We have the honour to share with you the first edition of Trócaire Rwanda Newsletter in 2016

Established in 1973, Trócaire is the overseas development agency of the Catholic Church in Ireland and envisages a just & peaceful world where people’s dignity is ensured & rights are respected; where basic needs are met & resources are shared equitably; where people have control over their own lives & those in power act for the common good.

Trócaire has been in Rwanda since 1994 working through local partners impacting lives, contributing to social justice and ending poverty. We are inspired to work with communities to achieve lasting change in their lives and ensure duty bearers work for the common good. In Rwanda we are currently working in 11 out of the 30 districts and are partnering with 24 local partners.

Trócaire continues to work in more than 17 countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Our core values include:

- Participation
- Solidarity
- Courage
- Perseverance
- Accountability
Trócaire has contributed immensely to development in Rwanda in the areas of value chain development, conflict transformation, livelihoods and citizen participation over the last 21 years. Going forward, our work in Rwanda will be informed by our Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2016-2020 which is aligned to the global strategy of Trócaire focusing on 3 pillars:

I. Women’s Empowerment;
II. Resource Rights, and
III. Preparing for and Responding to Emergencies

Human Rights and democratic space will remain an overarching goal for Trócaire work globally.

These will not be completely new bodies of work for our country programme in Rwanda but there are some shifts that we have made under the new strategy. We will have a more integrated programming approach in order to ensure we respond to the often multifaceted and interlinked vulnerabilities that communities face. This means among other things, ensuring a more focused geographical coverage and active partner portfolio review. Broadly, we have also taken efforts to ensure that our work is aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and support the efforts of the Government of Rwanda and other development partners as pronounced in Vision 2020 and EDPRS II.

**Women’s Empowerment** will now be a key pillar of our work rather than a mainstreaming action. This is in line with SDG number 5 which is focused on achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. Our work on Women’s Empowerment in Rwanda builds on the existing work we have done under the Governance and Human Rights programme and global expertise in this area with focused work on Women’s Empowerment being delivered in other countries such as Sierra Leone, DRC and Nicaragua.

Our deliberate focus on Women’s Empowerment comes at a time when Women’s Rights was the main theme of the recent African Union summit, which took place from 10-18 July 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda. The African Union Commission launched the first ever report on the “Implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa”. It is worth noting that the venue for the launch of the report was in the Parliament of Rwanda, which remains a remarkable symbol of women’s empowerment in Africa and in the world, with a leading representation of 64% of women parliamentarians.

**Climate change** is a reality globally and Rwanda is no exception. Trócaire will continue to take an Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) approach to deal with climate change and livelihoods of communities. This will be the key focus of our Resource Rights programme which builds on the previous livelihoods programme. Already exciting work on Water Management including local level climate change adaptation and building water tanks and dams has been happening in a few districts with exciting prospects to scale up such work in the coming year.

Emergency Preparedness Planning (EPP) and responding to the needs of Burundi refugees in Rwanda are also key focus areas of our programming working through Caritas Rwanda and other Caritas Internationalis agencies globally. We remain committed to partnering with other humanitarian actors in Rwanda led by Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) and UNHCR to address the short to medium term needs of communities in Mahama Camp and any major emergencies that may occur.

Lastly, I would like to say that it is an exciting time for Trócaire Rwanda as we roll out our Country Strategic Plan over the next 5 years and engage various stakeholders including central and local government, partners and beneficiaries to deliver on our strategy and indeed contribute to Rwanda’s Vision 2020.
Trócaire’s Partnership Approach

Trócaire adopted a partnership approach to its work since the organisation was founded by the Irish Catholic Bishops in 1973. The decision to work in partnership with other organisations rather than taking a directly operational approach, was based on the core values of solidarity, participation and subsidiarity from Catholic Social Teaching, and also reflects the approach of Trócaire’s sister agencies in the CIDSE and Caritas networks.

Partnership with locally based organisations is central to Trócaire’s programme work in more than 17 countries where it is working. Much of Trócaire’s direct advocacy, campaigning and development education work is also undertaken in close collaboration with partners in Ireland and Europe.

Trócaire believes that real change to the lives of poor and vulnerable people cannot be brought about simply by providing basic services such as food, water, shelter, education and healthcare. These services are important in their own right, and may be absolutely critical in some situations, particularly in emergencies. But real and lasting change can only be achieved by empowering individuals and communities to achieve their basic rights as human beings, and to be masters of their own development in the long term.

This change can only be achieved through collective action by individuals and groups acting on their own behalf to challenge unjust structures and unequal relationships.

Trócaire therefore strives to empower poor and vulnerable people through support for local organisations that make their own decisions and manage their own affairs. As change may be required at a number of different levels in society, Trócaire works with partners at a variety of levels to achieve that change.

In Rwanda Trócaire currently works with 24 partners in 11 out of the 30 districts and provides programmatic and technical support, as well as organisational capacity building and operational support to partner organisations.

