

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



KOMERA
Self Confidence, One Girl at a Time.

TABLE OF
CONTENTS

4

YEAR IN REVIEW

6

COVID-19 RESPONSE

8

PILLARS OF IMPACT

10

IMPACT NUMBERS

12

EDUCATION

20

COMMUNITY

22

HEALTH & WELLNESS

26

THE KOMERA LEADERSHIP CENTER

28

EVENTS RECAP

32

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

33

KOMERA TEAM

34

WAYS TO GIVE

MISSION

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

VISION

At Komera, 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 is a force in the community! We invest in the long-term development of young women by providing holistic support. Komera is developing the future female leaders of Rwanda!”

— Dativah Bideri Mukamusonera

A LETTER FROM OUR
Executive Director

Hello Komera Family,

Greetings once again!

As we share the 2021 annual report, allow me to congratulate the Komera team, Board Members, sponsors, and the entire community. Each of you have managed to stand and thrive with Komera girls, women, and our communities during another turbulent year as we continued to face difficulties brought on by COVID-19. As the pandemic continued to impact all lives, the lives of girls and young women were disproportionately impacted, especially in the areas concerning their health, bodies, education, and their power to make decisions. It’s for this reason that we share how Komera was able to represent each of you appropriately and impact the lives of girls, even during lockdowns. We are committed to being stronger than ever before as we stand together.

Despite the disruption to our work, Komera continuously created an enabling environment for the community which helped adolescent girls and their entire family through our various programs. With particular focus on making life-changing choices through education, we were able to have 219 girls enrolled under Komera scholarships. With help from our school partners, we educated 492 students on reproductive health and rights, and provided support to 345 teen mothers through education on reproductive health and entrepreneurship, in addition to teaching family conflict resolution skills.

In 2022, we will focus on the Komera Girl’s Leadership Center which will avail a space for education enhancement, health and counseling, youth in action programs, and community business development.

We kindly invite you to continue to stand with us on this mission.



Dativah Bideri Mukamusonera
Komera Executive Director



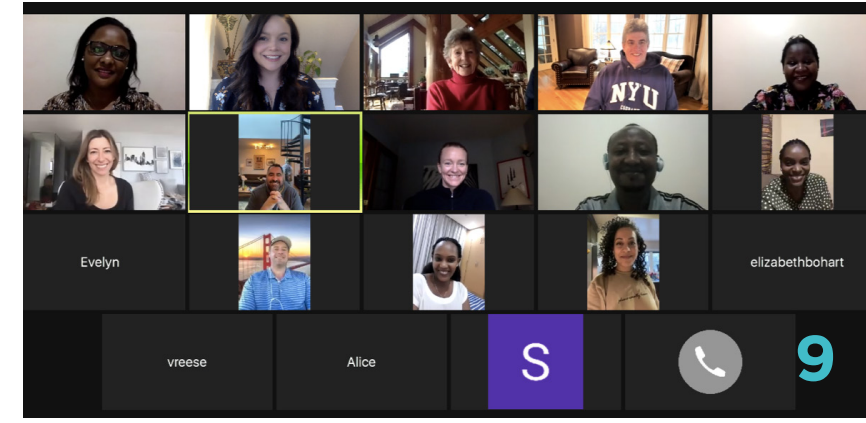
1



4



6



9

YEAR IN REVIEW



2



3



5



7



8

1 Joined the **Obama Foundation Girls Opportunity Alliance**, an initiative of Michelle Obama, with a year-long grant partnership

3 Invested in our staff's professional development through a series of **workshops, trainings, and staff retreats**

4 Partnered with **Tailored for Education** to outfit **889 students with full uniforms**—our largest uniform partnership to date!

5 Graduated **16 university students**—our highest number of university graduates in one class!

6 Broke ground on the **Komera Leadership Center** in August!

7 Launched a **new partnership with SACCA (Streets Ahead Children's Center)** for vocational training as part of our post-secondary transition program that included culinary and hairdressing courses

8 Set up "Girls Rooms" stocked with sexual reproductive health materials, including menstrual hygiene supplies, and in all of our partner schools as part of our **Pregnancy Prevention Program**, to address the rise in teen pregnancy in our community.

9 Hosted our first virtual U.S. and Rwanda **board meeting**

COVID-19 RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global crisis on an unprecedented scale affecting lives and communities worldwide, resulting in pervasive disruptions across social, economic, and health dimensions. Adolescent girls and young women have faced a myriad of risks including exposure to violence, teen pregnancy and early marriages, school dropout, poverty, and increased responsibility for caregiving among others.

With the bleak circumstances brought on by the pandemic, Komera worked hard to curb these risks by offering protective and supportive spaces.

Beneficiaries were able to build foundations for good health, psycho-social support and counseling, economic success, adaptation, and resilience. Additionally, Komera offered intensive Sexual Reproductive Health sessions to avert the likelihood of worse risks to adolescent girls. Komera also worked with other community organizations and members to provide critical provisions to vulnerable families which included:

- + **Food supplies**
- + **Six monthly stipends used for essential needs**
- + **Monthly sanitary towels**
- + **Hygiene kits for girls**

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: CREATIVE ACTION INSTITUTE

During the pandemic, the Creative Action Institute (CAI) started a mentorship program called “Sauti ya Dada” and invited Ruth, Komera’s Social Worker, to be a part of the program. The aim of the program was to support girls in using their voice to address and respond to the challenges COVID-19 presented.

Through the Sauti ya Dada program, more than 1,000 girls in East Africa received holistic support that included personal hygiene products (like soap and sanitary towels), and conference calls with mentors (like Ruth) three times a week. CAI and Ruth also worked together to create a project that had the Komera girls speak on a podcast episode!

The program also focused on educating girls on sexual reproductive health, as well as ways to stay safe during the lock down when the risks of sexual violence and exploitation were high. CAI and Komera further encouraged the girls to stay focused on their education. When schools reopened, all the girls in the Sauti ya Dada program were ready for school, and there were no unplanned pregnancies among these girls!



Scholars at our Leadership Day



Komera Team providing COVID-19 relief

The employment of mentors in the communities helped to supplement our programming. Mentors reached out to beneficiaries and communities to regain contact with program participants, especially those in hard to reach places and with no telephones. Recipients received psycho-social support and discussed mechanisms for coping during this highly stressful period. Mentors also met the scholars in person, while respecting local safety requirements, through safety circles.

