

# ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BURUNDI

EGLISE ANGLICANE DU BURUNDI

**EAB PRESS**

July 2021

## **Disability – finding solutions and resources**

Disability is one of the major challenges that communities struggle to overcome in Burundi. Precarious living conditions and lack of means appropriate to their physical conditions prevent those affected from meeting their basic needs. Several cases of disability existing in households limit survival which causes feelings of hopelessness.

All age groups are affected by this problem and solutions are few. Some public infrastructures do not take their needs into account. Schools specialising in education of children living with extreme disability are limited, and the very limited resources of families do not guarantee them access to certain services.

The Diocese of Muyinga in collaboration with EDAN has initiated a project aimed to assist this specific group in order to empower them and reinforce their dignity.



Over 400 people living with disabilities among them children who had dropped out of school were able to receive assistance relating to treatment and resources. As a result children who had dropped out have reintegrated; others have been supported with income-generating activities to help them overcome livelihood issues.

The project has provided wheelchairs to people in need so that they can now travel and participate in community gatherings such as church services and visiting neighbours. For beneficiaries of the project the support given to them has not only met their needs but it has also restored their dignity.

## **Flooding - “Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep”.**

Lake Tanganyika and its surrounding rivers were normally natural resources for sustaining the lives of many people in Burundi particularly those living in Imbo flat which comprise four provinces of west and southern Burundi. Farmers growing rice and maize have facilities to drain fields because of the rivers. Lake Tanganyika provides different sorts of fish that generate incomes and food for families. Beaches are the favourite places for many people and tourists.

For the past three years people have started to perceive those natural resources differently as another side of the lake and its rivers has been revealed. Scientists have indicated that Lake Tanganyika and surrounding rivers are more likely to overflow and cause flooding to riverside areas due to an increase in heavy rains.



Thousands of families have been forced to flee the flooding caused by the lake and rivers as villages have been swamped. Houses, schools, churches and fields have been seriously affected. Displaced families have struggled to find a place to go and had to face challenging living conditions.

The government has provided temporary camps that have admitted some of the survivors of the floods

while others are struggling to start a new life in safer areas far from their homes.

Partners of the government and NGOs have been mobilized to respond to this humanitarian emergency that has changed the life style of thousands of people. Food and non-food items, sanitation and health services, children's education, women and children's protection against abuse are all major concerns that governors and partners have been addressing since the occurrence of flooding a few months ago.

### **Launching of environmental protection campaign**

The Province of the Anglican church of Burundi participates each year in environmental protection and climate resilience by conducting tree planting campaigns and community mobilisation to bring about behavioural change regarding the management of natural resources.

The community of Rweza in Matana Diocese has participated in launching a campaign that aims to plant over 330,000 forest and agro-forest trees.

The Bishop of Matana, the Rt. Rev. Seth Ndayirukiye, and Archbishop Martin Nyaboho who officially launched the campaign urged the population to learn from the effects of climate change and commit themselves to changing behaviour regarding the care of the environment and use of natural resources.

With the support of Episcopal Relief and Development the Anglican Church of Burundi will work with communities to protect public and private land and train community members in climate resilience.



communities to protect public and private land and train community members in climate resilience.

Recently leaders of the Anglican Church and Roman Catholic Church initiated a partnership focused on climate resilience and a commitment to mobilise communities in reasonable use of resources. As mainline churches in Burundi the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches have considerable influence over social change and they urge people to listen to the voice of nature and heed its warnings.

### **Engaging youth in evangelism**

Evangelism and sharing the Good News of God's Kingdom is interesting many young Christian people in Bujumbura city. Attendance in churches and other Christian meetings keeps increasing and young people show more commitment to spreading the Good News. In some suburbs people get visits from young people whose passion it is to share their testimonies of God's saving love.

Some of these young evangelists have received training in evangelisation while others are involved in Christian ministries where they got help in spiritual growth.

In the context of a Christian country like Burundi there can be the assumption that all people have heard and received the Gospel. At times the Gospel and Christian values may be compromised by inappropriate behaviour and people may claim to be Christians but don't go to church and have no access to the Gospel.

To address such issues small groups of street evangelists have organised themselves to go to where people are in order to share the love of Christ.

Many people, impressed by the compassion they have seen, have appreciated the initiative and accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour. For others it is an opportunity to renew their commitment and develop their spiritual life.



The department in charge of youth in the Diocese of Bujumbura has recently organised special worship meetings to celebrate what God is doing through Christian young people and to encourage them to keep on being living witnesses of spiritual transformation and true discipleship of Christ.

### **Prayer request**

*The Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi is looking forward to installing the new Archbishop and Primate of Burundi the Rt Rev. Sixbert Macumi on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021. Please join us to thank God for the achievements of the outgoing Archbishop The Most Rev. Martin Blaise Nyaboho and commit the new leadership into the hands of God so that the Church may continue to carry out its mission.*