



JUSTICE RISING

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



# LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS

*What a year it's been! Back in March, we remember receiving a call from our team about the first COVID-19 case in the Congo, and the subsequent government response, including the nationwide closure of schools. Though our team had experienced other types of emergency situations, like the recent Ebola epidemic, navigating a global pandemic was new to us.*

Suddenly, we were tasked with reimagining our programs and answering the following question: How can we transform war zones through education when schools are shut?

In the wake of a global public health crisis, our team quickly determined that education was not, at the time, essential for public safety, but public health education absolutely was. We quickly mobilized our teachers and staff, provided training on COVID-19 health and safety guidelines, and deployed our staff to conduct public health outreach in the communities we serve. Working in a low- and no-tech environment, we also knew we faced a major obstacle when it came to distance learning. Our staff, ever resourceful, pulled together a distance learning workbook that was personally delivered, graded, and returned to students, and launched a radio education pilot (one of two radio education providers in the city, the other being UNICEF) to work in tandem with the printed workbooks.

Meanwhile, our donors came through in a BIG way. In less than a month, we all came together to raise more than \$100,000 for our emergency COVID-19 response, impacting more than 8,000 household members in the first couple of weeks! With the radio program, even with a much smaller budget (read: much smaller) when compared to other education providers, our team was coming up with innovative, low-cost solutions for distance learning to reach some of the world's most vulnerable student populations.

Almost overnight, our teachers became local heroes. Our staff shared stories of students and parents flagging them down in the streets to thank them: "You're the teacher from Justice Rising! I've been listening to the radio program every day!" In another instance, our teachers went to check on what they thought would be an empty school, and were surprised when they found students cleaning the school yard! "We wanted to come back to school, so we thought we'd come and clean, even if we can't study from inside the classroom." Things we never said (or did) as high school students...

In the rebel held village of Kalembe, our teachers reported that during school closures, three young boys in our high school were recruited into the army. This came as a major blow to our team. Our school principal in Kalembe put it simply: "Without school, many students will end up as child soldiers." He continued on to say that, "In communities with war, kids are either raised on the streets, in the army, or in the classroom. Education is a powerful tool in places of conflict."

Thankfully, the three students ultimately decided to return to school when they were offered distance-learning support. And even as we wrestle with these types of challenges, cliché as it may sound, we're reminded that this, our mission, is a marathon and not a sprint – real and enduring change occurs one step at a time.

With that, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your partnership. We're now able to reach over 2,500 students, employing more than 140 teachers and staff across our 18 schools – all thanks to your support. For that and more, we are so delighted to run along side a community of partners that continues to lean in, even amid a global pandemic!

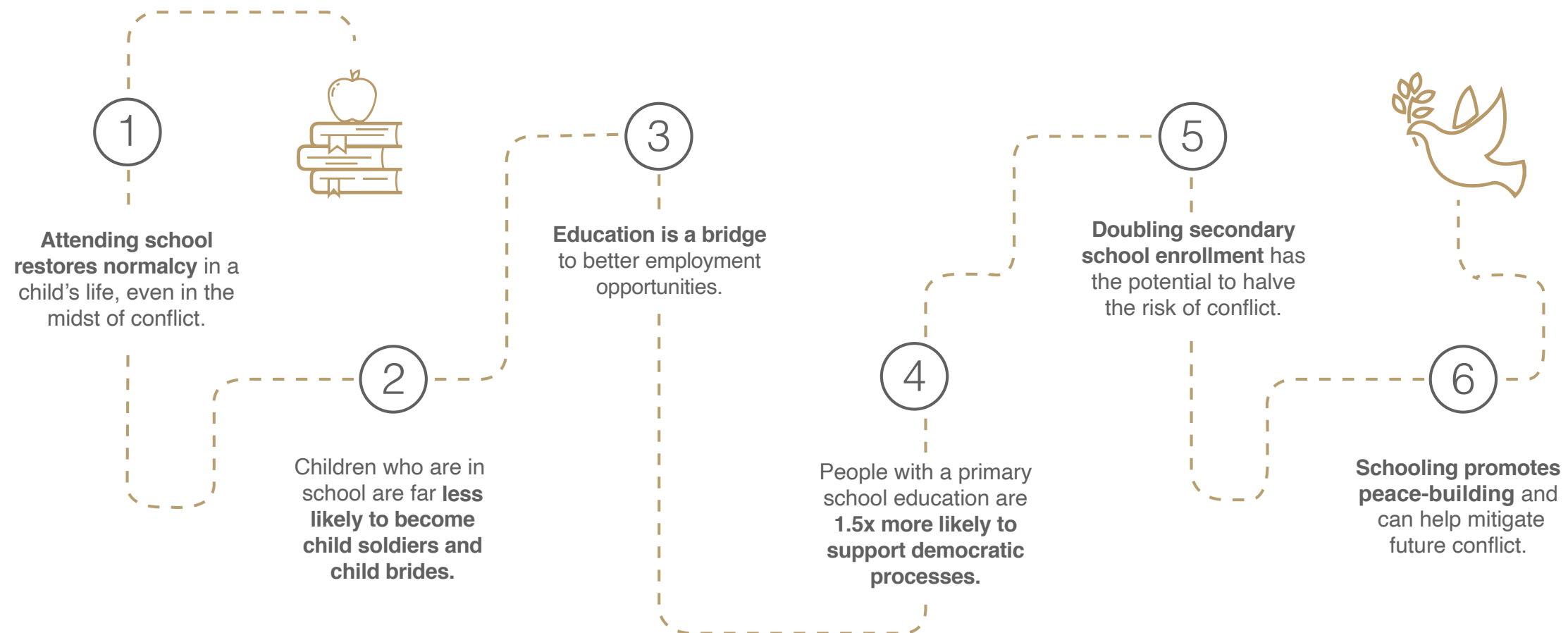
We know this has been a challenging year for many people, and that is particularly true of people living in conflict areas – your support makes a huge difference. On behalf of our students, teachers and their families, our deepest thanks for your continued partnership!

