





Burundi

Burundi is a small land-locked country in central Africa and one of the poorest. Child mortality is the 12th highest in the world (104/1000) and in 2017, it was estimated by the European Commission that 3 million people out of the total population of 11 million were in need of humanitarian assistance. Due to the current political instability and severe food shortages, 390,000 refugees have fled to neighbouring countries.

Mwumba

Mwumba is a desperately poor commune (local district) with a population of 25,000 in northern Burundi, not far from the border with Rwanda. The commune is located just to the north of Ngozi, the third largest town in Burundi.

It is a rural community and the population subsists on small family farm plots. The average size of a farm is less than one acre and many families are landless. Coffee is the main cash crop, but there has been a decline in coffee production due to poor prices and better returns from growing food crops.





Food for the Hungry

Food for the Hungry (FH) is a Christian international development organisation that has been serving the poor globally since 1971. FH Burundi is working in partnership with the people of Mwumba to help them lift themselves out of poverty in a sustainable way and to transform the lives of their children.

The transformation programme is based on the needs of the most vulnerable children attending Mwumba Primary School. The community identifies the children where one or both parents have died, the father has deserted the family, the parents are living with HIV, or the family is landless and lives in extreme poverty. Such children are in danger of dropping out of school, thereby losing the opportunity to escape poverty.

Since 2011, FH Burundi has been working alongside the community to help transform the lives of these vulnerable children and their families with various infrastructural, agricultural and educational projects.





Agricultural projects

One of the most pressing concerns expressed by the parents of the most vulnerable children was the lack of land and the need for more food.

FH Burundi has addressed this problem by forming Farming Associations, renting land to be used by them and providing training in improved farming practices. Conservation farming techniques have promoted the protection of the soil using plant litter (mulch) to conserve moisture and improve soil fertility. The use of organic compost is strongly advocated.

Demonstration plots, which compare traditional farming techniques with improved methods,

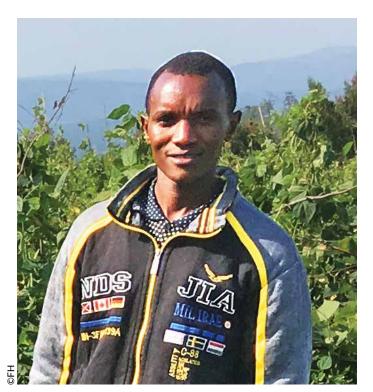
have shown a threefold increase in yield. The Associations are convinced of the benefits of these methods and have more food to share between members. A new storehouse has been built, so now their crops are protected from moisture, pests and theft.



The new storehouse ensures that no part of the precious harvest is lost

Polycarp, (below) is the FH Agronomist. He provides training to the farming associations alongside his work of advising coffee growers.

A technique called 'hot composting' is being promoted to speed up the time it takes for decomposition and to improve the quality of the compost. Some groups of farmers have been helped to buy an improved breed of cow. The cows are kept in a stable. They produce valuable manure for the compost heap as well as providing milk for sale and family nutrition.





Above: Learning how to make compost helps ensure better crops

Below: Owning a cow provides much needed income for families. Everyone helps with the harvest.





