

## **KOMERA**

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Komera is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.  
All donations are tax deductible.

# TRANSFORMATION

2015 ANNUAL REPORT





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# Meet Vestine

PHOTO: Vestine, in blue, with Komera scholars

This isn't the story of Vestine, although you will meet Vestine and follow her from a shy young girl to the confident bright working woman she is today- this is her journey as a Komera scholar.

This is the story of progress. *Transformation.* The Komera mission is to inspire leadership and empowerment through programs in education, community and sport. How? We believe that by investing in the whole girl, her whole self, her whole community, transformation is possible.

If we are successful, it will be because the girl, and the community, embraced change. And if we succeed, we all succeed; the small village in Rwinkwavu, the larger Kayonza district, the nation of Rwanda, and the global community. We are in this together or not at all.

Join us by following the transformational journey of one of the many Komera shining stars, Vestine.



**EDUCATION**

Komera sponsors scholars with full tuition, including room and board, at a public boarding school in Rwanda. We provide intensive leadership courses and a 9 month post-secondary transition program.



**COMMUNITY**

Komera builds a local community of support for the scholars. At school, a scholar meets with her mentor and fellow scholars once a week. At home, her parents work with the Komera Parent Co-Operative.



**SPORT**

Komera is unique because of its emphasis on empowerment and positive body image through sport. We host the annual Komera Global Run in June.

# WHO WE ARE

In Rwanda, “Komera” means “be strong, have courage.” Komera develops self-confident young women through education, community and sport.

We created Komera, in rural Rwanda, to assist girls who have the courage and desire to pursue secondary education, but who lack the resources to do so.

## OUR VISION

We believe if Komera fulfills its mission, young women in Rwanda will have the confidence to lead positive social change in their community, experience the joy of self discovery, and realize their own personal potential.

As a leadership incubator, we invest in inspired young women taking action towards self empowerment. We create the space for shared experience, education, and leadership training, and we use sport as a tool to empower and connect people around the world.



“BE STRONG, HAVE COURAGE”



**16** 

schools supported for our students across the eastern province of Rwanda

**26** 

new students entering Senior 4 in 2016

**58** 

students have graduated through our program

**500+**

people have been directly impacted by Komera programs



# KOMERA IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS



**2015**

Komera launched the Post-Secondary Transition Program



**30**

scholars graduated secondary school



**75%**

of Komera graduates were employed upon graduation of Post-Secondary Transition Program



**22**

new scholars in Komera Program in 2015



Our Rwanda Board of Directors expanded this year!

**Komera Rwanda Board of Directors:**

Jackie, Piorine, Evelyne, Donatha, Dativah and Francis.  
Absent: Honoline, Juliet, Solange, Jackline, Alice and Shyaka.

PHOTOS: Komera Rwanda Board of Directors, left; Komera Staff, right

## GROWING KOMERA FAMILY

We added several new staff members:

