



**KOMERA**

*Self Confidence, One Girl at a Time.*

**KOMERA.ORG**

**INFO@KOMERA.ORG**

*Komera is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.  
All donations are tax deductible.*



# KOMERA

## STRENGTH & COURAGE

— ANNUAL REPORT 2016 —



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# WE ARE KOMERA

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

If Komera fulfills its mission, young women in Rwanda will have the confidence to lead positive social change in their community, experience the joy of self-discovery, and realize their own personal potential.



EDUCATION



COMMUNITY



SPORT

## HOW WE GOT HERE AND WHY WE'RE STAYING

How did we find ourselves down a red dirt road, in a very rural village two hours from the nearest city, in Rwinkwavu, Rwanda?

Komera founder and Executive Director Margaret Butler was working and living in Rwanda in 2007 when she saw first-hand the need for education and empowerment programs for young women. Not only were girls missing opportunities for education, but many vulnerable young women had no support system or hope for their future once school was over.

After enrolling the first ten girls in secondary school, Margaret launched a network of holistic support programs that has evolved into what we now know as Komera.

Transformative tuition scholarships, school materials, sexual and reproductive health training and leadership summits provided girls with everything they needed to have the best chance for a successful future. Shortly after followed the parent and guardian cooperatives, community empowerment programs and post-graduate transition courses to see to fruition our goal of long-term support for the entire community. Today Komera is run by an incredible Rwandan staff who know and understand what it takes to drive sustainable social change.

## SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

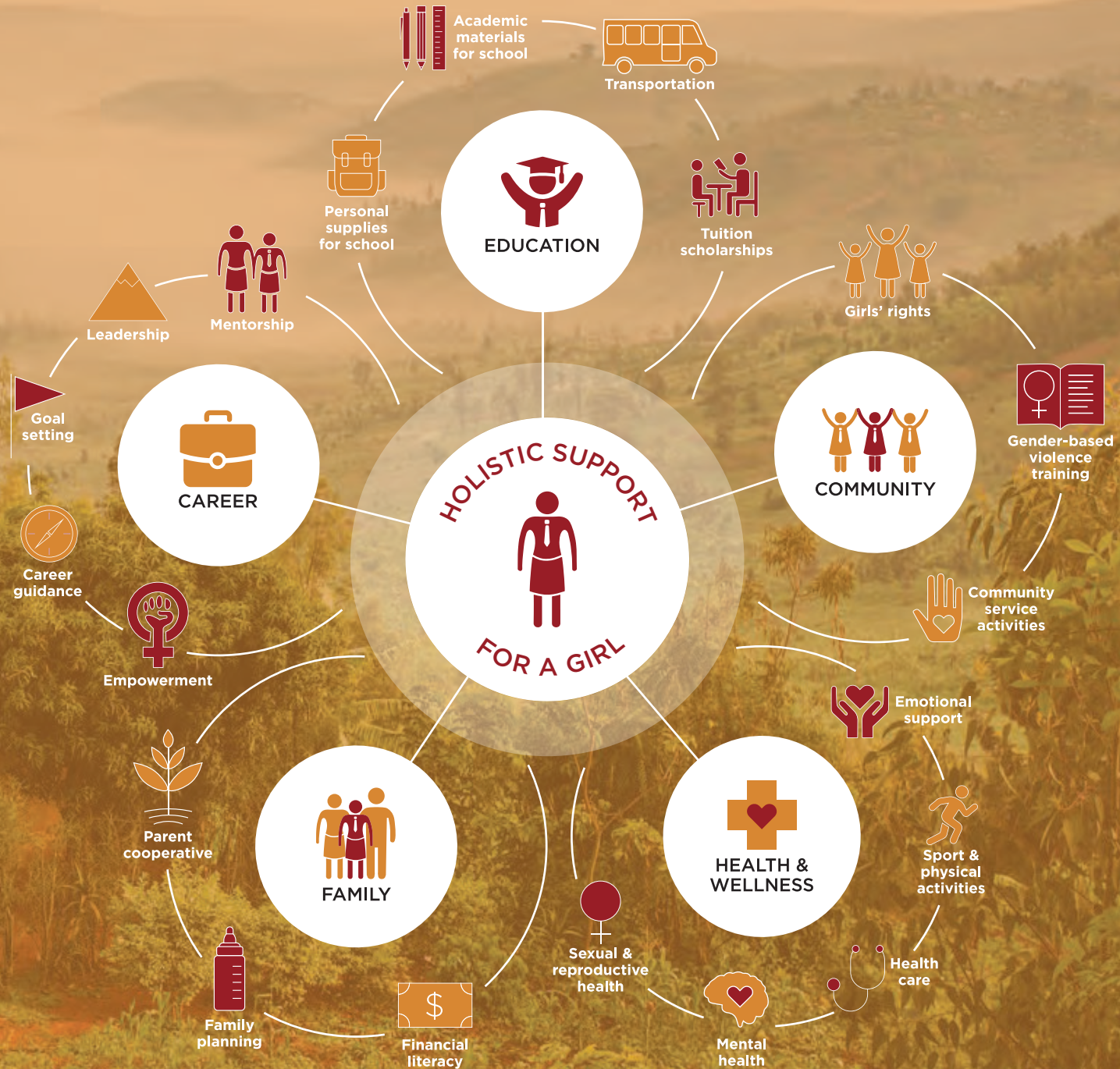
Thoughtful, strategic growth in the right direction. We have shown our love to a community in rural Rwanda, and we plan to continue growing based on the needs of the people we serve. We don't have plans for massive scale or expansion. Komera could put thousands of girls into school. But we choose not to. We choose not to just tick a box and call her a number.

