

Survey of Tautvydas Rindzevicius over orphans and vulnerable children sponsored by the foundation Jyambere in Kabaya/RWANDA

Introduction

During the period of July – August 2015, I have travelled to Kabaya in Rwanda in the name of “Jyambere” foundation. I have met all of the children at some point, but I have also visited some families in particular at their home.

My goal was to see their living situation and see if the help they get from the foundation is enough. I wanted to get a standard picture of a “typical” family in this area.



So here comes a little summary of my visits and interviews. I hope this report will help the foundation to get a good understanding of a “typical” family and their needs.

Procedure

I have met and interviewed 9 families at their home, which are located around village of Kabaya in the Western Province, of Rwanda. My first intention was to visit all of the families and do a small interview with all of them; unfortunately I quickly realized that it will not be possible. Because of the difficult terrain and the distance between families. It took long time to go from one family to the next.

View of hills 10 km from Kabaya



View of the hills in the North 7 km from the village of Kabaya



Also I quickly realized the difficult situation they were in and it was so, for most of all of the families. Because of their hard living situation, the interview took quite long time. That's why I decided not to do so many, but longer interviews instead. In that way I would get more correct information and get a better view of their everyday life.

The report

So in this report I will write down the facts that I got from the interviews with the families. I will use a simple way to do this which I hope will be easy to understand. I will simply write down my notes from the meetings with families. At the end I will write a final summary and also my own opinion on what I did see and my personal impressions.

Family 1.

The situation at home is very difficult. Mother has no job and stays at home to take care of the children. The father has neither get a job. What he does is, he goes up the mountains every day and asks around if there's a farmer who needs help. Sometimes he can help out to cultivate and for that he receives some money.

The family also takes care of a cow for another farmer. When the owner comes to take back his cow they receive some money for their help.

There are six children who are living at home. So the parents need to feed six children and themselves. Apart from that they had no electricity, no chairs or tables where children could study. So basically all they could do at home is just eat and go to sleep. Of course they don't have much food and the only bed that was meant for children wasn't big enough so many of them had to sleep on the floor. The nights in Rwanda are very cold (probably because of the altitude) so the children are cold when they sleep, but the parents have nothing to give them. There aren't any mattress in the house either, so children sleep on the ground. Children also have only one pair of shoes (flip-flops) which they got from Jyambere, so they are even cold when they are walking to and from school. So as in many cases helping this family with school is just a little part of what they really need. This family would need clothes, mattress's, mosquito's nets, tables, chairs, gasoil lamps etc.

Family 2.

The family is composed by one old mother and six children.

They have a rabbit which they got from Jyambere, but because they can't protect it outside they have to keep it indoors. So they have built a rabbit hatch in their living room. There's not much space in the room and the children have nowhere to study.

Their home is in as bad quality as any others – meaning big holes in the ceiling, no isolation, homemade beds out of wooden poles and of course a very, very bad conditioned kitchen. To be honest it's not even a kitchen, but a fireplace indoors where they just happen to cook food.

They don't have electricity either, but the good thing in their case is that they live close to the main road and there's a possibility for them to connect to electricity. They also are in great need of clothes, blankets, shoes, mattress, chairs, tables, shoes etc.

Family 3.

In total they are 3 children in the family. They take care of a cow and a sheep for someone else. They are in the same situation as many others. Parents don't work and they go around asking for jobs to do.

The parents have trouble providing food for the family, but they have at least supper every day. Unfortunately sometimes it's the only meal they get during the whole day!

They don't have the possibility for electricity, but a gasoil lamp would help out a lot.

Family 4.

There are 5 children in the family.

The family has land, 2 rabbits from Jyambere and 2 sheep.

They have probably the most animals of everyone I've met during my visits and the children seem to at least be in quite good situation – compared to others of course.

Even though they have land and animals the living standards is still poor. There is no electricity, beds if there is, it is really bad and there is basically no furniture.

So as you probably understand now, there are basically no families who can provide studying possibilities for children at home. The biggest concern for them all is to get some food and pay school fees. If the children get food twice a day – every day, it should be considered as a good situation. The electricity is completely out of question, but if there would be some lamps. Like gasoil or battery-powered it would help.

Family 5.

There are three children in the family. All of them are girls. Family takes care of two goats, but these are not theirs and they only get some money at the end of the year.

Without another support than the one of Jyambere children will not be able to continue to go to school. The situation at home is bad – all girls sleep in one wooden bed with only one old blanket to cover with. Family has some land, but that means somebody has to take care of it. The mother is not strong enough to do it and that means children have to do it.

Family 6.

Family is composed by mother and 6 children. The father is dead 3 years ago.

Family has some land and they grow sweet potatoes and maize. Family have 11 rabbits in total.

Children get food at least once a day – they always have supper, but it happens that they don't have breakfast or lunch. Unfortunately children don't have the possibility to study at home and they have to walk in the dark to the school. It takes them 30 minutes to get to school, they get really cold in the morning and don't have any warm clothes. Children have to work after school and also they don't have electricity, so they can't study at home.

The situation at home is really bad – Two Children sleep on the floor. They put something on the ground and they sleep in their clothes because they don't have any blankets. The rest of the children sleep on the bed, but neither have any blankets. Children are in desperate need of shoes, blankets and matras's. They are cold when sleeping and walking to school and also their school materials are finished.

Family 7.

The Family is composed by two parents and 5 children. One girl gets support of Jyambere

The school material was finished two months ago and she borrowed material from her friends to be able to finish school.

Her twee other sisters are not sponsored by Jyambere and they have to go to work to be able to buy school material. Sometimes they borrow from the one who get help from Jyambere. The reason why her school material get quick finished.