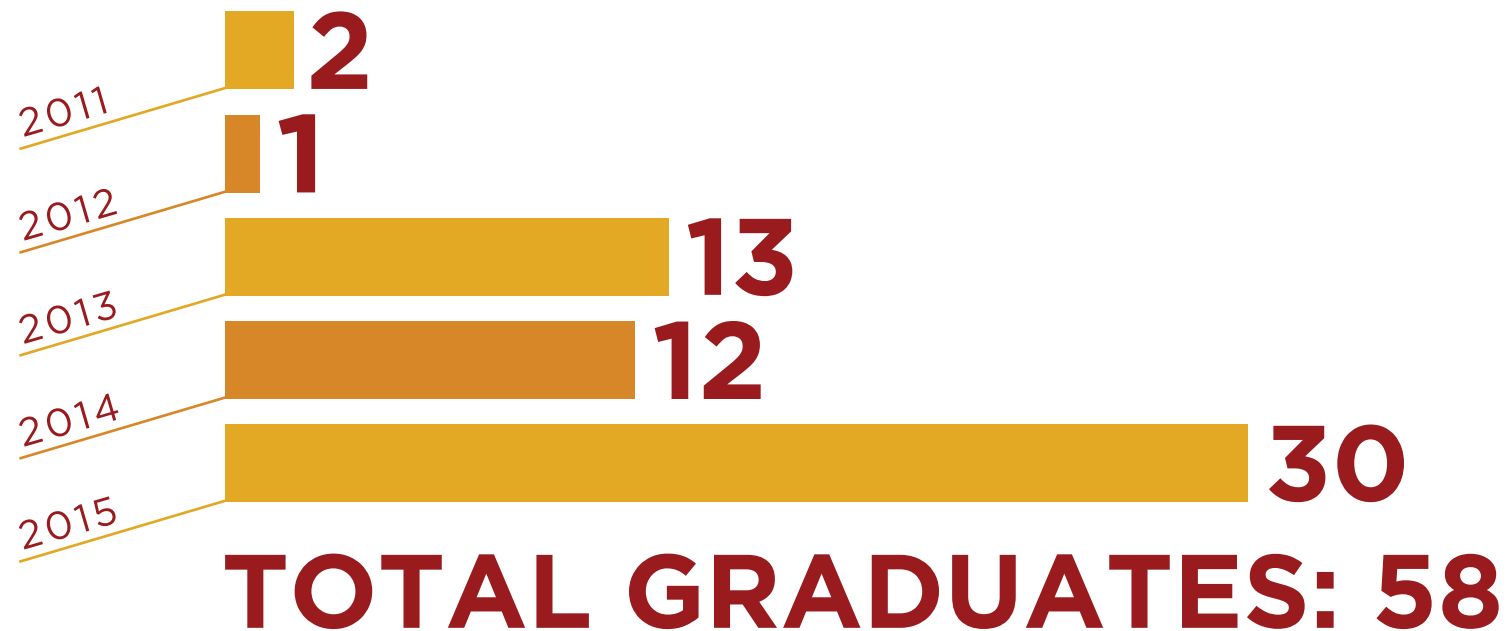
Ruth Kamatali, *Social Worker*

Rosemary Musimire, *Trainer & Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator*

Lauren LeBlanc, *Development and Communications Manager*



*Number of Komera scholars graduated each year:*



# 2015 GROWTH

## KOMERA BUILDING EXPANSION:

In 2015 the Komera Rwanda office moved to a new space to fit our growing family. We also added post-secondary transition program space to the office to accommodate more students and create a more robust computer lab space. Two classroom spaces allows students to break into groups based on their learning level and style to learn more effectively.

