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Dear Resonate Family,

As I reflect on 2016, I am grateful for the impact we achieved, humbled by the challenges we encountered along the way, and emboldened by what we learned. This past year held some of our biggest triumphs, and tested the limit of our abilities.

We started 2016 eager and hungry. Midway through the year we were stretched too thin, and were forced to slow down and reflect. Through an externally facilitated Organizational Capacity Assessment we identified areas of strength and weakness, and realized that we had to invest much more heavily in our internal infrastructure and operational systems before attempting to expand.

Only a few months later, we were asked to facilitate our biggest trainings yet with very little lead time. The work we did to identify and correct pain points paid off, and we partnered with the Rwandan First Lady’s organization, the Imbuto Foundation, to successfully deliver leadership training to 650 Rwandan youth in just two weeks’ time.

Yet success did not make us complacent in our efforts for improvement. In 2016 we experienced huge amounts of learning and organizational development. Yet perhaps more importantly, we witnessed the leadership, achievement, and economic advancement of the 1,330 participants in our programs.

What follows is a snapshot of our work in 2016 – our successes, our failures, and our dreams for the future. As we look back on 2016 I can speak for the whole Resonate team when I say that we are proud of what we have accomplished – and even more excited about our increasing ability to support women leading change in 2017. We owe this success to our community of friends, advisors, partners, and supporters. Thank you for being part of this journey.

To another great year,

Ayla Schlosser
Resonate Co-founder & CEO
Resonate uses storytelling to empower women and girls in East Africa to build self-confidence and unlock leadership potential.

We partner with groups that focus on skill-building and education, and integrate leadership training into programs to increase effectiveness and catalyze action.

After completing Storytelling for Leadership, women start businesses, take on local leadership roles, and advance in their careers and academics.

- **2014**: Pilot concluded in April, official program launch, and legal registration in Rwanda and U.S.
- **2015**: Awarded independent nonprofit status, began generating significant earned revenue
- **2016**: Team growth and organizational development, expanded client reach, and 55% supported by earned revenue
IMPACT

1,330 participants trained. We worked with 12 different clients to deliver leadership training to a diverse group of women and men from Rwanda. Through a partnership with the Segal Family Foundation we taught our Storytelling for Leadership course to more than 80 organizational leaders in Rwanda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

New M&E system. We partnered with economics researchers at UC Berkley to develop a new monitoring and evaluation system to more accurately and concisely track the impact of our programs. Pre- and post-training surveys show overall increases in leadership roles, public speaking, and self-confidence.
SUSTAINABILITY

We tripled our sales in 2016 and brought in $59,000USD of earned revenue that accounts for 55% of our total spending in 2016.

Customer satisfaction. We surveyed clients from our target market following a series of workshops funded by the Segal Family Foundation. Based on participant responses from more than 60 NGO’s from Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda:

- 69% were interested in using Resonate’s tools to build their own staff capacity
- 74% were interested in bringing our model to their beneficiaries
- 100% said they would recommend our training to other organizations

MONIQUE
Kayonza District

Monique is a 59-year-old mother of 6, and a talented weaver with entrepreneurial ambitions - yet she remained a subsistence farmer.

After Resonate’s training, this changed. She said,

“In Resonate’s training there is one important thing that I have learned: I have the power to solve my own problems. I have decided to no longer stay quiet about my ambition because I realized that if I don’t do it for myself, no one else will. I humbly and confidently talked to my husband and with time he began understanding me. After seeing what I can earn with my business he began supporting me. Today we are a happy family.”

She approached her husband about her passions and started a weaving business. Now she is the primary economic provider for her family and is a member of her village council. Her house has electricity, and she is part of her village saving group.
TEAM

New Hires. In 2016 we made two key hires: a Trainer, and a Program & Systems Manager. Both of these roles were crucial to our team, and are already contributing to our success as an organization.