By instituting strict measures, Komera has been able to keep our team and the Komera community safe by ensuring:

- + **100% of the Komera staff received both doses of the vaccine and booster**
- + **Social distancing measures for in-person small gatherings**
- + **Reduced in-person staff in office, alternating days**
- + **Group testing for in-person gatherings**
- + **Immediate testing for any exposures**

Finally, when it was unsafe for Komera mentors and employees to meet in person, the team employed the use of phones and online leadership trainings. This created a much-needed space for open conversations where all scholars and adolescent mothers would get time to share amongst themselves and find long lasting solutions to their problems.



THREE PILLARS OF IMPACT



EDUCATION

Komera sponsors scholars with full tuition, including room & board, health insurance, and personal & academic materials to study at public boarding schools in Rwanda. Komera provides intensive leadership and social entrepreneurship training during school break periods.



COMMUNITY

Komera builds a community of support for our scholars. At school, a scholar meets weekly with her Komera mentor and fellow scholars weekly. At home, her parents and family work with the Komera Parent and Guardian Cooperative.



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Health & wellness is deeply ingrained in our work at Komera. We have a number of programs focused on sexual and reproductive health, emotional support and sport at primary and secondary schools for both boys and girls to come together on an equal playing field, learning gender norms and dynamics of power, and using sport as a tool for confidence building and teamwork.

Post-Secondary Transition Program



Teen Mothers Program



Parent and Guardian Cooperative



Secondary Scholarship Program



Prevention Program



University Program



Adolescent Girls Prevention Program



School Empowerment Program



*While some of our programs focus specifically on one of our three pillars, others touch on multiple pillars. This interconnectedness of our programming helps to make the work that Komera does holistic and effective. Throughout this report, you will see our pillar icons next to programs and partnerships to demonstrate the interconnectedness of each aspect of Komera's work.

889

vulnerable boys and girls in **11 primary schools** received full uniforms including shoes

100%

annual **promotion rate** for secondary scholars to the next class

23

new beneficiaries enrolled for the secondary scholarship

13

active Parent Cooperative **small businesses**

6

post-secondary **student-run businesses**

1,000

community members reached during 4 advocacy campaigns in 2021

63%

of university students are **employed**

20

of 23 secondary graduates started businesses after completing the post-secondary program

100%

Four scholars scored 100% on their senior six national exams—the highest exam score in Komera history!

1,443

community members impacted directly through community advocacy over the 4 years

120

teenage mothers graduated successfully with businesses in the teen mother program

0%

recurrence of teen pregnancy of the young mothers in our program since 2018

99%

school retention rate among the 83 secondary scholars

16

university graduates in 2021— bringing the all-time total to 36 university graduates from Komera

172

total adolescent girls supported with educational programming, including secondary, university, and vocational training in 2021

93%

of scholars are aware of and willing to report sexual violence after attending a leadership training camp

91%

of scholars reported **knowledge on sexual reproductive health and pregnancy prevention** after attending a leadership training camp

442

Komera provided **health insurance to 82 families**, reaching 442 individuals

160

adolescent girls graduated in the school empowerment program in **four primary schools**

492

new girls and boys enrolled in the school empowerment program

98%

of secondary school scholars reported confidence and self-belief

75+

new teen mothers enrolled in Kabare sector in the teen mother program

80%

of post-secondary transition program graduates reported being able to make informed choices about their lives and understanding sexual reproductive health

27%

of Komera secondary scholars hold leadership positions in their schools and communities

67

girls were **sponsored with university education** in 2021, including eight girls who joined in 2021 with full government scholarships!

23

young women enrolled in the post-secondary training program in 2021



Marie and her mother

MARIE'S STORY



Sixteen-year-old Marie is very ambitious. After being selected by Komera in September, Marie began attending a top-notch boarding school with the hopes of pursuing her dream of becoming a doctor. Next to her is her mother Selaphine, who is the head of the family now after her husband passed away.

When Marie was in primary school, she witnessed a terrible incident of domestic violence in her home where her mother was severely injured and nearly died.

The lasting trauma from this event greatly impacted Marie and her mother, and yet they have continued on to fight for their rights as strong, resilient women!

At just 10 years old, Marie witnessed her father, who was deeply troubled, brutally attack her mother in their home. Marie was traumatized by this incident, but managed to run from their house to a neighboring home to get help and call the police. Thanks to Marie's bravery, her mother survived, and her father was taken to prison, which ended in his death.

Marie shared that she did not know what to do at her age. She said she regrets that she didn't know about reporting violence or human rights. If she had, she would have reported the domestic violence much earlier.

Marie's mother continues to experience lasting painful effects from her attack. Due to her poor health and injuries, she struggles to earn income to provide enough food, basic goods, as well as hygiene, and school supplies for her family. Yet she continues to farm to grow food for her family, as well as sell her produce at the market.

The conflicts in Marie's home affected her life and education and throughout her primary and secondary levels of schooling. Marie barely managed to come up with all the school materials required, and relied on support from neighbors and other friends in the community to stay in school.

Marie never gave up. She continued with education amidst all this.

The day that stands out most to Marie is when she met the Komera staff when they visited her school to distribute school uniforms to those in need; she was amongst the students who received one! This was the motivation Marie needed to stay in school and continue to fight for her rights. Marie used to ask herself,

“Will I ever be able to complete my studies and reach my goal of becoming a doctor? Who will support me so I can focus without stress at school?”

These questions kept Marie up at night and were a big burden for her to carry every day. The day she was selected to join the Komera scholarship program in 2021 filled her and her mom with overwhelming joy.

Marie is now healthy, happy, attends a nice boarding school, and believes that her dream of being a doctor can become true. Her advice to all parents is to,

“Resolve family conflicts, because they deeply affect your children.”

Marie is happy that through the Komera leadership training, she will begin to be healed from all the trauma, fears, and worries of life that she held. Marie's mother is also happy that she will meet other parents as part of the Komera Parent and Guardian Cooperative, and have a network of friends to connect with about challenges as well as support one another in business ventures, too.

100%

annual promotion rate for secondary scholars to the next class

99%

school retention rate among the 83 secondary scholars

98%

of secondary school scholars reported confidence and self-belief

27%

of Komera secondary scholars hold leadership positions in their schools and communities

SECONDARY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Komera is dedicated to ensuring that girls have access to high-quality education and addressing the challenges that lead to girls dropping out of school, particularly those from rural and disadvantaged areas.

The rates of lower secondary enrollment in rural Rwanda are higher for girls than boys, and thus Komera targets our efforts to support continued education for girls in upper secondary and beyond. As part of the Komera holistic education scholarship, each girl receives:

- Full tuition at a local boarding school
- All personal and scholastic supplies
- Health insurance for each girl and her family
- Transportation to and from school throughout the year

Komera scholars are enrolled in the following programs to expand and supplement their school education:

- School-based mentorship program
- Leadership camps
- Community advocacy campaigns

While at school, girls are connected to a mentor who supports their development and encourages their progress. Through leadership camps three times per year during school break periods, scholars receive training that help them to gain confidence, leadership, and life skills, as well as improve their reproductive health knowledge.