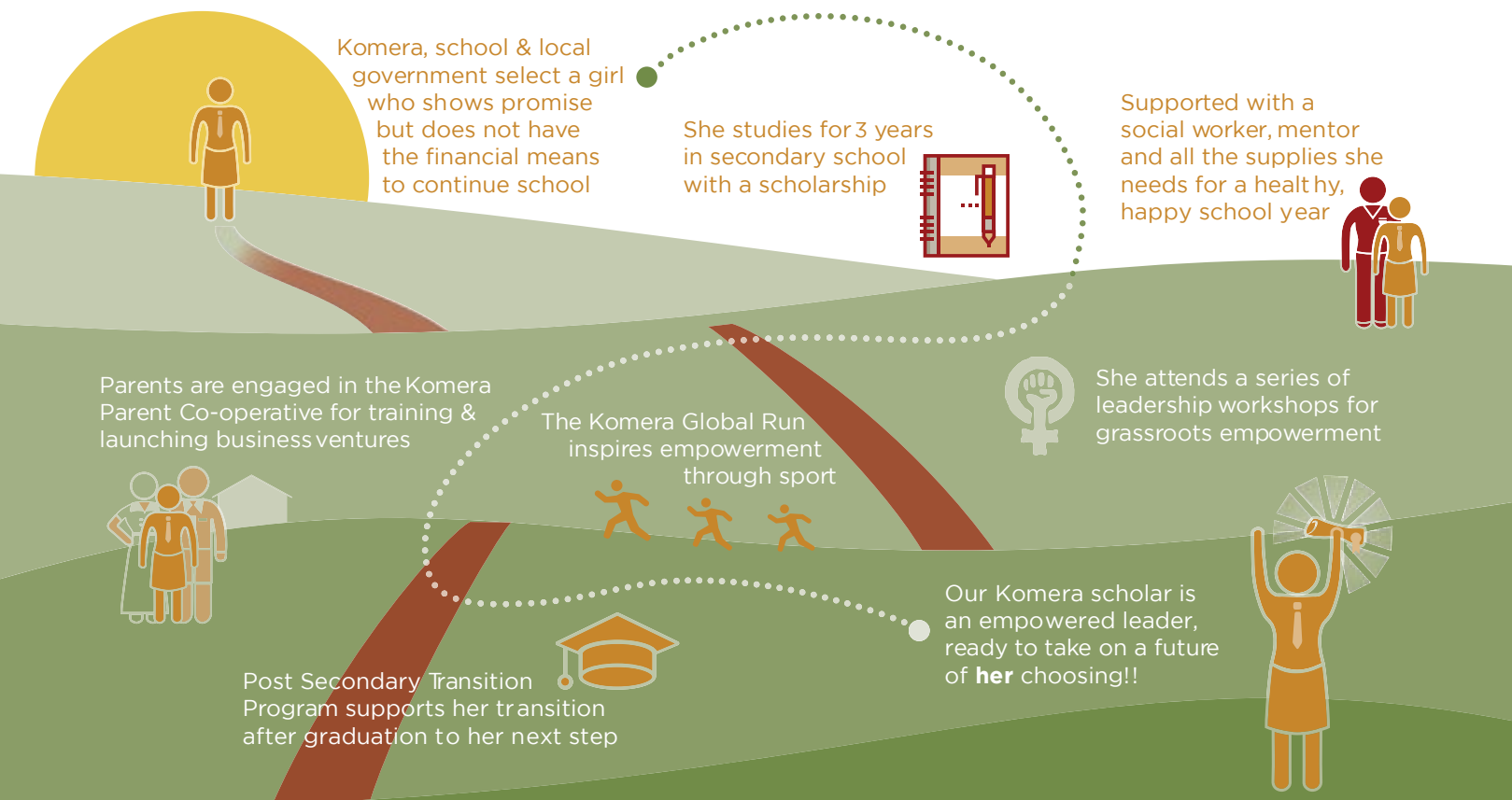


PHOTOS: New classroom, left & middle; new Rwanda office, right



PHOTOS: Komera scholars at Fawe Girls school, above; Komera graduate, Vestine, below

# JOURNEY OF A SCHOLAR



## EDUCATION

### SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT STORY

Vestine grew up as a refugee from Congo. Vestine's family, like most families in her village, were very poor. The disease of poverty takes many forms; one of which is losing confidence and determination that there is anything worth working towards. How can you focus and study when you are hungry? How can you think about tomorrow when you are worried about surviving today? You can see how surviving alone can become the number one priority, with health, education and any other activity falling quickly in last.

Though the conditions were desperate, the story of Vestine is not a sad one. Vestine came to find Komera in 2010 when she was 20 years old. The young, shy Vestine arrived at the Komera office in her best dress, and with

her best smile. She had something special - a spark, about her. Her determination to go to school was palpable.

In order to enter into the program, Vestine had to pass her S3 (grade 9) exams and was interviewed by the Komera social worker. A home visit was completed in order to confirm that she was one of the most vulnerable girls in our region. After selection she was placed in a local boarding school with several other Komera scholars. She was given funds for transportation to and from school and every school material that she could possibly need to thrive.

Over the next three years, Komera would encourage Vestine and support her not only with school fees and materials, but

