



BURUNDI

Burundi Kids Program

Annual report 2009 – 2010

Supporting Vulnerable Children in Bujumbura, Burundi

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I. Introduction

HOPE *worldwide* Burundi (WHB) is a non-profit faith-based charity in Bujumbura, Burundi. Our goal is to love and serve the poor and needy because Jesus called us to do so.

Thanks to the initiative of Chantal Mutamuriza and Daniel Bertholet, and with the support of a Geneva-based private donors and HOPE *worldwide* Switzerland, we started to respond to the needs of children by initiating a program for supporting orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) called **Burundi Kids Program** in September, 2008. The program enrolled **18** children (**9** males, **9** females) and has been providing care and support to these children since then. Due to the success of this program, HWB, in agreement with our sponsors, took the challenge of increasing the number of children to **100** for the following school year.

From July up to August 2009, new children were recruited and the enrolment process was based on the criteria of vulnerability and age. In particular, vulnerable children lost both of their parents, or one of them, or have their parents alive but in a dire need of help. Children in secondary school were enrolled are under 18 years of age and a few are slightly older because they were not schooled for a few years during the civil war.

The recruitment involved mainly the project's coordinator (Serge Gahungu), the Chairman (Tom Akello), a teacher and volunteer for HOPE (Jean-Claude), and a few local volunteers of HOPE. For children of primary school, they were usually met at their homes to assess their personal situation and needs. The children in secondary school were selected based on a list of "drop-outs" provided by schools authorities. These children were unable to pay school fees because of poverty.

The 100 children included the 18 who were initially supported the prior year. **60** children of secondary school (**31** males and **29** females) and **40** children of primary school (**19** males and **21** females) were in the program.

This program was overseen by a program coordinator and HOPE *worldwide* Kenya committed to providing technical assistance to the program; he trained Serge Gahungu as HOPE *worldwide* Kenya has extensive experience in similar projects for vulnerable children. Please visit www.hopewwkenya.org for more information.

In the name of all the children supported by the Burundi Kids program, **we would like to extend our warmest thanks to our donors** in Geneva, Switzerland, for their wonderful financial support. We would like to thank our HOPE team in Bujumbura and all the volunteers who are fully dedicated to serving these vulnerable children.

Tom Akello
Chairman

Serge Gahungu
Program Coordinator

Daniel Bertholet
Fundraising

Bujumbura & Geneva, December 2010

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Jesus Christ in the gospel of Matthew 25:40

Early September 2009, Serge Gahungu, together with HWB Board members met the children and their parents/guardians to inform them about the organization of the Burundi Kids program, the support they were going to receive and the organization's expectations towards them.

Secondary children receive information about Burundi Kids program



II. Strategic Objectives and Activities

Goal 1: Providing Educational Support to Vulnerable Children

In education our goal was to have the children attend school regularly without interruptions due to lack of school materials or a failure to pay the tuition fees. In September 2009, the children received a packet of school materials made of exercise books, pens, pencils, rubbers, geometrical sets and rulers.

Children receive school materials from Tom Akello, Chairman



Children also received school uniforms. Those in primary school got two sets while the ones in secondary school got one set.

Children receive school uniforms



At the beginning of the school year, Serge Gahungu – the program Coordinator – went to all different schools to pay the school fees directly to the school administration for each of the children. We managed to retain all the 100 children enrolled in school during the whole year. This was the result of (1) paying school fees for children on time, (2) providing the children the required school materials and school uniform and (3) after-school support program. We noticed with great satisfaction that several children were studying without the fear of being sent home from time to time. Many children gained confidence in themselves because they looked and studied like others.

To help children succeed in school, we have set up an “after-school support” scheme. In September 2009, four teachers were hired part time to support the children in their homework after school. Two are teachers in primary schools and two others are teachers in secondary schools. These teachers have worked after their daily job as teachers in public school on the Burundi Kids program and have each been paid about \$50 – 60 per month to do so. While the additional income is highly appreciated by these teachers, they were selected because they have a big heart to help these kids and the time to do so. Since February 2010, we hired an additional secondary school teacher due to strong demand from both teachers and the children. Each teacher is now supervising about 20 children after school, and will visit each of them at least every week, sometimes in small groups in each area of Bujumbura.

The four teachers



Teachers with some of the children



This “after-school support” really helped the children’s performance in school. We tried to work closely with the schools’ Principals to get class rooms available. In addition, children living in the same

area were grouped together to be helped. The primary school teachers met the children in their respective neighbourhoods to help them do their homework. Furthermore, in our regular meetings with the parents/guardians, we insist on not giving too much house work to the children but on giving them the time to do their school homework and revision.

