



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**



MWUMBA, BURUNDI

INTEGRATED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

In Mwumba, in NE Burundi, 65% of the population have been living below the poverty line. In 2019, Food for the Hungry raised funds to begin a 5-year programme of education, health, nutrition and economic empowerment. We are very encouraged that the mid-term assessment at the end of 2021 shows considerable improvement, although there are still major challenges to overcome.

This brochure summarises the successes of the project and highlights some of the challenges ahead.



THE BACKGROUND

An impoverished community

60% of Burundi's population is under the age of 20, and more than 90% live in rural areas. In Mwumba district, people live in extreme poverty on small plots of land with few agricultural inputs, poor soils and land degradation. This has led to high rates of malnutrition and mortality among children. Malaria and water-borne bacterial diseases are endemic. In the surrounding Ngozi Province, only 54% of the population have access to potable water and only 22% have sanitation facilities.

Burundi's 'free school' policy was introduced in September 2005, but the quality of teaching and learning environment remain very poor.

FH is using its child-focused community transformation model to implement a comprehensive development programme. This model places children at the centre of all development activities, with the knowledge that if children are 'uplifted' and empowered, their whole community will benefit. Cascade groups and farmer members' groups are being used to engage a broad section of the community. These groups are receiving training in behaviour change messages about education, health and nutrition, as well as improved farming techniques and livelihood initiatives.



EDUCATION



New classrooms at Gihama primary school

In 2014 and 2015, FH supported the building of a new school on Gihama Hill in partnership with the community and local government. Within the last two years, further classrooms have been build as parents understand the value of education and more and more children attend school.

The view of a head teacher



Bayivugire Raïssa is the head teacher of Kagozi School:

"Our school has 278 students and 7 teachers. It is solidly built, with sanitation infrastructure and a rainwater reservoir. Lessons were previously disrupted when children were sent 3 km for water to wash classrooms. Children used to travel more than 2 km to school - this is now less than 1 km. Sports, hygiene and agriculture training are dynamic with materials such as soccer balls, nets, watering cans, hoes and spray pumps from FH. Most of the children participate in the FH programme: they are motivated and mobilized, which makes the teachers' task easier. I am so proud to be responsible for this school."

Kagozi Primary School

In June 2021, a 10,000 litre rainwater harvesting system was provided for cleaning purposes. A hygiene kit was also provided, including brooms, buckets, trash cans, boxes of soap and menstrual hygiene materials. Now there is water at hand to clean classrooms instead of pupils having to bring water from home or go out to collect it remotely. This takes away one more burden and facilitates a clean and healthy learning environment.



The school was provided with 120 desks and 400 textbooks, which has reduced the ratio of children per book from 4 to 2.

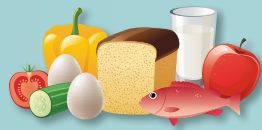
Primary school statistics

	Baseline	End of 2021
Primary enrollment (8 schools)	4,163	4,485
Children completing primary school	70.5%	85%
Children passing grade 9 test	360	417

Health training

Community volunteers from cascade groups have been trained in the following:

- Eating a balanced diet
- Prevention of HIV/Aids, tuberculosis and leprosy
- Essentials of reproductive health



There has also been a focus on encouraging villagers to install simple “tippy- taps” which can be hugely effective in improving hygiene.



HEALTH



A healthy balanced diet is promoted through cooking demonstrations

▲ Dietary education

A balanced and nutritious diet depends on the quality and diversity of what you eat rather than quantity. At times of food scarcity, such knowledge makes the difference between good health and sickness. Cooking demonstrations were carried out across the region, reaching over 300 participants. Training in preparation of balanced meals was passed onto community members who in turn will disseminate their knowledge to others. These sessions should also positively impact child nutrition over time.

Health-related statistics

Promoting handwashing and balanced meals has reduced the number of underweight children. Globally, 45% of deaths of children under 5 are linked to malnutrition. Increasing the availability of health insurance enables access to affordable healthcare.

	Baseline	End of 2021
Children under 2 underweight	34%	11%
People practising regular handwashing	71%	87%
Farmers with health insurance card	0%	42%



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Church partnership



Food for the Hungry has started working in partnership with a group of ten churches in Mwumba. The joint vision is to find ways to lift the local communities out of poverty. They are already formulating development project ideas, and church members are on hand to support upcoming activities in practical ways. The long view is to continue inspiring and encouraging development initiatives beyond the completion of Food for the Hungry projects in the region.

Training church leaders

Training was given to 20 church leaders from a church leader training manual. The manual is designed to encourage leaders to act out their faith in action as well as words. We have noticed increased involvement of church members in savings groups and cascade groups.

Cascade and savings groups

1,666 farmers have joined savings and loan groups, of which 57% have reported increased income since joining.