The team coordinates community-wide advocacy campaigns against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) to promote community understanding of a girl's rights. Girls benefit from regular mentorship and follow-up from school-based mentors to promote a safe and nourishing environment.

POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION PROGRAM (PSTP)

Following high school graduation, Komera scholars enroll in a nine-month program that prepares them for their future careers, from higher education, starting a business, to getting a job. This program was created as an approach for girls to stay active and engaged during their gap year before university enrollment opens. Students are trained on ICT, English language, career guidance, and entrepreneurship skills. They also learn how to be champions for girls in their communities and set goals for their future studies. Every girl in the program takes part in service projects.

Students then apply for university and advanced degree programs. If they do not continue on to higher education, they are enrolled in vocational training through our partnership with the **Streets Ahead Children's Association (SACCA)**. Here our PSTP students spend six months doing vocational training with options in hairdressing, culinary arts, or hospitality.

These students also receive micro-business management training and loans to start their own businesses in small groups. In 2021, we launched a new toolkit model where PSTP graduates worked together to form several small businesses, and Komera supported them with all the supplies needed to launch. This was a great success and provided income-generating opportunities right away.

NOELLA'S STORY

Noella is a very passionate girl who joined the post-secondary training program (PSTP) and graduated in culinary arts from vocation training in 2021. Before joining the Komera Connect program, she felt like she did not have an opportunity to continue her studies at university.

She originally applied for a Komera scholarship but unfortunately fell very sick during the selection process and missed the chance to become a scholar. She was raised by a single mother who didn't have the ability to teach her or support her in learning a vocation that would allow her to earn an income for herself. This put her in a desperate situation of a future without hope.

After joining Komera, she gained so much hope!

Throughout the sessions, she learned goal setting, business skills, and specialized in culinary arts training; she had a dream of running a shop selling cakes and baked goods. After graduating from vocational training, she was able to start a small business baking shortcakes at home with the small capital she saved.

After a few months, she also got a job doing data entry (skills she learned from the PSTP) at a rice growing cooperative where she supports growers and other suppliers. She has a plan of expanding her business selling snacks in her village because "they are very much needed." She was thrilled to be enrolled in the PSTP which brought hope for a better future and is very thankful for Komera's support which has made a huge impact in her life!



Noella, a student in the post-secondary training program

SCHOOL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

The School Empowerment Program focuses on improving the attitude of adolescent girls and boys towards education while reducing school drop-out rates. To do so, Komera creates pathways to career opportunities. The program also emphasizes education of sexual reproductive health, how to deal with conflicts in the home, and provides basic school materials. This year, the program enrolled both adolescent boys and girls after school leaders expressed a knowledge gap between both groups.

285% enrollment increase, up from 160 girls in 2020

239 girls enrolled in the program

218 boys enrolled in the program

Students were educated about the changes their bodies were going through during puberty, as well as their sexual reproductive health rights. This program started in September and concluded with a training for mentors to implement the program at two local schools. In addition to the learning sessions, all students received books, sanitary towels, and two girls' rooms were equipped with beds and bedding. Our partner schools also received 100 packets of sanitary towels, as well as teaching aids.

UNIVERSITY

In Rwanda, the expense of university education is very high when compared to the average household income. In most cases, students struggle to continue their studies without additional financial assistance, whether from the government, through student loans, or from other stakeholders who engage in youth's access to education.

Komera has created a program that allows promising young women to attend universities every year. This package comprises the living cost coverage and tuition fees to provide a pathway for girls to achieve their continued educational goals!

16 university graduates in 2021 — Biggest class of university students in Komera history!

63% of university students got **full time jobs after graduation!**



Solange and her parents

Solange, one of Komera's star scholars, has worked hard since the day she joined our community. It hasn't always been easy, but she, like all of our scholars, inspires us daily to keep working hard! This is her story.

SOLANGE'S STORY

"Disability is not inability, do not allow your fears to let you down! Growing up I had a lot of fears of whether I would ever attend school like others due to my inability to walk like everyone else. I was born lame, and could hardly stand or move, and was always fed from my bed because I could not sit or stand firm. My mother moved from one hospital to another to see me better but all was in vain, until she met Partners In Health who supported my medication. I started crawling and slowly by slowly I walked by stick, and finally moved.

I joined my primary school and always worked well in school. But what made me feel bad was finding myself lonely, and not participating in any sports at school with other children. Coming from a most vulnerable family and being lame were my greatest challenges. Worst of all was the way I was always chased from class due to lack of school fees.

My family hardly got basic needs like food, clothes, and shelter, even though my parents worked in people's fields. Our house was so small and not well covered but our roof was made of iron sheets. When I went to sit for my secondary national exams, our roof iron sheets were removed to pay the school debts. My parents did this because they believed in me. The results came and I had passed so well, but had nowhere to go to school.

When we heard of the Komera scholarship, it became our answer! The process was long, but we were selected to join a very good school - FAWE Girls. To me it was just a dream.

I could not believe the materials I got and all the support from the team. Komera not only paid for my education—an excellent secondary and University—but also built a home for my family!

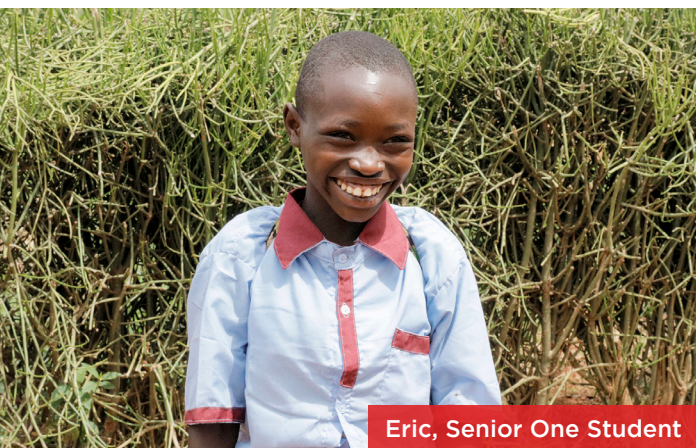
Life is so wonderful today! I completed my university at Davis College Akilah Campus in Business Management and Entrepreneurship. I am very confident of myself and what I do. I'm a marketer working with the Love-way Company that supports women in hospitals who have a hard time getting pregnant.

