

# VILLAGE TIMES

TIKKUN OLAM EDITION \* TERM I 2015



# NOTE FROM OUR VILLAGE DIRECTOR



This year, I am celebrating my fourth anniversary since I joined Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village (ASYV). Yes, four exhilarating years! It is the same amount of time our kids spend in the Village from their first year,

Enrichment Year, to their graduation. In these formative years, our kids learn the essence of healing, the significance of self-awareness, and the ability to serve and to give back. In the end, they learn to *'Pay It Forward!'*

In four years, I have seen so much good in our Village and the impact that we (our children and their educators) have in our community. I have learned and seen that one does not need much to make a lasting change; I have seen this through the breathtaking actions of our kids in our district where ASYV is located.

As you are aware, our kids come from all corners of Rwanda. The first day they arrive at our Village, we introduce them to their new (surrogate) family mother, big sister / big brother and cousin. This will become their family for four years, but also for the rest of their lives because we believe building long-lasting relationships is the foundation to healing the heart of Rwanda's orphaned and most vulnerable youth.

At home, our kids learn to embrace ASYV's core values in a healing environment, supported by parental wholeness and a range of enrichment programs. All activities in the Village enable our kids to build trust and self-awareness and to recognize their own potential. Through this process of healing their hearts (Tikkun Halev), our children learn that they can become active agents of change in their society (Tikkun Olam).

In the Village, we believe that everything in our kids' environment has to reinforce the narrative of who they can become. They learn to understand the world's imperfections and how it functions. Every day, through our programs, activities, meetings and more, the ASYV staff shows them their relevance and plant in them the seeds of hope.

We begin to realize some success only when the children recognize that they have an important role to play in making their world and their community a better place than they found it in

This is the essence of our Village. Anne Heyman, our kids' Grand Mother and Founder of ASYV believed that a child could be raised by the community. She also believed that the Village could be a permanent solution to ending the orphan crisis in Rwanda.

Seven years since its conception, we witness that our kids, alumni included are beginning to have an impact in their communities. Our children are learning to see a challenge as an opportunity to do something good. And this is the best achievement any educator can hope for.

As I end this message, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Anne for having had the idea and for having created a transformational Village instead of a transactional institute. I am truly grateful for having the opportunity to be part of this unique journey. I would also like to thank our Board of Trustees for their wisdom and intelligence in ensuring that our mission lives on. I also want to thank our kind donors whose support is unparalleled. Together, we will *'be the change that we want to see'*.

**Jean-Claude Nkulikiyimfura**  
**Village Director**

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**How the  
World's most  
Vulnerable  
Youth are  
Repairing  
the World**



***Tikkun Olam*** is a Hebrew phrase that means “Repairing or Healing the World”. This philosophy is not restricted to Judaism, but instead reflects **the belief that humanity has a shared responsibility to work together towards social justice, equality, and cohesion.**

Regardless of race, culture, religion, or socioeconomic status **every single person has the power and obligation to impact the world in a positive way.**

The students at Agahozo-Shalom have been labeled by the world as “vulnerable”. During their time at the Village, they are given the resources and supportive environment that enables their **transformation into socially responsible citizens of the world.**

ASYV believes that through healing the world, you can also heal yourself. During Enrichment Year (first year), our students focus on ***Tikkun Halev***, meaning **to repair the heart.** The next three years at the Village consist of grade-wide Tikkun Olam projects that deliberately reflect the grade’s growth and maturity as they progress to their Senior Six (final) year.



## **Meet Clarisse - an Enrichment Year student at ASYV**

“Since I was born I have really fought for my education and for myself. I studied as hard as possible in order to achieve my goals because I first loved myself, so that I can be who I want to be”

# **TIK**

**Enrichment Year students arrive at the Village from all thirty districts of Rwanda. Each student comes from a different environment, with a different history, and different burdens. Before they can be expected to repair the world, these students need to repair their own hearts. Tikkun Halev. This process begins with the support of their new family, formal counseling with social workers, and informal counseling through self expression in art and sports.**

“For me I understand that Tikkun Halev means that at first you must help yourself before you are able to help others. It is the same as if I am at school and someone wants me to explain mathematics. First I need to learn the lesson and do more exercises, so that I can explain it and memorize it for myself. Afterwards, I can help teach others.

Since I was born I have really fought for my education and for myself. I studied as hard as possible in order to achieve my goals because I first loved myself, so that I can be who I want to be.

