

ABSTRACT

Impact analysis of Appel's activities in Rwanda

L'Appel, 20 years of action in Rwanda: from humanitarian aid to integrated developpement



This document is an abstract of the impact study of the actions carried out by L'Appel in Rwanda.

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I — General background

L'Appel activities in Rwanda aim to bring about a lasting improvement in the living conditions of vulnerable people by addressing several key issues: education, health, access to water and electricity, and economic and social development. L'Appel marks an important transition from emergency humanitarian aid to an 'integrated development' approach. This is taking place in a context marked by the aftermath of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi and the continuing challenges of reconstruction and social and economic development.

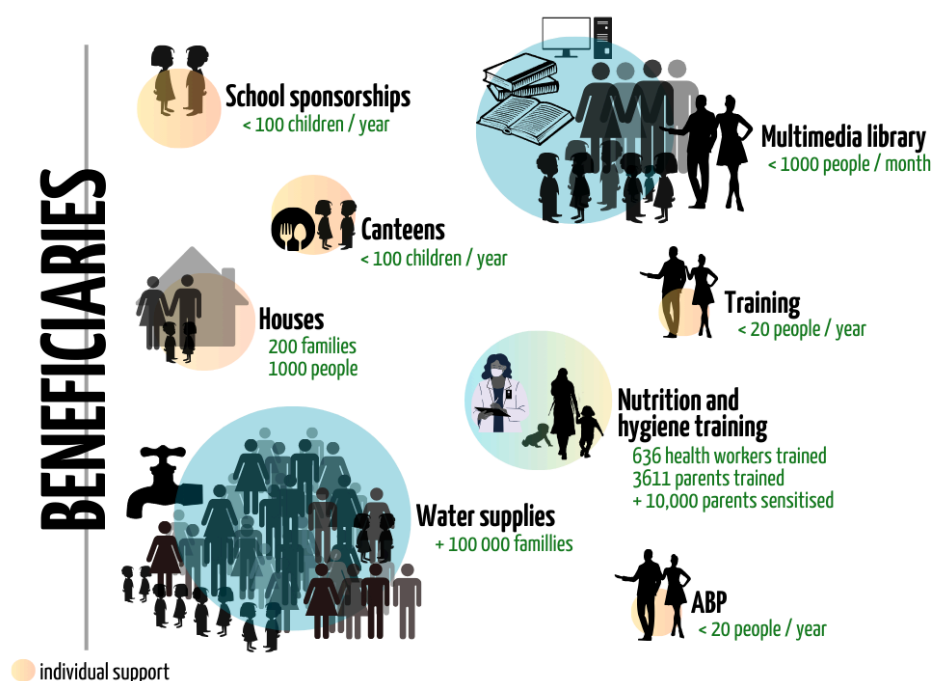
L'Appel has initiated several structuring projects that have had a tangible impact on the lives of the beneficiaries. The construction of houses has provided decent living conditions for many families, mostly single women with children. Improved access to drinking water, thanks to the installation of gravity-fed networks, has transformed the daily lives of thousands of inhabitants, reducing their vulnerability to water-borne diseases and relieving them of the burden of fetching water cans over long distances, a task that usually falls to women and children. At the same time, education has been a priority, with school sponsorships, vocational training, the opening of social canteens and the creation of a media library to promote access to educational and cultural resources.



During the period under review (2014-2024), L'Appel activities in Rwanda were as follows:

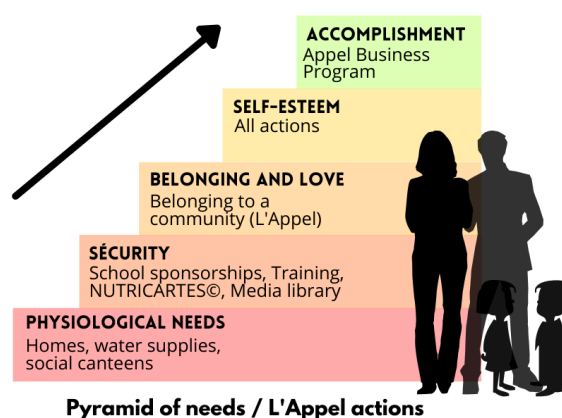
- **Construction of new houses:** Since 2014, the construction of 200 houses has provided housing for more than 1,000 people, 90% of whom are single women with children or disabled men.
- **Individual connections to the water network:** Since 2021, connecting the houses built or renovated to the water supply network has been a priority for the association. By 2023, 25 houses will be connected.
- **Construction of gravity-fed water supply networks:** The construction or rehabilitation of 19 gravity-fed networks has benefited around 100,000 people.
- **Social canteens:** Funding for a social canteen allows 50 children to be fed daily. A second canteen was inaugurated in Kiruhura at the end of August 2024.
- **School sponsorship:** 64 godchildren from underprivileged families or orphans were sponsored this school year, and more than 300 children have been sponsored to complete their secondary education since 2004.

