

# The Lutheran World Federation Burundi

## The Lutheran World Federation Burundi Bimonthly Newsletter

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Four constructions sites are on-going:**

Administration Block for Bumba Primary School at Rukoyoyo colline in Cendajuru commune;

Extension of Mwiruzi Health Centre in Mishiha commune;

Rehabilitation of Gasasa Water Gravity Scheme in Mishiha commune;

Habitat: 75 decent houses (Programme for Peace in Burundi - PPB) and 35 decent houses (Community Empowerment Project - CEP).

### Working in Associations Stamped out Distrust

"The first days here were not easy. We not only were destitute but also lived in distrust, the returnees towards the residents and IDPs or the other way round. We hardly said hello to one another." This is a testimony from Gervais Cishahayo of Mwiruzi colline in Mishiha commune, one of LWF intervention areas. Expellees and returnees make the bulk of the village's population.

Since they were installed in the village in 2008, most households continued to lack basic needs, including shelter, sufficient food and water, and so was the receiving community. Later on, LWF assisted the community in establishing a peace village. The inhabitants of the village and their surrounding community also benefited from agriculture and livestock inputs to help them boost their livelihoods. However, this was not enough as the villagers still went hungry.

In 2009, LWF embarked on a



seed centers project in the area and encouraged the community to group into farming associations. Cassava, peanut and yellow maize seeds were developed, first on collective fields and then distributed to the villagers for individual use.

According to the villagers, working into associations not only improved productivity and reduced the threat of hunger but also helped them

strengthen their social ties. So, spending hours together in collective farming and training activities established a bridge of understanding and reconciliation among community members of different backgrounds. "Today, you can be sure, there is no such a thing as ethnical hatred or suspicion among us. We work together and we walk together," insisted Gervais Cishahayo. (Ctd on p.4) Marie Kamariza, a member of

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### Defusing Food Insecurity through Seed Multiplication

Mwiruzi village is located in the eastern part of the border commune of Mishiha in Cankuzo province. The village is essentially made of woodlands and possesses a highly fertile but poorly exploited cropland. It is also essentially made of returnees and expellees.

As part of Phase II of its sustainable livelihoods project, LWF assisted local population in establishing seeds multiplication centers. One field is made of five hectares of crops, two for maize already mature enough for harvest, two for mosaic-resisting cassava and one for peanuts. (Story Continues on p. 4)



Peanut Crop in Mwiruzi village

## Muvumu Colline Now Out of Education Isolation



*Muvumu Secondary students. They still use Muvumu primary school classrooms*

Following the situation of acute insecurity in Gisuru commune of Ruyigi province, the only primary school that Muvumu village had was completely destroyed while most inhabitants fled to Tanzania. The school did not operate until 2004 when refugees started coming back. It then reopened with three teachers respectively in charge of standard one, two and three. The roofs were

covered with tents. Before the school restarted, the nearest school could only be found in Kigamba village at approximately 10 kilometers distance.

LWF intervened in rehabilitating all of the six classes of Muvumu school, a development that brought back scores of pupils who were enrolled in other schools located in neighboring collines.

LWF contribution consisted also in equipping the school with desks and other tools. Pupil numbers grew significantly so that during the school year 2008-2009 the school population reached 500 pupils including 276 males and 222 females. For the last year, the school had 460 pupils including 255 males and 205 females.

According to the head-teacher of Muvumu primary school, the school dropout is not alarming compared to the number of continuing pupils. So far since the beginning of the current school year, 14 pupils interrupted courses including 6 girls and 8 boys.

During the school year 2008-2009, 54 winners of the Standard 6 National Examination were registered. However, the pupils were still faced with long dis-

tances they had to go to reach the nearest secondary schools. As a result, the community felt the need to start a secondary school that could take in finalists from Muvumu primary school. The first intake pupils are now in Form 1 and comprise 42 students. However, as no classrooms were in place, Muvumu secondary school is still using classrooms belonging to the sister primary school.

According to Mr. Elias Bagomwa, the Muvumu village leader, the option of starting a secondary school in Muvumu was taken as a response to the difficulties the pupils faced in traveling to and from distant schools. "We hope the Government, LWF or any other community development actors will help us get the secondary school built," Mr. Bagomwa insisted. We are ready to bring our contribution through community works."

