



JUSTICE RISING

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

There are times we wish everything could just fall into place, where our programs work exactly as planned without any unexpected challenges. We would simply plan our year and budget and execute it to perfection. But then again, if that were all true, we probably wouldn't be working in war zones. Still, a heads up would have been nice for 2020/2021:

Hey, a global pandemic is just around the corner. You may want to stay flexible!

As we play it back, the challenges came in like waves. Leading up to the pandemic, we first dealt with a major Ebola outbreak, the second worst on record. Then in March 2020, like much of the world, Congo went into lockdown, causing widespread food insecurity and poverty, which then led to a surge in conflict and violence in the communities we work. Just as we thought we were coming up for air, Mount Nyiragongo erupted after nearly 20 years, wiping out 17 villages and two of our schools. As if that weren't enough, the Congolese government then declared a state of siege in the eastern part of the country, removing the civil government in place of a military government. Even with all of that, our team has remained incredibly resilient in the face of these overwhelming challenges.

In fact, based on our academic results, you would never even have guessed that our students had to deal with such unprecedented disruptions to their education!

- 117/118 students passed the national exit exams (99.2% compared to ~75% nationally)
- 10 scored over 85% (highest tier)
- 87 scored over 70% (2nd highest tier)
- The top quartile of test takers scored an avg. of 83.2%
- Girls scored better than boys on 4 out of 5 testing subjects (including math and science!)

For reference, our schools are located in some of the most vulnerable, war-affected communities in the entire country. Government officials frequently look at our results (which put us on par with some of the top private schools) with disbelief given where our schools are located and the populations we serve. This is testament to the talent and dedication of our teachers, who work tirelessly to serve our students and our mission of transforming war zones through education.

Peace Starts with Me

After many postponed trips due to the volcano and a wave of covid cases in the summer, we finally made it back (all while expecting our first child) to Congo in October. Our month-long trip felt altogether too short, but it was enough time that we got to connect with our team and hear stories, gaining a more intimate understanding of the current challenges.

One story we heard was from Esther, who heads up our positive peace program, Watoto wa Amani (or "Children of Peace" in Kiswahili) in our schools. She shared how a young boy in one of our schools was so violent that his parents would lock him in his room after school, fearing he was a danger to those around him. Though we knew he had violent tendencies, we weren't fully aware of what was happening at home. But as he went through the program, he had many questions for Esther particularly about forgiveness and how to resolve

conflict constructively. He would dive into questions about justice, revenge, and even how people can just live their lives when there's so much pain in the world – heavy stuff for a young kid. Esther patiently answered each of his questions, talking through these difficult topics together. Over time, he made a personal commitment to becoming a peacebuilder, and his behavior slowly changed.

Not only did Esther observe real change in him, but the student shared how his home life was also changing for the better. He explained how he used to be locked in his room from the time he came home from school. As his parents saw changes in his behavior, they no longer confined him to his room. While we certainly don't condone locking children in their rooms, even for bad behavior, it's also not lost on us that when people experience war-related trauma, responses to violence may look very different. In this case, it's a reminder that peace often starts with us (both children and adults alike).

What's Next?

During our month-long trip, we had a chance to see the start of construction for three new schools, which never seems to get old. In fact, looking back at the last six years, we are incredibly grateful for the impact we've been able to make through the 18 schools we operate – none of which would have been possible without your continued and generous support – each school richly rewarding in its own unique way. However, as we enter into the next year, we wanted to share with you our vision for the future.

We dream of a future where the nearly 30 million out-of-school children living in conflict areas can access a quality education, and perhaps one day, that conflict would be a faint memory for the 426 million children who live in areas of conflict today. For our part, we want to lead from the front, as practitioners, by identifying high-impact, low-cost interventions that are evidence based. There are countless things school operators can do to make positive strides in learning outcomes, but if those interventions cost 4-5x (on a per pupil basis) what national education systems can afford, how scalable is it? There's no denying that building and operating more schools would make a significant impact on the lives of the students who attend our schools, but we also recognize that there are 3 million out-of-school children in the Congo alone that would be difficult for us to reach by simply building more schools.

In an effort to go deeper with our programs, and to learn new ways of growing our impact, we'll press pause on new school construction in 2022 once we've completed construction on the schools we have already secured funding for. As an organization, we believe that peace is possible when people have the tools to build it. This temporary pause will simply allow us to sharpen those tools so that our students are properly equipped to build the future they want.