Anne Heymen, the founder of ASYV helped the children of Rwanda, who were faced with a cruel world. She saw that we needed help, so she helped us even though we could not pay her back. Now that Agahozo-Shalom has helped me, I will be able to help others.

Recently a graduate from ASYV was involved in a terrible car accident and was unable to afford the expensive surgery. Once we heard the news, everyone at the Village put all the money that we had together in order to support him. I was able to do this because Agahozo-Shalom had initially supported me.

Tikkun Halev and Tikkun Olam are things which are very important in my daily life, but Tikkun Olam cannot be done by force. If you want to help, you can do it. I know that when I am in need of help, I will feel regret if I do not help others, because the world turns time to time”

# KUNHALEV

# Tikkun Olam Senior 4

Senior Four (S4) is the second year at ASYV, but the first time the kids participate in a grade-wide Tikkun Olam project. Still new to the Village, their first project revolves around physical construction.




During this first term, Senior 4 students helped reconstruct the inside and outside of a family's home in Rubona, a small town located 2 Km from the Village. The family is a mother, and two young sons, who are both studying at Rubona Primary School.



ASYV Senior 4 students reached out to nearby neighbors of the family whom to purchase water, in order to create mud for the outside of the house. Next term the ASYV students will continue working on internal repairs by building bricks for the kitchen and bathroom.





**“Leading Tikkin Olam is something very nice because it makes me happy that I gave a hand to someone in need” - Senior 4 Tikkun Olam Coordinator Dorcus**


# TIKKUN OLAM SENIOR 5



Senior Five (S5) marks the student's third year at Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village. By this time, their language skills have

evolved and all of their classes are taught in English. The students are much more confident in their abilities and have learned an immeasurable amount over the past few years.

For these reasons, the S5 Tikkun Olam projects revolve around education. Every week, the S5 grade teaches six different English classes to P4 and P5 (7 - 12 year old, junior high) students at Rubona Primary School, in addition to offering courses for local residents as well. Our students collaborate with teachers from Rubona Primary School and study various textbooks to prepare the weekly curriculum.



**“Teaching represents a different experience for them. They are taught at the school, but this gives them the chance to be the teacher, to imitate their teachers, and share what they have learned. In the process of teaching, they increase their public speaking skills, sharpen their minds, and have the opportunity to interact with diverse groups of people” -Senior 5 Grade Coordinator Jose**



# TIKKUN OLAM

## SENIOR 6

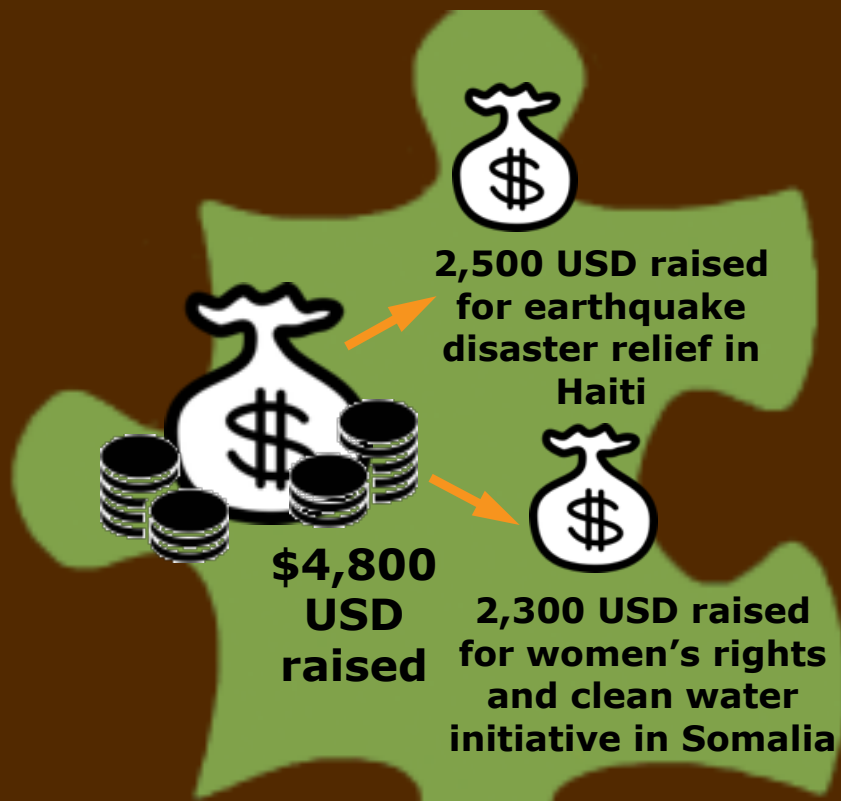
Senior Six (S6) is the final, fourth year at Agahozo-Shalom and revolves around preparing our students for life outside of the Village. Their Tikkun Olam emphasizes project management and involvement with the local community. S6 Tikkun Olam is designed for our students to be able to gain experience working outside of ASYV and learn where they want their place in the world to be.