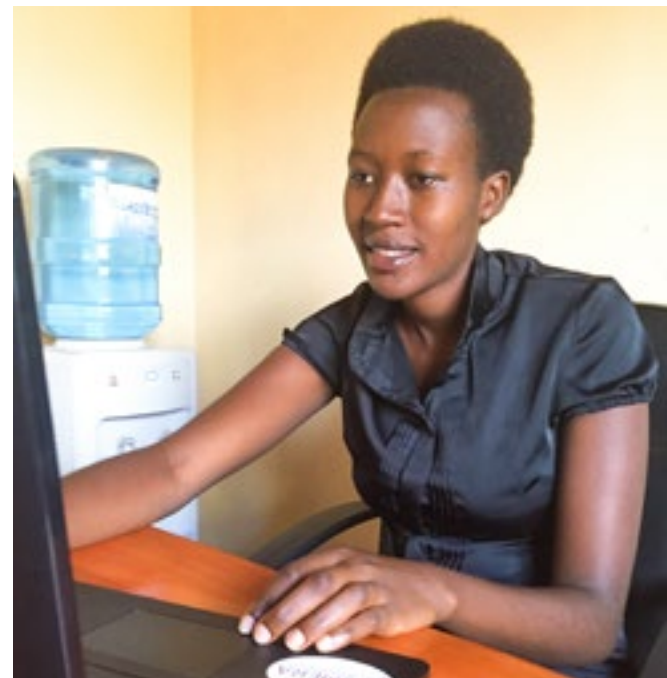


also with emotional support. Her mother would be welcomed into the Parent Co-Operative. Vestine would participate in the Post Secondary Transition program and would launch her own business. The 1994 Rwandan genocide took its toll on Vestine and her family, leaving them vulnerable, and emotionally wounded, but resilient. The scars of violence and hatred were deep, but with time and continuous efforts from Komera social workers, the wounds would begin to heal.

## LEADERSHIP SUMMITS

Komera is a family, and our Leadership Summits bring our Scholars together in sisterhood. Held three times each year, the summits focus on training, empowerment and bonding. In April, we recognize the month of Genocide remembrance by offering counseling and providing a supportive environment in which all students can work through trauma in their own lives. Our August Academy teaches young women how to work against gender-based violence and advocate for their own rights.

And in November, students study sexual reproductive health and gender-based rights while tackling a community issue as a group. These summits are designed to help Scholars raise one another up while discovering individual strength.



PHOTOS: Komera scholars gathered at the Leadership Summit, above; Vestine working as the Komera intern, below

## POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION PROGRAM

When a girl finishes school, it can be difficult to know what's next. Our Post-Secondary Transition Program helps each graduate of our program identify a strategy for going forward.

Over nine months, girls develop the skills and knowledge needed to plan their futures. English language training enables students to learn the conversational English necessary for everything from job interviews to public speaking. Computer literacy training gives girls a full understanding of how to navigate the internet, use software and research job opportunities.

Our business incubator program prepares students to launch their own entrepreneurial endeavors, from writing a business plan to being a leader. As they learn English, computer literacy and entrepreneurship, girls also participate in a post-secondary coaching program that prepares them to pursue higher education in Rwanda and abroad. Holistically, the transition program ensures our girls know that graduating as Komera scholars is far from the end of their education.

Upon graduation of secondary school, Vestine applied and was selected for the highly sought-after position as an intern at the Komera office. In 2015, Komera scholars landed prestigious internships at local hotels in the Kayonza district.

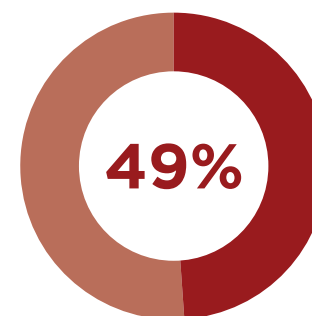
## POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION PROGRAM



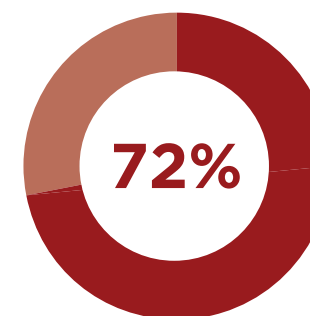
PHOTOS: Post-secondary students in class, above; Students completing ICT tests, below

The PSTP students take English tests that are based on four areas: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Their scores increased from 49% at the beginning to 72% at the end of the program.

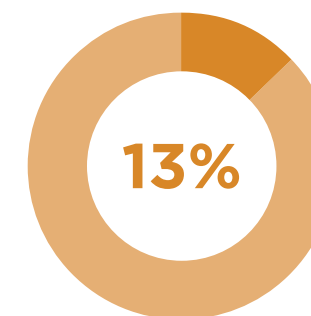
Students also take a simple ICT (computer) test, which tests them on basic functions of a computer, typing skills, ability to access the internet, to do a basic internet search, to send email, and to open several document types. They averaged 13% on these at beginning of program. We are thrilled to share that at the end of the program students averaged a 70% success rate on the same tests.