We are focused on depth and breadth of impact. We know that our solutions are community based and not a top-down approach. We know that our impact is real and that the outcomes are not just numbers - but people with faces, names and stories. We hope this impact report will give you a peek into our work and that you'll be inspired by hearing our stories and meeting some of the amazing individuals who make up our Komera family.

# OUR APPROACH

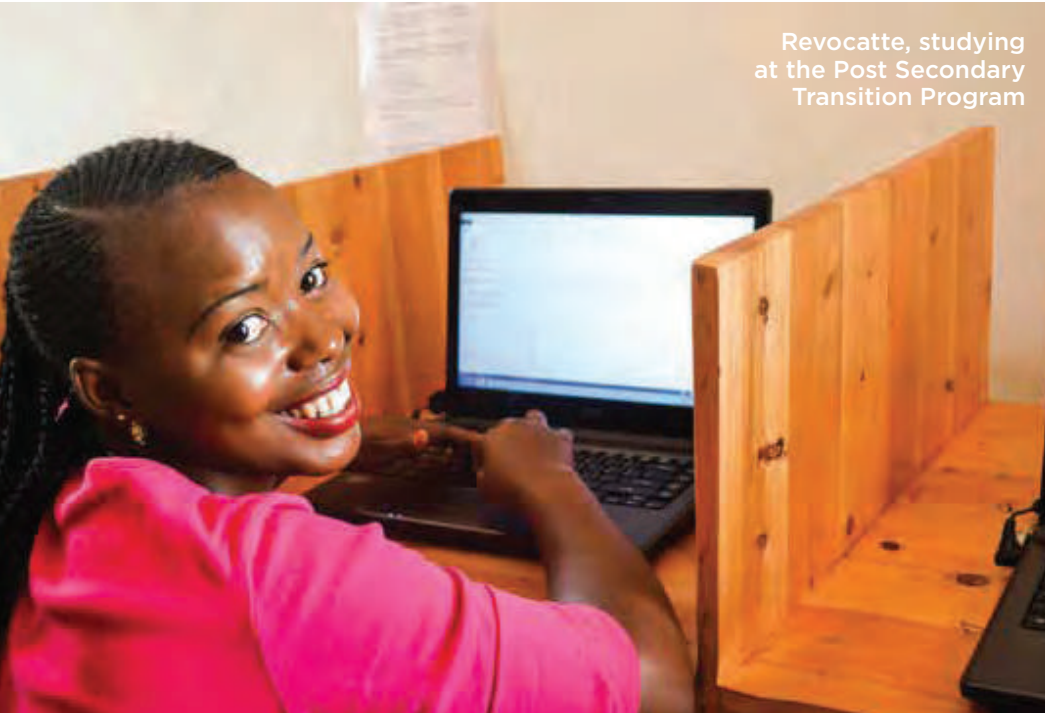
Komera's work is different because it's comprehensive. Komera invests in the whole girl - her health, wellness, education, family and community.