This year's S6 grade is named Ingenzi grade, and they have adopted the ASYV core value of "support" as the model for their Tikkun Olam project.

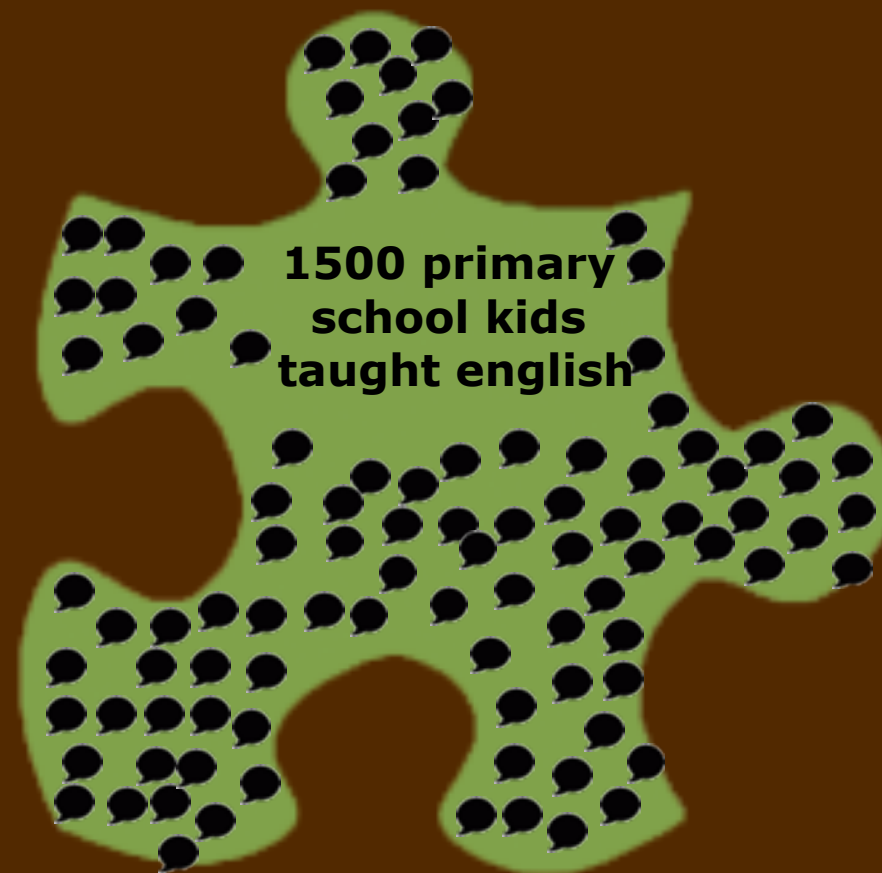
Underscoring their belief in the importance of support, Ingenzi students created an initiative to care for a disadvantaged family living in Rubona. The family consists of five children who suffer from Kwashiorkor, severe protein malnutrition, and are cared for by their two disabled grandparents.



Ingenzi Grade cleaned the family's home and taught the children proper hygiene techniques. They bought the family much needed materials, including clothes, soap, and lots of food. After delivering these items, the students cooked dinner for the family to enjoy together. In addition to the support given to this family, Ingenzi Grade also participates in the countries' community service initiative by volunteering with local residents of Rubona.



**TIKKUN OLAM  
IMPACT AT A GLANCE  
2010 - 2015**



## Meet KUBWIMANA Ange Longin - The Tikkun Olam Coordinator at ASYV



**"I have been** working at Agahozo-Shalom since 2009. In addition to being a counselor (big brother) for the Thomas Sankara family, I have had many other responsibilities including coaching basketball and acting as chief editor of the Village Newspaper.

From the beginning I have been very impressed by the ways of living between the kids and staff, as well as the philosophy of the Village and the family structure. Two of the main pillars of the ASYV philosophy that touched me the most are Tikkun Halev, where different activities and programs are put into place to heal the wounds and scars of kids from their vulnerable past, and Tikkun Olam, where the kid's go outside the Village to heal the world by supporting vulnerable people. We started Tikkun Olam activities in 2010, and since then our kids have grown up with the culture of helping others in need.

