

# ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BURUNDI

EGLISE ANGLICANE DU BURUNDI

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## INVESTING IN CHILD HEALTH

Three years ago the main focus of women involved in the fight against malnutrition was the improvement of the nutritional status of children under five years and women who were pregnant or breast-feeding.

This was done through a project supported by Christian Aid Burundi designed to help people to use local assets to address malnutrition in their community. Women organised in care groups began to benefit from the knowledge they acquired. Attitudes and behaviour changed. Women started to help each other to address issues relating to good nutrition. At the beginning of the project, health facilities registered around 5% of cases of malnutrition of children tested. By the third year the average number of cases decreased to 3%.



The Anglican Church of Burundi with leaders from local administrations have invested their efforts in tackling the root causes of malnutrition by sensitising people to consider providing diets using a range of locally grown nutritious food.

In Rumonge, for instance, the Provincial Health Coordinator said that the community has the ability to treat children suffering from malnutrition and even to prevent it by applying the right knowledge and skills.

During these last three year women who received training have been involved in a mass screening campaign, coaching households in good nutrition, and providing cookery demonstrations in temporally community nutrition centres. They have helped children affected by moderate malnutrition by feeding them with locally produced food that every household can access.

To support the project various strategies have been adopted by community members. For example, participants have developed common model gardens to demonstrate how to grow vegetables and establish kitchen gardens.



Saving and credit circles have been created to encourage income generating activities that can be used to help provide more varied diets. Christian Aid Burundi provided equipment that enabled women from those circles to establish cooperatives that produce porridge flour from sweet potatoes.

Such initiatives are having a very real impact on child health as parents invest in the welfare of their families and inspire and encourage others to do the same.

## YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

In Burundi, there is a saying that youth are the future of the nation or are Burundi's tomorrow. In their regular gatherings, Christian young people engage in challenging debates on issues of common interest like public health, the environment, and socioeconomic issues. Their discussions focus on the place and role of Christians in finding solutions and the contribution they can make.

Recently young people started questioning their responsibility regarding damage to the environment and what the future will be as the environment seems to be changing negatively.



A young man involved in youth ministry said that Christians should be at the forefront in protecting the environment as they are commanded by the Creator of the universe to take care of it and maintain it.

The government of Burundi declared a few months ago a country with zero plastic bags, a measure that everyone should respect for the sake of the environment. Business men started to apply this measure by stopping the importation of plastic bags but the management of the used ones remains a major challenge.

Some Christian young people in collaboration with the local administration in Bujumbura and ADEPE, a private enterprise that transforms plastic bags into other materials, have been collecting plastics bags in one of the market places and in other public places.

This initiative aims to raise awareness among young people of their responsibility towards protecting and maintaining the environment and that their safety and future are related to its care.