

Returning to school can be challenging for pupils who lack essential school materials and regular meals. For some children in Kabarole Sector, Gatsibo District, this term began differently, with school bags, shoes, books and other supplies provided to help them return to class prepared to learn.

Some 450 vulnerable children from five schools in Kabarole sector have received back-to-school materials under an initiative by the Zakat Foundation of America, in partnership with Abdallah Kiromba Foundation (AKF).



The initiative, described by the organisers as the first of its kind in Rwanda, seeks to help children from vulnerable families attend school with the basic materials they need to learn alongside their classmates.

The beneficiaries were drawn from GS Bihinga in Kabarole town, GS Gatoki, GS Ruhuha, GS Simbwa B and Nyabikiri Model Village.

At least 90 children from each school received a pair of shoes, socks, a school bag, five exercise books, pens, pencils, a rubber and a sharpener. The support also covered school meals for all the beneficiaries for the entire term.

The distribution was conducted at the respective schools, with some parents accompanying their children to collect the materials.

For children who previously lacked basic items such as shoes or a school bag, the support brought visible excitement and relief.

Donath Niyonsaba, President and Legal Representative of the Abdallah Kiromba Foundation, said the initiative was designed to address some of the barriers faced by vulnerable pupils.

“We want vulnerable children who lack these basic materials to have the opportunity to learn like other children and attend school with dignity,” he said.

Niyonsaba encouraged the pupils to take their studies seriously, respect their teachers and grow into responsible children and future citizens.

He also urged them to maintain good personal hygiene, noting that keeping clean contributes to better health and creates a healthier environment for learning.

At GS Bihinga, the head teacher urged both parents and pupils to take good care of the materials so they can serve the children throughout their studies.

Jean Baptiste, an official from Kabarole Sector, thanked the two organisations for choosing schools in the sector for the initiative.

He said the support was particularly valuable because many children and families continue to face different needs, while similar support is also required in schools across the country.

Baptiste encouraged the beneficiaries to work hard and make good use of the assistance they have received.

“The people who support you think about those in need. They take their time and resources to come and support children so that people’s lives can improve,” he told the pupils.

The initiative forms part of the Abdallah Kiromba Foundation’s broader work to support and empower vulnerable communities in Rwanda and the region, particularly in education, healthcare and social welfare.

The foundation partnered with the Zakat Foundation of America, a Chicago-based non-profit organisation involved in emergency relief, post-disaster rehabilitation, sustainable development, education, healthcare, orphan sponsorship and seasonal programmes, including Ramadan iftars and Udhiya/Qurbani.

For the 450 pupils who received the support, however, the immediate impact is much more personal: having a meal everyday at school, shoes to wear, a bag to carry and the books and stationery needed to participate fully in school.