



Ubuntu “Grace” Ndora Empowerment Group, Rwanda Year 2 – Profile of a Household

The following report highlights the activities and achievements of a family from your empowerment group which is now in its third year. This profile report is just one example of what all the children in your group have experienced.

Head of Household: Olive, 20

Dependents: sisters Claudine, 15, Nadine, 13, and Patience, 9; brothers Pacifique, 9 and Elissa, 2
(The picture to the right features Olive and her siblings when they first began the ZOE empowerment program.)

Challenges: In 2011 Olive’s father died and her family was plunged into dire poverty. Her mother has a chronic stomach disease and cannot support or care for the family. Olive has borne that responsibility. As is the case with most of the young orphans in a community, she was exploited and abused as she struggled to find work to buy food for the family. They had no home of their own so she also had to work in exchange for a place to live. They had no money for cleaning supplies, no source of clean drinking water and, of course, no money for school fees and supplies. All of the children had to leave school, which would have been their connection to the community. Stigmatized and isolated, their lives were incredibly miserable. Eating only four meals a week, all of the children suffered from malnutrition and had intestinal worms as well. Not surprisingly, they had no faith in God. Even if they had, they would not have attended church, because of their ragged clothing.



The following are Olive’s most recent responses to the Dream questions:

- What makes you feel sad? *Hunger*
- What makes you happy? *Having a lot of food to eat*
- What happens in the community that you do not like? *Being hungry and begging*
- What is your dream for the future? *Running a business*
- What will be your guiding principles to achieve your dream? *Working hard; savings; prayer*

Family Specific Achievements Because Of Your Partnership

Food Security: These children were on the edge of starvation when they were invited to join the Ubuntu Empowerment Group. ZOE needed to help Olive develop multiple ways to provide food and other necessities for her family. The first step was to start growing food. Olive received vegetable seeds and a hoe and was taught how to plant a small kitchen garden so that in a matter of weeks they had fresh leafy, vegetables to cook. She also planted a crop of beans so that she would have a staple food item she could store. After training in animal

husbandry, the family received the grant of a goat from ZOE. The goat has produced two more goats. With profits from her first income generating project, she bought a hen which she has bred. Currently she is keeping five hens to breed and for egg production. The animals are a source of income and have the additional benefit of providing fertilizer for her garden. From being hungry all of the time, Olive and her siblings are now eating three healthy meals consisting of cassava, beans, maize and vegetables every day.



Olive with her goats and her kitchen garden.

Income Generation: In order to maintain a stable food supply and cover other living expenses, Olive needed a reliable income. Initially, she received a small grant from ZOE to sell sorghum juice. Then she participated in business and financial management training and decided to also start selling fruit and vegetables while still growing her sorghum juice business. Both businesses are strong enough that she is able to meet her family's needs and even hire two people to help her. Although ZOE initially provided funds for her siblings to return to school, she now pays for their supplies and uniforms. Best of all, she is no longer exploited or abused by others as she works to earn her money.



Left Olive selling her produce at market, right is Olive preparing the sorghum juice.



Health/Housing: Given the children's poor physical condition, health was also a priority for this impoverished family. ZOE helped Olive get health insurance for the family, which gave them access to health care. However, health education was also very important. Olive joined her group in health and hygiene training, learning the

importance of boiling water, hand washing, and cleaning around the house to keep pests away. The group helped the family clean the house and build a latrine. Once the children demonstrated that they were practicing good health and hygiene principles, ZOE provided them with mosquito nets to prevent diseases.

Having a safe housing was also an issue for Olive's family. She saved her money and used proceeds from group activities to pay for construction materials. ZOE provided the roof for both the house and the latrine and the money to hire a construction supervisor. Her working group provided the labor. She is proud of her new home and can now focus her time and energy on building her business instead of having to work in exchange for housing.

Community Connections: Having been isolated and stigmatized for years, Olive found grace in her group. There she has shared her story and found support from the others who understood because they had similar experiences. The group has worked together on each other's homes, gardens and projects; they have created group funds to help each other financially; during weekly meetings they study the bible and pray. In short, they have become extended family, supporting and visiting each other. Through her group, Olive and her family have learned that God does indeed love them and has a plan for their lives. They have joined a church and Olive sings in the choir. According to their ZOE program facilitator, because of their new faith, they share joy and food with others as they believe it has been a gift from God. Olive says, *"Nothing else makes me happy but only to wake up and find what to cook. I am always thankful."*

Her prayer requests are for the children's growth, the family's progress and her mother's recovery.