



Ruhango WASH Program Area, Rwanda

UNITING A COMMUNITY THROUGH SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Emmanuel Ishimwe is a 30-year-old father to four children, the youngest of whom was born with a disability. Because of social stigmas surrounding his child's disability, Emmanuel and his family felt excluded from their community and lived in semi-isolation. Emmanuel was overjoyed when Living Water Rwanda came to install a water system in his community; however, at the time, he had no idea how much Living Water's programming would change his life.

Living Water Rwanda set out not only to provide safe water for the residents but also to equip them with the knowledge they need to safeguard their health. The staff conducted intensive training on hygiene and sanitation and challenged the participants to look for ways they could serve their community at large. Emmanuel, who attended the training, said, "The training inspired us to believe that we have potential within ourselves. We started a hygiene club that runs a savings and loan program, which later allowed us to start a small soap-making business. Being able to make soaps and sell them at the market was like a miracle for us. We didn't believe we could achieve this."

Now, "Abajyina Ku Isuku," the community's sanitation club, has 35 permanent members, many of whom are also parents of children with disabilities. What once began as a handful of residents learning about sanitation practices has become an inclusive and united community. Emmanuel shared how the club has transformed their way of life: "Our club has helped members of our community get out of isolation, help each other, and share ideas on how to care for children with disabilities. Being a member of the club has changed me in so many ways. I'm confident in myself now."

Safe water and the *living water* of Christ have changed everything for Emmanuel and his neighbors!



The sanitation and hygiene club meets regularly to plan ways to share sanitation and hygiene practices with the wider community.



Two members of the sanitation and hygiene club sell their handmade soaps at a local market.