



# DELIVERING AS ONE UN RWANDA

## Environmental awareness brings new light

Before the Sabyinyo Eco-Tourism Lodge came to the Kinigi Sector of Rwanda, Julienne Nyirasine's children often had to skip school to help the family take potatoes to the nearby market. But now money from the lodge, nestled near Volcanoes National Park, has funded roads that allow vehicles to pick up the market goods, and take children to school, instead. "After the lodge came in, we got a lot that we didn't have before," says Julienne.

The luxury lodge is part of an ongoing effort to help Rwandans reap the benefits of Ecotourism. Supported by the UN in Rwanda in partnership with Rwanda's Ministry of Lands, Environment, Forestry, Water and Natural Resources. Together they espouse the advantages of projects where residents can profit from the natural resources around them.



The Sabyinyo Eco-Tourism Lodge in the Kinigi Sector of Rwanda has shown residents how Eco Tourism can bring development.

The infrastructure required to maintain the lodge has spread to the local community. Now water, housing, roads, bridges and schools are more abundant in the region. These tools have enabled Rwandans such as Julienne to get their crops and wares to local markets more efficiently and increase their business. "When we get money from our crops, first we pay medical insurance for all the children and for us. Anyone who gets sick can be treated, no problem," she says of the improvements. "We use the money also for clothes and for pens and notebooks. We also continue to buy seeds for crops."



Children in the Kinigi sector help their parents cultivate land after they come home from school.

The developments have also brought a new mindset to the region and expanded upon the popularity of sustainable growth. "Our children have go to school, but when they go back home they also spend a small part of their day helping their parents, and as mothers we show children how we cultivate the and go about our economic planning," says Julienne. "Our actual thought process has changed."

Not far from the lodge, the Mutubu Micro Hydro Power Rural Electrification

Project has also made a difference in local lives. The project, which is supported by UNIDO, harnesses the power of local water sources to provide electricity to the region. “Villages around the stream are very poor and they badly need electricity,” says Y asas Ponaecre, manager of the Mutubu project. “People will use electricity for shops, salons, and other activities in schools and offices.”

And just like in the Kinigi Sector, changing mindsets has also taken hold when it comes to the region’s natural resources. “We teach people how to protect the environment, which they are very excited to do, because they know they get electricity from this water,” says Y asas.

Consolée, a villager from Cimonyo, says access to electricity will improve her life in many ways. “Electricity can really help in the village, because we can boil water to keep ourselves healthy,” she says. “We will also have electricity for places like hair salons, and then we’ll have business.” The electricity will especially benefit the children of Consolée and other residents.

“I’m a teacher and I don’t have much time to tutor my children,” she says. “But with electricity, as soon as I leave work and go home, I’ll simply switch on my lights, and I’ll be able to tutor my children after dark.”

With the possibilities of alternative energy, new lights continue to shine not only in Consolée’s house, but also in homes all over for Rwandans and their children.



**The road network near Sabyinyo Lodge provide valuable support for local communities.**