We want to thank all our partners who share in our vision to deepen our impact by building on our early success from the last six years. While our schools already perform at a high level, we envision a future where quality education is available to all students, regardless of their circumstances. Over the years, many of you have come on this journey with us, entrusting us with your support to create access to quality education in places of conflict. As founders, we know there are many incredible causes you can support, and we are moved beyond words that many of you would choose to continue this journey with us – thank you!

Sincerely,

Cassandra & Edison Lee

Co-Founders, Justice Rising International

WHY EDUCATION

The DRC has a complex history of war and conflict, particularly in the eastern region including the province of North Kivu where JR DRC operates. Conflict has interrupted life for many children in North Kivu and is compounded by a lack of access to quality education. According to USAID, approximately 3.5 million children of primary school age are not in school across the DRC, and of those who do attend, 44% start school late, after the age of six. National data also indicates that only 67% of children who enter first grade will complete sixth grade. 2016 World Bank data ranks the DRC 157 out of 173 countries in terms of education expenditures, below the world average. In North Kivu, approximately 40% of children do not have access to school. Anecdotal findings suggest a key reason for this is because government schools in the region only accounts for approximately 30% of the current need, while the remainder of students either have no funds to pay private school fees or lack access all together. Even where students can access government schools, they are often oversubscribed and crowded with class sizes often times exceeding 100 students to a single teacher. JR DRC is committed to building schools in communities where education is limited or does not currently exist.

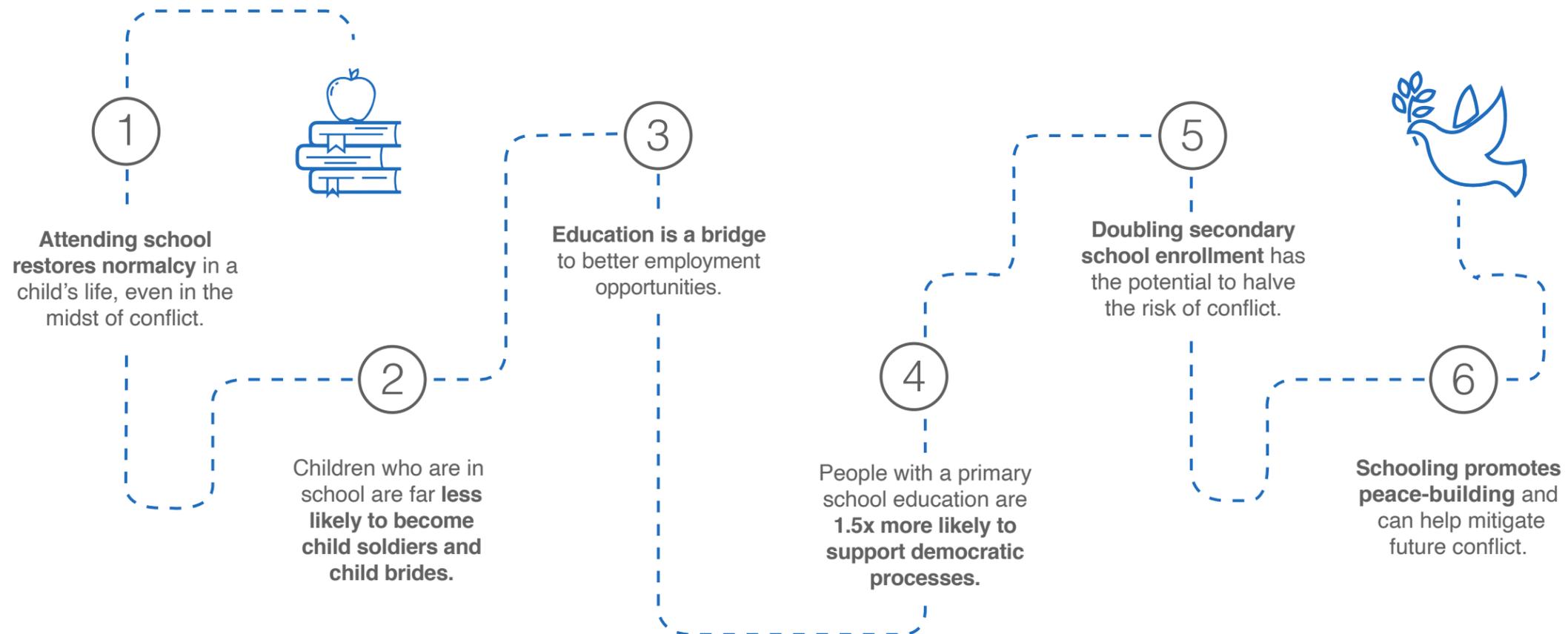
- 1 in 4 of the world's school-aged population lives in countries affected by crisis
- Education receives just 2 to 4% of global humanitarian aid, despite the incredible need
- Children in conflict-affected countries are 30% less likely to complete primary schools
- They are also 50% less likely to finish lower-secondary school
- Conflict and disaster increase the likelihood of being out of school, a risk factor for child trafficking, including child prostitution





