

AT ONE WITH
NATURE & THE COMMUNITY

One&Only

GORILLA'S NEST

Rwanda



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OUR
PHILOSOPHY

One&Only Resorts are located in the world's most exceptional destinations, handpicked for their beauty and unique cultural charm.

We are passionate about preserving the rich stories of our locations, contributing to the protection of the natural habitat, and being a valued member of our local community.

In Rwanda, One&Only Gorilla's Nest and One&Only Nyungwe House, lay adjacent to two of Africa's most celebrated areas of wildlife - the Volcanoes National Park and Nyungwe National Park.

**WE ARE PROUD TO WORK
HAND-IN-HAND WITH THE
COMMUNITIES FOR WHOM THESE
MAGICAL PLACES ARE HOME, AND
TO PLAY A MEANINGFUL PART IN
THE ONGOING CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.**



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IBYIZA BY'U RWANDA

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*"Wherever you find
people dancing to the
beat, you have no choice
but to dance along."*

— RWANDAN PROVERB —





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THE WELCOMING BEAUTY OF **DANCE**

When you arrive at One&Only Gorilla's Nest at the foothills of Volcanoes National Park or One&Only Nyungwe House on the edge of Nyungwe National Park, you are immediately immersed in Rwandan music and culture.

Traditional Rwandan dancers and drummers offer a welcome performance like no other, where the beats of the cow hide drums are matched with melodic songs of tales drawn from the country's rich cultural heritage.

Guests at both One&Only resorts in Rwanda will have their creative curiosity sparked through joyful and energetic performances from the *Ibyiza By'u Rwanda* and Nyungwe Cultural Village dance troupes that entertain and delight with their beauty and majesty.



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Ibyiza by'u Rwanda, which means "The Beauty of Rwanda," is a dance cooperative founded in 2017 in the town of Kinigi, Musanze in Rwanda's Northern Province - where One&Only Gorilla's Nest is located.

It was established by community member Antoine Mupenzi, who has long held a passion for dance and music but struggled to find a troupe where he could live out this passion. Antoine began training young people in his community, teaching them different Rwandan dances including *Amaraba*, *Ikinimba* and *Umushayayo*, as well as traditional songs.

He encouraged them to showcase their nation's culture through dance and most of the young people he trained joined Antoine to form *Ibyiza by'u Rwanda*.

Today, the troupe has more than 20 members and has performed at One&Only Gorilla's Nest since 2019.





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A SHARED LOVE OF
CULTURE

The One&Only Gorilla's Nest partnership with Ibyiza by'u Rwanda is inspired by a shared love of culture.

The cooperative works with the resort to deliver exceptional moments for guests, from the inspiring drumming that greets a guest arrival, to teaching them local dances.

They also prepare a special evening by the boma, which in Rwandan tradition is known as *Igitaramo* or *Inkeru y'imihigo* - an event which signifies enjoyment accompanied by songs, poetry and dancing.

During the evening, *Ibyiza by'u Rwanda* members stage a short play on the ancient Rwandan culture of a traditional wedding and perform several spectacular and moving dances.

Antoine finds it heartwarming to see visitors from all over the world enjoy Rwandan culture and even join in the performance and drumming. "It is always a pleasure to see people enjoy what we have to offer, especially those who have traveled from afar," says Antoine.

"I've been passionate about dancing since I was young and I'm proud to have found a way to live my dreams and contribute to the development of my country."

— ANTOINE MUPENZI —





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GROUND-TREMBLING
DANCE

Florite Nyiravunane, a 25-year-old dancer and coach in the *Ibyiza by'u Rwanda* troupe, says the cooperative's most loved dance is *Ikinimba*, a dance that is performed with joy, stamina and determination.

The choreography of *Ikinimba* is characterized by powerful, ground-trembling jumps. It is the most popular dance in Northern Rwanda and unique to the region.

Florite joined the cooperative after completing high school and is happy to have the opportunity to bring her passion to life, and represent the country through dancing.