I am able to support myself and my family; my dream is to start a business to give back to my community by supporting vulnerable children. I am greatly indebted to Komera and my sponsors for transforming me and my family.

Though I was physically disabled, this did not limit me. I am so happy and confident and I am so grateful to all the Komera supporters for believing in us."



Solange and her mother



Eric, Senior One Student



Komera passing out school uniforms to vulnerable students

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: TAILORED FOR EDUCATION

Every year, many students in our district are unable to attend school due to an inability to afford school uniforms. As part of our School Empowerment Program, Komera works to provide vulnerable students with uniforms. This year we are so pleased to share that after receiving **a grant for \$20,000 USD from Tailored for Education, Komera was able to provide 889 financially vulnerable students (470 girls and 419 boys) with a full uniform**, which included:

- **A shirt with a trouser or shorts**
- **A blouse with a skirt**
- **A pair of shoes**
- **Two pairs of socks**
- **Underpants**

These items were sewn by members of our Komera co-operatives and post-secondary group, and went to boys and girls in primary and secondary schools across our 11 partner schools in the Kayonza District. Although distribution was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were able to pass out the uniforms in time for school, ensuring scholars were able to attend for the entire academic year! The sector education leader, school heads, and teachers were thrilled to see their students receive full uniform for the first time.

Eric, a senior one student, had this to say about receiving a uniform...

“Staying in school has always been my dream! I want to study and be a doctor. My education has always been disrupted by my family’s less capacity to give me all the necessities to study including school uniforms and other materials. My parents are not able to buy me all the requirements. When my uniform is very torn, I cannot attend school and sometimes the schools send teachers to look for us. Sometimes I even dodge my own teachers because I am ashamed of my torn uniform and decide to stay home.

I thank Komera and its funders for giving us all these materials. I can’t believe all are mine! I will attend all my classes with no shame and even pass my exams so highly since I will not be absent anymore. Thank you Komera.”



Eric’s story resonates with over 90% of the students who received uniforms this past year. This drive created an opportunity for Komera to strengthen our partnership with schools and local government, who were very happy and grateful to Komera and Tailored for Education!

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: GIRLS OPPORTUNITY ALLIANCE

This year we had the pleasure and honor of receiving fundraising support from Former First Lady Michelle Obama’s **Girls Opportunity Alliance (GOA)**. GOA collaborates with organizations working to address the needs of vulnerable girls across the globe. Through GOA’s GoFundMe page, **Komera was able to raise \$45,000 to fund our education, leadership, and mentorship work**. These funds reinforced Komera’s ability to provide multi-level support to all 82 of our scholars, and reach a broader network of over 500 girls.

The funding Komera received also allowed us to support our greater community by providing two intensive training sessions to five of the mentors from our partner schools. These trainings focused on psycho-social support and career guidance. This was especially necessary after all the uncertainty the COVID-19 lockdowns brought to both our scholars and surrounding community.

So far, over 300 families and 4,500 community members have benefited directly from the Komera interventions, which includes families of the girls in the programs, families of teachers and mentors trained, and community members reached through bi-weekly sensitization campaigns.

\$45K

raised through GOA’s GoFundMe page to fund Komera’s programs

300

families in the community impacted by Komera’s programs

5

Komera mentors received two intensive training sessions

4,500

community members have been reached by Komera’s interventions

PARENT & GUARDIAN COOPERATIVE



Apart from supporting vulnerable girls in education, Komera also works directly with their parents and guardians. They are invited to join the Cooperative to start small businesses together, and participate in monthly meetings with the council of elected parent leaders. These leaders receive training by Komera, and then train their sub-groups in their small villages. The training by Komera includes the following topics:

- Entrepreneurship
- Business Management
- Saving
- Community Development
- Life skills, including Health, Hygiene, and Conflict Resolution



Through their income from the cooperative, parents and guardians are able to support their girls and families by being able to provide food, clothes, transport to visit their children at boarding school, and becoming girl's education ambassadors in their communities. The parents encourage and support one another and lead by example in the community.

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: AMPLIFY GIRLS

Komera is a founding member of **AMPLIFY – a collective of 25 community-driven organizations across Eastern Africa working to develop community-based alternatives to traditional development work.** As a member of the collective, Komera has focused on adolescent girls' education and how we can develop programs that result in agency for this population.

As a part of the AMPLIFY collective, Komera shares and learns best practices and collaborates on how organizations can best serve our community and adolescent girls. Komera was also a part of AMPLIFY's research on adolescent girls' return to school amid COVID-19.

This multi-country research led to a grant to Komera for 30 girls who had dropped out of school in 2020 being sponsored to attend school for the next three years!



girls who dropped out of school in 2020 are now sponsored by a grant secured with Amplify's help



partner organizations in the Amplify collective across four East African countries

FLAVIA'S STORY

Flavia is the mother of Bertha, a Komera scholar who joined in 2017 and is now in the Post-Secondary program. Flavia joined the parent's co-op savings group where she met with other parents to discuss their parental responsibilities to help pave the way for their children.

After several meetings, Flavia was elected as the group president and led seven parents who were all new to Komera. They started by saving 200 Rwandan francs (RWF) per week (about 25 cents USD), but after learning saving and business skills their savings grew higher. Flavia invited eight more community parents to join their group which helped to grow their savings by 200-500 RWF per week!

The additional savings gave the group members an opportunity to borrow from the group savings to begin businesses. With the funds, Flavia renovated her home by buying doors and windows to keep her family healthy and safe. She was able to get a loan to not only create a better home for her family, but to also buy a cow and a goat! She also started a small business selling tomatoes and vegetables to bring in additional income and savings.

Flavia and her children



The group was so successful, they were able to save 1 million RWF in a year (approximately \$1,000 USD); the highest amount earned by a cooperative since Komera's inception! Flavia is incredibly grateful for all the support she received from Komera, including the training on problem solving, conflict management, and savings!

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: STREETS AHEAD CHILDREN'S CENTER (SACCA)

This year Komera partnered with SACCA (Streets Ahead Children's Center) for their May 2021 'Raising Girls Voices' campaign. During the month of May, girls at home, at school, and around the Kayonza community received messages concerning the potential to be exploited, experience gender-based violence, teen pregnancy, and the transmissibility of COVID-19. The Komera team also participated in the cycling event that was facilitated by SACCA and the Rwandan Police to further support the campaign!

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: LOCAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Komera is Co-Chair of the Girls Education Working Group under RENCP (Rwanda Education NGO Coordination platform). We plan meetings for the general assembly that bring together all organizations in education. We attend all JADF (Joint Action District Forum) meetings, even virtually now, and sit in on the KCRAN (Kayonza Child Rights Actors Network) meetings to work with NGOs in our district to advocate for programming for women and girls.