All of these Tikkun Olam activities are initiated and implemented by the kids. The staff is here to support by ensuring that everything is well planned, that the kids are provided with everything they need in order to fulfill their initiatives, and to guarantee that our student's are safe while offering help to the local communities. For the past three years, I've been coordinating the activities of Tikkun Olam at the Village level, and am assisted by the Tikkun Olam club and the entire staff team who participate regularly in these activities.

We are so delighted by the impressive work done by the kids in Tikkun Olam activities and how sensitive they are of the problems of their neighbors, local communities, country and the entire World. On behalf of the Tikkun Olam team we're so proud of everything the kid's have accomplished."

# Senior

# 6

legacy project

**“How will we be remembered?”**

**Every year, the S6 grade independently designs, finances, manages, and completes a special Tikkun Olam initiative. Each legacy project enables the graduating class to “pay it forward” by creating a permanent and personalized project. These tangible developments continue making an impact even after our students have graduated, a reminder of the influence each grade has had on the continued success of ASYV and their community.**



S6 class is known as Ingenzi Grade. For their legacy project, they planted over 250 banana trees in the Village's farm. This doubled the banana supply, which increases ASYV's capacity to be self-sufficient.

## INGENZI GRADE

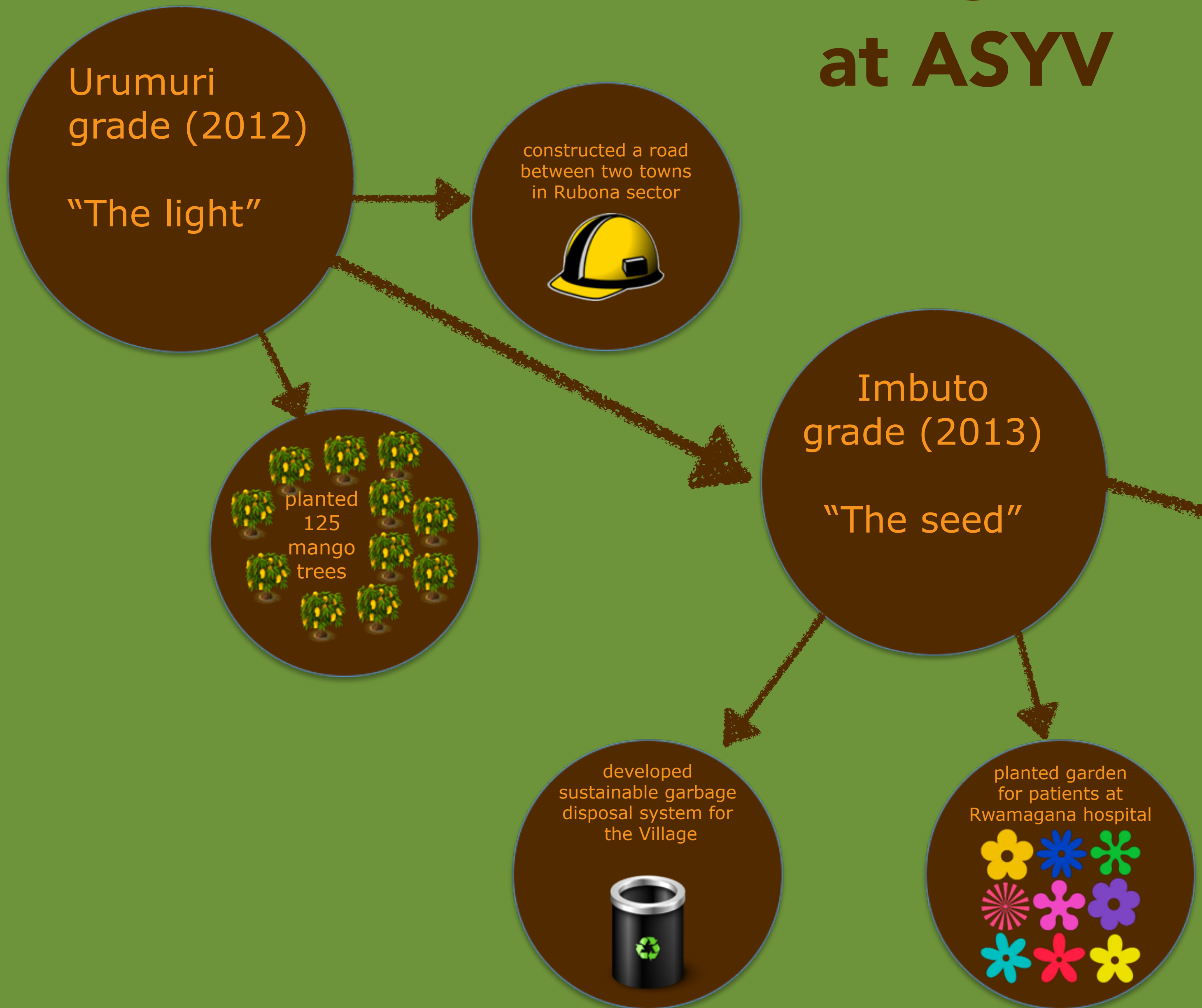
"It is our hope that when students eat bananas, they will remember our grade"  
-Michael, an Ingenzi Grade student.