“We are always excited to meet and dance with people from around the world and are grateful for the income we earn from our performances.”

— FLORITE NYIRAVUNANE —



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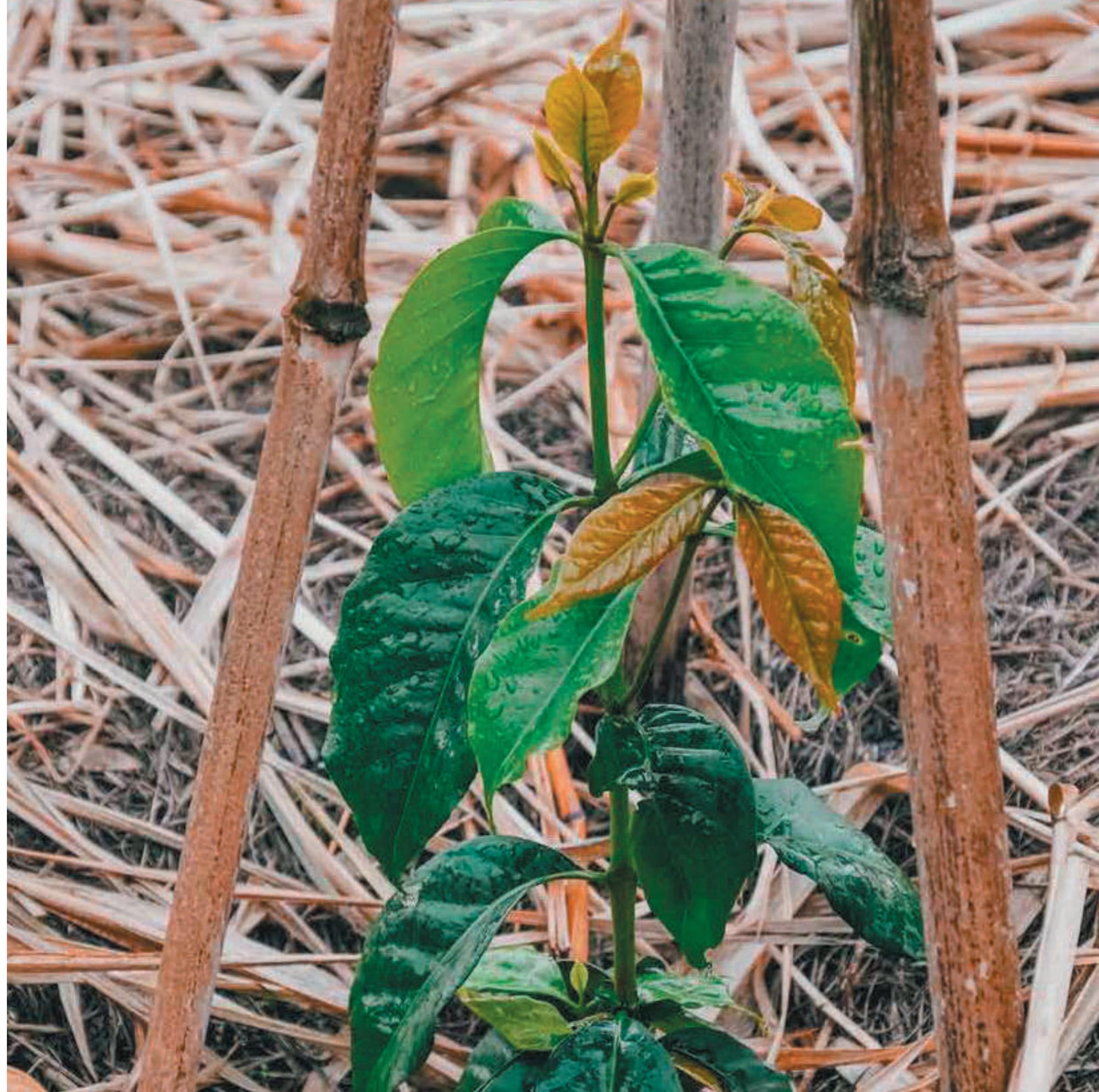
TWONGERE KAWA COKO COOPERATIVE

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THE BEST OF
THE BEST

Rwandan coffee is known for its floral aromas and distinct taste. Grown on hillsides in high-altitude regions between 5,600 and 7,200 feet, Rwandan coffee is both award-winning and an important source of income for communities across the country.