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.



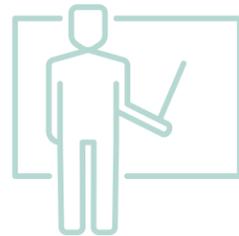
WHY EDUCATION



18 SCHOOLS



2,500 STUDENTS



141+ TEACHERS AND STAFF

2021 Academic Results

- 117/118 students passed (99.2%)
- 10 scored over 85% ("Excellent")
- 87 scored over 70% ("Very Good")
- Top quartile - 83.2% average
- Girls scored better than boys on 4 out of 5 testing subjects

WHERE WE CURRENTLY WORK



Our schools serve urban and peri-urban communities with little or no access to basic amenities. Often members of the communities walk significant distances to get water, 73% of those recently surveyed said they had no access to water three or more times within a period of one month. 78% said they and members of their household have had to go hungry due to inability to purchase food.

39% of those surveyed identified as unemployed and 12% of the household had 7 or more children living in the house.

A recent household survey conducted by JR-DRC revealed that 71% of the students and communities served by JR DRC identify as internally displaced due to conflict. 76% of the families are led by a female with about 4 in 10 of those reporting that they had no source of income; 18% of them said they had access

to land which they used for subsistence farming to support their households. Of those that participated in the survey, 14% of the household heads reported having a disability that prevented them from adequately supporting their families and 40% said they were confident they were able to read and write. Finally, we found over two-thirds of our student population reported at least one adverse effect of a traumatic event.



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Emergency Response

On May 22nd, Nyiragongo, an active volcano that sits on the edge of Goma, erupted as lava spewed near the city of roughly 2 million people. Two Justice Rising schools, built in partnership with Love Does, were completely destroyed by the lava flow. After the eruption, the government ordered the evacuation of 10 out of 18 districts in fear of a second eruption, displacing thousands of people.

Our team responded immediately by opening up three of our primary schools to host families displaced by the disaster. Working around the clock, they provided over 2,000 people with clean water, food, and sanitation facilities. Together, we also delivered more than 50,000 meals, provided school supplies, backpacks, uniforms, and shoes to over 250 students who were directly impacted by the eruption, and also gave building materials to all 120+ students and their families who lost their homes.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

We heard story after story of beautiful interactions among our students and our team. Some stories were still quite painful as they shared with us about the volcano and how that impacted our students. And though we met with the 120+ students who lost their homes to the lava, we are so grateful for our global community who helped us with volcanic relief.

MEET BALUME



My name is Balume, I am studying at Love Does Primary. I am in 3rd grade and 10 years old, and I have 4 brothers and sisters. During the volcanic eruption, I saw the lava coming from the volcano. The sky was red, our house and our school were burnt by the lava. We have lost everything. My shoes, clothes, uniform, notebooks...we fled to the village of Sake.

Life was really difficult in Sake. We slept without eating anything, without drinking anything. It was cold because we slept outside without blankets. I liked my school. Unfortunately, it was destroyed by the lava. It was a very pretty school and I loved my teacher and director because they taught us so well. When I finish my studies, I want to be a teacher like them to educate others as well. We are studying in a nearby wooden school until our school is rebuilt.