Fabiola, a teen mom in the teen mother program, sewing.



FABIOLA'S STORY

Fabiola, now 19, grew up in a family that was full of conflicts that were brought on in part by her mother's drinking, which later led to her parents separating. She became pregnant and gave birth at just 17. Due to all the conflicts at home, and new ones between her and her mom due to her teen pregnancy, Fabiola always felt sad and lonely. She struggled to find food or clothes to wear during her pregnancy, and had no one in her life that was willing to take care of her.

When Fabiola enrolled in the teen-mothers program in September 2020, she was totally broken, with no hope for a better future. Komera's training showed her better options for her life and gave her skills to deal with being a single mother. She regained her confidence, and later even reconciled with her mother!

Since her mother was also involved in the training, she eventually was able to give up alcohol and started teaching Fabiola how to sew. After learning for months, Fabiola started working with her mother, sewing women's clothes and uniforms for school students and selling vegetables and tomatoes at home.



Fabiola and her mother

From all these sources of income, she bought her own sewing machine at 150,000RWF (approximately \$150 USD) which gave her the opportunity to work and earn.

Since then, her life has changed completely in ways she sometimes can't even believe! She is able to financially support herself and gets along so well with her mother. She still belongs to four savings groups, takes care of her child, and plans on enrolling him in a good school when he's old enough. Her long-term goal is to help her mom renovate her house!

PATHWAY TO POWER

The Pathway to Power was established in response to teenage pregnancies, a persistent challenge for the Rwandan and Rwinkwavu communities where Komera works. Both teen mothers and their parents are enrolled in the program so the parents can learn to value their children again as esteemed members of the community.

The program is grounded on a community-based mentorship model where mentors meet weekly and interact with girls in small cohorts of 15 members. All groups gain soft skills on self-acceptance, counseling, family planning, savings, and entrepreneurship skills that enable them to start their own businesses and support their children.

TEEN MOM ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Teen moms in our community are neglected and forgotten about, but not at Komera. We believe they can contribute to society and become successful businesswomen. Using Komera's pathway to power and business development curriculum, we will educate teen moms on self-appreciation, utilization of their potential, and support them to find their passion and self-development.

A series of both personal development and vocational training provides the resources participants need to re-develop themselves in all areas, so that they are able to economically change their lives and those of their families. Upon graduation, the mothers will receive toolkits with essential supplies and small capital grants to launch their businesses.

80%
of the 345 teen mothers in the program are involved in income-generating activities

90%
of the 345 teen mothers in the program are in small-cell savings groups

Through this initiative, we strengthen the self-confidence, skill based training and economic empowerment for adolescent mothers with an aim of re-building their resilience, decision making skills, and economic prosperity.

We are pleased to share that we have had **no recurring pregnancies amongst the teen moms in the program**, and 95% of all participants have received conflict management trainings. Komera will continue this work to ensure that our next generation of adolescent girls and teenage mothers are emotionally strong and safe by promoting a supportive environment through engagement with parents and communities.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

For the past five years, there has been a steady increase in teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence. To address these issues, Komera has been working to empower women and girls to take a lead in tackling the root causes of both issues together with their families and communities.

To do so, Komera implemented four projects in the field with the direct goal of ending violence against women and girls. **The Teen Mothers Program has empowered 345 teenage mothers throughout our community through a mentorship program for the last four years.**

We also host advocacy campaigns as well as week-long leadership camps where girls have a safe space to discuss the issues that affect them and how best to handle them. This includes trainings on sexual reproductive health, understanding all forms of GBV and how to report abuse, how to confidently say “NO” to sexual abuse, and ways to prevent teenage pregnancy.

Komera advocates for young women and girls through health counseling. Here, girls and teen moms can come and learn about SRH and GBV, as well as access essential feminine hygiene and family planning supplies. Komera mentors are working to break the stigma of using birth control by accompanying women to the local health clinics as they advocate for themselves and take control of their health with family planning.

The stigmas surrounding the use of birth control has been the biggest barrier for girls to begin using contraceptives. This is why having mentors available to our scholars is so critical to their continued education and success.

120

teenage mothers graduated successfully with businesses in the teen mother program

0%

recurrence of teen pregnancy of the young mothers in our program since 2018

75+

new teen mothers enrolled in Kabare sector in the teen mother program

Additionally, as there is a huge need to provide feminine hygiene supplies and menstruation education in our community, we continue to make sure our girls have access to health necessities—pads, soap, and sanitary supplies.



Teen Mother Program Participants

ADOLESCENT GIRL PREVENTATIVE PROGRAM

During a 2020 survey Komera found **80% of girls in our community could identify five or more classmates who had gotten married or pregnant since the COVID-19 pandemic began.**

This data, coupled with reports from our programs, shows just how critical prevention continues to be, as well as how much women and girls have been affected by the pandemic. This led to the initiation of our Teen Preventive Program which empowers 160 adolescent girls to address the causes of teenage pregnancy and help them remain focused in school.

Girls in the program receive mentorship from Komera social workers, which gives social/emotional support and focuses on rebuilding relationships with their families and peers. The program also focuses on developing self-love and self-confidence, while making SRH a topic of discussion within families. Yoga and meditation are tools used to create body appreciation as well as self-love to increase their feelings of self-worth and acceptance. Adolescent girls in the community will participate alongside teen moms to learn about SRH and how to have healthy relationships.

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: ROAR TRAINING

This fall our Komera team participated in a six-week virtual training with **Roar Training**—a self-defense and emergency preparation organization started by Julie Morrill and Rebecca Tolkoff. This was Roar Training’s first ever virtual mentorship program! Each week, our team leaders learned the tools needed to teach our Komera scholars techniques they could use to defend themselves. Based on a 2020 report from the Rwandan Investigation Bureau, gender-based violence cases increased to 19.6%.

PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: MUTERA, RESONATE, AND KOMERA

In partnership with Mutera and Tabita Maphira of Resonate, Komera had four of our team members (Ruth, Veneranda, Vestina, and Josephine) participate in a multi-day trauma focused training. During the four days, the team learned about the signs of trauma, what triggers trauma responses, how to work through trauma, and healing practices. The sessions were also attended by nearly 20 community members! The trainings focused on:

- How therapy can aid in healing trauma
- Meanings and technical terms related to trauma and healing – e.g., “trigger” “perpetrator” and “judgmental”
- How to create safe spaces for counseling and some best practices

The Komera team was also tasked with translating commonly used words and phrases in trauma healing/therapy from English to Kinyarwanda. Over the course of the three days, our social worker, Ruth, was able to translate over 90 words and meanings! This is incredibly helpful when working with our community members who may not have strong English language skills.