- Komera is a grassroots community-based organization
- We develop programs based on needs of the community we serve
- Komera hires talented Rwandan staff to run all programmatic work on the ground
- We have made a long-term investment in Rwinkwavu, Rwanda, spending the past 9 years fighting for the rights of vulnerable young women



# Meet Revocatte

The best stories are told first-hand. We are honored to introduce you to one of our bright young women, who shares from the heart how Komera has changed her life.



Revocatte, studying at the Post Secondary Transition Program

I am Revocatte, a second born in a family of five children. I have both parents though very poor. This is my life story before and after joining Komera. Before joining Komera, I remember that my life was very hard up to when I completed my O'level\* in 2010. I passed my O'level exams, but could not continue with my secondary school due to poverty in our family. My father was not supportive and my mother didn't have any income to support my education.

*My life and future in general was all hopeless.*

I didn't have any chance of continuing school and complete at least A'level\* of secondary school, which was always my desire. This worried and made me unhappy every time I thought of it because I realized that my dream could not be achieved. Many told me to get married, but I decided not to because I was young, and I was dreaming about my studies and goal that had failed.

*But I hoped that one day I could get another chance to complete my secondary school and even university.*

In September of 2011, while I was working in the village bar in Nyamirama, the leader of a nearby health center came to drink, and while we chatted, he asked me why I was working in a bar at my age instead of being in school. I explained to him my challenge and he connected me to a group of other young girls who had the same problem like mine.

I was later selected as their leader and the person who was training us connected us to Komera for our support. When I joined Komera, they took me to a secondary school called Appeka College, paid my school fees and all my requirements. After getting the sponsorship from Komera, I was too excited to even say anything.

*I could not believe what God had done for me, and that's when I started seeing my future in my hands.*

I completed my A' level secondary school in 2014 successfully and got an A2 diploma in Accountancy. In 2015, I enrolled in the Post Secondary Transition Program in Komera, where I also worked as their group representative. This year, I decided to apply to university so as to continue my studies, and by luck, I was accepted.

I am now so happy, I joined university in IPRC WEST in faculty of Hospitality Management all because of the support of Komera. I got a study loan from Komera and I see that my dream will be achieved soon.

*I will study and work hard and be a good manager, as I always dreamt.*



\*O'level is lower secondary school, grades 1-9.

\*A'level is upper secondary school, grades 9-12.

**We have the opportunity to invest in the future of more young women like Revocatte!**

# OUR 6 FAVORITES FROM 2016

Grew and re-vamped Parent Cooperative by training **96 PARENTS** in business and entrepreneurship skills and launching **10 NEW BUSINESSES**



Led discussions with **HUNDREDS** of high school students about what it means to be a **WILD FEMINIST**, and how they can take action as young global citizens



Ran a collective **997 MILES** IN 5 CITIES around the world for the Komera Global Run!



Opened doors & unlimited opportunity for **18 EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS** with full university scholarships



Launched the Komera Community Empowerment Program to empower and inspire over **500 PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Hired **2 GRADUATES** of our program to work for Komera, making our program grow full-circle!



# EDUCATION



We select students to join our program based on many factors. We select the poorest of the poor who would have no other option if not for school. Komera staff interviews students, evaluates written applications and school reports, and visits students' homes to meet with their parents and guardians. Students must have a strong willingness and desire to pursue educational opportunities beyond secondary school, and a passion for learning. We look for that "spark" that shows us she is committed and dedicated to investing in herself.

## TRANSFORMATIVE SECONDARY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Currently 80% of our district relies on agriculture as a main source of income. Youth unemployment rate in Rwanda is at a staggering 60%, leaving thousands of young men and women with a bleak future. Access to opportunities such as education and job training is extremely limited, and our community is stuck in a never-ending cycle of poverty. Komera takes a holistic approach to education that ensures long-term success for our students.