The Family has 2 goats and one cow which they take care of for others. Compared to other families they have "quite a lot" of land. They use the land to grow food. They don't sell it, but use it for

themselves. Parents go also around looking for jobs. Children have to work after school. They bring water and food for the animals.

Unfortunately the children don't get breakfast, ever. Sometimes they get lunch but at least they always have dinner.

Family has a table at home, but no electricity, so that the children can do the home work, but only until it gets dark. They have a bed at home, so they don't need to sleep on the floor, but it's a terrible bed and they don't have enough blankets. Also the blankets that they do have are worthless and basically useless. The boy sleeps alone and the girls sleep together in one room.

They are in great need of jackets, shoes and sweaters for everyday use.

Family 8.

The family is taken care of by one mother. She has five children. The two children who are sponsored by Jyambere are doing well in school. They passed at 83 respectively 81%, when you need to have 50% to pass.

The school material has finished though. They couldn't borrow from anybody and for the past two weeks they had only one notebook for all classes. Their day starts when they wake up at 6am and go to bring food and water for the rabbit. When they come home after school, they go to bring more food for the rabbit. They work until it's about 30 minutes left till the start of the lessons. Then they get ready and leave - take about 10 minutes of walking to get to school.

Family has a small land where they grow some vegetables. During the day mother and 3 oldest children go to the hills to look for a job. Children don't get any breakfast or lunch, but at least they get supper every day. Children don't have any possibilities to study at home either and they only have one pair of flip-flop each.

All of the children sleep on the ground; they put something on the floor, but no mattress. They don't have anything to cover themselves with either, they sleep in their cloths only. Mother sleeps alone and boys and girls sleep separately. One of the girls gets sick often because they have no food and bad cloths. It's not dark when children are walking to school, but they are complaining that it's really cold!

If the children are studying on morning schedule they finish school at 12 and if it's afternoon class they finish around 4pm or 16 o'clock.

This family is in great need of shoes, sweaters and school-material.

Family 9.

The sponsored child is a good student and the family have most land of all the families that I have met. They even have avocado trees, but unfortunately this family is in big trouble. The mother died and the father is very sick and in really bad shape when I was visiting them. I don't know for sure if he's eve alive any more. They basically survive by farming wheat and maize.

The boy is really good student, I think he's on top of his class, so it's really sad the situation they are in. To be honest I don't really know what's can be done to help this family.

Conclusion

As you can probably see from the stories, the situation of the families I visited is not good at all. There are some who are managing to get some food every day and have some place to sleep. That is though applicable to families living in Kabaya.

People who live outside of Kabaya in the hills or some other towns are basically in disaster situation. They get food just once a day and sometimes it can be that they don't get any food at all in some days. Many children are falling asleep during class, others feel dizzy.

Anyway it basically means that they can't focus and achieve good results at school.

Murambi school has good possibilities to provide food for children, they could organize breakfast and lunch.

It would of course cost a little bit more in school fees, but it's worth. What's the point of paying school fees when you know that they will fail because they don't get enough nutrition?

Murambi school also has most of Jyambere children at the moment it's around 22 if I'm not mistaking.

It would make it easier to follow-up the children. Because it takes time and it's difficult to visit other schools outside of Kabaya. Bukunzi school for instance, it's very far and the roads are very bad.

So I would suggest investing and try to develop the activities of the foundation at Murambi School.

People responsible for Jyambere live also close to this school, so it should be the best choice.

Other big problem for children is clothes and beds. Many children are very cold when they are walking to school, so they would need warm clothes and shoes. Many families are so poor that the clothes children get from Jyambere are the only thing that they have to wear.

The school materials are also finishing before time.

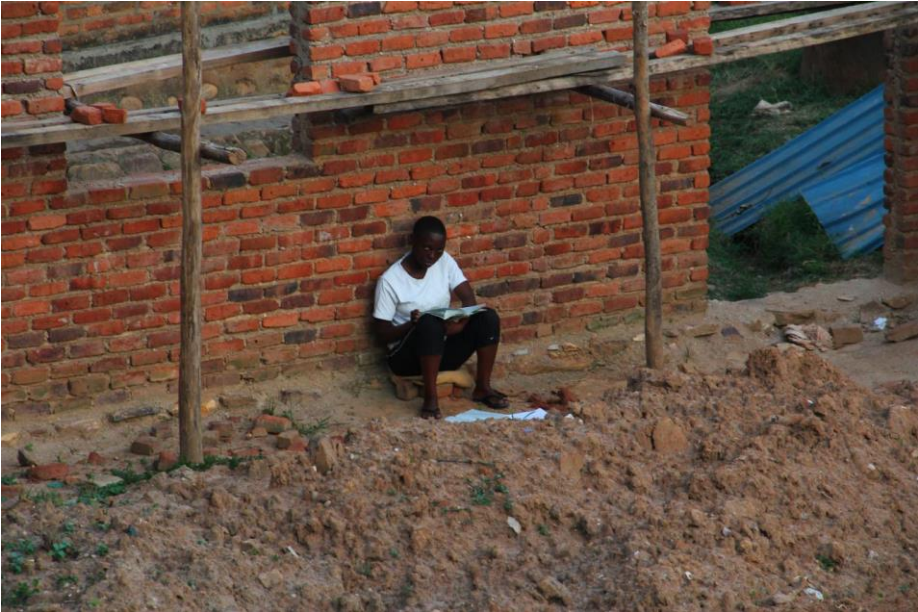
It is difficult for children to concentrate at school and be successful. I believe because they are unable to study at home and they must work after class. Children are often sick, they must work on the family's fields or stay home to do housework every day. These circumstances is very tough for the children.

Thank you kindly to read this with me and above all to consider it!



Kind regards,
Totó

Doing homework before it get dark



On the School bench: six children on one bench



Fire and cooking place



Children take care of animals before and after school