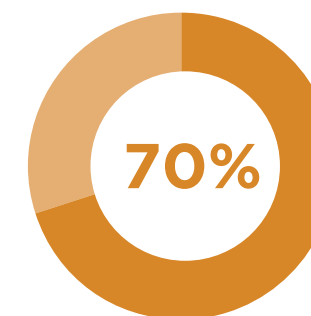
Average score on English tests at the beginning of the PSTP program



Average score on English tests at the end of the PSTP program



Score average on ICT tests at the beginning of the PSTP program



Score average on ICT tests at the end of the PSTP program



# COMMUNITY MENTORSHIP

When Vestine first arrived at her local boarding school, she was nervous. It was her first time away from home and she didn't really know what to expect. Thankfully upon arrival she was greeted by her Komera mentor, Christine.

Christine met with her and the other Komera scholars on a weekly basis; teaching them about their rights, their health and helping them address issues they were facing in school. Christine was Vestine's life-line at school, she helped her on a daily basis not only adjust upon arrival but also remain happily in school.

In 2015, Komera had 13 mentors at 16 partner schools. Each mentor meets with her Komera scholars once a week to help them deal with their daily struggles and guide them towards a positive future.



*“My mentor helped me to feel confident in everything I did.”*  
- Vestine, Komera Graduate





# COMMUNITY PARENT CO-OP



When Komera selects a young woman as a scholar, we are selecting her whole family. Experience has led us to understand that plucking a girl out of her community to “rescue” her from the disease of poverty will never work. It is in the grassroots work, with the whole family and whole community, where the real change happens.

Parents and guardians of Komera scholars are invited to join the Komera Parent Cooperative. The community of elders becomes invested financially and emotionally in the success of their girls in school by investing in social enterprises that serve the greater community.

In 2015, the Komera Parent Cooperative, with membership totaling 84, invested in mushroom farming and goat husbandry. These businesses allowed parents to support their Komera scholar and also boost their families from extreme poverty with an income-generating business.

PHOTOS: Komera Parents, left; Vestine with her mother in parent co-op, right


The Parent/Guardian Cooperative combines 12 trainings per year with the opportunity to participate in mushroom and goat-rearing businesses. Parents also receive training on health, family management and gender-based rights.

In 2016 we look forward to expanding our work into ten new businesses spread across 6 sectors in Rwinkwavu district. Our cooperative of parent activists is expanding and we are so excited to watch them build their dreams and advocate for young women in their communities.

**900**   
kilos of mushrooms harvested

**84**   
members in the cooperative

**35**   
goats shared for husbandry

**500**   
people impacted by Komera programs

A scholar is strongest when she knows how to share and shape her own story. The East African Girls’ Leadership Summit (EAGLS) gives students the tools and opportunity they need to discover their personal creativity.

In partnership with Akili Dada and the How Fund, Komera invites more than 30 girls across seven countries in East Africa to learn about the issues that effect them most. The second annual EAGLS focused on gender-based violence, sexual reproductive health and girls’ rights. Our goal is to tackle these heavy topics with an approach grounded in self-expression.

The summit is for girls, about girls, and driven by girls; that aims at developing critical leadership skills that allow promising young women to be effective change makers in their communities and beyond; and that builds a diverse networks of young women leaders who advocate for girls’ and women’s rights.

## EAGLS

EAST AFRICAN GIRLS’ LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



PHOTO: Young women gather in a circle at the summit

While at EAGLS, girls created a Girls’ Bill of Rights and discussed how they could help women in their community to achieve these rights.

### GIRLS’ BILL OF RIGHTS

*Girls have the right to appreciate and accept their bodies.*

*Girls have the right to be safe in the world.*

*Girls have the right to express themselves and their ideas with confidence.*

*Girls have the right to resist gender stereotypes and violence.*

*Girls have the right to love themselves.*

*Girls have the right to make mistakes and be proud of their successes.*

# SPORT

## KOMERA GLOBAL RUN

*“Teach her she can run the world.”*



We use sport as a tool to empower young women in Rwanda and around the world! Young women shouldn't just be seen as tools for economic gain or supporting healthy families. We encourage girls to celebrate their bodies through sport and fun!

We host an annual all girls fun run in Rwinkwavu, Rwanda. It's a community event where we talk about what it means to be a female leader and inspire young women to be future Komera scholars.