While the responsibility should not be put on our girls to learn self-defense, we are grateful for organizations like Roar Training who work to educate young girls and women on ways they can protect themselves if the need arises. Shortly after the training was completed, one of our scholars, Olive, was able to defend herself against a pick-pocket at the market where she sells her goods. Afterwards Olive noted how “strong” and “proud” she was that she was able to show other people in the market that **“girls can be strong too.”**

THE KOMERA LEADERSHIP CENTER



Groundbreaking Celebration attendees walking about the Leadership Center construction site



District Mayor of Kayonza Laying a Brick for the Komera Leadership Center



We are so pleased to share that the Komera Leadership Center has been making great progress! With COVID-19 restrictions easing, our team on the ground has been able to make great strides in the construction of the center. We broke ground on the center in September 2021, and since then, the construction crew has been on track and making up for delays caused by the pandemic.

At this time, the foundation is complete and the walls are going up! The bricks being used for the center are not only locally made, but they are being placed in a design inspired by traditional Rwandan patterns. These small features are important as they signify Komera's continued support of the local community and Rwandan culture.

Additionally, in keeping with our commitment to create sustainable economic development opportunities for our community, especially the women, **we are excited to share that 40% of our construction workers are women!** The women received skills training before starting and while working on the job. Opportunities like these are especially important, as they will create future economic opportunities for the women beyond the Center's construction. We are also happy to share that some of the women on the crew are former Komera scholars!

We have been working diligently with the Rwandan government to ensure that all those involved in the construction of the center be safeguarded from COVID-19. To do so, Komera abided by all State COVID health and safety requirements. Komera also pushed to ensure that all workers had or have access to the vaccine.

At this time, **100% of our crew and team have received at least one dose** with only 30% needing to receive their second. We have also been able to ensure that our team has had access to booster shots as well as regular access to COVID-19 tests and PPE.

With these steps taken, we are proud to share that, since the beginning of the project, we have had zero cases! We greatly value everyone involved in this process, so we will continue to support them with whatever safety measures are needed as construction is completed this year.

We were also able to officially celebrate the groundbreaking with the greater Rwinkwavu community. The celebration, which took place in February 2022, was attended by our Rwandan Board of Directors and team, as well as some of our scholars and their families, Rwinkwavu community members, and the District Mayor of Kayonza! We were so pleased that he was able to make it – he even helped lay a brick on one of the Center walls!

All of this progress would not be possible, though, without the support from our partners and donors. Our goal has been to raise \$650,000USD for the Center and we are so excited to share, that **we are currently 81% to our total fundraising goal!** Komera wants to extend our warmest regards to those who have helped to bring the center to life.

81% of our total Leadership Center fundraising goal is met!

We would like to thank our design and construction team especially for all their hard work on this project as well as the generosity of our benefactors. Without you all, we wouldn't be able to make this dream a reality!

GENEROUS MAJOR BENEFACTORS OF THE CENTER CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Arthur B. Shultz Foundation
 The Block Family
 Becca Gelb and David Boehmer
 Elizabeth Epstein and Stuart Bohart
 Jocelyn Cohen
 Adam Giannone
 Bonnie and Jim Gwin
 Arlene and John Hagarty
 The HOW Fund
 Victoria Reese and Greg Kennedy
 One Day's Wages

The Orser Family Foundation
 Cristina and Sam Patel
 Project A.B.L.E. Foundation
 Ali Samadi
 The Segal Family Foundation
 The Sophie and Arthur Brody Foundation
 David Stewart
 The Wade Family Foundation
 Annie and David Wright
 Peter Zink

DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION TEAM

Bruce Engle of BE Design
 Brian Halusan
 Justin Twizere of Rwanda Village Enterprise

The Center construction is expected to be completed and open by Fall 2022.

EVENTS RECAP

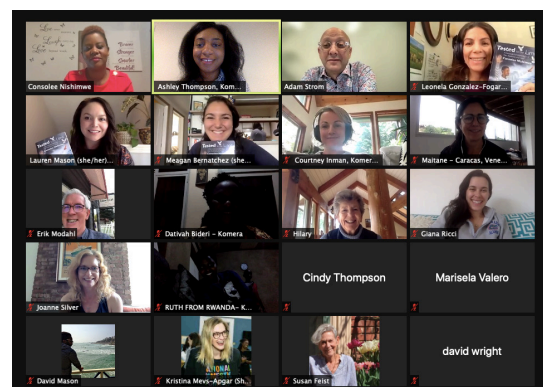
We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with wonderful partners and supporters throughout the year! Here are a few of the many great event highlights from 2021.

ANNUAL NYC SOCIAL – VIRTUAL EVENT

In keeping with COVID-19 safety protocols, our Komera team decided to bring our annual in-person event online for our first ever virtual social—**From Hope to Home!**

This year, we had the pleasure of showcasing the amazing progress that had been made on the Leadership Center, even after delays and changes caused by the pandemic. Our Rwandan Team spoke firsthand about how, especially during these uncertain times, the Leadership Center will benefit our scholars, their families, and the greater Rwinkwavu community.

We had a goal of \$100,000 and are so proud to say that, even though we didn't quite get there, **we reached \$77,511 of that goal** with 100% of the donations going directly to our Leadership Center!



RILEY BLOCK & HER FAMILY, THE 2021 KWIZERA AWARD RECIPIENTS

We also honored our **2021 Kwizera Award Recipients—Riley Block and her Family!** In Rwanda, the word Kwizera means “hope.” This annual award recognizes an honoree who displays a unique and special commitment to Komera. They are our people, our family, and inspire our work. Riley, who was finishing her first year at college, began volunteering for Komera in 2013. And in 2014 she along with her family, visited Rwanda to meet the Komera scholars.

As a young woman herself, Riley understands the privilege she has of education and parents who have supported her. She believes that educating young women is essential, which is why she believes in Komera. We are so proud of the work she has done to support Komera and our scholars, and we can't wait to see all that she accomplishes! Thank you again, Riley, for all that you do.

SQUARETRADE DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION SPEAKER SERIES

As an organization that works in a space that historically has not included marginalized communities, Komera has been working to make significant strides to include all voices at the table, and shift towards our goal of a justice-based model. We are proud to have both a U.S. Board of Directors and a Rwandan Board of Directors composed of dedicated individuals who strive to develop our organization to become a model for effective holistic programming.

