

My Rwandan Journey

There are few places more critical to the future of Rwandan children than their classrooms. It is in the classroom that the hearts and minds of Rwandan young people are most consistently shaped and influenced.

Perhaps this explains why many of the 300+ people in attendance at our recent Wellspring Ignite Gala were struck by a visible contrast in the quality of education between two seemingly similar rural classrooms, as portrayed in our new film, *My Rwandan Journey* (www.thewellspringfoundation.com/myrwandanjourney).



The film starts by observing a Rwandan teacher who has not yet received Wellspring training. The camera powerfully captures the disheartening separation between teacher and student and the complete lack of engagement from students.

It then portrays a second teacher who has received training from Wellspring for just six months. She is thoroughly engaged, makes great use of homemade teaching aids, and has enthusiastic participation from the students in her classroom. Clearly, her students are learning in a completely different way.

The second teacher goes on to credit what she had learned from Wellspring's Rwandan teacher trainers with the change. This scene from the film clearly captures the impact being made in Rwandan classrooms today through our School Development Program.

Wellspring Ripples

Here in Rwanda it is rainy season and one of my favourite things to watch is the growing ripples that occur as a rain droplet hits a pool of still water. Watching as it hits the surface with a splash and creates a series of growing concentric ripples emerging from its centre is one of those little joys I treasure in life. There is something simple yet significant about it that just fascinates my soul. It reminds me that the ‘splash’ we make in our world has a similar effect. When I am reminded of this I am humbled, sobered and excited.

At Wellspring this is certainly the case. Our ‘pool’ or ‘pond’ consists of forty schools in the District of Gasabo nestled in the beautiful Land of 1000 Hills, Rwanda. As we ‘splash’ we have the potential to create ripples that will bring change and hope to Rwandan school communities. We are beginning to observe some of these ripples of hope spreading through our school communities.



The Head Teacher at one school has started to organise tea for his staff at break time. Having shared with our ‘Star Leaders’ who were already implementing such support measures in their schools he decided on returning to his school to do the same. So now the teachers at Rwanyanza enjoy a warm and milky cup of tea to strengthen them and encourage them through a long working day. Teachers at another school have seen a significant change in the leadership of their school. They have testified to a change in the attitude and care of their head teacher as he interacts and serves the school. In fact, he now sometimes buys them a soda and they feel much more valued and appreciated.

The Head Teacher at Kimihurura Primary School has also been enjoying the effects of the Wellspring ripples. After the delivery of the ‘Parent-Teacher Relationships’ unit to parents a very large ripple has emerged. In fact, it could even be approaching a tidal wave! This Head Teacher testifies that prior to this training some parents didn’t even know what school their children attended far less how they were progressing. But now, parents are visiting the school and teachers to share and communicate with them. Parents have also started to provide the 150RWF (about 25 cents) to help with school supplies. He has requested more ripples!



In classes the ripples of change are equally exciting. One of our teachers has said, ‘I used to work and get so tired but now with this new methodology I could teach 10 lessons a day’. He has appreciated and enjoyed engaging students more actively in the learning process and has recognised that it makes his work so much less tiring. In turn the interest and smiles on children’s faces as they experience new activities in their lessons has been a joy to watch. Observing lessons where students are clapping, praising and appreciating one another and their teacher bring such delight. Others where the students are using teaching aids and are actively engaged have created a joy and interest in learning that wasn’t there before. Lessons are now being enjoyed by teachers and students.

Having almost completed a year with our forty partner schools it has been incredible to observe the ripples of influence impacting different schools. One little ‘splash’ of hope and change can go a long way!

A fantastic evening for Wellspring

Our first ever Wellspring Ignite Gala was October 22nd at the Rocky Mountaineer Train Station in Vancouver. Over 300 people joined us, with nearly half of them heard about Wellspring for the first time that night, and partnered with us to raise \$103,000 for our work in Rwanda.

Richard’s latest blog post

[Click here](#) to read Richard’s latest blog post, “The Radical Shift from Scarcity to Abundance (Part 3 of 4)”, on our website.

2011 Lake2Lake a HUGE succes

With more that double the riders from our inaugural event, and a mixed bag of weather heading in the weekend, we were sure it would once again be a weekend to remember-and it was!

Thank you riders for hopping on your bikes Saturday morning knowing the rain and cold were just around the corner. You are an amazing group of people who wanted to help make a difference in education in Rwanda, and your fundraising efforts will do just that...you’ve raised over \$68,000! THANK YOU!