Goal 2: Providing access to medical services

For a few months children could go to the nearest medical institution to get emergency medical services and were assisted by HOPE project coordinator or volunteers, or sometimes board members, to pay for the medical bills. However, not all public hospitals or clinics provide good medical care. Therefore, we identified a private clinic with a good reputation and providing good medical care at affordable prices. HWB signed a partnership contract with a medical center, *Centre Medico Chirurgical Chrétien (CMCC) de Jabe*, which is in a central location for most families. The children received a personal HOPE ID card to allow them to receive medical services from this medical center (doctors appointments in emergencies, medical tests, drugs, hospitalization or referrals). HWB then took care of the bill at the end of each month.

In addition, we provided training and advice about health and hygiene issues to parents and guardians.

Initially our program was focused on emergency medical needs for the children. Most children go to the clinic due to malaria or some viral/bacterial infection. After a few months, we decided to provide the children with a yearly medical check-up to allow the doctors to check the overall health status of the children, and provide vaccinations when adequate. In April 2010, we informed the families and the children about the importance of undergoing a medical check up. There were a lot of questions and some pushback as it is unusual to visit a medical doctor in Burundi when not sick. In addition, some were fearful of taking the HIV test, as the epidemic is widespread in the country.

Goal 3: Providing food security

From September 2009 on, each parent/guardian received a package of 5kgs of rice and 5kgs of beans per child. Between the 20th and the 23rd of each month, the parents/guardians of children in primary school came to pick up their food pack and between 24th and 27th of each month, the parents/guardians of secondary school children stop by the office of HWB. In addition to this, children under 10 years of age get 2kgs of a nutritious porridge flour and ¼ kg of sugar to boost in their development.

Goal 4: Meeting basic needs

We also noticed that several girls were missing school consistently and we found out that it was mainly during their menstrual periods. Therefore, we started providing them with sanitary pads and they are taught how to use them correctly and how to maintain personal hygiene.

Children received with soaps and toothpaste especially those who really could not afford it. Furthermore, during exams period, some children could not work at night because they do not have

access to electrical power in their homes. We provided them with candles so that they could study and prepare for their exams.

Goal 5: Mobilize Volunteers to Respond to the Needs of Most Vulnerable Children



A number of volunteers gave their energy, time and expertise to support the children.

Whenever there was a children's event, the volunteers were there to support, encourage and cheer up the children. They also went to the children homes for visiting them and their parents/guardians.

III. Activities for Children

Every 4 to 5 months, we organized a fun event lasting for a full day for all children enrolled in our program. This is a time for children to be children. Most children do not have toys to play with. They are often required to perform chores at home, or do some kind of work by their guardians after school. During these events children were given an opportunity to play and enjoy different games. The children forget their daily family problems and it helped them bond together and have fun. It is also an opportunity for the HOPE team to encourage them, bond with them and to counsel those who have some psychosocial problems.

a) Fun activities



(Boat ride - primary school children)



(Coordinator with children in primary school)



(Potato-on-spoon race)



(Girls enjoy the lake)



(Girls run after a ball)



(Sack race)

b) Meeting the parents/guardians

Guardians/parents are met



These are moments where parents/guardians are involved in the project directly. They are asked to give their input about the project in order to help us to improve the services given to the children. They are shown the part they need to play in the process of fighting to reach the strategic objectives. It is also an opportunity to enlighten them on issues pertaining health and cleanliness.

IV. Challenges

Regarding nutrition, our goal was to provide food security. However, given the quantity of food support we are providing, it is hard for some of the families to reach that level of food security. Some families still struggle with hunger despite our support. Furthermore, we noticed that food security is only a first step and we want to improve the quality of their diet with more vitamins, etc., which was started in September 2010.

It has not been easy to go to different homes and meeting the children one by one. Their homes are far apart in Bujumbura. In many cases the living conditions of the children are not conducive to learning: several houses do not have electricity, are so small that it is difficult for the child to find a place to do her homework. Some families were not cooperating with the teachers in helping the children with schoolwork. There is also this situation of parents/guardians who are rarely at home. They leave early in the morning only to come back late in the evening. Children suffer from their absence and the lack of parental love and care. Some are burdened by house duties.

The 2009 – 2010 school year was often interrupted by the teachers' strikes. One month of strike in the first term and two months in the second term! Teachers have low pay of about \$1800 per year, and have very large classes of 200 to 300 children per class, especially in the primary schools. These strikes made our job more difficult, especially our pedagogical follow up.

It is not enough to tell some of the Burundian families that their medical bill is taken care of. But more is still needed in the area of educating them about their health. In the beginning of the program, though the parents/guardians have been told that they can contact a doctor or any medical centre whenever the child in the HOPE program is in need of medical assistance, the parents were still hesitant to do so. At times, guardians/parents had to be seriously talked to before they at last decide to take the child to see a doctor and they tended to wait until the health condition had very seriously deteriorated, which was then a problem in the medical center. The other challenge is that the medical center is a bit far away for some of the families so poor that they cannot afford the bus fare or even call HOPE office for assistance in case of sickness of the children.

It has been challenging when the siblings or parents/guardians of the supported child are sick, they came to us seeking for help and we had to turn them down because they were not enrolled in the program. This situation could be perceived as unfair in the families we supported.

