In 2010, Robin Strickler established Rwamagana Leaders' School in Eastern Rwanda, recognizing education's vital role in the country's recovery after the Genocide against the Tutsi.

The school aims to transform Rwanda's educational landscape by emphasizing university preparation, 21st-century skills, and character development.

Rwamagana Leaders' School envisions a society where empowered youth act as champions for social change and environmental sustainability. Its mission is to foster an environment that nurtures future leaders and problem-solvers, guided by core values of inclusiveness, visionary accountability, leadership, innovation, and environmental stewardship.

Expeditionary Learning (EL) is the distinctive teaching and learning methodology that sets Rwamagana Leaders' School apart. This educational model emphasizes hands-on, project-based learning, encouraging students to engage in real-world projects and collaborate to deepen their understanding of subjects. Originating in the United States in the 1990s, EL has been integrated into the school's curriculum to ensure that students gain meaningful, practical insights from their studies.

Mr. Moses Ssenyonjo, the school's director, notes that this competence-based model significantly boosts student engagement and knowledge retention, allowing for job opportunities during vacations and scholarship access for higher education. "The model of learning helps students secure jobs during vacations, and those who miss scholarships, get opportunities to attend university."

Moses Ssenyonjo, the director of Rwamagana Leaders School

As a charity-driven institution, Rwamagana Leaders' School prioritizes affordable education and provides scholarships to students from low-income backgrounds. The school collaborates with various organizations, particularly from the USA, to facilitate funding for these initiatives.

Vocational training is incorporated into the school curriculum, offering students practical skills in various fields, including farming, livestock management, baking, poultry and soap making.

In farming and livestock, students learn sustainable agricultural practices, including caring for cows and chickens. The baking program teaches students essential skills in pastry and bread-making, fostering entrepreneurship. Students also learn how to create soap using natural ingredients.

Under the robotics club program, students work on problems they believe society is facing. An example is water shortages and how to build water grids from the swaps to communities using technology. Students have also worked on garbage collection and sorting projects at the same time, incorporating technology in learning and teaching.

Mr. Ssenyonjo emphasizes that technology plays a crucial role in 21st-century learning. The Rwandan government has actively promoted and invested in technology, and the school is committed to follow this path by providing students with the necessary resources and opportunities.

Similarly, the school takes pride in seeing approximately 45% of its students graduate with scholarships to prestigious universities including the USA, United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, Turkey, Poland, India, and Uganda among others. The first cohort of graduates left on scholarships for the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, USA, in 2016.

Other students aspire to become job creators after graduation. Two alumni have already successfully launched organizations supporting students and children in Rwanda. Today, these graduates are making their mark across various sectors, including banking, tourism, NGOs, entertainment industry, and academia.

Notable alumni like Rita Kagaju, a celebrated musician, illustrate the school’s profound impact across multiple sectors. She is currently pursuing further studies in the USA.

To ensure that students receive the necessary support, each one is assigned a counsellor or mentor. The designated teacher closely monitors their academic, social, and emotional progress, which helps to maintain a positive disciplinary environment. By addressing these challenges earlier, the school fosters a supportive atmosphere that promotes personal and academic growth.

Some of these dedicated volunteers hail from Princeton University in the USA.

Jacky Namala, a career counsellor from Princeton University, highlights the school's supportive learning environment: "The school provides an excellent learning experience that encourages students to excel." Classes are held in the welcoming library, which features two sections—one upstairs and one downstairs. Students can also engage in outdoor lessons, allowing them to learn in a dynamic and interactive setting.

Additionally, the school offers separate dormitories for girls and boys, a dining hall, and sports facilities for football and basketball.

The school actively participates in community support, including food assistance during lockdown in the pandemic, support for widows in the school neighborhood, and Community-Based Health Insurance for vulnerable families. Students mobilize resources for local health initiatives and organize blood donation drives. The school does everything based on love; teachers mingle with students to avoid tension.

Rwamagana Leaders' School has organized an annual university fair for the last five years, connecting senior six students with universities operating in Rwanda to provide vital information and dispel misconceptions about higher education. The initiative, sponsored by the Bank of Kigali Foundation, saw 2,500 students attend the event last year.



"We are immensely grateful to the Bank of Kigali Foundation for their generous support, as this initiative which involves considerable expenses for feeding and transporting students to and from their schools," Mr Ssenyonjo said.

Parents have also played a crucial role in supporting their children's academic journeys and ensuring they achieve their goals.

The school employs 40 teachers and support staff. It offers interest-free computer loans to teachers and sponsors their further studies to help them upgrade their qualifications. Additionally, every Wednesday, teachers gather to learn from invited counsellors and psychological experts, enhancing their skills not only for the benefit of their students but also for their own professional development.

With increasing demand for educational resources, Rwamagana Leaders' School has

developed a master plan to expand its capacity to 600 students over the next five years. The school is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Government to sustain its mission of providing meaningful opportunities for Rwandan youth.