

Issued to : Floris van Bommel
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Beyond Barriers Report





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Executive Summary

The Beyond Barriers Program, a five-year partnership between Aquaculture Trust (AQT) and Floris van Bommel, aims to address systemic barriers to education and healthcare for the marginalized Batwa community in Rubuguri, Uganda. Historically excluded from essential services, the Batwa experience extreme poverty, limited access to education, and heightened health vulnerabilities. This report builds on the inception report to outline the program's progress, key achievements, and early impact during the June-December 2025 reporting period.

Key Achievements include:

- **100% school enrolment** for 46 Batwa children (28 girls, 18 boys) .
- **100%** retention rate across all three terms, with all 46 Beyond Barriers pupils remaining enrolled throughout the academic year.
- Overall, the pupils maintained **perfect attendance of 99% across all three terms.**
- **Overall Academic Performance:** 67% of students consistently improved their academic performance across the term. 28% students consistently performed in the top ranks of their class (top 5) while 4% of students recorded a below average performance (targeted for intervention).
- Successful school holiday activities.
- **306 community members** reached through health outreach, including maternal care and disease screenings.

Objectives of the Program

- To improve educational and nutritional outcomes for the Batwa community by providing scholarships for Batwa children.
- To improve health outcomes for the Batwa community through community health outreaches conducted by healthcare workers.
- To support project management activities, including quarterly field visits and reporting.

Beyond Barriers Learners Monitoring Approach

Purpose:

Monitoring is critical to ensuring the long-term success of the program. This is achieved by tracking consistent enrollment, regular attendance, and academic performance of Batwa learners, allowing for early identification of challenges and timely interventions.

Baseline Enrollment (2025):

A total of 46 pupils (Girls: 28, Boys: 18) were successfully enrolled at St. Kizito Rubuguri School in Term 1 (February 2025). This cohort serves as the foundational group for longitudinal tracking of retention and academic progress.

Weekly Attendance Monitoring:

- Teachers record weekly attendance for all learners.
- Attendance data is analyzed monthly to identify patterns.
- Pupils with less than 80% attendance are flagged for immediate follow-up.
- The Community Liaison Associate conducts home visits for pupils at-risk of absenteeism.
- Interventions include parental engagement, counseling, and guidance on addressing barriers to regular school attendance.

Termly Retention Rate Calculation:

Retention rate is calculated using the formula: $\text{Retention Rate (\%)} = \left(\frac{\text{Number of pupils completing the term}}{\text{Initial enrollment}} \right) \times 100$

Academic Performance:

- Termly examinations are administered for the learners, to measure whether pupils are achieving expected academic standards and grade-level competencies.
- Performance records are compiled based on teachers' evaluations, to identify learning gaps early, detect pupils who are struggling academically so that timely support and interventions can be provided.
- Interventions include remedial tutoring, mentoring, or additional resources.

Beyond Barriers Learners School Attendance

a. Retention:

The program recorded a **100% retention rate across all three terms**, with all 46 Beyond Barriers pupils remaining enrolled throughout the academic year. This indicates that no learners dropped out or discontinued schooling during the reporting period, reflecting the effectiveness of attendance monitoring, timely follow-up, and sustained community and parental engagement.

b. School Attendance:

The average school attendance data for the 46 Beyond Barriers pupils is as outlined in the table below. Overall, the pupils maintained **perfect attendance of 99% across all three terms**. All classes recorded attendance rates between 98% and 100%, demonstrating uniform engagement across early childhood and primary levels. No class fell below the program’s acceptable attendance threshold 80%.

The consistently high attendance rates across all classes and terms suggest that the Beyond Barriers program has been effective in addressing barriers to school attendance. It also reflects strong collaboration between schools, families, and community support structures, contributing positively to learner retention and academic engagement.

Class	Pupils Details			% School Attendance			
	Female	Male	Total	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Overall
Baby Class	6	7	13	98%	98%	98%	98%
Middle Class	8	4	12	100%	100%	100%	100%
P1	2	4	6	99%	99%	99%	99%
P3	3	1	4	99%	99%	98%	99%
P4	2	1	3	100%	100%	100%	100%
P5	2	0	2	98%	99%	98%	98%
P6	1	1	2	100%	100%	100%	100%
Top Class	4	0	4	99%	99%	99%	99%
Total	28	18	46	99%	99%	99%	99%

c. Academic Performance

An end of term exams were conducted for the 46 pupils across the three terms The grading system varies by class level:

- **P6 & P7:** Merit-based grades (Division 1-4, with Division 1 being the best)
- **For lower primary students (Baby class to P5):** rankings are determined based on their exam scores, and they receive a class position instead of merit grades.