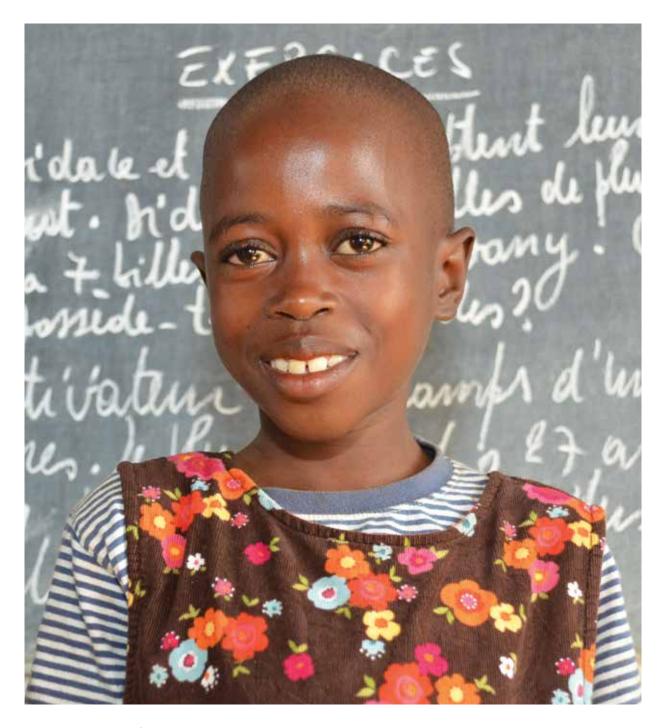


Education

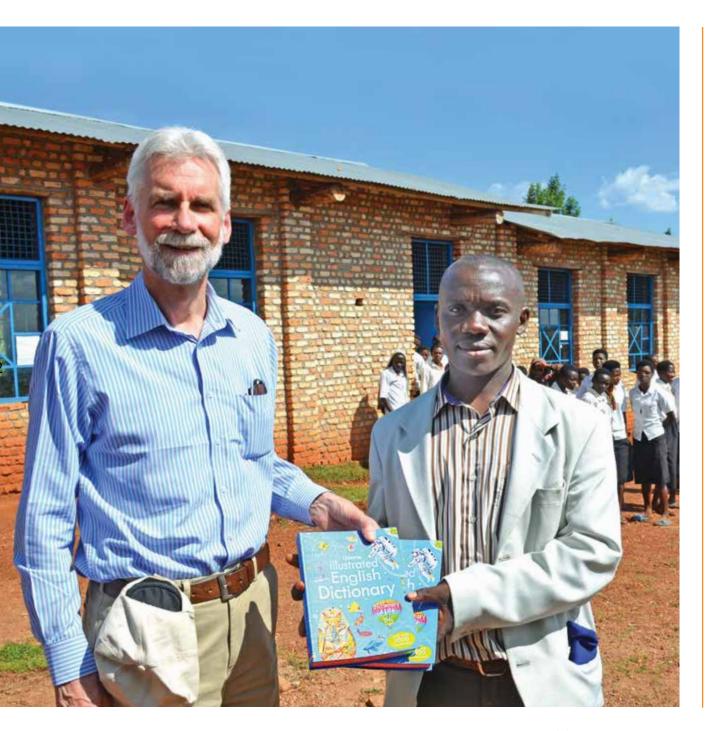
FH Burundi is enabling the poorest families to keep their children in school. Although primary education is free throughout Burundi, parents are still required to provide school uniforms and writing materials and also to make financial contributions towards school projects. For many parents this can be too difficult and, due to poverty, the children have to drop out of school to help at home.

FH Burundi provides the vulnerable children with school uniforms, health care and school materials. The whole school population benefits from staff training, sports equipment and infrastructure projects. Four new classrooms, with latrines and a rainwater catchment tank, have been built at nearby Gihama. This has relieved the overcrowding at Mwumba Primary School and shortened the walking time to get to school for some children.

Right: Thanks to FH Burundi, Christelle is still able to attend Mwumba Primary School. She is near the top of her class and is making good progress Far right: Gihama school







From the Headmaster

Vincent Miburo (right) is the Head Teacher of Mwumba Primary School. He is appreciative of the support FH Burundi is able to provide. The school has a



Parent Teacher Association to support the headteacher in the management and development of the school. Many of the 24 teachers have to make a daily 15 km round trip from Ngozi to teach at the school.

The aim of the school is to support the physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of each child. School clubs for sports, agriculture, the environment and hygiene have been started and volunteers from local churches are providing Christian education.

The headteacher was grateful to receive some new books to help teach English but there is a need for more language teachers and books in English, French and Kirundi (the national language). There are still many challenges but great progress has been made.





