

# Supporting Arts for Change in the rehabilitation and empowerment of street children through art and craft courses in Rwanda

Grantee: Arts for Change

Location: Rwanda, Africa

Grant Cycle: 2025 – 2027

Type of Grant: three-year program support, Human Welfare & Rights

Website: [artforchangerwanda.org](http://artforchangerwanda.org)

Arts for Change, founded in 2020 by Rwandan visual artist Hodari Olivier, is an association based in Musanze, northern Rwanda, that uses the transformative power of the arts to provide restorative care and empowerment to street children. Through creative expression, such as painting, handcrafts, sewing, and dance, the association provides a safe, nurturing environment where children and youth in vulnerable situations can express their feelings and stories through art, providing them a sense of community and hope for the future. In addition to its core artistic programming, Arts for Change offers educational support, environmental conservation projects, and targeted outreach to children living in the most critical conditions throughout the Musanze District. Committed to long-term impact and sustainability, the association has also launched income-generating initiatives, such as a chicken farm business, to support children's education, healthcare, and basic daily needs. By fostering social inclusion and resilience through the power of creativity, Arts for Change is building pathways to a more hopeful and empowered future for Rwanda's most vulnerable youth.

In Rwanda, the issue of street children is a deeply rooted and multifaceted challenge, shaped by long-standing socio-economic hardships and the enduring impact of the 1994 genocide, which left many children orphaned and families disrupted.

Key contributing factors include poverty, family breakdown, and domestic violence, with urban areas, particularly Kigali, reporting the highest concentrations of street children. While the government and various NGOs have launched rehabilitation and reintegration programs offering shelter, education, and vocational training, the path to sustainable reintegration remains difficult. Many children return to the streets due to limited support systems and the persistent cycle of poverty. Addressing this issue requires a sustained, holistic focus on strengthening family units, expanding educational access, and fostering economic opportunity. Within this context, Arts for Change operates in Musanze to transform the lives of street children through arts-based education and psychosocial support. As of today, the organization serves 22 children, both girls and boys, between the ages of 6 and 18, providing them with a nurturing environment where they can heal, learn, and grow.

The Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation (NaEPF) supports Arts for Change in advancing its mission to use the arts as a powerful vehicle for social transformation. This grant aligns closely with NaEPF's strategic objectives: promoting the arts as a tool for community empowerment, supporting vulnerable children and youth, and combating poverty. The project aims to reach and rehabilitate at least 100 street children over a three-year

period by offering structured training in arts and crafts that foster creativity, emotional healing, and self-reliance. In addition to arts-based education, the program provides comprehensive support services, including food assistance for children experiencing extreme poverty, psychosocial care for those affected by trauma, and accompaniment back into the formal education system. Together, these interventions aim to create sustainable pathways for reintegration, resilience, and long-term empowerment.