Numerous cooperatives and industries grow and produce coffee - each a testament to the remarkable impact and value of coffee when harvested, roasted and brewed with care.



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EMPOWERING COFFEE FARMERS

One&Only Gorilla's Nest is located at the foothills of Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park in the north of the country, an area renowned for its rich volcanic soil in which potatoes, flowers and coffee flourish. To engage local communities and contribute to socio-economic transformation in the region, the resort has partnered with *Twongere Kawa Coko* Cooperative.

Through this unique collaboration, guests have a chance to visit the resort's coffee garden, sip the finest Rwandan coffee and learn more about its origins from the farmers themselves.

Twongere Kawa Coko is a women-led cooperative with more than 200 members, including 169 women and 35 men.

Located in Coko in the neighbouring district of Gakenke, the farmers' passion for growing coffee led to the name of the cooperative, '*Twongere Kawa*' which means 'Grow More Coffee'. The cooperative produces exceptional coffee and they aim to inspire a love for coffee in communities across the north of Rwanda.

ONE&ONLY GORILLA'S NEST INITIATED THE PARTNERSHIP IN 2020 AND TODAY THE RESORT PURCHASES COFFEE FROM THE COOPERATIVE AND OFFERS GUESTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE COOPERATIVE, TOUR THE PLANTATION AND LEARN ABOUT COFFEE PROCESSING FROM CROP TO CUP.



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FROM CROP TO
CUP

"We begin by preparing a nursery for seedlings, water them regularly and shade them from the bright Rwandan sun until they are ready to be planted. We use organic fertilisers to give the seedlings an extra kick to grow into coffee trees," said Therese Nyirangwabije, President of the *Twongere Kawa Coko* Cooperative.

The location, climate and soil in *Coko* are perfect for growing coffee. The land is fertile and moist, which favours the process. Regular maintenance of the trees and skillful harvesting by cooperative members also contribute to the coffee's quality and taste. "The specialty, or rather quality, of our *Coko* coffee varies with the rich soil in which we grow it. We also apply organic fertiliser when planting the beans," adds Martin Kabwari, a coffee farmer and cooperative member.

The *Coko* coffee trees grow for a maximum of two years. Harvesting of the cherries which contain the beans begins in the third year by hand-picking the ripe ones which are red in colour. After picking, the cherries are first washed in a large pool of water and stirred to remove the unripe ones. They are then put into a machine to remove the outer layer without damaging the bean. After being sun-dried for a day or two, the dried coffee beans are milled to remove the silver skin, followed by polishing. They are then packaged and ready for sale. Once these steps are completed, the *Coko* coffee can be roasted, ground and enjoyed. Each step is carefully managed to ensure the best quality coffee, and can be observed by guests when they visit the cooperative.

In addition to purchasing coffee for the resort and arranging tours, *One&Only Gorilla's Nest* hires *Twongere Kawa Coko* Cooperative members to manage the coffee garden at the resort and provides opportunities for guests to learn more about where their coffee comes from and the people behind it.

Clarisse Mukatetero, a *Twongere Kawa Coko* Cooperative member and garden farmer at *One&Only Gorilla's Nest*, is excited to work at the resort.



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“I take care of the coffee trees here in the garden by applying the knowledge I gained from my fellow farmers in the cooperative. I’m proud to plant and grow great coffee here.”

— CLARISSE MUKATETERO —



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INSPIRED BY

COFFEE

Coffee has transformed the lives of the cooperative members and their communities through job creation. It is more than just a crop or a brewed beverage, it is an important source of income for individuals in the cooperative and brings great pride to the farmers.