V. Visit from our sponsor

In December 2009, Daniel Bertholet came to visit HOPE worldwide Burundi in order to see for himself the work which was being done on the field. Daniel has been helping as a volunteer with fund raising activities in Geneva, Switzerland. It was a very successful trip as he got to see and interact with the beneficiaries (children and parents/guardians), and the HWB management team. He also got an opportunity to visit some homes of the children. In addition, with the HWB team he met with several NGOs and met with Marguerite Barankitse of Maison Shalom in Ruyigi.

HOPE team with Daniel*Daniel meets the beneficiaries*

VI. Way forward

Thanks to our donors, we managed to increase by 50 the numbers enrolled in the program in the school year 2010-2011. We now have 150 children and added 8 families who are being supported in a special way. This is the beginning of our move from relief to development of the different families benefiting from our support.

Nutrition

In the services we were offering to the children, we had this goal of providing food security to the family. They were receiving 5kgs of beans and 5kgs of rice each month. Now we are moving from food security to *healthy nutrition*. Each child will be receiving the same package of beans and rice but in addition, he/she will also be receiving vegetables every month. For children under 10 years of age, they will be getting a nutritious porridge flour to boost their healthy growth.

Health

In our goal of providing medical support to the children, a new service is being introduced: every year children will undergo a thorough medical check up. Furthermore, school girls are given sanitary pads and are taught how to use them correctly and how to maintain cleanliness. In addition to all that, an ongoing training and advice about health (including prevention on malaria and distribution of mosquito nets) and hygiene is now taking place for the parents and guardians.

Education

Regarding education support, the number of teachers who volunteer to help the children with their homeworks has been increased. In this regard, children are frequently met by the teachers and this will boost their performance in school. We are trying to work closely with the Principals of schools so that

they provide us with rooms. In addition, children living in the same area are pooled together to be helped and the teachers, especially those of primary, meet them in the neighbourhood for tuition or help them do homeworks.

As it is clearly stated in the objectives of this program, we want to help the children participate in after school educational programs. This is the reason why we will be introducing a *computer skills development* program. After school, the older children will be introduced to computers, and then taught Word and Excel basic skills.

In summer holiday in the future, we would like to organise a training camp for the children in secondary school. This will be a good opportunity for the children to bond with one another and with HOPE volunteers and team. It will be an opportunity for the children to learn about work, school work, HIV/AIDS topic, cleanliness, and so on.

When the children went back to school they received school materials with Hope bag.



Leilla, a child in primary school said, "I am grateful about your care and love for us...I used to carry my exercise books in plastic bags which could not last even two weeks to my shame but now I have a new and beautiful school bag like other children".

From Supporting Vulnerable Children to Supporting Vulnerable Families

Finally, in our mission of empowering the families to be self supportive, HOPE *worldwide*, in partnership with Maison Shalom, will start a program to empower eight families. Through training, household heads will be helped to start an incoming generating activity. In addition, they will receive a capital/micro loan to start and sustain those activities and a social worker will monitor and support them.

In many sessions, the selected eight families have been met and trained in small income generating project management. After identifying the specific project, each representative of the family (the one responsible for the project) received a sum of 300.000Fbi (\$250). They all expressed their gratitude and started dreaming about their life being changed thanks to the support.



Beatrice and her husband gladly receive money from the hands of HOPE Treasurer



Jeanne joyfully receive money from the hands from HOPE Coordinator

VII. Table of Results

Activity	Target Reach		Actual Reach	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No. of Volunteers Mobilized	15	10	12	7
No. of Children that Received:				
• Food and Nutrition	48	52	48	52
• Healthcare	48	52		
• Housing	-	-	-	-
• Clothing and Bedding	-	-	-	-
• Primary Education Support	19	21	19	21
• Secondary Education Support	29	31	29	31
• Psychosocial Support	48	52	48	52
Total Number of Children Supported	48	52	48	52
School work results (success)	48	52	39	35

Explanations for the variance budget vs. actuals

Comparing the Budget & the expenses, we see that there 3 main items where we have a big difference

1) Medical: In the beginning the parents were not quick to bring their children at the hospital & we had at times to go ourselves to help them out convincing them that they should bring their children to hospital. In their habit they don't go to see a doctor unless they are very sick.

The other reason of the difference is that sickness is unpredictable, you cannot exactly budget for it.

Luckily few children got sick, that is why we remain with a lot of money in this line.

2) School fees & materials: While budgeting we thought we will get many children from private schools (which are expensive) But we got most of them from public schools which are less expensive because them they have a record of vulnerable children.

We were lucky also to get the school materials at lower prices than what we expected.

Now for the budget of this year, we tried to cut down the budget allocated to this line.

3) Other expenses: It is made mainly of office equipment & psychosocial support. For this school year we did not spend much on psychosocial support because of teachers strikes, it was not easy to meet them.

Even activities which were planned couldn't be done because the school year opened abruptly.