Our work towards becoming a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization is ever-growing, and in 2020 we achieved an important milestone as an organization to shift Executive Leadership to our Rwandan Executive Director, who leads the organization from the ground. However, as stated before, we at Komera believe that “None of us are equal until all of us are equal.” As such, Komera continues to be committed to having an active voice in the conversation.

REACHING FOR RECONCILIATION: APRIL BOOK CLUB & DISCUSSION

This past April, Komera hosted a virtual conversation in honor of the 27th anniversary of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. During the conversation our Board Member and Author/Activist, Consolée Nishimwe, and the Director of Re-imagining, Adam Strom, discussed what it was like for Consolée, a genocide survivor, to immigrate to the US and build a new life.

In June, both our Executive Director, Dativah Bideri Mukamusonera, and our Managing Director, Lauren Mason, participated in Square Trade's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Speaker Series.

During the Speaker Series, both Dativah and Lauren spoke about the programming Komera runs and the challenges the pandemic has brought to our community. They also spoke about widening the circle to shift from charity work to working for justice by shifting power to the local community. Additionally, they spoke about what it looks like to see equity in action by working to:

- **Level the playing field for girls and women**
- **Change social norms that negatively affect our community**
- **Educate the community on personal rights**

Komera is very grateful to have participated in this event and welcomes any opportunity to partner with organizations and companies working to create a more equitable world.

Adam brought his knowledge to the conversation by discussing what it looks like to “belong,” understanding biases, and the history of immigration. With over 40 participants, each one was gifted Consolée's book *Tested to the Limit: A Genocide Survivor's Story of Pain, Resilience and Hope*. We are so grateful to Consolée and Adam for their honesty and willingness to be vulnerable when discussing such sensitive topics.



NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

Like all of our events in 2021, things weren't quite the same as they have been in the past, and the TCS NYC Marathon was no exception. In 2020, the marathon was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions, but in 2021, the race was on! However, with many still concerned about gathering in groups, we had a smaller outcome this year than in previous years – only seven out of our typical 15-18 bibs were used. But that didn't stop our amazing team of runners from showing up and crushing those 26.2 miles!



runners participated in the New York Marathon

\$23.8K

raised by the Komera team members running the New York Marathon

Our seven runners trained for months using a plan created by our founder, Margaret Butler - a previously professional runner - to be able to run through the five boroughs, and cross the finish line in Manhattan. But that wasn't all they did—**they also helped raise and donate \$23,817**, helping us reach nearly 80% of our \$30,000 goal!

After the race, our team was able to get together for a team dinner hosted by one of our Board Chairs, Ali Samadi. We are so grateful for our team's hard work and dedication to Komera, and we look forward to welcoming them back again this year for another 26.2 miles!



VIRTUAL KOMERA GLOBAL RUN 2021: THE RACE TO RESTORE

This past July was our 13th annual KGR! Over the years we've been able to expand the race to several cities in the US, including Boston, San Francisco, and New York – to share a few. With the pandemic still a concern, we opted to move the entire KGR to the virtual space. This allowed for Komera to expand our global involvement while also keeping our participants safe. In addition to the run, Komera also hosted multiple virtual yoga classes taught by our Komera staff! During the run, we had an amazing outcome with 78 participants from all around the world and together, **we were able to raise an incredible \$9,575.00!**



runners participated in the Komera Global Run

\$9,575

raised by the Komera Global Run

THE RACE AROUND RWANDA

As always, our annual Race Around Rwanda (RaR) helped us kickstart the year. The RaR is our annual two-week (virtual) trek around Rwanda totaling 610 miles. With the option to join either individually or in teams, we had a great turn out – 81 racers with 17 teams, including corporate partnerships. Komera also hosted a virtual yoga class for our racers. Altogether, **our amazing racers logged an incredible 4,883 miles**; that's eight times around Rwanda! In addition to an impressive mile count, **our participants raised and donated an impressive total of \$8,771!**



runners participated in the Race Around Rwanda

\$8,771

raised by the Race Around Rwanda

GREEN FARMS ACADEMY DRAGON DASH

Green Farms Academy (GFA) has been partnering with Komera for several years. One of the students attending GFA took it upon herself to start a Komera Club dedicated to supporting the work Komera does in Rwanda, as well as sponsoring some of our Komera scholars! The Komera Club fundraised through bake sales and hosted an annual Dragon Dash 5k.

This past summer's Virtual Dash broke the Komera Club's previous donation record. Altogether, **the students raised and donated \$6,401 and had over 270 people participate in the race!** These young students know first-hand the importance of access to education is and we are so proud of their commitment to sharing and supporting the work Komera does!



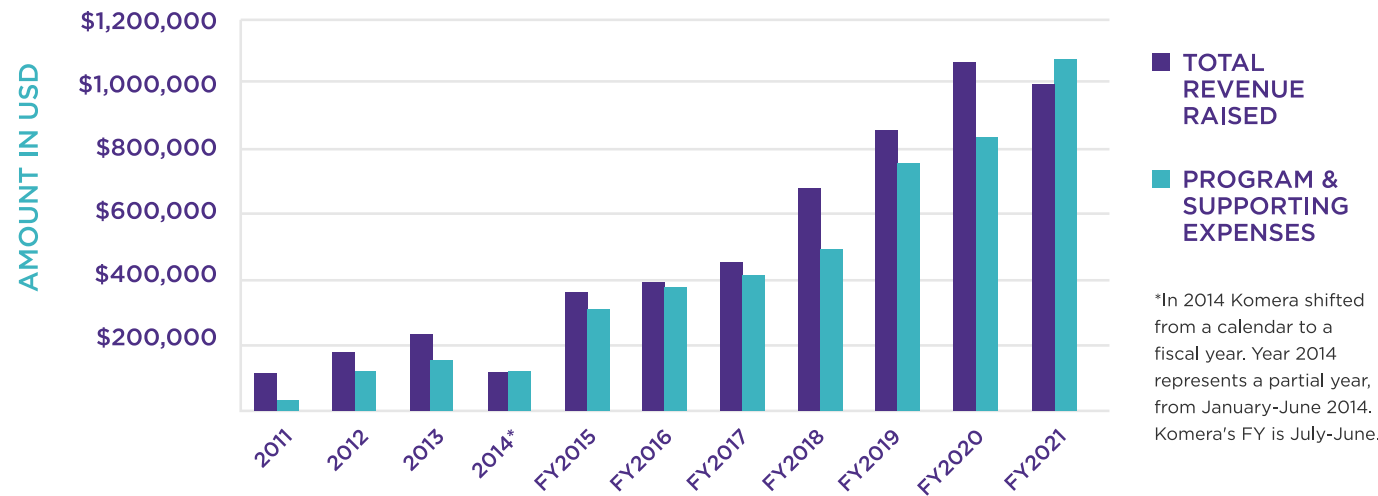
runners participated in the Green Farms Academy Dragon Dash