An example of Partner Capacity Building

From 28-29 July 2016, Trócaire and partners had a workshop on Action planning, reporting and monitoring and evaluation. 32 participants from partner organisations attended the 2 day workshop which was facilitated by Modeste Sibomana, Programme Manager, Emmanuel Karukinda, Sustainable Livelihoods Programme Officer and Desire Nduwayezu, M&E Officer.

- Partners noted the benefits of working in focused geographical area in order to maximize impact based on available resources;
- Managers committed to link strategic planning to panning tools such as Gant charts and start applying M&E framework. The 2 tools were explained and exercised on during the workshop;
- Participants confirmed to have clear understating of Trocaire Results Framework indicators and how to use relevant data collection tools to track them.

At the end of the workshop, one participant said “In our organizations, field officers in charge of project implementation do not take in account the whole project as unique, they are interested in the chronology of activities and are not seeking the coherence between the milestones; It is the role of us managers to link project deliverables with milestones embedded in our strategic planning”.

Another participant added that “gender is a cross-cutting issue; it has been recommended to address it through all the stages of the project process for better monitoring and evaluation instead of having it as standalone project outcome”.

Participants indicated that there are in need of training on Results Based Management (RBM) to help them to be more efficient in strategic and reporting in line with Trocaire and many other donor organizations current working system. Trócaire Rwanda intends to have a follow up RBM training before end of 2016.
Apart from several key strategic decisions taken, some countries received awards for the progress made in promoting women’s right and gender equality, according to the recently introduced Gender Scorecard. The three main categories awarded were: social, economic and political, whereby Rwanda topped the political category.

In the margins of the 27th AU Summit, the African Union Commission launched the first ever report on the “Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa”. The report which was launched on the 9th of July, 2016, during the Third AU High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, seeks to form the basis for enhanced dialogue and engagement with AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities, civil society, and other key stakeholders on accelerating implementation, as well as better informing the African Union’s engagement with international interlocutors and partners on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa.

The focus on Women’s Rights by the Africa Union summit is important for Trócaire Rwanda as it comes at a time when the country programme is establishing a focused Women’s Empowerment Programme in line with the CSP 2016-2020.

Enhanced citizen participation in decentralised governance processes in Rwanda

With support from the European Commission, Trócaire implemented a phased project from 2010 to 2016 with Rwanda Civil society Platform, CEJP and IMBARAGA as implementing partners working in 5 districts in Rwanda—Gakenke, Rulindo in the North, Nyamagabe, Nyaruguru and Gisagara in the South. The project engaged 4780 citizens (50% women, 20% youths under 25 years and 30% other vulnerable groups). Apart from citizens, the project also targeted 1000 local leaders and 125 CSOs. The final evaluation of the project was finalised in July 2016 and a number of achievements were registered. The main achievements of the project included the following:

1. The level of public participation in decision making improved considerably from a baseline figure of 46.7% to 76%;
2. Citizen satisfaction level of participation in various meetings improved from 44.7% to 85.5% by end of project. In particular the level of women participation improved from 22% to 96.4%;
3. The participation of target population in monitoring and evaluation increased from 67.9% to 80.2%;
4. 91.2% of citizens were aware of District development plans and Performance contracts (Imihigo);
5. The level of participation of CSOs in governance processes covering development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation improved from 51% to 85.2% by end of project; and
6. Improved level of interaction between local authorities on one hand, and between local authorities and civil society on the other. The level of citizen participation by end of the project stood at 89.9% compared to a baseline figure of 56%. Interactions between the duty bearers at local level and civil society stood at 73.8% by the end of project and respondents commended the existence of good understanding and flexibility between the two actors.
With the support of Irish Aid and SCIAF, Trócaire has been implementing a Water Project in 3 districts in Rwanda - Nyamagabe, Kamonyi and Nyanza, combining Community Integrated Water Resources Planning with the introduction of rainwater harvesting technologies for Climate Change Adaptation.

Nine communities participated and successfully tested five technologies. As result, 588 households (226 MHHs & 362 FHHs) installed one or two technologies and are now harvesting/storing rain water for their farming activities, mainly dry season vegetable production. Of those who installed roof rainwater systems 435 Households installed semi-underground tanks with 6,000 litres capacity , 131 Households installed bamboo tanks with 5,000 litres capacity and 22 installed plastic tanks with 5,000 litres capacity. 60 households (45 FHHs and 15 MHHs) are using the low cost technology to recycle waste water from other domestic activities for vegetables production as well. Additionally, 352 Households (215 FHHs & 137) grouped into farmers' cooperatives have access to 10 run- off water ponds to irrigate their group plots. Nine communities have developed village water resources action plans and established Village Water and Climate Change Committees (VWCCs). The VWCCs have presented the findings of their village water resources investigations to higher authorities. Having brought to the authorities attention issues such as broken piped systems, pollution by mining, severe erosion, they have received some immediate responses from government. Formal mining has been suspended in one village and budget provisions will be made for repairing a piped water system in another village.