Ingenzi Grade also invested outside of the Village, delivering vulnerable families with much needed assistance. They saved their own money to be able to provide ten impoverished citizens with two years of health insurance.



Additionally, they gifted goats to five different families, which will provide fertilizer to develop gardens. "Paying it forward" does not end here, as the goats will reproduce and the five families once helped by Ingenzi Grade will be able to help others. Three goats are already pregnant.

# S6 Legacies at ASYV

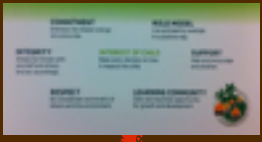


furnished a widow's home with basic materials, including a bed and mattress



Ingenzi grade (2015)  
"the one who is successful"

built a Core Values billboard for ASYV and Rubona



planted 250 banana trees



funded 2 years of medical insurance for 10 people



Indatwa grade (2014)  
"the one we acclaim and compliment"

donated 5 goats to vulnerable families



The Informal Education Department at ASYV contains various clubs that all grades can participate in, including **Tikkun Olam Club**



Members are in charge of running the logistics for individual grade projects. They seek out needs within the community and ASYV and coordinate how to accomplish these endeavors.

They also participate in volunteer work within the Village. During the first term this year, the Tikkun Olam Club organized a massive clothes donation for students to be able to help out their fellow peers who cannot afford more than a few outfits.



# Expanding Horizons with



For a few weeks during the first term of 2015, Agahozo-Shalom was home to a group of 10 high school graduates from Young Judaea. Young Judaea is a Jewish organization that offers young Europeans and Americans the opportunity to live in Israel for a year and to engage in experiential learning through meaningful volunteer work and college courses. As part of the program, they traveled to Rwanda where they volunteered at the Village.

During their time here, they engaged in Tikkun Olam as they helped out our kitchen staff, worked on the farm, and made themselves available for any other work needing to be done. This was a great opportunity for Young Judaea to continue exploring new cultures and ways of life. Our students at Agahozo-Shalom were also able to form meaningful relationships with peers from around the world.

Many of the Young Judea participants had previously been volunteering at Yemin Orde, which is the Youth Village in Israel that ASYV was inspired by. This meant that Young Judea was able to learn more about the concept of “Youth Villages” and social change, while everyone here at Agahozo-Shalom appreciated the opportunity to hear unique perspectives about our work. **Young Judaea’s time at ASYV really exemplifies the philosophy of “Tikkun Olam”, as students from England, America, and Israel come together in Agahozo-Shalom to help “repair the world”.**



**Meet Daniel Sonn -  
A Young Judeaea volunteer, and  
a recent high school graduate  
from England. Daniel worked  
with Staff member Max Rewak  
and the students at ASYV to  
produce a song that will help  
raise money for the Village.**



**“As we entered** our last week at the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village, the group felt that time was moving too fast and that we would have to work very hard to complete all of our personal goals that we had set out at the beginning of the trip. For myself, I was determined to showcase the talented musical artists in the village by producing a pop song.

The song is about hope and believing in your dreams, which is a running theme throughout the Village, as some of the students had come from nothing and were now able to make a life for themselves through the power of education. The lyrics that they had written were incredibly honest. Not to give too much away, a lyric in the song is **'I see men dying on the street, working 10 hour days and still can't afford to eat.'** This put into perspective the lives that some of them lived before they came to the Village.

