eat enough survive. To help people move out of extreme poverty, World Vision Rwanda focuses on changing that situation. This ties closely to the overall economic transformation the government is trying to make.

The Rwandan economy is dominated by agriculture. Most farms are very small, have historically produced just enough food for the farmers own needs, and depend upon the timely arrival of rain. Outside of agriculture, Rwanda has few natural resources to exploit, and the industrial sector is both small and uncompetitive. The national government is working towards economic transformation by seeking to boost the productivity of agriculture, promoting the use technology with a focus on accelerating innovation by internet and mobile phone infrastructure players, improving internet and communication skills in the workforce, stimulating entrepreneurship, increasing access to finance and business development services for the private sector, and stimulating private sector job creation.

In order to contribute to this economic transformation, since 2013 World Vision Rwanda has been implementing The Community Empowerment Through Economic Development Project in six Area Development Programs (ADPs) in Western Rwanda. (We found that name a bit dull so we call it Inzozu Nziza, which means Good Dreams.) This project supports the World Vision Rwanda strategy, which seeks to build improved and resilient livelihoods of targeted small-holder farmers, agrobusinesses, and entrepreneurs by 2020. Our goal is a 150% improvement in both food security and household income by 2017. We make this contribution to poverty alleviation in Rwanda by using approved World Vision project models including Savings Groups, Local Agricultural Value Chains Development, Business Facilitation and Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture.

On this original foundation, we expanded our work towards the full “THRIVE” model. We have rejuvenated and expanded our microfinance institution, and are working closely with them. We have added the use of technology. Since most farmers farm on degraded land (both a result of poor land management and an ever changing climate) we have added natural resource management to our priorities. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration, Conservation Agriculture, and clean energy systems are being used to both safeguard the environment (mostly forests and trees) and build the resilience of the farm, its soils, and its water.

To date, more than 300 Commercial Producer Groups (CPGs) have been formed with approximately 4,000 farmers, and 1,353 Savings Groups have been formed. Unemployed youths have started many new businesses which have created hundreds of new jobs.

One big success we are very proud of is in the Akagera Marshland where farmers who had been working alone and isolated were organized to work together and to take advantage of the natural opportunities provided by the water supply. Today, farmers are organized, are managing water for the entire area and for their own farms, are applying fertilizer and treating acidic soils with lime, and have massively increased food production. Flooding and droughts have stopped. Now farmers are producing crops 3 times per year. Yields of many staples like corn have doubled. In what used to be the dry season with no farming, farmers in this relatively small area harvested 250 tons of potatoes. The farmers sold 40% of the potatoes for almost \$24,000, and kept the remainder to eat.

Technology has been a key driver for this movement. One example is a technology we introduced called e-Hinga. It allows farmers to have access to agricultural extension services and market information for crops and domestic animals grown across Rwanda. The information is packaged in text and audio and can be accessed on smartphones and computers.

Finally, and perhaps where we should have begun, we have seen that worldview and mindsets are critical to achieving the movement from dependency to empowerment. Worldview affects the farmers' ability to make change in their lives. We use the Bible and we use locally available resources and opportunities. What keeps me so motivated is seeing people who before our work were poor widows, dependent women, and hopeless orphans who are now professional farmers, entrepreneurs and job creators. We have proven that changed mindsets leads to powerful steps towards economic development.

The THRIVE scale up will be a game changer for the children, families and communities of Rwanda!

[Hear the interview](#) by Christopher Shore of George Gitau, National Director World Vision Rwanda, as George describes THRIVE Rwanda.

\* Kwigira: Self reliance

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## Vision Trip Season

Vision Trips are a great way to see the impact of our work and the transition from poverty to prosperity. We invite you to join our staff and beneficiaries in the field on the following trips!



1) Join Tony Frank, National Director for WVUS, in **Myanmar** from **October 27-November 1, 2017**. We also have tentative trips in the works to Myanmar for **November 5-11** and **November 19-25** based on your availability. Trips to Myanmar will feature the work VisionFund International is doing to provide access for the poor to financial services in order to lift them out of poverty. [This article](#), written by a recent Vision Trip traveler to Myanmar, provides you a glimpse of what a Vision Trip would look like. Please click below if you would like more information about upcoming Vision Trips to Myanmar.

[More Information about the Vision Trip to Myanmar](#)



2) Join Chris Pope, our Minneapolis Rep, in **Zambia** from **November 3-12, 2017**. Trips to Zambia will feature THRIVE Zambia in the Kasama region of northern Zambia. Please click below if you would like more information about upcoming Vision Trip to Zambia.

[More Information about the Vision Trip to Zambia](#)

## Prayer Requests

### PRAISE

- VisionFund International has appointed its 3rd CEO – Mr. David Mithika. “With more than 20 years of experience, Michael has provided strategic and specialist financial advisory services and management consulting to private and development-oriented clients based in Africa. Since co-founding J.M. Mantle & Co. Limited, a management consulting and financial services firm, Michael has worked with investors, donors and financial institutions committed to deepening and increasing financial inclusion in sub-Saharan Africa. Michael has broad expertise across microfinance strategy and competitiveness, economic development, business planning, financial and investment analysis, technical assistance design and evaluation. He also has transactional and advisory experience in corporate and structured finance in a number of African markets.
- Due to the generous hearts of our donors we have received a gift to support the THRIVE

work in Zambia. This gift helps move us closer to eliminating extreme poverty in Zambia.

## REQUESTS

- For the upcoming THRIVE meetings in Rwanda in August. These will include the “Technical Teams” meeting (more technically focused) from the 22nd to 25th, and the THRIVE Forum (more big picture and strategically focused) from the 27th to 31st of August. Pray that God would lead us strongly to ever increasing efficiency, effectiveness, and scale in lifting smallholder farmers out of extreme poverty.
- For the team in Mali as they bring their situational awareness tool for smallholder farmers and communities on-line. The system provides information about weather, insect issues, animal and plant health, and market prices. Pray that the installation and roll-out would go smoothly, and that we can determine whether this can become a key situational awareness system for THRIVE in other countries.



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