- **Nutrition education:** L'Appel supports the NUTRICARTES© project, a nutrition education method based on participatory teaching and an adapted play tool. 636 community health workers and 3,611 parents - mainly mothers - have been trained.
- **Microcredit:** A microcredit programme for economic activities, the *Appel Business Programme* (ABP), was piloted in 2023. In 2023, this project enabled 12 former godchildren or beneficiaries of L'Appel (8 women and 4 men, aged between 23 and 45) to create their own business and employment.
- **Media library:** Inaugurated in 2011, the library now includes a games library and a computer room. On average, over 1,000 people use the library each month. It collaborates with schools and Early Childhood Development centres (ECD).



All of these initiatives have a direct impact on the self-esteem of the beneficiaries, enabling them to improve their social standing and change the way they are viewed by their friends, family and community.

The *Appel Business Programme* goes even further by offering people the opportunity to fulfil their potential through an entrepreneurial project, thereby contributing to their autonomy. The diagram opposite, inspired by Maslow's pyramid, shows the potential synergies of the actions undertaken, whose effects are mutually reinforcing when combined.



II — Impact assessment

— Impact on living conditions

L'Appel's action has significantly improved the living conditions of the beneficiaries. Access to secure housing has increased the stability of families and facilitated their social integration. The construction of water supplies has had a positive impact on the health and well-being of communities: the closer proximity of standpipes has also enabled them to devote more time to schoolwork, leisure activities and, in some cases, income-generating activities. Improved schooling conditions and the activities of the media library have encouraged the educational success of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, by providing them with an environment conducive to learning and personal development.



Economic support through vocational training and a microcredit programme, the *Appel Business Programme*, has helped beneficiaries become self-sufficient by enabling them to start income-generating activities. However, these initiatives remain limited due to the small number of beneficiaries.

— Main objectives achieved

- **Improved living conditions:** The houses built have improved the security and stability of families, especially single women. Access to drinking water and electricity has reduced the number of arduous daily chores, especially for women and children.
- **Education:** School sponsorships and social canteens have enabled more than 300 children from vulnerable families to complete their education. The media library, used by more than 1,000 people per month, improves access to educational and cultural resources.
- **Economic empowerment:** The ABP microcredit pilot programme has enabled 12 beneficiaries (including 8 women) to start their own economic activities.
- **Nutrition and health:** The NUTRICARTES© educational method has trained 3,600 parents and health workers, contributing to better nutrition and hygiene.



Certain limitations were also identified. Dependence on external funding is a major issue for the sustainability of the initiatives. The design of the houses built could be further improved by including sanitary facilities and kitchens to better meet the needs of the families. Finally, the involvement of the beneficiaries in the definition and implementation of the projects remains limited, which does not encourage them to take ownership of the initiatives and become independent in the long term.

— Limitations identified

- Dependence on certain financial partners, such as the *Fondation Abbé Pierre* and SEDIF, and a decline in the number of sponsors.
- Unmet needs, such as the inclusion of sanitary facilities, kitchens or even basic furniture in the houses built.
- An approach that is still insufficient to mobilise the beneficiaries as direct actors in their own development.

— Empowerment impact

The impact analysis highlighted an evolution in L'Appel's vision, moving from a humanitarian rationale to an integrated development approach. This evolution can be seen in L'Appel's desire to create synergies between actions that will increase their effectiveness and impact on the direct beneficiaries, their families, their neighbours and their communities.

