

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BURUNDI

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MAKING HOLIDAYS MORE PROFITABLE FOR YOUTH

The dry season in Burundi is a period for many people to engage in different activities while others, especially students consider it a period of rest as it corresponds with the holidays. Young people normally have the opportunity to attend various trainings in order to be equipped with useful skills. Activities such as making bricks for construction meant they are able to gain some income that helps them with school materials.

This year such activities had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on mass gatherings. However alternatives have been found and youth have been able to engage in discussion forums, share experiences with other young people and receive training organised by youth departments in parishes.

They have participated in community service such as providing food items often used in families - baby's cereal, fruit salad, doughnuts, and popcorn. They have been trained in how to make items such as necklaces that have then been sold in small trade fairs. The income generated will help to supply their needs particularly when schools reopen.



The Church is investing in preparing youth for future responsibilities by focussing on the development of essential skills made necessary by a constantly changing world.

MAKING COMMUNITY MORE RESILIENT WITH WOMEN AT THE FRONT



“Empowering women is to empower the entire nation”, this is how development is perceived by people involved in community development focused on women in Matongo Commune. In Kayanza Province the Mothers Union with the support of Christian Aid Burundi has started an initiative of investing in sustainable livelihood through cooperatives, renewable energy and gender empowerment.

The Mothers Union have conducted training sessions aimed to develop skills for women in reproductive health, nutrition, hygiene, and food security. Communities in Kayanza as well as in other parts of Burundi live with limited resources and some people unfortunately lack skills and knowledge to make existing resources more profitable.

Kayanza is one of the most populated areas in Burundi. The majority live on agriculture but face complex challenges such as insufficient land, high numbers of people in households, low productivity, and nutrition related diseases.

Kankurize Colombe is one of the women in Matongo commune actively involved in the initiative since it started two years ago. She had faced various health issues caused mainly by ignorance. Her experiences caused her to seek for change. She joined the trainings and then became a trainer of women in her locality. At first people hesitated to engage with different ideas and attitudes especially over issues like birth control. However she and other women who benefited from the trainings are now experiencing change in their families and communities that is having a positive impact on people's lives at many levels.

ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES BY INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

Since the Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi started a programme of empowering youth with life skills, hundreds of young girls and boys out of school are trying different ways of addressing some of the challenges they face. Those who were not able to finish their studies or go on to university and those who finished school but lack employment face financial issues.

The programme of developing life skills for youth has introduced an approach of identifying their existing resources and skills so that they become part of the solution to the problems they face. The girls who participate in that programme have considered the programme as an opportunity to reduce gender based discrimination and have used their skills to prove that gender equality can be a reality.

Ariella Ininahazwe, has been trained by peer educators of her community in Bukeye, Makamba Diocese. Due to the economic situation of her family she gave up her dream of going at university to study medicine. Instead she joined solidarity groups where she participated in agricultural activities that generate incomes.

Recently, she and her friends paid for further training in managing a hairdressing salon and a dressmaking workshop. They used the income from the agriculture activities to start a hairdressing saloon where they work. "We were aware of criticism from people in our village because we tried to do something that girls have never been doing before, and some people openly said that we will never succeed but many became our permanent clients", she said



Such initiatives are transforming the mind-set of young people. The young people who are involved in that programme say that they realize how ignorance and fear of innovation cause many people to judge others and discriminate against them. Ariella hopes that she will soon pursue her dream of studying medicine because with the income she is saving and the business she is doing, she will be able to go to university and achieve what was impossible a few years ago.