Support for the community

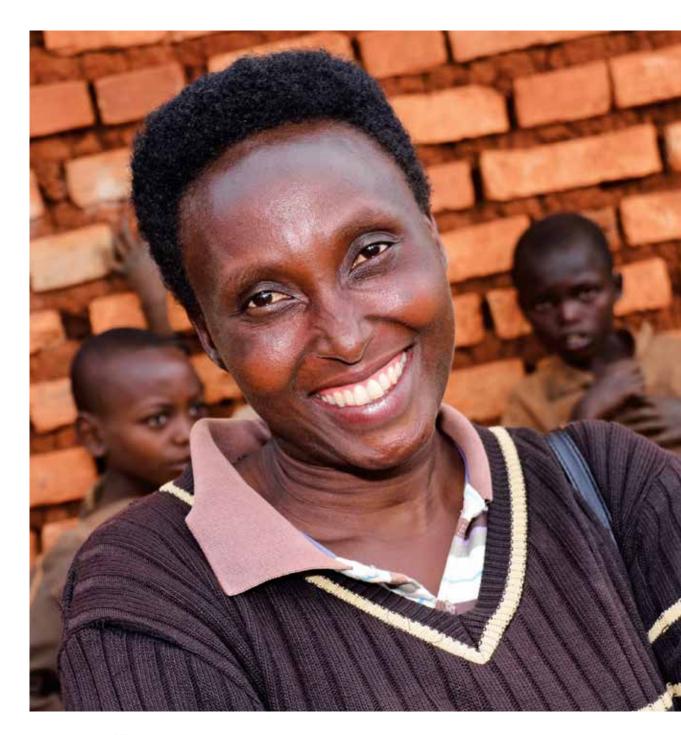
Violette is the FH Burundi Community Worker in Mwumba. She plays a vital role in visiting the families of the vulnerable children registered at Mwumba primary school.

The main purpose of these visits is to build good relationships and identify the challenges faced by the families. Each family is encouraged to build their own latrine, to have a 'tippy tap' for handwashing after visiting the toilet, to use mosquito nets to prevent malaria, to make compost, and to have a kitchen garden to grow their own nutritious vegetables such as carrots and spinach.

Volunteer 'lead mothers' are selected for training which they then pass on to other families in their neighbourhood care groups. Training modules on public health have been developed by the Ministry of Health. Polycarp, the FH Agronomist, provides the training in growing vegetables.

Left: A kitchen garden

Right: Violette, Community Worker





Community projects

Some projects supported by FH Burundi benefit the whole community. The extension of an existing water supply has provided clean drinking water to an additional 3,000 households. After laying the water pipes and building the standpipes, the project was handed over to the local water committee, which is responsible for collecting money from the sale of water and for managing the scheme.

The community has also benefited from the construction of new classrooms and the distribution of livestock. Small livestock such as rabbits and goats are the most suitable for poorer families. A common sight is a child with a goat, which has been tethered for grazing during the day. The goats are hardy and produce valuable animal manure, as well as generating income from the sale of offspring.





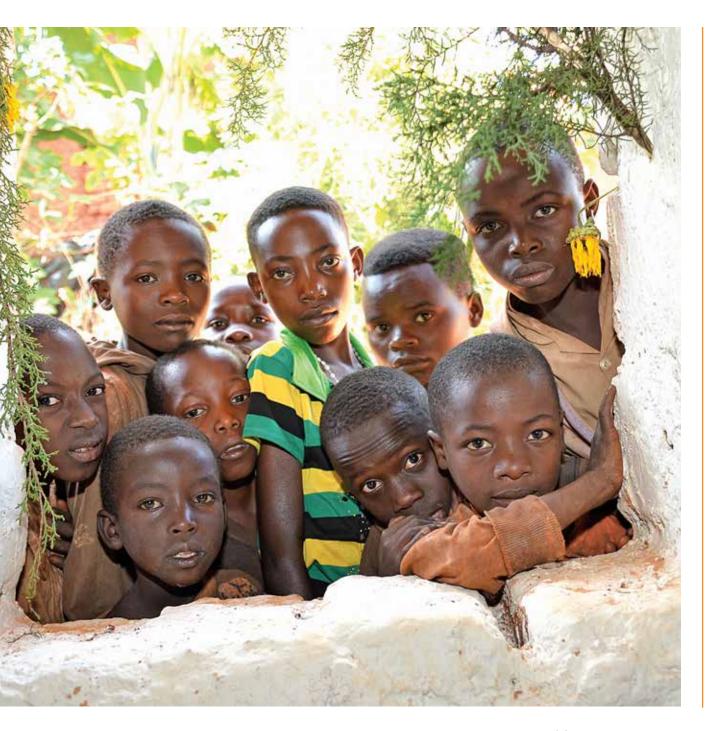
Learning and Savings Groups

An important aim of the programme is to encourage all vulnerable families to join a Learning and Savings Group and start the practice of saving a small amount of money each month.

FH Burundi staff provide the basic training and the simple materials needed to start the group. As the savings accumulate, each member is entitled to request a loan. The size of the loan depends on the amount of money deposited by the member, and the loan + interest has to be repaid within six months.