It is clear to see that the students at the Village are incredibly talented, and hopefully one day they will have a chance at realizing their music worldwide. **When the song is fully complete, it will be released worldwide on iTunes and all proceeds will go to the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village.”**

# students create Hope for the Future

A group of Agahozo-Shalom students decided that they wanted to do even more for their community. In search for a **long-term and sustainable project**, "Hope For the Future" was founded. This organization was launched on African Child's Day (June 16<sup>th</sup>) in 2013 and consists of twenty-four students from each grade, who are committed to "paying it forward".

**Hope for the Future is a student-run, student-created, and student-funded initiative**

Working together with local educators, our students visited primary schools and family homes in order to decide which children were in the most vulnerable situations. **Hope for the Future now provides continued support to four orphaned children living in the near-by town of Rubona.**

"The main purpose of Hope for the Future is to pay it forward. We chose students most in need and we decided to provide them with everything necessary that was in our means, so that they can pursue their dreams and conquer their future" –Maxime, a member of Hope for the Future

Sacrificing their limited pocket money, the group cares for these children in a multitude of ways, including covering school fees and school materials. In addition to financial support, Hope for the Future provides advocacy with local actors to ensure that the children have the resources they need to receive help for any psychosocial issues that arise as a result of their difficult upbringing.



**"We want to keep emphasizing the legacy of Tikkun Olam. We want to highlight that we've been healed and we want to heal the world. No matter how big or small, we must have the courage to do something. Even if we are still a young generation, (Hope for the Future) wants to prove that we are responsible for our country, for the development of our nation".**