*Edison and Cassandra Lee*  
*Co-Founders, Justice Rising International*

# VISION

*Justice Rising (JR) exists to transform areas of conflict by providing access to quality, conflict-sensitive education. We believe that education is the most powerful tool to build peace and to break the cycle of war. We also believe that every child, regardless of circumstance, should have access to a quality education.*

As an organization, we believe that top-down, policy-driven solutions will not, on its own, solve the problems of war. However, when people who are most deeply impacted by war can access a good education, they are also the people best placed to solve the problems of conflict and violence in their own communities. As a school network operator, our grassroots approach to our programs also allows us to share the knowledge we have obtained from our schools with external partners (including the regional UNICEF Education Cluster) and the Ministry of Education, thus enabling us to work toward a coordinated effort of systems level change for the education sector in places of conflict







## OUR APPROACH

*Short Term:* Create access to quality education in mid- and post-conflict communities where good schools do not exist.

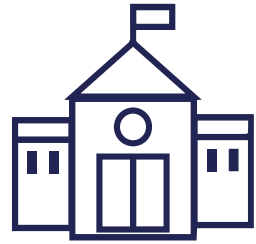
*Medium Term:* Deliver a quality, conflict-sensitive education and ensure school completion through secondary school.

*Long Term:* Develop transformative civic leaders that are equipped with the tools to create durable solutions for peace.



# OVERVIEW

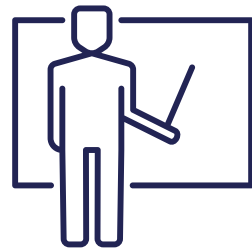
*Current Impact*



**18 SCHOOLS**



**2,500 STUDENTS**



**141+ TEACHERS AND STAFF**



## *Results 2020*

Despite the challenges of being out of school for months during COVID-19, our students had a 100% pass rate for both primary and secondary exit exams! Though many students around the world, who left school due to the pandemic, may never return, through the hard work of our teachers, we also saw 94% student retention rates across our grade 6 cohorts!





## YEAR AT A GLANCE

### *Challenges*

It goes without saying that 2020 has brought with it many challenges. In the Congo, one of the most difficult challenges we are currently facing is the problem of food insecurity. Since March 2020, the cost of food has skyrocketed 100 to 200%, exacerbating an already difficult food crisis. More than 70% of the population lives on less than \$1.25 per day, and many families are forced to ration meals, eating only once every two days. In response, we are partnering with an organization called Love Does to provide food and emergency relief for families dealing with extreme hunger.

Due to the pandemic, our team was also unable to travel. While our team has responded admirably and with incredible resolve, with our team distributed across three continents, communication, program design and implementation, and monitoring & evaluation have become substantially harder. Though it's anyone's guess as to when we'll be able to resume international travel, we're hoping that by Spring 2021, we'll be able to reunite with our team on the ground.



# QUICK HIGHLIGHTS

## *Back To School*

The government has announced the reopening of schools across the country and, as of October 12th, we have welcomed back over 2,500 students across our 18-school network!

## *New Schools*

This Fall, we opened up 4 additional schools, including 3 primary schools and 1 pre-primary school! We're incredibly thankful to our local team and contractors who, even in the midst of the pandemic, continued forward with the construction of our new schools!

## *Watoto Wa Amani*

Last year, we piloted a new peace-building program called Watoto Wa Amani (Children of Peace) in two of our schools. This program has proven very successful with our students and teachers reporting a significant reduction in fighting on school grounds. In many cases, students are mediating conflict on the playground, encouraging peaceful interventions using newly learned approaches to conflict resolution. With your help, we hope to expand our pilot to additional schools and eventually roll it out to our entire school network!





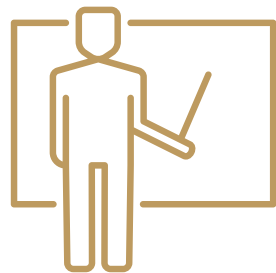
# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON OUR WORK

*Our team has shown us that new opportunities for innovation and impact are possible even in the midst of a global pandemic.*



## *Public Health Response to COVID-19*

Our teachers and staff were re-deployed as public health agents. With an already established relationship of trust between them and the communities within which they work, our team was able to ensure that accurate and life-saving public health information reached families and community members on time.



