

Volunteer HANNAH FOX

Partner organisation Ahazaza Independent School | RWANDA

PKF forensic accountant Hannah Fox wanted to learn first-hand about the challenges facing charities in developing countries and to use her skills to make a positive difference. [Accounting for International Development \(AfID\)](#) organised a six week volunteer assignment for Hannah, coaching the staff at Ahazaza Independent School (www.ahazaza.org) in Rwanda. The school enables intelligent and motivated children from all backgrounds to benefit from a high standard of teaching in the three national languages. A small farm attached to the school allows children to pass on the knowledge acquired to better their parents' agricultural techniques and improve their standard of living. The local residents named the school AHAZAZA, meaning "the future", because it sees its pupils as representing the future of Rwanda.

THE ASSIGNMENT

Since its inception in 2006, Ahazaza had grown rapidly to eight classes and is in the process of adding one per year until all ages are covered. It is funded by a combination of school fees and donations but is aiming to become self-sufficient. It was undergoing construction work to build new classrooms and a multi-purpose hall; expected to be completed by the end of the year and will be used for a variety of income generating projects. Most of the school staff had never received any form of accounting or business training and they were not used to thinking about how things could be done more effectively. The financial procedures were very basic and Hannah's task was to spot the gaps in their financial management; suggesting and developing potential improvements.



"I was worried that I wouldn't have the right skills to be able to help, but the accounting was actually very basic. What is common sense to anyone with an accounting qualification was new to staff, because most had not had any accounting training."

Hannah Fox, AfID Volunteer

"Hannah had an excellent relationship with all the staff and children. Her contribution to the school management was extremely important. Thank you for sending us such a wonderful person."

Raina Luff, Founder of Ahazaza

WHAT WAS ACHIEVED?

Hannah worked with Ahazaza's secretary, their part time accountant and the agronomist of the school farm, suggesting a number of important measures to improve the school's accounting, making it understandable to donors. Once staff understood the planned changes they began to implement them together. Hannah's input significantly improved the variety and quality of reports. She helped put controls in place in areas such as stock, fixed assets and school fees in order to ensure that Ahazaza complied with internationally recognised standards and Rwandan government guidelines.

LOCAL IMPRESSIONS

Hannah: "A typical day started at 6.50am when I began the 20 minute walk to school. This often took longer than it should, as so many children stopped me in the street to say "good morning, how are you?" When I finished work in the evening, the night guard at my house always came to say hello and, despite my appalling language skills, he patiently tried to teach me some Kinyarwanda".