The evaluation of this impact cannot be limited to the satisfaction of their primary needs or to a simple economic or health dimension, but must also be understood in terms of empowerment increasing (the "*power to act*") of the people helped (increase in knowledge, know-how and interpersonal or interactional skills). In order to measure the effects and impacts of the actions carried out in terms of increasing the beneficiaries' capacity to act, we used the "*Empowerment Grid*" presented below:

ASSETS	POWER & WILL
⇒ Access to resources, access to services and financial and social situation	⇒ State of mind, psychological strength, ability to reach out to others ⇒ Critical awareness and ability to influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Roles, networks and social relations — Individual and family income and income management — Access to services (housing, water, electricity, etc.) — Assets: resources, properties and their use (house, land, goods, tools and other resources) 	Individual : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Self-Esteem — Developing a personal project — Public speaking — Participation in public decision-making — Individual critical awareness of power relationships
KNOWLEDGE	
⇒ Knowledge, skills and individual critical awareness	Collective : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Collective awareness of power relationships and the power of collective action — Participation in local development organisations/actions — Collective influence capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Technical training and level of learning — knowledge of nutrition and hygiene (health) — Ability to formulate ideas and opinions — Ability to identify gender-based violence and discrimination (GBV) 	

Increased empowerment - both individual and collective - transforms beneficiaries from mere recipients to actors in improving their living conditions, turning the aid they receive into an opportunity for positive change for themselves and their loved ones.

The analysis of the actions carried out by L'Appel shows that two dimensions of empowerment are strengthened in the area of **Assets**, namely '*roles, networks and social relations*' and '*access to services (housing, water, electricity, etc.)*'. The actions also had a significant impact on **Knowledge** ('*technical training and level of learning*') and **Power/Will** ('*self-esteem*', '*developing a personal project*' and, to a lesser extent, '*public speaking*').

All the other dimensions are less mobilised or only mobilised in specific actions. This is the case, for example, with '*knowledge of nutrition and hygiene (health)*', which was mobilised to a large extent in the NUTRICARTES© project but is not at the heart of the other actions carried out.

This consideration highlights the need to strengthen this empowerment dynamic at the heart of integrated development. The training and empowerment of the beneficiaries thus emerge as fundamental principles for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of the impact of the actions undertaken.

III — Synergies and partnerships

L'Appel has developed a network of strategic partnerships with local institutions and French organisations (*Fondation Abbé Pierre*, SEDIF). Collaboration with the Gicumbi district, the Byumba hospital and the Hydrenco company has helped to optimise the impact of projects by mobilising local expertise and monitoring progress. These synergies have facilitated the implementation of key activities, particularly in the areas of water supply, housing and nutrition training.

However, challenges remain in terms of coordinating, monitoring and promoting the initiatives undertaken. The media library, despite its educational and cultural importance, is struggling to be recognised as an essential lever for community development. Communication between the various L'Appel teams in France and Rwanda could be strengthened to ensure greater coherence in the implementation and monitoring of projects and to enable them to be better adapted to local realities.

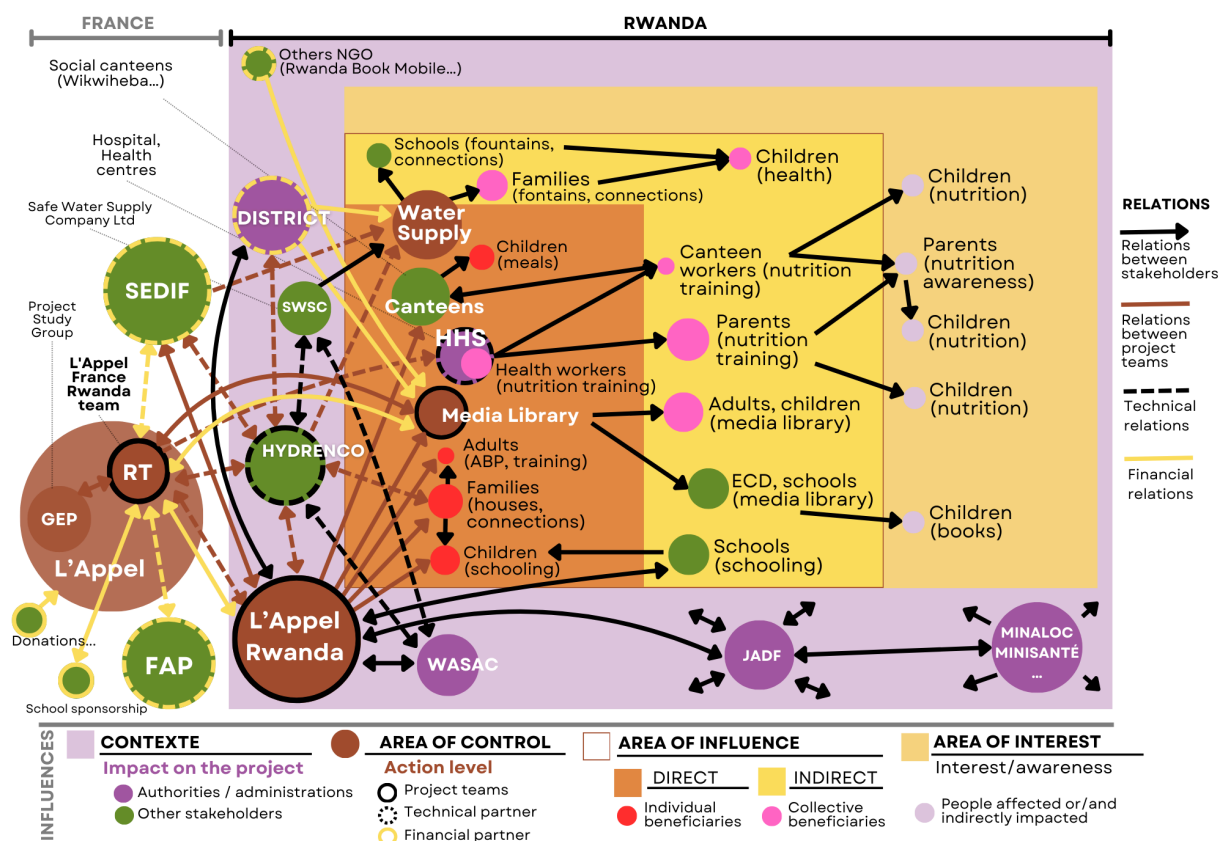
— Successful collaboration:

