



TRAVEL REPORT

Elisabeth Kürsten



ABOUT ME

I have been deeply connected to Rwanda and the association Iriba Shalom International e.V. (IRISI) for eight years. In 2016, I spent four months as a volunteer in Rwanda, getting to know and further developing the work of our partner organizations Shalom Ministries (SHAM) and Iriba Shalom Rwanda (ISHAR).

Since then, Rwanda and its people have been close to my heart, and I have been a board member of our association in Germany for several years.



MY TRIP 2024

For us as the board of IRISI, it is essential to travel to Rwanda regularly to maintain contact with our local partners and visit the projects.

This year marked my sixth visit to Rwanda, and each time I am thrilled to reunite with my Rwandan family and friends and to witness the progress our work and support bring to the region.



A MILESTONE: OPENING OF THE SENIORS' HOME IN MUKOMA

A highlight of my trip was the official opening of the seniors' home by ISHAR in Mukoma, accompanied by our chairwoman Denise Uwimana-Reinhardt and myself. On Dec. 4, 2024, 14 out of 16 elderly women moved into their new home, where they now receive care, security, and comfort – things that were out of reach for many of them for a long time. Representatives of the Rwandan government and media were also present, emphasizing the significance of this project. Alongside the joy and warmth of the residents, a special highlight was a gift from our association: a cow, which will provide fresh milk in the future. The delight of the elderly women was immense – an unforgettable moment!



YOUR SUPPORT SECURES THE FUTURE OF THE SENIORS' HOME

The seniors' home in Mukoma enables widows in need of care to live a dignified and fulfilling life. However, the ongoing operation involves high costs, which can only be covered through donations and sponsorships. Your support has already achieved so much – please help us continue this important work and secure the future of the seniors' home. Every contribution counts!

For more information about the senior center and how to donate, visit:
<https://globalhz.org/iriba-shalom-usa/>



MAINTAINING SPONSORSHIPS

One heartfelt project I visited during my trip was our sponsorship program. These not only provide financial support but also foster meaningful connections between people in Germany and Rwanda. I had lovingly prepared gifts from Germany, which I was able to personally deliver to the children, families, or widows on-site. These moments – the joy, the bright eyes, and the heartfelt conversations – showed me just how significant these sponsorships are for the families.

To date, we have facilitated **over 150 sponsorships**, and maintaining personal connections remains a priority for us. These relationships are bridges of hope and community, with an impact far beyond financial assistance. For more informations please write an email to sponsor@iriba-shalom-international.org



OUR PARTNERS IN RWANDA

The success of these sponsorships and projects is thanks to the excellent collaboration with our partner organizations, **Shalom Ministries** and **Iriba Shalom Rwanda** both based in Rwanda. The members and staff are our hands, ears, and feet – proposing, developing, and implementing projects, as well as keeping us informed. Close and warm contact with them is particularly important to us.



<https://iribashalomrwanda.org/>



<https://shaloministries.org/>

IT-PROJECT IN RWAMAGANA

During my trip, me and some other members of IRISI, had the opportunity to visit the ongoing computer course in Rwamagana, a project by SHAM, which was launched in fall 2024 with partial support from *Cents for Help e.V.* Here, 20 young adults are being trained in IT skills that aim to open doors to a better future.

During our visit, we were impressed by the enthusiasm of the students and the skills they had already acquired. They proudly demonstrated what they had learned and shared their hopes and goals. The gratitude and determination to make the most of this opportunity were palpable – a moving moment that underscored how education can truly change lives.



THE WEDDING OF CHARLES VITAL RUKONDO

Another highlight of the trip, and a deeply personal event, was the wedding of Denise Uwimana-Reinhardt's eldest son, Charles Vital Rukondo. As a member of IRISI and a genocide survivor, his wedding was a symbol of resilience, joy, and the strength of community across generations in Rwanda. The celebrations were attended by family and friends from around the world, as well as members and staff from our partner organizations.

MICROFINANCING AND SMALL PROJECTS



Several visits took me to small-scale projects by members of our partners. These individuals receive financial start-up support of approximately €100 to €500 after developing a business plan, enabling them to start small businesses. These initiatives range from selling fruits and vegetables to trading goods and raising animals.

It was fascinating to speak with the participants, hear their stories, and witness the remarkable successes, particularly in animal husbandry. Such initiatives not only foster independence but also provide a stable and sustainable income, offering families a solid foundation for the future.

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE!

Beyond the projects I was fortunate to visit during my trip, we have several other ongoing initiatives that you can explore on our social media and newsletters. I warmly invite you to support our projects so that, together, we can achieve even more. Every donation, big or small, makes a difference and helps change lives sustainably. For more information, I am happy to answer any questions.

Please feel free to share my travel report with family, friends, and acquaintances so that we can reach more people and continue to advance the projects – every contribution counts!

Donations can be made online:



By Mail:

Iriba Shalom USA
PO Box 64059
Eagan, MN
55164-0059

IB



iribashalomusa@gmail.com



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