

2011 APPEAL



Dear Supporter,

I will keep my words for this year's appeal brief. Last month I had the honour to attend the inaugural convention of current and graduate university students sponsored by Survivors Fund (SURF). It was a remarkable event, only made possible through your generosity.

Charles Gashumba (pictured) recently graduated from university through support from SURF. He spoke on behalf of the many students at the event, and put into words far better than I, the challenges and opportunities for young survivors. His full speech can be read overleaf.

Over 11,000 young survivors have applied for financial support to enrol in university this coming year. The Rwandan Government Assistance Fund for Survivors (FARG) can only support 10% of that number. SURF is raising funding to enable us to support more young survivors to secure a higher education in 2011. Tuition at Rwandan universities is now on average £700 a year for a four year undergraduate degree. However, with your support we can help more survivors like Charles to realise their dream of becoming independent and self-sufficient.

Thankfully, this year has been a stronger one financially for SURF, particularly due to a new grant from Comic Relief to enable us to extend our support to HIV+ survivors through our partners AVEGA and Solace Ministries. With the continuing support of the Charities Advisory Trust through donations to their Good Gifts Catalogue (a copy of which we enclose) we have been able to scale up a number of livelihood projects, with partners including AERG and GAERG. However, it is through the support of individual donor's that we are able to allocate unrestricted funding to support priorities as and when they arise - such as the university education programme. For your support to date, and hopefully your continuing support in the future, we thank you.

David Russell
Director, Survivors Fund (SURF)

Sponsor the work of Survivors Fund (SURF)

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Speech by Charles Gashumba on the inaugural meeting of The SURF Fellowship, young survivors currently or previously sponsored through university with the support of SURF

4th November 2010

Honourable SURF Director, Honourable SURF representative in Rwanda, esteemed guests. This day in many ways is a special day for students and former students like I who have been supported by SURF. No words can express our gratitude towards SURF for their passionate support for the orphans affected by the genocide in Rwanda. After the tragic events that happened in 1994 in Rwanda, SURF took the initiative in providing the necessary support to Rwandans. We thank SURF for their unending support they continue to give to the orphans and widows of the genocide. SURF has supported this vulnerable group through various ways which includes providing the basic necessities.

We highly appreciate the efforts that you put in providing education to Rwandans which is a beneficial factor in the development of this country. Education for all was not something that we were used to because before the genocide the government that was in place then, had a policy of educating only one side of the community. The Tutsis in Rwanda had no right to education at the time. Fortunately this has changed for the better because with the support of SURF and the Government of Rwanda, there is education for all. I am a good example of this important stride in education that the country has made. Despite my unfortunate situation whereby my whole family was killed in the 1994 genocide, I was able to gain a formal education and now I am able to sustain myself thanks to SURF.

After the genocide I was hopeless, and at times I was tempted to commit suicide. I had lost all hope in life because as a fifteen year old I needed someone to support and guide me which I could not get. I was desperate to continue my education because I saw this as the only outlet for a better future. After a short time I was introduced to SURF which helped pay my university fees. This was like a miracle to me because I had never envisaged such fortune happening to me. SURF has supported me all along and they have been there for me where my late parents would have been, were they alive. I recently graduated and fortunately I immediately secured a job at Banque Commerciale du Rwanda. I am now independent and am also able to support my younger brothers and sisters in their education so that they can be able to achieve the success I have been able to achieve. All this was achieved as a result of the support by SURF.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the support you continue to give Rwandan orphans which goes a long way in developing Rwanda. In other words, Rwanda is greatly benefiting from your concerted efforts because most of us who have completed school are now an important workforce for the country. On behalf of those supported by SURF and have completed their education, we would like to say a big thank you and May the Almighty God repay you for your kindness.

Thank you.