## Hope for the Future gives... support /sə'pɔ:t/ to help & encourage one another



schools materials, including school bags, books, pens, and school uniforms



vegetable gardens for their family homes



extra class fees



clothes and shoes

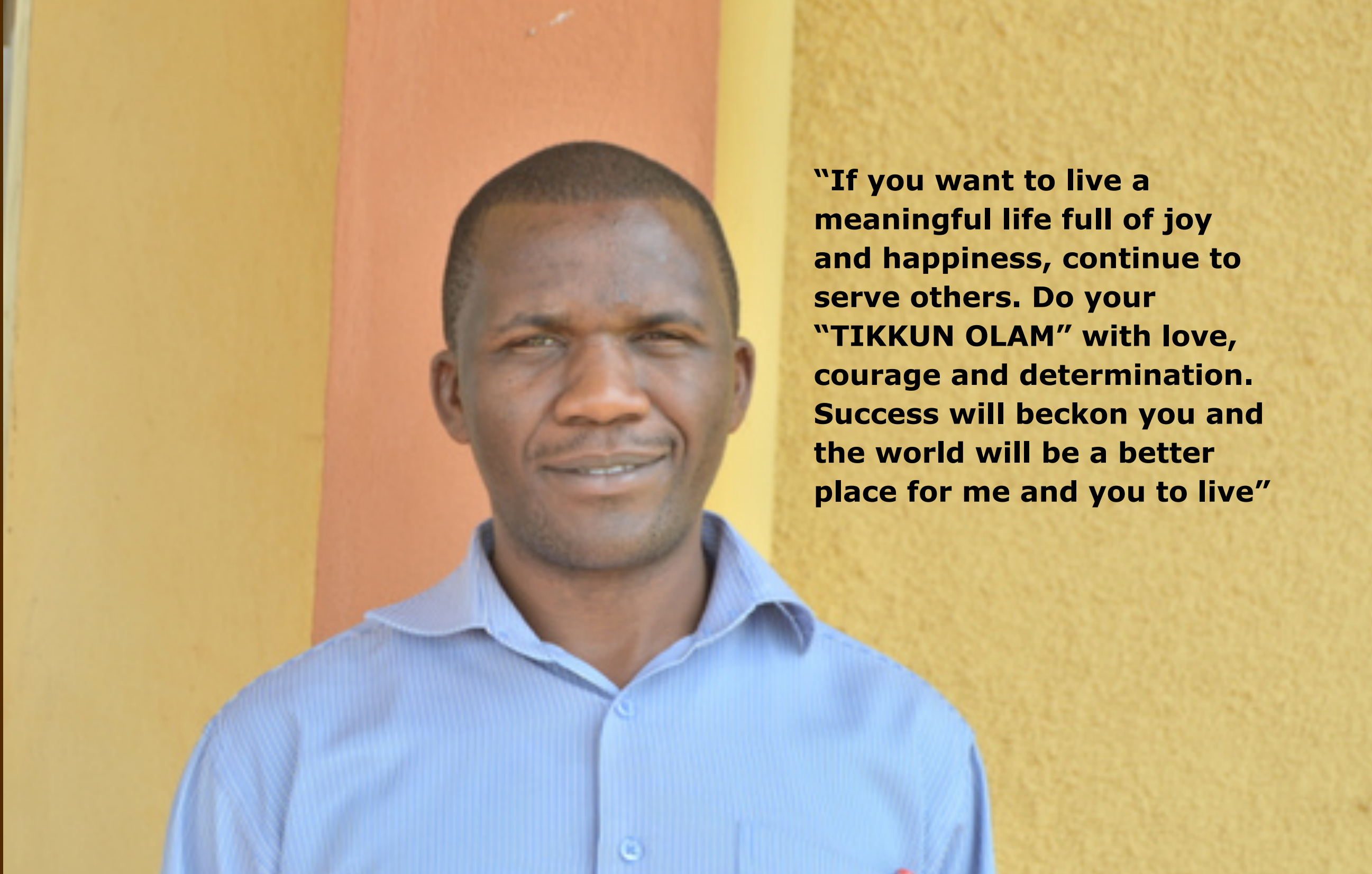


Health insurance cards



life discussions and encouragement to move forward





**“If you want to live a meaningful life full of joy and happiness, continue to serve others. Do your “TIKKUN OLAM” with love, courage and determination. Success will beckon you and the world will be a better place for me and you to live”**

**Meet Julius - a teacher at Liquidnet Family High school in the Village. While Tikkun Olam is a program that originated in the Informal Education Department, it has since spread to every part of the Village.**

**“We are all** familiar with the phrase “TIKKUN OLAM” in the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village. We sing it every day like a popular song and we surely do it, but have we reflected on the true value of the actions we do? We need to, so that we don’t just do (Tikkun Olam) as a routine, but instead treat it as the blessed treasure we have on earth that makes us different from “them”.

Mahatma Gandhi says, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” This is the main goal of “TIKKUN OLAM”; being able to identify exactly who we are. And once we have known who we are, we will give more and even more to others. To identify yourself is to know your strengths and weaknesses, and only by serving others will you be able to know that. From the smile on their faces, the sweet appreciating words they say to you, the power you lend them to work harder.. all that shows you exactly who you are.

I want you to reflect on the number of times you have done “TIKKUN OLAM” and ask yourself: which skills have I learnt that I didn’t know I had? Which talents have I identified that I didn’t practice before? How many people have I given a smile by doing something small for them? How would the lives of those people be without my contribution? When you get answers for these questions, you will realize that you have been a hero to someone, you are a generous person, you have a big heart that cares for others, and above all you will be happy.

When you get answers for these questions, you will realize that you have been a hero to someone, you are a generous person, you have a big heart that cares for others, and above all you will be happy.

“Happiness doesn't result from what we get, but from what we give.” These are the words of Ben Carson. I believe giving makes you feel free and happy, especially when you see the fruits of how the lives of those whom you have helped have greatly transformed.

**“Mahatma Gandhi says, ‘The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.’ This is the main goal of “TIKKUN OLAM”; being able to identify exactly who you are...To identify yourself is to know your strengths and weaknesses, and only by serving others will you be able to know that”**

Many of us keep wondering and asking ourselves the cause of Anne Heyman’s constant smile. I perceive it originating from “TIKKUN OLAM”, seeing her work of starting the Village as a way of healing the broken hearted come true, seeing all your smiling faces and all your determination to excel. I believe you were mirrors for her to reflect the best inside her, and although she passed away, she had found herself as a loving person, and hence a cause to smile.

If you want to live a meaningful life full of joy and happiness, continue to serve others. Do your “TIKKUN OLAM” with love, courage and determination. By doing this you will discover that many blessings will come your way. Success will beckon you and the world will be a better place for you and I to live.”



## National Service Program in Rwanda

**Tikkun Olam** is unique to Agahozo-Shalom, however the ideology of “giving back” can be found throughout all of Rwanda. Rwandan citizens feel a responsibility towards investing in the development of their local community and country, which has led to the creation of several countrywide volunteer programs. *Uregereso*, or The National Service Program is a mandatory civic education initiative for all S6 graduated classes in Rwanda.

**After completing** their final exams and thus their secondary school education, Senior Six students return home to their sector for a few weeks of community service and seminars surrounding social responsibility. The specific community work varies across the country, dependent on each region's local needs. During these conferences, recent graduates have the opportunity to discuss the importance of ethical values and the vision of their country and of the world. The National Service Program offers students the chance to apply their education to solving real tangible issues and orientates them to life outside of high school.