An average of the performance was obtained across the terms categorized into 3 as outline in the table below:Top Performers – Students with the highest averages (Positions 1-5 in the class). Average Performers – Students performing around the class median (Positions 6 to half of the class). Needs Improvement – Students performing below the median (Half the class to the last position).

Out of 46 students,

- Top Performers those achieving the highest averages, accounted for 28% of the cohort, demonstrating strong academic excellence.
- The majority, 67%, fell into the Average Performers category, showing consistent performance around the class median,
- Only a small fraction, 4%, were identified as Needs Improvement, indicating targeted support may be required for a few students.

Class	Average Score (Term 1, Term 2, Term 3)			
	Top Performers	Average Performers	Need Improvement	Total
Baby Class	6	6	1	13
Middle Class	3	9	0	12
P1	2	4	0	6
P3	0	3	1	4
P4	0	3	0	3
P5	1	1	0	2
P6	0	2	0	2
Top Class	1	3	0	4
Total	13	31	2	46

School Holiday Activities

Following the school closure, structured holiday activities were implemented to support student engagement and retention:

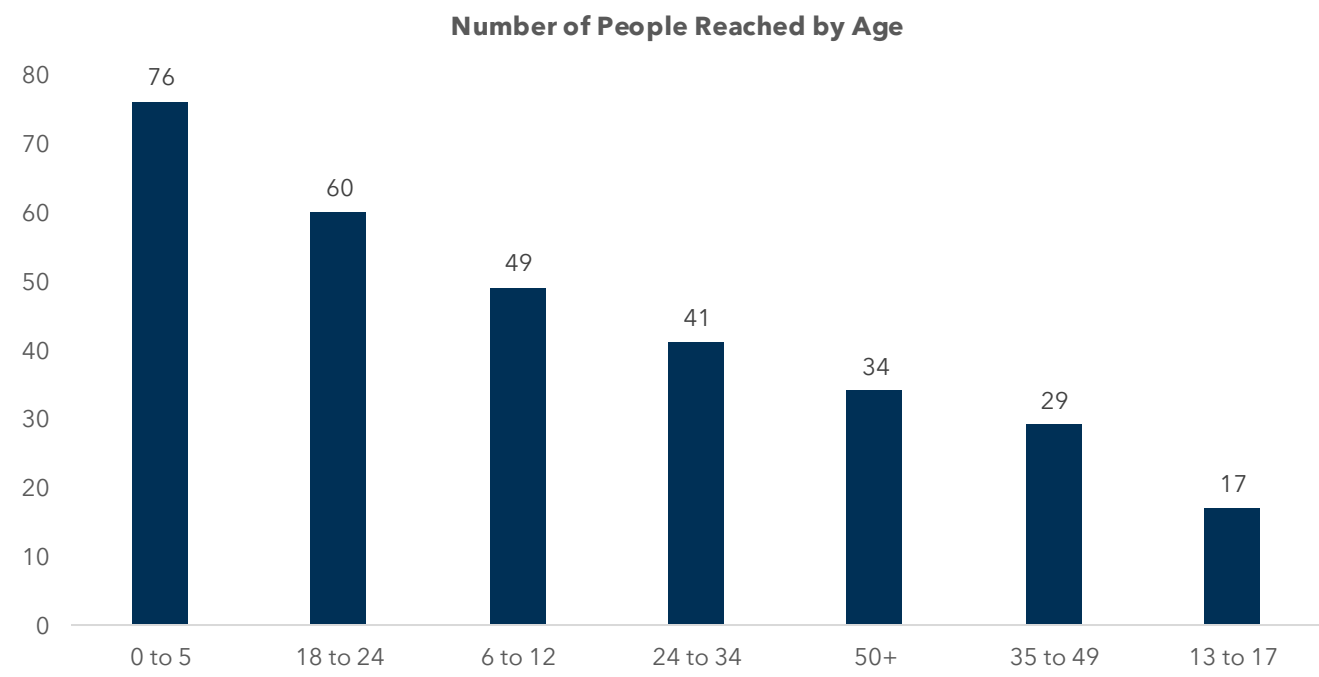
- **Structured Sessions:** Held thrice weekly, combining life skills training with interactive games.
- **Facilitation:** Led by two teachers and the community liaison associate to ensure quality learning and supervision.
- **Meal Provision:** Meals provided during sessions to encourage consistent participation.
- **Purpose & Impact:** Activities help prevent learning loss, reinforce life skills, promote healthy routines, strengthen student-teacher and peer relationships, and sustain interest in school during the holiday period.