## *Distance Learning*

Since much of the population lacks access to electricity, let alone access to the internet or applications like Zoom and Google Classrooms, our team was tasked with building our distance learning program from the ground up. Our team created workbooks for our students to take home, containing rich content and intuitive exercises for them to continue their learning even in the midst of a pandemic.



## *Radio Education Program*

As our team prepared for the possibility of school closures remaining in September, we piloted a scripted radio program that revisited key curricular material for primary students to mitigate regression in learning. The radio content was delivered alongside coordinated distance learning workbooks

## *Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on education*

- 24 Million more children are predicted to drop out of school due to COVID-19, an impact felt more strongly by girls who are at greater risk of violence and exploitation (UNICEF)
- 1/3 of all children globally were not reached by any remote learning in 2020 (UNICEF)
- 1 Year - Projected learning loss after just three months out of school (Andrabi et al., 2020)





## STORIES

### *Sifa & Benjamin:*

We didn't choose to leave. We chose to live and that meant we had to leave.

War came to our area many years before. At first, every time fighting would come we would flee to the jungle and then when the rebels would leave, we would go back home and continue on with life. But life was very difficult.

We had four young children, but on time as rebels attacked our village and while we were running from war, two of our daughters were shot and killed. They were 5 years old and 3 years old. But we had to continue; we knew we had to keep going for our two that remained.

That was when we moved to this area of Kanzana. We had to leave and find somewhere safer. We had to stay alive.

When we moved here, we had nothing. This community had nothing. Only small houses and maybe some small stalls that sold soap and salt. Nothing else. Then a new school started to be built, we thought, "Who can build here? Who would build in this area?" Not only that, but it was a very good school.

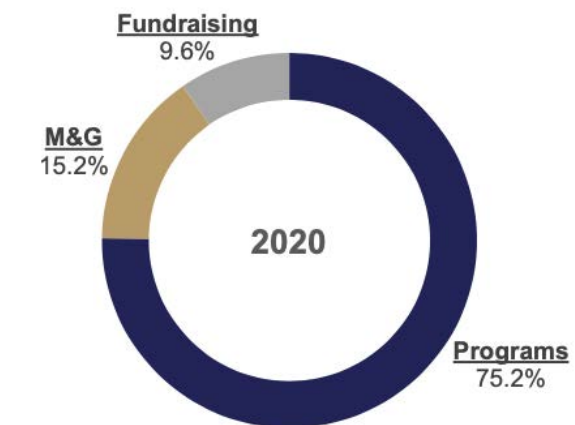
Our older daughter now goes to that Justice Rising School. We are so thankful! She will now have many opportunities because she receives an education.



# FINANCIALS

	FY 2020 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Revenue</b>	
Donor contributions	
Donor support (without donor restrictions)	\$ 679,743
Donor support (with donor restrictions)	226,216
<b>Total donor contributions</b>	<b>905,959</b>
Annual event(s)	-
Other income	106
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>906,065</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Program service	585,929
Management & general	118,434
Fundraising	74,947
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>779,311</b>
Net Operating Revenue	126,754
Total Other Expenditures	3
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 126,752</b>

	FY 2020 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) &amp; Metrics</b>	
Net revenue margin (%)	14.0%
Program service % expenses	75.2%
Management & general % expenses	15.2%
Fundraising % expenses	9.6%
Cost per dollar raised	\$ 0.08



	Amount (\$)
Program Service	\$ 585,929
General & Administrative	118,434
Fundraising	74,947
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 779,310</b>



# PARTNERS









## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Warren Allan, Board Chair*

*Ryan Juenger, Treasurer*

*April Tam Smith, Secretary*

*Jason Wendle*

*Dr. Sarah Whittaker Howe*

*Cassandra Lee*

*Edison Lee*

## ADVISORY BOARD

*Alvin Chung*

*Brit Gilmore*

*Bill White*

*Jennifer Toledo*

*Ryan Bethea*

*Sarita Hartz*

*Shawn & Cherie Bolz*

*Thaddeus Nichols*







# OUR TEAM

*Cassandra Lee,*  
Co-Founder & Executive Director

*Edison Lee,*  
Co-Founder & Managing Director

*Mboto Mathe,*  
DRC Country Director

*Rachel Vuseghesa,*  
DRC Chief of Staff

*Oladapo Orwo,*  
Programs Director

*Ee-Reh Orwo,*  
Schools Director

*Jen Chai,*  
Donor Relations Manager

*Djimmy Mathe,*  
Trauma Care Program Manager

*Aline Mungumua,*  
Gender Rights Program Manager

*Esther Makalele,*  
Finance Administrative Assistant

*Anselme Sabuni,*  
Student Leadership Program Manager

*Deborah Katungu,*  
Bookkeeper

*Mupanza Mumbere,*  
Schools Supervisor

*Jemima Ooi,*  
East Asia Regional Representative





JUSTICE RISING