**“This program is a good opportunity for students who have been abandoned by society to be able to reconnect. When our students exit Agahozo-Shalom, we have seen them become leaders in their sector's National Service Program. They really exemplify our core values. It is a good evaluation of who they will be in the future”**

**– Jean Marie Vianney (Issa) Sikubwabo, Director of Education, Training & Philosophy**

*Infore* - a Kinyarwanda word that most closely translates to “supreme quality or set of values considerate of society”

In addition to The National Service Program, everyone in the country participates in an entire day of community work at the end of each month. This obviously supports the development of Rwanda, but also allows for neighbors to meet each other and build strong connections to their communities.

These past two initiatives, as well as many others that have been implemented in Rwanda, are not going unnoticed, as many neighboring countries are beginning to adopt similar programs.

**After overcoming the horrific genocide in 1994, Rwanda has shown tremendous resilience and has transformed into one of the leading countries of East Africa**

“I asked myself what could I do for the Village? The garden is just from the kitchen staff. It is just for healing the world, just for the children”



**Meet Hilam – The man behind the scenes who prepares breakfast, lunch, and dinner for over 500 students and staff everyday. His favorite food is potato soup and he is almost always smiling.**

**Hilam joined ASYV** as Kitchen Manager on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009 when the Village was only a single building. At that time, the roads were so poor that “even the cows would fall down trying to pass”. Despite having a great job, he realized his place was with Agahozo-Shalom in order to help the most vulnerable children in his country.

The students receive every meal within the Village, so it is imperative that they are provided with a nourishing and balanced diet, as well as educated in kitchen and nutrition skills. Hilam ensures that both happen every day.

“The Dining Hall building is like a protector of the whole Village because everyone comes to breakfast to start their day, and then at lunch, and even at dinner. We are very happy to do that. That is why this is my place. I love the Village – it is like my home”.



Inspired by Tikkun Olam, Hilam decided to start his own personal project. When everyone else left for vacation, he stayed at ASYV and spent his holiday clearing the Village grounds and building gardens filled with vegetables, herbs, and fruits. These gardens provide fresh produce for the kitchen staff to cook, as well as deter snakes from invading students' homes.

“I asked myself what could I do for the Village? How am I going to be able to do something important without any outside support? It is a good thing because the farm uses the Village's budget, but the garden is just from the kitchen staff. It is just for 'healing the world', just for the children”.



## Remembering our founder Anne Heyman...



This term has been filled with countless accomplishments and reasons to celebrate here at the Village, however it has also been a time of reflection and mourning.

The beginning of 2015 marked the one year anniversary of the tragic passing of Agahozo-Shalom's founder Anne Heyman. Everyone who was lucky enough to have met her knows what a truly inspiring and passionate woman she was. The creation of Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village was only made possible through her tireless hard work and dedication to help others.



There is an immense sense of gratitude for what Anne Heyman started, as well as a deep sadness that she is no longer with us. She faced the world's most difficult challenges with an unwavering belief that they could be fixed, if and when every person takes shared responsibility for the state of humanity. An incredible yet humble woman, Anne Heyman always refused to accept the overflowing appreciation directed towards her, instead requesting,

**“Don't thank me, just pay it forward”.**

**Reflective of her kind, generous spirit, the Village decided to commemorate her life through a Tikkun Olam volunteer project.**

In 2011, a three-classroom block was built, supported by ASYV Tikkun Olam activities by the Urumuli Grade (Class of 2012). The project was never completed due to financial restraints.

**Agahozo-Shalom believes that by supporting education initiatives, we are contributing to the sustainable development of the entire nation.** In January 2015, the students and staff at ASYV donated one million three hundred and seven Rwandan Francs (around \$1900 US Dollars) of their own money to go towards finishing the repairs at Rubona Primary School. On the anniversary of Anne's death, the entire Village woke up early to walk united to Rubona and began the first day of restorations.

This year-long project includes repairs such as cleaning up the landscape, preparing concrete, and painting the walls of the classrooms. The primary school currently lacks an effective drainage system, leading to leaks and floods whenever it rains; and by laying down concrete, this problem is easily solved.

Agahozo-Shalom selected this mission because we believe that **no matter who you are or where you come from, you have the power and social responsibility to help the world in some way.** Our students have also found that this action is a long-term investment because as we help others, they then turn around and help even more people.

**Everyday our students continue what Anne Heyman began – paying it forward.**





**HELP ASYV HELP OUR STUDENTS HELP THE WORLD.**



[asyv.org](http://asyv.org)