As well as the loan fund, a solidarity fund is accumulated. This can be used to help members meet emergency needs. The majority of the members are women, and the Learning and Savings Groups are providing a way for them to be increasingly self-reliant and not totally dependent on their husbands for the money needed to support their families.





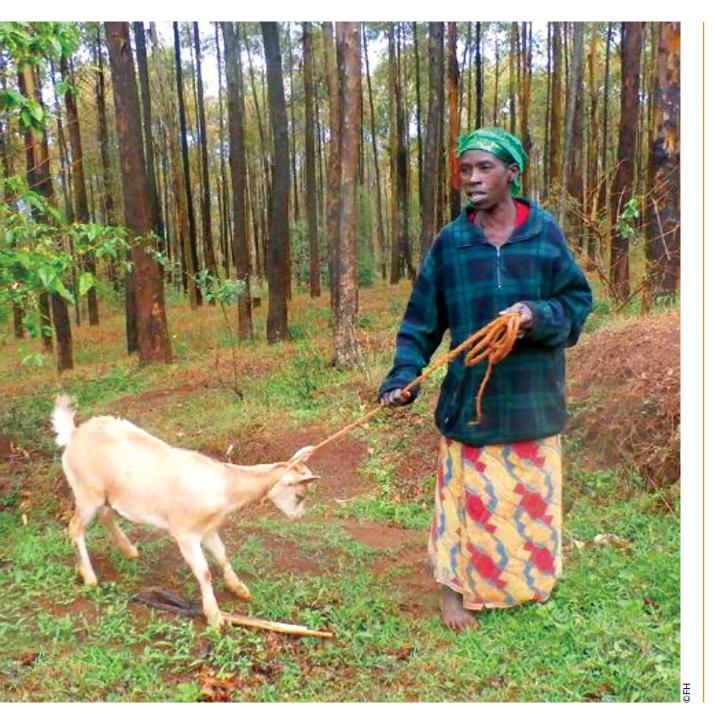
The Local Church

The church plays a central role in the community of Mwumba and FH Burundi works alongside all the local churches, both Protestant and Roman Catholic.

FH believes in a holistic approach to development, which addresses people's physical, spiritual and relational needs. Sometimes people can remain in poverty due to fatalistic beliefs and a change in worldview is needed. The belief that all people are created in God's image and that God loves them can give new meaning to life, as well as the motivation to strive for a better future. Helping community leaders and individuals to see what they can do themselves with their own resources and initiative is vital for sustainable transformation.

FH staff meet with church leaders in 'church engagement' training to encourage them to work together for community transformation. Support is also given to the volunteers from the churches who run the Sunday School Clubs at school.





Supporting families

Claire Minani (*left*) is a widow with five children. After her husband died, she struggled to provide for herself and her family. Joining a Learning and Savings group has helped Claire to save a small amount each week.

"After saving for a year and a half, I took a loan of £15 to start a small business of selling cabbage and amaranth vegetables. In three months, I managed to pay back the loan and continued the business with my own funds. With the profit I made, I bought a goat for £17."

Claire is also a member of a Farming Association. The goat provides manure for the Association's land to improve crop yields, as well as benefiting the land she has been able to buy.

Her children now have enough to eat and, supported by FH, they are also able to attend school. They each receive a uniform and are encouraged to participate in the after-school clubs.

Claire's success has enabled her to support her eldest son to go to university. She is proud of her achievements and has ambitions for the future. She hopes to expand her business and buy more land, so her children are provided for when she dies.

Child Sponsorship

Could you sponsor a child in Mwumba?

Sponsorship gives you a unique connection with a child and it also enables Food for the Hungry to help the child's entire community to provide for its children.

Your child will benefit from

- Improved nutrition
- Access to clean drinking water
- A life-changing education
- Better medical treatment
- The generation of increased income by parents
- Training for parents on how to care for their children
- Community projects to create an environment where children can thrive
- A resilient community that can withstand disasters more readily
- The knowledge that someone loves them and wants them to succeed
- Hope for a better life



Etienne, a sponsored child, and his sister



Food for the Hungry is committed to the transformation of the community in Mwumba. This involves working with local leaders, churches and families to address critical issues that prevent children from reaching their God-given potential.

Could you join with us in bringing hope to vulnerable children in Mwumba? Your gift could change a child's life forever.

To sponsor a child visit: www.uk-fh.org/sponsor-a-child/ or email: uk@fh.org.