\$6,401

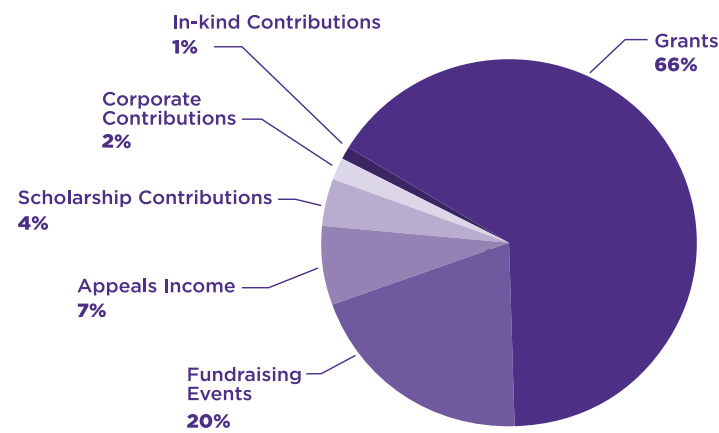
raised by the Green Farms Academy Dragon Dash

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

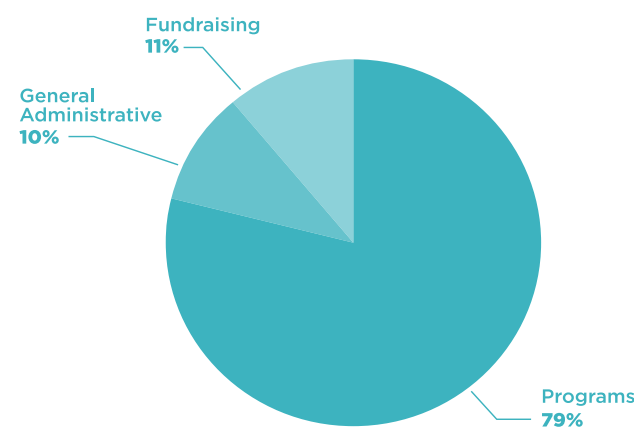
PROGRAM AND FUNDRAISING GROWTH



FY21 REVENUE



FY21 EXPENSES



NOTE: Komera served as the fiscal sponsor in FY20 and part of FY21 for AMPLIFY, an organization founded by Margaret Butler, Komera founder. AMPLIFY is a collective of organizations working in communities in Eastern Africa. The AMPLIFY division accounted for 42% of total program expenditures and 43% of income for FY20, and 48% of total program expenditures and 24% of income in FY21. As of January 2021, AMPLIFY has separated from Komera as an independent nonprofit organization.



KOMERA TEAM

- Dativah Bideri Mukamusonera** - Executive Director
- Lauren Mason** - Managing Director
- Rosemary Musiimire** - Director of Programs
- Ruth Kamatali** - Social Worker Manager
- Veneranda Barungi** - Community Development & Training Manager
- Josephine Mutamba** - Teen Mother Advancement Program Coordinator
- Sylvia Murekatete** - HR & Finance Manager
- Vestine Uwamahoro** - Youth Empowerment Officer
- Scovia Kamatenesi** - Administrative Assistant
- Justine Mbabazi** - Assistant Accountant
- Jacquelyn Spade** - Development and Communications Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

US BOARD

- Ali Samadi, Co-Chair
- Kristen Gengaro, Co-Chair
- David Boehmer
- Elizabeth Bohart
- Margaret Butler
- Larkin Callaghan
- John Hagarty
- Consolee Nishimwe
- Victoria Reese
- Jessica Malaty Rivera
- David Wright

RWANDA BOARD

- Donatha Gihana, Chair
- Solange Ayanone
- Dativah Bideri Mukamusonera
- Francis Kamanzi
- Monica Keza
- Evelyn Mukakabano
- Jackline Mukayisire
- Jackline Mukashyaka
- Pierrine Musabyemaria
- Juliette Muzaire
- Honoline Niyigena
- Alice Nyirimana
- Edward Shyaka

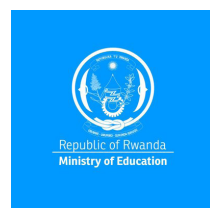
CANADA BOARD

- Hilary Butler, Chair
- Barry Adams
- Margaret Butler
- Peter Baumgartner
- Courtney Inman
- Rebecca Johnston
- Susan Munro
- Sue Ritchie

PARTNERS

Our work would not be possible without the generosity of those who supported us tirelessly this year with both financial and in-kind support.

MURAKOZE CYANE! THANK YOU!



The Stone Family Foundation

WAYS TO GIVE

There are many ways to continue your support for Komera. To learn more, make a donation, or partner with Komera, please contact us at info@komera.org

WITH YOUR DONATIONS, WE CAN PROVIDE:

\$50 SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Give the gift of notebooks, books, pens, paper and a calculator—all of the academic supplies she needs for a year at school!

\$500 TUITION SCHOLARSHIP

Give the gift of a full tuition scholarship, health insurance, school mentorship, school transportation, and access to our annual leadership summit for one year

\$75 HYGIENE

Give the gift of sanitary pads, Vaseline, lotion, toothpaste and toothbrush, soap, toilet paper, and a washing bucket

\$750 SECONDARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP + SUPPLIES

Give the gift of a full tuition scholarship for one year AND all of the personal and academic materials she needs to thrive

\$250 FULL PACKAGE

Give the gift of a fully packed bag for school, including all of the personal and academic materials she needs for an entire year!

\$1,250 UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP + ROOM AND BOARD

Give the gift of university tuition and room & board for one year at a Rwandan university

OUTRIGHT GIFTS

- Become a monthly supporter: komera.org/donate
- Sponsor a scholar through monthly or annual gifts: komera.org/sponsor-a-scholar
- Give the gift of education by donating to our Leadership Center's Capital Fund: komera.org/leadershipcenter

ESTATE GIFTS

Remember Komera in your will or living trust, or leave a portion of your life insurance or retirement plan assets to Komera. Contact Komera to learn more.

WORKPLACE GIFTS

Komera accepts in-kind donations and corporate matching gifts. Contact Komera to learn more.

Donations accepted by cash, card, check, wire, and stock.



US: P.O. Box 1491, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
Rwanda: Kayonza District, Rwinkwavu Sector
info@komera.org | komera.org