L'Appel has worked effectively with local partners (Gicumbi district, Byumba hospital, WASAC and Hydrenco). These synergies have helped to maximise the impact of interventions, particularly for gravity-fed water networks, house construction and nutrition training.

— Organisational issues:

There is a lack of coordination in relations with certain local actors, particularly when it comes to promoting initiatives such as the media library. Internal and external communication needs to be strengthened, in particular to align objectives - and monitoring tools - between L'Appel France and L'Appel Rwanda teams.

The following illustrative map shows the main "organisational nodes" and the actors at the heart of the project: L'Appel Rwanda, L'Appel Rwanda teams (RT) and Hydrenco. Hydrenco is the main technical partner, both for the construction of the water systems and the houses (the two actions with the greatest impact in terms of number of beneficiaries).



IV — Perspectives and recommendations

In order to increase the impact and sustainability of the initiatives undertaken, a number of improvements can be envisaged. The inclusion of sanitary facilities and kitchens in the houses built would provide a more functional living environment, better suited to the needs of the beneficiaries. Diversifying funding sources is a priority to reduce dependence on current donors and ensure the continuity of projects. Economic support can be strengthened by expanding the ABP programme and introducing more structured monitoring to ensure the viability of beneficiaries' business initiatives.

Gender equality deserves greater attention to ensure strict parity in school sponsorship and to encourage the participation of women in the local governance of L'Appel Rwanda. The social canteens could be developed by integrating educational programmes on nutrition and hygiene to encourage families to adopt good eating habits.

Improving project monitoring requires the adoption of modern tools¹ for more rigorous and responsive monitoring and evaluation. An approach that focuses on long-term change², rather than just the implementation of activities, would help initiatives to adapt better to the changing needs of the populations concerned.

— Proposed improvements :

- **Strengthen the infrastructure of houses:** Including sanitation, kitchens and basic furniture in the houses.
- **Diversify funding:** Reduce dependence on a few donors by exploring new sources of funding.
- **Supporting economic self-sufficiency:** Expand the ABP programme by increasing the amount of microcredit and strengthening monitoring of beneficiaries.
- **Focus on gender equality:** Reinstate strict parity in school sponsorship and strengthen the presence of women in the local governance of L'Appel Rwanda.
- **Optimise social canteens:** Diversifying meals and introducing educational programmes on nutrition and hygiene.
- **Monitoring strategies:** Adopt modern monitoring and evaluation tools, such as collaborative online platforms, and promote an approach based on sustainable change (outcome mapping).

V — Conclusion

L'Appel seeks to make its initiatives part of a process of sustainable change in the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations. This approach reflects a move towards an integrated development strategy that is not limited to satisfying basic needs, but aims to strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries to become actors in their own development. By enriching its activities in 2023 with the introduction of microcredits, thus adding an economic dimension to its social support actions, L'Appel has begun to change the position of the beneficiaries of its actions, who become actors in their own development and partners in the success of the projects undertaken.