Community Health Activities

Led by the District Nurse with support from the Community Liaison Associate, a team of five health workers conducted a 3-day outreach across Lyabitukuru, Nyabaremura, and Kashija villages in Rubuguri District. This targeted outreach successfully reached **306 community members**, including **138(45%)Male** and **168(55%) Female**, delivering vital health services and education while promoting early detection of common health issues the Batwa Community. The chart below outlines the age distribution of the community members reached.

Key Insights:

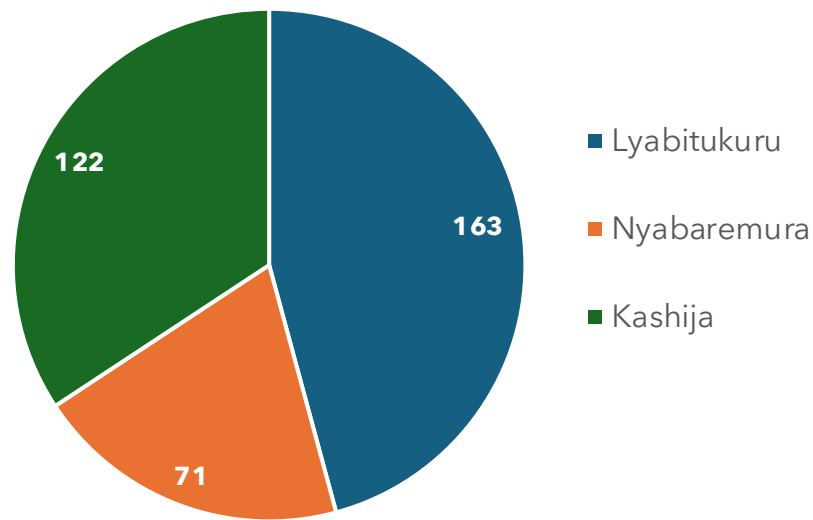
- **Young Children Are the Largest Group (0-5 years):** 76 children (25% of participants) indicate a high need for early childhood health interventions, including immunizations, nutrition, and growth monitoring.
- **Significant Youth Participation (18-24 years):** 60 individuals (20%) show that young adults are engaged and can be leveraged for health promotion and peer education programs.
- **Moderate School-Age Attendance (6-12 years):** 49 children (16%) highlight opportunities for school-based health education and preventive care initiatives.
- **Lower Engagement Among Adolescents (13-17 years) and Adults (35-49 years):** Only 17 (6%) adolescents and 29 (9%) adults participated, suggesting potential barriers to access or awareness in these groups.
- **Older Adults (50+ years) Represent a Substantial Segment:** 34 individuals (11%) require targeted interventions for chronic disease prevention, screenings, and age-appropriate health education.



Delivery of Comprehensive Health Services Tailored to Community Needs

Aligned with our mission to meet the complex health needs of underserved communities, the outreach team provided comprehensive health services to 306 community members. Mixed levels of community participation across different villages. A total of 306 individuals were reached: 150 in Lyabitukuru, 51 in Nyabaremura, and 105 in Kashija and outlined below.

Participants Reached per Village



Services Provided:

- **Communicable Disease Screening (CD):** 295 individuals ($\approx 97\%$) were screened, receiving treatment and follow-up for malaria, pneumonia, and HIV, ensuring timely care for common infectious diseases.
- **Non-Communicable Disease Screening (NCD):** 7 individuals ($\approx 2\%$) had their blood pressure and blood sugar levels monitored, supporting early detection and management of chronic conditions.
- **Maternal and Child Health Services (MCH):** 4 individuals ($\approx 1\%$) accessed antenatal, postnatal, and child health services tailored to their specific needs.
- **Pregnancy Assessments:** Among women of reproductive age, 2 women ($\approx 0.7\%$) were identified in their third trimester, allowing for timely antenatal support.

This strategic, individualized approach ensured that each participant received care tailored to their health profile, reinforcing efforts to promote health equity and improve outcomes within the Batwa community.

Key Outreach Challenges and Mitigations

Challenge	Description	Mitigation
Low community participation	Low turn-up in some villages due to work schedules and alcohol consumption, limiting access to essential health services.	Mobilize additional funds for outreach logistics, enhance community mobilization, and schedule activities to maximize participation.
Resource shortages and stock-outs	Limited resources for activities, including shortages of drugs and medical supplies; critical health issues like children's dental problems untreated due to health centre stock-outs.	Secure more funding to ensure essential medicines, dental supplies, and treatments are available, enabling full implementation and access in remote areas.
Sanitation and hygiene gaps	No latrines in communities (e.g., Lyabitukuru Village), contributing to hygiene-related illnesses.	Support latrine construction, promote hygiene education, and implement community-led sanitation initiatives.
Poor nutrition and food insecurity	High rates of poor nutrition due to lack of household gardens, limiting balanced diets and increasing illness vulnerability.	Promote household gardening with seeds/training, integrate nutrition education, and link to outreach for sustainable diets.