Defined core values. During an all staff retreat, we worked to define our organizational values. Not only was this an incredible team-building exercise, it is also an important compass for guiding future hires, decisions, and strategy. Our values are:

Turi Kumwe
Believe in Yourself
Believe in Others
Welcome Challenges
Keep Learning

Wellbeing. It is organizational policy at Resonate to ensure that staff are rested, healthy, and happy. As a learning from our intense first half of 2016, rather than putting an upper limit on how often staff can take leave, we instead require that every staff member take a break from work every quarter. As a result we have guarded against burnout, and are a happier, more productive team.
IMPACT

• **M&E system bugs.** During the roll-out of a new system, we had some bugs to work out – both technological, and methodological. Our laser-focus on quantitative data resulted in a loss of some of the rich qualitative context we had been collecting previously. We are now working to reincorporate a balance of both types of data.

SUSTAINABILITY

• **Structural questions.** Our increased focus on revenue generation led to some questions about whether we should retain our US nonprofit status, or operate exclusively through our for-profit Rwandan company. We ultimately decided the support of grants and donations through the nonprofit is critical in allowing us to reach some of the most vulnerable populations.

TEAM

• **Under capacity.** We aim to accomplish a lot with our small team, but this has resulted in a few crunch points during the year where staff were asked to wear many different hats – perhaps a few too many, at times.

• **Board size.** Our Board of Directors is still relatively new and quite small. We are actively recruiting new board members to improve the diversity of experience and perspective of our board, as well as have more power to help drive organizational strategy and direction.
Looking Ahead

**IMPACT**

**Data-driven decisions.** In addition to our programmatic M&E, we also partnered with UC Berkeley researchers to begin a small-scale control study to measure the broader impact of our program. We will collect a year’s worth of data on two groups – one who received our training and one who did not – and will compile the findings at the end of 2017.

**Post-program support.** We are currently in the research phase of designing an initiative to ensure participants stay motivated and supported to maintain and build on the leadership skills learned through our training.

**Preparing for Scale.** We will participate in the GSBI Accelerator program and work with experienced mentors to pin down the best structure and model to allow us to sustainably reach scale. We will also be developing the corresponding systems and infrastructure to prepare for a growing team and expanded reach.
Looking Ahead

SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic planning process. While we know that change and iteration are necessary and important for a young organization, we have reached a point where we can and should be planning farther ahead. In 2017 we will undergo a multi-year strategic planning process to set a long-term vision and guide decision-making.

Building our brand. As prepare to grow, we will increase our focus on building a strong and recognizable brand throughout East Africa and among our stakeholder and client communities.

Partnerships. We are actively pursuing partnerships with big organizations and government programs in Rwanda to both raise our organizational profile and pursue larger distribution models for our product.
Looking Ahead

OUR TEAM

Key new hires. In addition to growing our training team, we will also be hiring a Program Director in Rwanda.

Board members. We will be adding 2 to 3 new board members in 2017.

Advisory council. We are growing our in-country advisory council in Rwanda.
“When I heard, “And the winner is Wendo Dorcas” that evening I took the trophy to my room, sat on my hotel bed and cried until my ribs hurt. I cried for the woman who did not have confidence in herself, who considered herself inferior, who was fearlessly afraid, who was so proud of herself for doing something she had never done before. She had pitched and won. Yes! The villager as I commonly, proudly, refer to myself, had won $10,000 plus a trophy.”

- Wendo Dorcas
Founder, Dandelion Africa

Wendo Dorcas is an entrepreneur who attended one of Resonate’s trainings in Kenya in May of 2016. Just four months later she used her newfound confidence, belief in herself, and her story to win $10,000 for her organization.

She had never pitched before in her life, but Resonate’s training gave her the courage and the practice to stand up in front of a room of 400 organizational leaders and funders and present herself, her ideas, and her work. She had all of the skills that she needed to be a phenomenal leader – now she also has the self-confidence to achieve her full potential.

Wendo Dorcas is one among 1,330 participants that went through Resonate’s catalytic Storytelling for Leadership training in 2016.
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