**WE BELIEVE ONE OF THE CORE ISSUES IS THAT LESS THAN 8% OF YOUNG WOMEN ARE ACTUALLY FINISHING SECONDARY SCHOOL AND THOSE THAT DO RARELY TRANSITION ON TO A LIFESTYLE THAT HELPS THEM BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY**

Komera provides comprehensive scholarships for upper secondary school (grades 9-12), including full tuition at a public boarding school, scholastic and personal materials, uniforms, health insurance, transportation and everything she needs to have the best chance of success.



## MENTORSHIP

Once we get a Komera Scholar into school, we want to ensure that she stays there. We train teachers to be Komera mentors at each of the nine boarding schools in the Kayonza District that Komera scholars attend.



Every week the Komera mentor meets with the Scholars to support them in handling financial, social, and academic problems. These meetings also give our scholars the chance to learn about sexual and reproductive health, relationships, and gender-based violence in a safe space. They are an essential part of the program and ensure that our scholars remain happily in school.



## POST SECONDARY TRANSITION PROGRAM

When a girl finishes secondary school, it can be difficult to know what's next. Our Post Secondary Transition Program helps each graduate of our program identify a strategy for going forward. Over nine months, girls develop the skills and knowledge needed to plan their futures.

An English Language Intensive enables students to learn the conversational English necessary for everything from job interviews to public speaking. Computer literacy training gives girls a full understanding of how to navigate the internet, use software and research job opportunities. Our business incubator program prepares students to launch their own entrepreneurial endeavors, from writing a plan to being a leader.



**HOLISTICALLY, THE TRANSITION PROGRAM ENSURES OUR GIRLS KNOW THAT GRADUATING AS KOMERA SCHOLARS IS FAR FROM THE END OF THEIR EDUCATION**

## LEADERSHIP SUMMITS

Komera Leadership Summits support our scholars through some of the most challenging aspects of their lives.



**OUR GOAL IS TO HELP YOUNG WOMEN DEVELOP SKILLS THAT WILL SET THEM UP TO EXCEL IN EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR LIVES**

Our summit achieves this with tailored programming including creative leadership activities, experiential learning, and incorporating traditional cultural practices such as story telling and dance. Komera Scholars attend three Leadership Summits per year during school breaks.

An essential piece of the summit is our focus on sexual reproductive health. We provide our students with a safe space to learn, ask questions and take charge of their bodies.



Komera is the co-founder of the East African Girls Leadership Summit (EAGLS). EAGLS is a collective of community-based organizations across Eastern African that convenes annually to host an intensive summit for young vulnerable women from the poorest communities.

During the summit, program staff is immersed in curriculum development, mentorship and leadership training. Komera has collaborated with organizations in Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya over the past 3 years.



**EAST AFRICAN GIRLS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**





# COMMUNITY



## PARENT & GUARDIAN COOPERATIVE

The Komera Parent Cooperative grew from the need to reach the greater community, and support the parents of guardians of our scholars. Once a scholar is selected, their parents and guardians are invited to join the cooperative, where they receive extensive training on family management and how to generate income to support their family.

Parents are advocates for vulnerable girls in our community, and are leading the way in addressing sensitive cultural norms that limit opportunities for girls. The cooperative members save money together to launch small businesses, and Komera provides training for them to become savvy business owners.

Our Parent Council, that heads the cooperative, reorganized the group from one large group into ten small groups in 2016. The council facilitates business training and provides support for each individual group. Komera provided small seed grants to each of the groups to start their businesses, and we're excited to watch them grow!



**IN 2016, THE PARENT COOPERATIVE REVAMPED AND LAUNCHED 10 NEW BUSINESSES**



## COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Launched in 2016, the Komera Community Empowerment Program reaches hundreds of primary school children with confidence-building exercises and empowerment training.

Our social worker and staff members visit local schools to lead lessons about gender-based violence, girls' rights, and sexual and reproductive health to girls and boys. Part of the empowerment program includes community services activities to inspire young women to be change agents in their communities.