Mind-set change has been achieved at both village and higher governance levels; villagers realise that they have power to change the management of communal water resources and factors affecting them. Government authorities are aware of the prevailing problems relating to water resources and are willing to act. They are grateful to villagers and to the project for forming and training VWCCs and for making IWRM Action Plans. Higher authorities are very happy at the level of installation of rainwater harvesting systems as this is part of the government’s plan.

Participants are making the direct connection between climate change and water resources status. They also recognise direct human impacts which raise or reduce risks to climate hazards. People feel more empowered to do something and that they are not just exposed to a remote threat which national governments talks about in global conferences. Local authorities are already planning to copy all aspects of this pilot project elsewhere in their districts. The national government is also interested in copying the project innovations and processes more widely. Success was possible because of:

- Openness by Trocaire and partners to the new whole-village, catchment -wide approach; Strong trusting relationships between the partners and the villagers and between Trocaire and the partners; The placing of water technologists in partner organisations and with responsibility for facilitating only two villages each; Excellence and efficiency of engineering and technical teams; Use of enjoyable participatory methodologies; The combination of granting of water technologies simultaneously with community planning processes.
Since March 2015, Rwanda started to receive a sudden mass influx of refugees from Burundi, fleeing due to fear of election-related violence. Under the leadership and coordination of the Government of Rwanda Ministry for Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including participation from UN agencies and national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) an interagency multi-sectoral response was initiated from the outset of the emergency.

Since the start of the emergency, over 77,925 Burundians refugees have been registered in Rwanda as of the 9th of May 2016. Out of these Burundian registered refugees, 48,562 (62.3%) are currently living in Mahama refugee camp, while the remaining 29,363 individuals are urban refugees living primarily in Kigali and Huye. The Mahama refugee camp site was established at the end of April 2015 with emergency shelter, WASH, health facilities and lifesaving assistance.

Trócaire through CARITAS Rwanda took part in the emergency response in collaboration with other implementing partners operating in Mahama Refugees Camp. With the mandate to ensure the community affected by crises receive timely, accountable and needs based humanitarian assistance, Trócaire has awarded a grant to CARITAS Rwanda to implement a project for supporting Lactating mothers, People with Disability and single mothers to meet their basic needs and livelihoods.

CARITAS Rwanda is providing direct assistance to 2927 lactating mothers with children between 7 to 24 months old, 519 people with disability with food provision. The food supplement is very important in such situation where some families including our beneficiaries do not have enough means to purchase enough food in order to improve their diet. In positive repercussion all beneficiaries including children are getting healthier and increasing their weight mass significantly due to the support provided. To be more Effective and for sustainable intervention, CARITAS Rwanda recruited 30 volunteers who play vital role in community mobilization, mainstreaming protection and accountability.

A two days training on Accountability and Protection mainstreaming was conducted by Trocaire Humanitarian Advisor in April 2016 to CARITAS staff and Volunteers. Monitoring visit to Mahama Camp by TROCAIRE staff accompanied by CARITAS Staff was conducted to ensure the progress and to support where necessary.

Women who are breastfeeding receive nutrition adapted to their specific needs and conditions. Photo credit: CARITAS RWANDA
The Humanitarian Advisor conducted a two days workshop on EPP for TROCAIRE staff in the framework to equip staff with skills and capacity for developing Trocaire Rwanda EPP and for responding effectively to any emergency. This is a key result area for the CSP.

A one day training on Protection mainstreaming and accountability for CARITAS staff - Emergency Response Project Coordinator and M&E Officer was facilitated by Humanitarian Advisor, Julie Breen on 12th August 2016.
Josiane Umumarashavu’s Journey with Trócaire continues:

For Josiane, the lady who appeared on the Trócaire’s Lenten box in 2004, it has been an exciting journey completing University education in 2015 with a degree in Accounting with the support of Trócaire. Josiane recently joined Trócaire Rwanda in August 2016 as a Finance and Administration Intern. “I am happy about joining Trócaire because Trócaire helped me from primary education until I finished University. I am very much appreciative. I applied for internship to learn more about professional accounting. I want to be a professional accountant in future and learn more, have a Master’s Degree and take ACCA or CPA examinations”, Josiane said, commenting on the occasion of joining Trócaire

“Josiane’s journey has been an inspiration to me and the team and I am very much delighted to work with her on her career journey and provide mentorship to her dream of being a qualified accountant while at the same time contributing to development of communities in Rwanda”, Dony Mazingaizo, Country Director of Trócaire in Rwanda remarked.

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Trócaire extends its deepest gratitude to the donor agencies, institutional partners, the Government of Rwanda and the people of Ireland who are a vital support to our programming in Rwanda.

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For any questions about Trócaire or our programmes and work in Rwanda please call or email us.

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