

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BURUNDI

EGLISE ANGLICANE DU BURUNDI

EAB PRESS
JULY 2019

REACHING THE NEEDY THROUGH AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM

In Burundi now there are families, young people and old ones who have been living in refugee camps in Tanzania for many years and have returned back to Burundi. Many of them struggle to establish stable lives depending on the time they lived in the camps.

Some of them were born and grew up in Tanzania and don't know where their parents fled from. Others have adopted Tanzanian culture and have difficulties integrating into Burundian society.

They mainly depend on agriculture but, as with other community members, insufficient agricultural land and low production due to poor soil constitute major challenges for them.



Since the Anglican Church of Burundi with the support of Episcopal Relief and Development initiated a new approach of contributing to community relief through an integrated programme, the participants to that programme have been experiencing a positive transformation of living conditions.

The integrated programme includes modern techniques of farming, sowing improved seeds of basic foods, practicing techniques of land and environment protection, learning basic information to improve health, commitment to ending gender based violence, and participating in the literacy and financial education programme. This combined approach is enabling beneficiaries to make a step forward in development.

One returnee who joined the programme says, *"I have been living in Tanzania for many years but the time had come to return back to my country of birth. It was not easy for my husband and I to make that decision because it was a new starting point in our lives. We had no friends and in the first days we felt like foreigners in our own country.*

I had heard about the existence of circles where people meet together and learn a lot about development. Those circles are supported by the Anglican Church. I thought that I would not be allowed to belong. Then I found out that they are open to everybody. That was a door to my re-integration and what I am benefiting from the programme is changing our lives".

The evidence of change from the programme is mainly reflected in stronger community life, increased productivity of the land and changes in attitudes to health.

Beneficiaries of improved farming techniques are now harvesting two or three times more than they were previously.

Households with increased income are able to meet other basic needs like paying school fees for children, getting medical treatment and providing a better diet.

Through discussions of common issues and the sharing of knowledge and ideas vulnerable people are building strong bonds and inspiring surrounding communities.

MAKING HOLIDAYS MORE PROFITABLE FOR CHILDREN

Singing, learning, playing and sharing together are what children remember after the holidays when they go back to school. In different parishes of the Diocese of Bujumbura children participate in a range of activities some of which help them to improve skills and reinforce what they learn during Sunday school gatherings.



“What I like the most is when we memorise Bible verses together and the competitions between children from different parishes,” said one participant.

Sometimes it is difficult to ensure the security of children when they are not at school so the activities organised by the Church are a benefit not only

for the children but also for the parents.

With the support of Scripture Union who organise and help resource the programmes over two thousand children have been able to participate.

HUNDREDS COME TO FAITH

The summer period in Burundi is normally a good social time for people as it corresponds to one of the harvests and is when many family events like weddings take place.

Within the Church it is also an opportunity for evangelistic events and in many parishes during July crusades have been organised.

Recently, a three day crusade was organised in Muyinga Diocese. A team from Bujumbura Diocese joined that crusade. Hundreds of people including faith leaders attended.



The purpose of the crusade was the proclamation of the Gospel.

“In a context of great social change and complex issues and challenges people still need encouragement to hold on to their faith in Christ as the foundation of their life and tell the world that the love of God is still calling,” said one person who attended the event.

After three day of preaching and worship over three hundred people received Christ as their Saviour and started a new life in Christ.