4,352 individuals are involved in cascade groups, which are a way to communicate health and nutrition lessons with the community.



A cascade group volunteer training session

ANIMAL CARE

For communities dependent on livestock farming, taking care of cattle and poultry is essential. Food for the Hungry project staff together with local veterinary professionals conducted a training session on animal husbandry. It is intended that the trainees will go on to train other farmers. Veterinary supplies have been purchased which include thermometers, multivitamins and parasite medication. These will be administered by the veterinary professionals, ensuring that beneficiaries are provided with animals free of disease.



CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

Climate smart agriculture is a way of transforming farming to support food security as the climate changes. FH agronomists have trained groups of the poorest farmers in better techniques. The most influential farmers have been selected as model farmers to cascade climate smart information to neighbours and demonstrate the increased crop yields the techniques achieve. The training includes these topics:

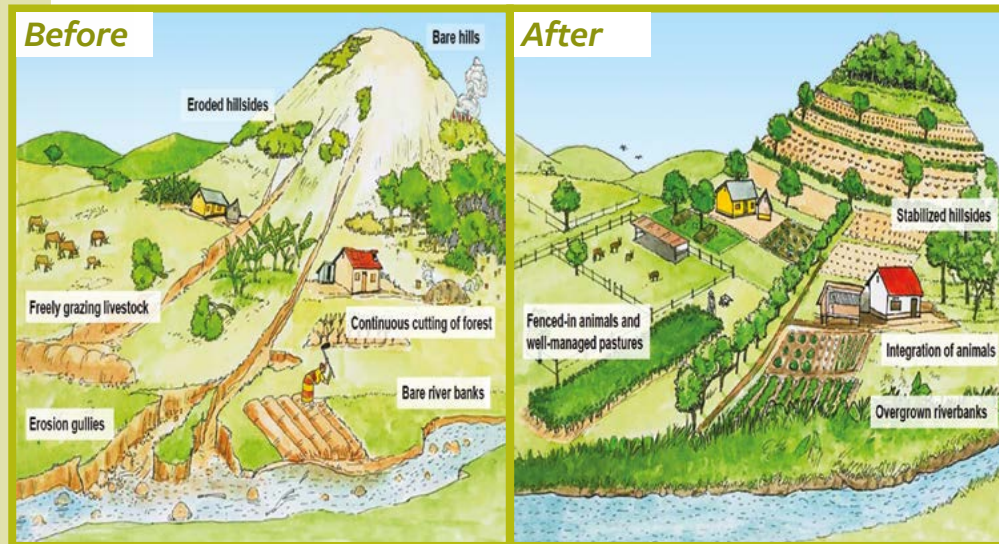
- No tilling and minimum soil disturbance, which reduces erosion
- Soil coverage with mulch or crop residues
- Crop rotation and improved seed varieties
- Integrating crop and livestock management
- Fenced-in animals and well-managed pastures
- Addressing pests through organic “push-pull” technology
- Diversifying production (including kitchen gardens and vegetables)
- Producing own seeds
- Ensuring women’s access to resources and decisions

LIVELIHOODS

1,666 savings group members meet regularly to save and lend money. Initially small amounts were borrowed to establish microbusinesses. Now members are borrowing larger sums to buy land. Good harvests, achieved by improved agricultural techniques, enable members to repay these loans.



AGRICULTURE AND ECONOMY



Amani’s story



Amani, the Kabazi Hill model farmer and seed multiplier

Amani says:

“I put into practice good agricultural techniques and I also teach others in the neighbourhood. I am now a certified seed multiplier - I received 30kg of base seeds. With this seed, I was able to sow 1 hectare: I am hoping it will yield 2,500kg of certified corn seeds for sale to other farmers.

Life in my family will be changed for the better and the community will benefit from the availability of good seeds.”



WORLDVIEW AND GENDER

Sadly, our surveys show that most women in this community (in common with large areas of the country) consider that it is acceptable for their husbands to beat them. FH have been trying to work with both men and women to change the broader outlook and gender views of which this is just a small part. So far, the results have been disappointing.



Deep-seated attitudes and behaviours take time to change. FH will consult with government and other players in this field and redesign the programme where necessary, so that women and girls can play an equal part in community life without fear or shame.



THE FUTURE



The people of Mwumba are hoping to graduate from FH’s programme at the end of 2024. Subject to funding, FH will seek to move on to neighbouring villages at that stage. This will build on the impact of seeing a vibrant, flourishing and resilient community next door.

Meanwhile, lessons are being learned about the areas where the present programme has been least effective. In consultation with local leadership, FH will use incremental funding to improve our approach and extend engagement to the most vulnerable and hardest to reach of the population. We are particularly focusing on the quality of education and on addressing gender inequality



FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

THANK YOU!



If you are interested in finding out more or supporting Food for the Hungry UK's work, our contact details are as follows:



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