



AT SCHOOL IN RWANDA



In the pictures above; left: students at the MIPC College; right: VVA international school, Rwanda

In August last year, a Sussex family moved out to Musanze, Rwanda in order to improve the level of education provided. Musanze is a gateway town in the North West of Rwanda that attracts tourists on their way to view Gorillas in the wild.

The “Virunga Valley Academy” school in Musanze targets children whose families have travelled to Rwanda to complete missionary work, or children who intend to go to university abroad. It is an American International school for children, from Nursery to 12th Grade. We spoke to Mollie, whose family moved away in August, and has been studying at the Virunga Valley Academy. She compared her school in Rwanda to be “mostly the same, subjects wise, the school is just on a way smaller scale”. There are only 50 students at VVA whilst her previous school had over 750 students. Students also do a lot of work in the community including delivering clothes and toys to the infants who are in hospital. The leading cause for the infants being hospitalised is malnutrition, because a large amount of their community has severe poverty. The school is well equipped and many students go on to study in America.

However, we also spoke to Mollie’s father, who works at the MIPC College, which is also in Musanze. He commented that the “two schools were very different”. MIPC students have to buy all of their own equipment, and the teacher only has a basic

Chalkboard with which to teach each day. The college specifies in teaching Hotel Operations, Management skills and Tourism to 16- 20 year olds. One 18 year old said “My dream is to work as a receptionist in a hotel in England, but my family is poor and I will never be able to afford a flight to England”. Resources at MIPC are very scarce, even paper has to be used, reused and used once more, because their community is largely effected by poverty.

These two schools are within miles of each other, yet the level of resources and poverty is so largely different between them. Maybe we should be doing more to give others just some of the things that we take for granted every day.