**IN 2016, WE GAVE 159 STUDENTS BRAND NEW SCHOOL UNIFORMS THANKS TO SUPPORT FROM OUR PARTNER TAILORED FOR EDUCATION**



## SPORT: KOMERA SOCCER TEAM

In 2016, we launched the FIRST ever all-girls soccer team in our sector. Led by members of the Post Secondary Transition Program, the team rallies local students to play and empower each other. The team brings together youth across our community to join on the field or cheer on from the stands.



The players have increased their confidence and understanding of their rights as women. The soccer coach works with Komera staff to include sexual and reproductive health trainings before and after practices and games. This is a great way to engage new adolescents in our community and also provide much needed education and training.





# SPORT

## KOMERA GLOBAL RUN

Komera supporters raised an incredible  
**\$34,002**  
— IN 2016 —  
through crowd funding by running the world in the Komera Global Run!

What began as a fun run for girls in a small village in Rwanda has developed into a global run for girls' empowerment around the world!

We believe that every girl around the world has the right to go to school and to believe that she can **RUN THE WORLD!**

### THANK YOU TO OUR SCHOOL PARTNERS

- The Beacon School  
*Brooklyn, NY*
- The Berkeley Carroll School  
*Brooklyn, NY*
- Greens Farms Academy  
*Westport, CT*
- Packer Collegiate Institute  
*Brooklyn, NY*
- Spring Valley Middle School  
*Kelowna, Canada*
- The Stanwich School  
*Greenwich, CT*
- Winsor School  
*Boston, MA*



BOWEN ISLAND, CANADA



SAN FRANCISCO, CA



BROOKLYN, NY



BOSTON, MA



RWINKWAVU, RWANDA



# THIRD ANNUAL GIRLS RUN THE WORLD EVENT



## GENEROUS INDIVIDUAL SPONSORS

### PLATINUM SPONSORS

Sharon & Tom Teles  
Ali Samadi

### GOLD SPONSOR

Allan Loeb

### SILVER SPONSORS

Sam & Cristina Patel  
Elizabeth & Stuart Bohart  
Michael Caperonis

### BRONZE SPONSORS

Purvi Padia  
Michael Hanin

Komera hosted the 3rd annual Girls Run the World Event at Avenue nightclub on Tuesday, May 24th, 2016. Guests enjoyed a fun and festive evening of drinks, food, music, dancing, virtual reality experiences and stories from the field from the founder & Executive Director of Komera.

**THIS YEAR OUR  
GENEROUS SUPPORTERS  
RAISED ENOUGH FUNDS  
IN THIS ONE EVENING  
TO PURCHASE A  
MUCH-NEEDED TRUCK!**

The truck provides essential transport for our staff in Rwanda and emergency and urgent transportation for our students.

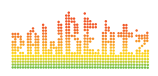
## THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING HOST COMMITTEE:

Ali Samadi  
Amy D'Annibale  
Andrea Burrell  
Annelise Osborne  
Arlette Umuhoza  
Brittany Whyte  
Carlo DaVia

Consolee Nishimwe  
Cristina Patel  
David Boehmer  
Dayna M Hart  
Doug Scrivani  
Hayley Rynehart  
Henson Robert Orser  
Kerry Aronchick

Kevin Kettl  
Kristina Apgar  
Leslie Kroeger  
Lisa Stone  
Margaret Butler  
Sophie Pape  
Vaeme Afokpa