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Jacobs Foundation / MIT Solve

Justice Rising competed in the Jacobs Foundation MIT Solve Solvathon and won the Audience Award in the Blended Learning Solutions category for our concept: Chalkboard Guides. Chalkboard Guides are structured teacher guides for emergency contexts, providing teachers with lesson-by-lesson support to deliver quality teaching so that children can achieve foundational literacy and numeracy by 3rd grade. With the award of 20,000 CHF, we were able to begin prototyping and field-testing Chalkboard Guides in our schools. We ran our first field-test in July, creating Chalkboard Guides for teachers in rural, peri-urban and tent schools. We hope to keep testing and have a proof-of-concept by early 2022.

Teacher Training

Delivered teacher training to 138 teachers and school directors.





Wash:

Across all our schools we provide basic WASH education to all of our 2,500 students, teaching them basic and yet life-saving hygiene practices like effective hand washing, sourcing clean water and simple nutrition.

Trauma Care Program:

Due to the prevalence of the majority of people we serve struggling with historic and ongoing traumatic events, we provide a trauma counseling service across all of our schools, ensuring our students are provided with the tools they need to realize their full potential

Gender Equality:

Over the years, we have worked tirelessly, reaching out to the members of the communities we serve, advocating for the education of all their children regardless of sex. We remain committed to this, ensuring the basic rights of both girls and boys to a quality education is protected in all the communities we work in.

Student breakdown for 2021

- 50.1% girls, 49.9% boys overall
- 54.7% girls, 45.3% boys in ECD
- 50.2% girls, 49.8% boys in Primary
- 38.1% girls, 61.9% boys in Secondary

Watoto Wa Amani:

Through this intervention, we are beginning to equip tomorrow's community leaders with basic peace-building skills like tolerance, resilience and negotiation.



MEET BLESSING

My name is Blessing. I am in 6th grade and am 12 years old. When I was 5, my family had to evacuate because of the M23 war and move to this area. It has changed a lot since the war and I am happy to live here. There are many new buildings near the road, new homes and new people. I have been at Riviere Fraiche since the 3rd grade.

I like Riviere Fraiche much more than the school I went to before. Here, there are more programs to learn from, like Wato-wa Amani. In the program, we learned ways we bring peace into our communities. I have applied it in my life by helping to break up fights between my friends and others in the community. I help them solve problems without fighting. I also really like history and geography because I get to learn about the past and about other places in the world. One day, I hope to be a doctor so I can help take care of sick people everywhere.

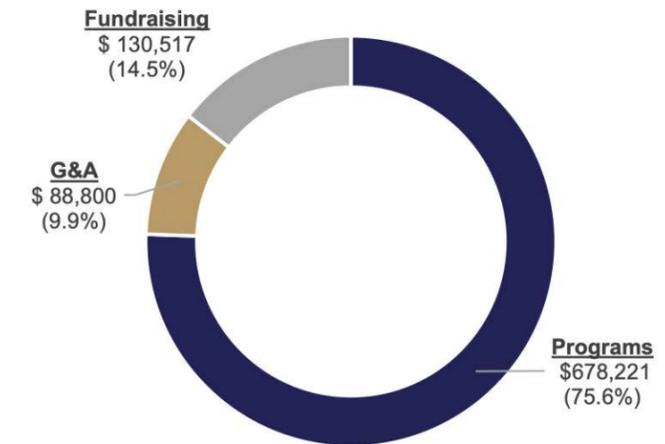
FINANCIALS

FY 2021 *Income Statement*

	FY 2021
Revenue	
Donor contributions	
Donor support (without donor restrictions)	\$ 846,191
Donor support (with donor restrictions)	300,968
Total donor contributions	1,147,159
Total Revenue	\$ 1,147,159
Expenditures	
Program service	678,221
Management & general	88,800
Fundraising	130,517
Total Expenditures	\$ 897,538
Net Operating Revenue	249,621
Total Other Expenditures	-
Net Revenue	\$ 249,621
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) & Metrics	
Net revenue margin (%)	21.8%
Program service % expenses	75.6%
Management & general % expenses	9.9%
Fundraising % expenses	14.5%
Cost per dollar raised	\$ 0.11

FY 2021 Expense Breakdown

	Amount (\$)
Program Service	\$ 678,221
General & Administrative	88,800
Fundraising	130,517
Total	\$ 897,538



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OUR TEAM

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Edison Lee,
Co-Founder & Managing Director

Mboto Mathe,
DRC Country Director

Rachel Vuseghesa,
DRC Chief of Staff

Oladapo Orwo,
Programs Director

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