“I enjoy growing and drinking coffee. The crop has provided me with a regular income and improved my life. I now own a small farm I bought with the money I earned from the cooperative.”

— FRANCINE MUKANTWALI —



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FROM RWANDA
**TO THE
WORLD**

Rwanda's agriculture sector is the largest employer in the country and one of the leading exports. Around 75% of the country's agricultural production comes from smallholder farmers - just like the members of the *Twongere Kawa Coko* Cooperative.

Coffee and other locally grown crops have the potential to foster partnerships worldwide and contribute to the country's economic development. For One&Only, it is important to contribute to the local economy in a meaningful way, and through purchasing from *Twongere Kawa Coko* the resort can support local farmers.

“If you’ve never tasted Rwandan coffee before, now is the time. Don’t just take my word for it, try for yourself and enjoy the incredible flavour!”

— FRANCINE MUKANTWALI —







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ESTHER'S AID



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EDUCATING WITH **ESTHER'S AID**

One&Only supports Esther's Aid, a non-profit organisation working to transform the lives of young people and women by providing them with life-changing skills and educational opportunities so they can become self-reliant.

"We support young people to build their lives, and the most effective platform to achieve this is education. But we don't just train and equip the youth and women with skills and stop there. We also make sure they have opportunities to apply those skills, be it in internal projects or other opportunities that can sustain them," said Clare Effiong, Country Mission Director at Esther's Aid.

Esther's Aid has been operating since 2002 and is driven by love as it works to create a bright future for Rwandan women. The organisation has empowered thousands of people over the last decade through programmes that restore and strengthen their hope and help them realise their own potential.

Esther's Aid programmes include culinary arts and pastry, hospitality, entrepreneurship and computer training. Students go through the 15-month course before they are eligible for employment. The training is conducted by renowned chefs from Rwanda and around the world who give their time to train students and share knowledge. Trainees also receive soft skills that build good character and enable them to succeed in the workplace.

REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE

One&Only works with Esther's Aid to provide internships to young adults who have gone through the organisation's programmes, paving the way for them to learn more about hospitality and gain real world experience.

Our resorts in Rwanda offer either a four month or a one year programme for interns, who receive regular training to boost their skills and

experience, and a number have been contracted to work at the resorts after completing their internship.

"It's our responsibility to help the younger generation of Rwandans to gain the skills and resources necessary to compete on the job market. We are here to inspire, guide and believe in them," says Jeanne Kayitesi, Human Resource Manager at One&Only Gorilla's Nest and Nyungwe House.

DEVELOPING TOURISM IN RWANDA

Tourism and hospitality is a vital sector for Rwanda's economy. In 2019, the industry generated 10.3% of the country's GDP, and provided employment for 160,000 people. By investing in Rwanda's young people and sharing our experience with Esther's Aid, One&Only is proud to contribute to this growing sector and create new opportunities.

FROM INTERN TO EMPLOYEE

Eric Hitimana is a graduate of Esther's Aid and now works as a porter at One&Only Gorilla's Nest. He is one of a number of young people from Esther's Aid who have been working at One&Only resorts in Rwanda, taking advantage of the opportunity to work with and learn from seasoned colleagues, gain experience and confidence and feel valued in their work.

"I used to think that working in hospitality wasn't for me, but after I joined the sector, I realised how fulfilling it is, the skills it requires and just how much practice it takes to excel. It also provides a good income, which I appreciate."

— ERIC HITIMANA —

He invites fellow Rwandans and people living around the world to visit and explore the country as it is a peaceful nation that loves welcoming guests. "Rwanda has so many stunning things to see and admire, coupled with rich culture and warm hospitality that awaits all travellers. I invite everyone to visit Rwanda," he says.

Bonded by a common interest of investing in community engagement, One&Only's partnership with Esther's Aid will continue to grow, as both organisations work towards improving the livelihoods of the communities around them.