We also celebrate the Komera Global Run around the world! In 2015 we ran in Boston, San Francisco, Brooklyn, Rwanda and beyond! Will you join us in 2016?

PHOTO: Komera Global Run in Rwanda, above and below



PHOTO: ALDA women and runners at Komera Global Run Brooklyn, above



### 2015 GLOBAL RUN SPONSORS



# KOMERA FUNDRAISER NYC 2015



*Over the past two years we have raised over \$100,000 in support of young women in Rwanda.*



AVENUE NIGHTCLUB, NYC

## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS:

### PLATINUM:

Ali Samadi  
Sharon & Tom Teles

### GOLD:

Allan Loeb  
Scott & Kara Friedman

### SILVER:

Sam & Cristina Patel  
Kumaran Vijayakumar  
Chris D' Annibale

### BRONZE:

Michael Hanin  
Nancy Stephens Rosenthal  
Todd Richter  
Ryan Cain  
Amy D'Annibale

## HOST COMMITTEE:

Ali Samadi	Elizabeth Langel
Amy Burkholder	Genevieve Magee
Amy D'Annibale	Kate Dillon
Andrea Burrell	Kristina Apgar
Annelise Osborne	Lauren Stephenson
Arlette Umuhoza	Margaret Butler
Bernadett Vajda	Paul Brillinger
Consolee Nishimwe	Penelope Benson
Craig Mac Parmenter	Ryan Cain
Dayna Hart	



## 2015 EVENT SPONSORS



PAULA MENDOZA



VALE JEWELRY



AVENUE



# FINANCIALS

FY15 REVENUE AND EXPENSES

REVENUE & OTHER SUPPORT	
Grants and Contracts	\$ 64,985
Appeals Income	\$ 137,324
Corporate Contributions	\$ 5,770
Scholarship Contributions	\$ 19,615
Post-Secondary Contributions	\$ 21,500
Fundraising Events	\$ 115,686
Other Income	\$ 487
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	-
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Other Support</b>	<b>\$ 365,367</b>
EXPENSES	
PROGRAM SERVICES:	
Scholarship Program	\$ 84,350
Leadership Academics	\$ 37,656
Post-Secondary Program	\$ 35,658
Social Entrepreneurship Program	\$ 13,620
Parent Cooperative	\$ 7,801
Mentorship Program	\$ 6,887
Total Program Services	\$ 185,881
SUPPORTING SERVICES:	
General and Administrative	\$ 40,203
Fundraising	\$ 81,010
Total Supporting Services	\$ 121,213
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 307,094</b>
Change in Net Assets	\$ 58,273
NET ASSETS, Beginning of Year	\$ 276,841
NET ASSETS, End of Year	\$ 335,114



**WE BELIEVE  
THAT YOUNG  
WOMEN HAVE THE  
RIGHT TO LEAD  
CHANGE IN THEIR  
COMMUNITY, TO  
EXPERIENCE  
THE JOY OF  
SELF-DISCOVERY,  
AND TO REALIZE  
THEIR POTENTIAL.**

# KOMERA VISIONARIES



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**Margaret Butler** Co-founder, Executive Director  
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**John Hagarty** Managing Member, Arc Delta LLC  
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**Ali Samadi** Managing Director, Equity Derivatives at Nomura Securities  
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**Edward Shyaka** District Project Manager, Partners in Health  
**Jackline Mukayisiri** Manager, Bank of Rwanda  
**Solange Ayanone** Managing Director, Afri-Media  
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**Dativah Bideri** Program Director, Komera

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**Leonela Gonzalez** Co-founder, E4L Network

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**V.A. Lopes** Senior Vice President, Management Supervisor, Giant Creative Strategy  
**Sasha Rabsey** Manager, HOW Fund and Co Founder of Present Purpose Network

# THANK YOU!



**Transformation for Vestine has just begun.** Not only is she employed full-time with Komera, she is also running a successful business that she started with her classmates in the Post-Secondary Transition Program. With a reliable income, she can pay the fees for her younger siblings to go to school. Vestine wants to attend University and become a nurse, and is studying and saving so she can pay her own way. **Vestine has become a true leader and example in the community of an educated, empowered young woman.**