Despite these challenges, the community expressed deep gratitude for the services provided and emphasized the need for sustained support to improve health, nutrition, and living conditions.

Monitoring Visit: Success Story



https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-RFJ9z-AKVGjFgneYPKGoJUJUCX_Sqlx/view?usp=sharing

- The video features testimonials from Batwa villages about a transformative development project. Families previously struggled to afford school fees, books, and basic necessities, causing many children to drop out. The project now enables children to stay in school and provides essential support.
- Healthcare access has significantly improved through regular outreach programs. Health workers visit pregnant women, provide antenatal care, deliver baby packs, and distribute medicine. Inspired by this support, one young girl Christine (May she Rest in Peace) aspired to become a nurse.
- Community members express deep gratitude to the project sponsor through Lattice. Youth request additional support like being enrolled for vocational training courses e.g sewing, carpentry, hairdressing, cookery, to create income opportunities.
- Rwomushana Alice, a 35-year-old resident, urged all children to pursue education, emphasizing its life-changing importance.

Planned Interventions for 2026

- 1. Sustained Support for Learners:** Ensure continuous payment of school fees for 50 learners, removing financial barriers and promoting uninterrupted education.
- 2. School Holiday Activities:** Roll out structured holiday engagement sessions, including life skills training, educational games, and mentorship. Provide meals and learning materials to encourage consistent participation and reduce the risk of disengagement during school breaks.
- 3. Community Health Outreach:** Conduct regular health campaigns covering hygiene, nutrition, and preventive care. Address critical gaps such as malnutrition, hygiene-related illnesses, and access to basic health services. Strengthen community awareness to empower families to adopt healthy practices.
- 4. Monitoring and Support Visits:** Implement scheduled monitoring visits to schools and communities to track attendance, academic performance, and wellbeing. Provide real-time feedback and targeted support to ensure interventions remain effective and responsive.
- 5. Capturing Success Stories and Significant Change:** Document and share transformative stories of learners and communities impacted by the program.

Proposed Additional Interventions

- 1. Older Persons' Livelihood Support:** Provide 2 pigs per household to rear and sell piglets over time, enabling a sustainable source of income.
- 2. Youth Vocational Training:** Attach 15 young women (5 per village) to experienced tailors and salon operators to develop skills for financial independence within 3 months.
- 3. Household Health Fund:** Enroll 35 households in a health fund at 60 Euros per family per year. This fund will cover additional medication not available at the district hospital. Unused funds will be carried over to the following year, with oversight managed by Lattice.
- 4. Construction of latrines:** Build 3 hygienic household latrines across the three villages to improve sanitation, reduce waterborne diseases, and promote overall community health. Lattice will oversee the construction and ensure proper maintenance training for beneficiary households.
- 5. Community Mobility Support:** Provide a motorbike for the community liaison, Deus to enhance community program support. The asset will remain under Lattice's custody, with Deus responsible for its management and use in assisting program members across the community.

BEYOND BARRIERS BUDGET_2026

Activities	Budget
Education	
Scholarship for primary education	15,000
School Holiday activities	5,745
Subtotal	20,745
Community Health Outreach and Mama Kits	
Community Liaison personnel	1,800
Health care workers (3)	3,600
Mama Kit Provision	700
Subtotal	6,100
Total Directs projects Costs	26,845
Program Support	
Monitoring and Evaluation - meetings and onsite quarterly visits	10,000
Knowledge generation and dissemination (Photography and Videography)	1,500
Quarterly reporting	2,000
Administration support	2,000
Subtotal	15,500
Total Annual	42,345
Management Fee(10%)	4,235.5
Overall Total	46,580



Tribute to Christine



IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Christine

2014 — 2025

Christine was one of the learners who was fully supported through the Beyond Barriers program. She was a dedicated and promising student who consistently performed well in her studies. More than her academic success, Christine carried a deep sense of purpose—she dreamed of becoming a nurse so she could serve and uplift her community after completing her education.

Tragically, Christine's life was cut short when she was struck by lightning at her home. Her passing is a profound loss to her family, the Beyond Barriers community, and to all who believed in her potential. We mourn not only the loss of a young life, but also the future impact she would have made through her compassion and service.

May she rest in peace, and may her memory continue to inspire the work we do.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bj8Z4W1w-HYoiMgJFg1A52CbyOX9DEU3/view?usp=sharing>