## 2016 EVENT CORPORATE SPONSORS

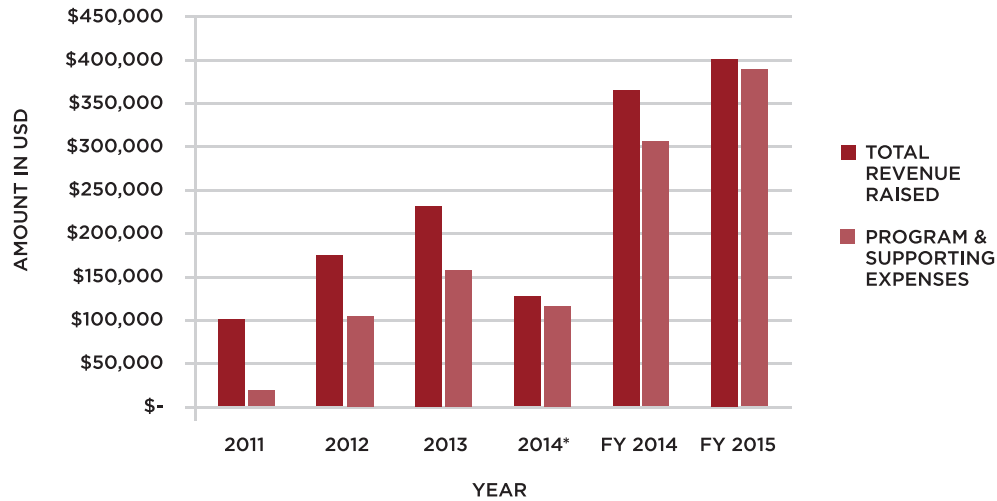


S!FRANK



# FINANCIALS

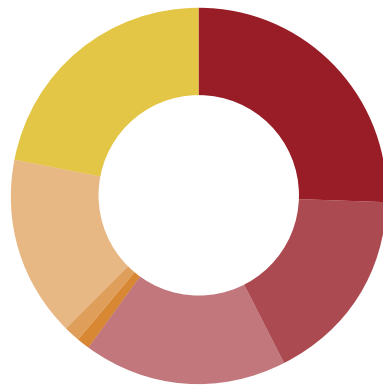
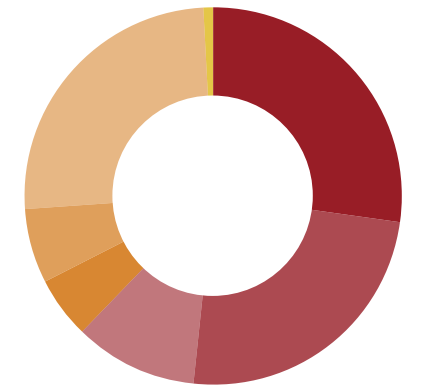
## PROGRAM & FUNDRAISING GROWTH



\*In 2014 we changed from calendar year to fiscal year. Year 2014 represents financials for a partial year, from January-June 2014.

## FY15 REVENUE AND SUPPORT

## FY15 EXPENSES



- GRANTS & CONTRACTS
- APPEALS INCOME
- CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS
- SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS
- POST SECONDARY CONTRIBUTIONS
- FUNDRAISING EVENTS
- OTHER INCOME

- SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM
- LEADERSHIP ACADEMICS
- POST SECONDARY PROGRAM
- PARENT COOPERATIVE
- MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
- GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE
- FUNDRAISING

# VISIONARIES

## U.S. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Boehmer  
Elizabeth Bohart  
Margaret Butler  
Kristen Gengaro  
John Hagarty  
Joanne Pace  
Ali Samadi  
Larkin Callaghan

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Bernadett Vajda  
Elizabeth Langel  
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Annelise Osborne

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Francis Kamanzi  
Jackline Mukashyaka  
Pierrine Musabyemaria  
Dativah Bideri Mukamusonera

## BOSTON ADVISORY BOARD

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Victoria Gomez  
Allyson McDonald  
Leonela Gonzalez

## SAN FRANCISCO ADVISORY BOARD

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Sasha Rabsey

## CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Peter Baumgartner  
Sue Ritchie  
Susan Munro  
Courtney Inman  
Barry Adams  
Rebecca Johnstone

## KOMERA STAFF

Margaret Butler  
Dativah Bideri  
Jean-Bosco Bamuririmbe  
Ruth Kamatali  
Rosemary Musilmire  
Vestine Uwamahoro  
Justine Mbabazi  
Lauren LeBlanc

## YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS.

*"Without you, I would be staying in my village, but because of your expectations for us to become strong, independent and self-reliant women, I am accelerating my studies."*

Marie Giselle, Komera Scholar

# THANK YOU!