L'Appel's approach is also based on coherent coordination between complementary initiatives. On the ground, this synergy has led to the simultaneous implementation of several actions for the same beneficiaries, thereby maximising their impact. The combination of housing, access to drinking water, educational support and economic initiatives has had a significant leverage effect, enabling beneficiaries to achieve more dignified living conditions and greater autonomy.

¹ F3e presents a set of tools and methods for planning, monitoring and evaluating actions to support change processes. <https://f3e.asso.fr/decouvrir-le-f3e/que-faisons-nous/nos-sujets/changement-approches-orientees-changement-aoc/>

² See in particular 'Agir pour le changement. Guide méthodologique pour accompagner des processus de changement « complexe : analyser, planifier, suivre et évaluer », F3E-COTA, 2014. https://f3e.asso.fr/wp-content/uploads/guide_chgmt_f3e_cota.pdf

However, this dynamic remains essentially individual, as current programmes do not encourage the emergence of a collective mobilisation of beneficiaries. The lack of forums for consultation and exchange limits the possibility of strengthening the social fabric and promoting forms of community mutual aid. L'Appel states that it wishes to encourage the emergence of a more active local civil society. This ambition is in line with the Rwandan government's desire to involve citizens in local governance through the *Joint Action Development Forum*³ (JADF). However, the integration of beneficiaries into these institutional dynamics requires specific support, in particular by encouraging their participation in existing organisations or facilitating the creation of new groups. The mobilisation of women beneficiaries appears to be particularly strategic, both in terms of strengthening their agency within the community and in terms of promoting changes in gender relations. By supporting their involvement in advocacy and rights-defence structures, L'Appel would contribute to the consolidation of a more inclusive and equitable framework.

The evaluation of the actions carried out shows significant changes, both in the living conditions and in the empowerment of the beneficiaries. However, the main challenge is to move from a logic of assistance to a logic of co-construction of projects, where beneficiaries are no longer simply recipients of aid, but active partners in their own development. This dynamic is already at work in the ABP microcredit programme, where beneficiaries are directly involved in the management and implementation of initiatives. To increase this impact, it is essential to extend the participatory approach to all L'Appel initiatives by involving beneficiaries more closely in the definition and monitoring of projects.

Improving the impact of our initiatives also requires more structured monitoring and evaluation processes. Improved communication with existing partners, combined with a more systematic use of results, will help to ensure the sustainability of funding and attract new support. In addition, the consolidation of the integrated development approach will require greater attention to the environmental aspects of projects, particularly with regard to resilience to climate change and the adoption of sustainable practices.

Finally, more rigorous planning and ongoing adaptation of intervention strategies would help to optimise the impact of interventions. In this sense, building the capacity of local teams and increasing the involvement of beneficiaries seem to be essential levers to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the initiatives implemented by L'Appel.

To summarise

Over the years, L'Appel has demonstrated its ability to bring about sustainable improvements in the living conditions of vulnerable populations through targeted initiatives tailored to the local context. The adoption of an integrated development approach has fostered synergies between the actions undertaken, leading to significant progress in education, nutrition and access to basic services (housing, water, electricity).

However, challenges remain in sustaining and scaling up these initiatives. Diversifying funding sources, strengthening coordination between actors, and improving monitoring and reporting systems are strategic levers for increasing the impact of our initiatives.

Finally, in terms of social transformation, L'Appel should continue its efforts to adopt a more inclusive and participatory approach, placing the beneficiaries, their families and their communities at the centre of the projects and considering the actions carried out as essential steps towards their empowerment.

— Description of illustrations and tables

Front page: NUTRICARTES© training session - **Page 1:** A beneficiary in front of her house built by L'Appel - **Page 2:** Diagram of beneficiaries by action + Pyramid of needs met by L'Appel actions - **Page 3:** L'Appel Library (books area) + Byumba social canteen - **Page 4:** Empowerment grid - **Page 5:** Mapping of the influences of the players involved in L'Appel actions.

³ There is little exchange of information between L'Appel and L'Appel Rwanda on the debates held within the *Joint Action Development Forum* (JADF), where representatives of the public sector, the private sector and civil society share their experiences and exchange views on local development. This is all the more regrettable as L'Appel Rwanda is represented at this forum, where all local initiatives are presented.