"Esther's Aid also supports vulnerable communities including young people who have dropped out of school, and it is therefore very important to us to collaborate with them throughout the community empowerment journey," adds Jeanne Kayitesi.





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HANDSPUN HOPE

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*"The empowered woman
is powerful beyond
measure, and beautiful
beyond description."*

— STEVE MARABOLI —



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EMPOWERING RWANDA'S WOMEN WITH
**HANDSPUN
HOPE**

One&Only is proud to support the development of the communities where we work and offer the opportunity for our guests to contribute in a purposeful way.

At One&Only Gorilla's Nest, we work together with Handspun Hope in Rwanda's Northern Province, an organisation that supports vulnerable women who experienced trauma in the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, as well as those living with HIV/AIDS.

The organisation empowers strong and resilient women by providing them with dignified jobs and spiritual counselling as well as by fostering community development. One&Only supports Handspun Hope by purchasing locally-inspired crafts made by the female artisans, including adorable handmade plush animals that are offered to guests as turndown gifts.

During their time at One&Only Gorilla's Nest, guests have the opportunity to meet some of the 280 remarkable women artisans and see first-hand how their products are made, from conception to completion, including the impressive handmade mountain gorillas, that celebrate the endangered primate found in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park.

Guests who visit One&Only Nyungwe House also receive plush chimpanzees from Handspun Hope, a memento of these compelling creatures who live in the ancient rainforest surrounding the resort, and whose calls can be heard echoing through the canopy. "One&Only is driven by community empowerment which is why working together with Handspun Hope is such a natural partnership," says Simon Pierre Dufitumukiza, Country Director at Handspun Hope.

"The more of our products that are purchased by the resort and guests, the more our artists benefit and their incomes increase. This is all possible thanks to the effort and dedication of the remarkable women who invest so much of themselves in making such beautiful handicrafts."

— SIMON PIERRE DUFITUMUKIZA —



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WHERE
NATURE
COMES FIRST

Handspun Hope has a unique craft production process that puts nature first. Most of the crafts are made from environment-friendly natural materials such as grass, eucalyptus, and calliandra trees.

The artisans also utilise avocado seeds used when dyeing sheep wool fibres and use natural gas, a more eco-friendly heat source with lower emissions compared to wood or charcoal.

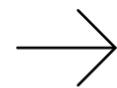


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AN EMPOWERED
FUTURE

One&Only is privileged to partner with Handspun Hope and we look forward to continuing to support the organisation, and the women who make our guests' time in Rwanda truly memorable.

Each souvenir from the women of Handspun is not simply a plush animal or knitted sweater, but a piece of Rwanda made with love by resilient and empowered women who are making their country proud and crafting a bright future for themselves, their families and their communities.



Learn more about the work of handspun hope by visiting their website handspunhope.org or following the artisans on instagram [@handspunhope](https://www.instagram.com/handspunhope).



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TRANSFORMING LIVES AND

COMMUNITIES

Jacky Ndererimana, a community member from Musanze and a supervisor at Handspun Hope, is an artisan herself who oversees the team that knits sweaters.

Each day, she trains and guides her team and works with them to develop new designs and liaise with customers.

According to Jacky, being part of Handspun Hope has helped her socialise with her community, build new friendships, and made her feel loved. She is grateful for Handspun Hope's partnership with One&Only because it has led to increased sales and secured her a source of income.

"Thanks to the income I receive from my work at Handspun Hope, I am able to meet my family's needs like paying school fees for my children, health insurance, buying food and other necessities that contribute to our welfare," says Jacky.

Francine Mukantagara, another Handspun Hope artisan, says that the income she earns from her work helps her provide for her family and pay taxes as her contribution to the country's development. She no longer depends on her husband to support the family and that makes her proud.

"When guests buy our crafts such as gorillas, chimpanzees, lions or knitted sweaters and beanies and take them as souvenirs from Rwanda, it gives us a deep sense of pride for our country and as women at Handspun Hope."

— FRANCINE MUKANTAGARA —