Likewise, as the Muvumu village leader estimates, proximity schools reduce the rate of school dropout particularly for female students while limiting reasons for uneducated parents to interfere with their daughters' education. In fact, though this habit is progressively vanishing, there are parents who still consider girls as domestics and income resource and find no reason to let them pursue education.

In the meantime, LWF is equally supporting the construction of 4 classes for Rugaga primary school near Muvumu. The existence of such infrastructures brings a special meaning to the lives of people in areas like Muvumu that had historically been underprivileged in terms of education facilities.

*"We are ready to bring our contribution through community works."*



*Jean Marie Nahimana, head teacher of Muvumu Primary School rehabilitated by LWF*

# LWF Actions in Picture



*Nyamugari health center upon completion*



*Maternity beds with mosquito nets at Nyamugari health center*



*Potato plantation in Mwiruzi village*



*Irrigation dam in one of swamps developed by LWF*



*Irrigation canal in Muvumu marsh*



*A farmer at work in one of swamps developed by LWF*



*A bull distributed by LWF*

## Working in Associations *(Ctd from p. 1)*

Mishiha communal staff confirmed that Mwiruzi returnees and residents lived in harmony. "LWF made a tremendous contribution in bringing the villagers together and instilling in their minds the feeling of mutual acceptance. We are eyewitnesses to the fact that they live together and harmoniously share tasks in the collective farms and we definitely admire LWF performance," she added.

Marie Kamariza expressed her hopes that LWF extends its intervention to other villages of the commune even those which have fewer returnees and expellees. According to Kamariza, the actions of LWF contributed in improving security. She said cases of robbery and theft have lowered since the villagers were involved in collective farming.

The idea of a harmonious cohabitation among returnees or expellees and the receiving community in Cankuzo is also supported by provincial authorities. The economic adviser for the Governor of

Cankuzo Mr. Célestin Ngendakumana told this newsletter that the administration was happy about the LWF performance on field, especially in the area of peace reinforcement. He said LWF brings an invaluable contribution in bringing communities together through a certain number of initiatives including capacity building trainings for numerous associations engaged in farming activities.

The Adviser reminded that in collaboration with the administration, LWF also regularly organizes workshops on conflict resolution whereby people learn how to peacefully settle problems as land disputes that are common in Burundi.

Mr. Ngendakumana said the administration was also witness to different reconciliation initiatives that include among others the organization of inter-communal games. "We have already made an official request to LWF that it be the focal point NGO in our province, and all this stems from the fact that we highly appreciate



*Celestin Ngendakumana, Economic Advisor of Cankuzo Province*

LWF work," Mr. Ngendakumana noted, adding that there is a situation of close collaboration between the administration and LWF in implementing community empowerment initiatives.

## Defusing Food Insecurity through Seeds Multiplication *(Ctd from p.1)*

There is also an Irish potato farm that stretches on 5 hectares.

Villagers work into associations. *Tugwizumwimbu* (let's boost production) and *Dushirukubute* (let's work hard) are among nearly 120 groups involved in the empowerment project. Seed multiplication initiatives have benefited at least 3,000 beneficiaries. The project reaches the beneficiaries on collective and individual basis. For example, cassava farms are first grown on collective farms and then

cuttings obtained from the seed center distributed to individual households. LWF intervenes in all stages of seed development, from teaching farming techniques, distributing seeds or cuttings for cassava and saplings for banana.

Full ownership of projects being the major focus of LWF interventions, the different associations have the latitude to decide on how to organize their activities, share the returns and assure the sustainability of the projects. For example, according to Gervais

Cishahayo, a member of *Dushirukubute* Group, each member is required to give some contribution to the association's fund that is used for miscellaneous expenses.

Likewise, all members have their part of the yields. However, the harvest is distributed in a manner to avoid wastage as some people are tempted to take much of their harvest to the market. Experience has shown that some people can sell even the seeds that should be reserved for the next season. The farmers were sensitized on the methods to preserve part of their agricultural yields.

As the farmers informed this Newsletter, they share the profits and a quantity equal to that of seeds initially distributed is reserved for collective activities. Most importantly, LWF has planned to build community granaries as a means to curtail possible yield wastage.

In recent years, many factors have contributed in reducing the country's ability to feed its people including climatic irregularities and crop diseases. For example, during previous years, Mwiruzi as well as many parts of the country had done away with cassava production as the traditional varieties were completely destroyed by mosaic infection. The main objective of crop multiplication initiatives is therefore to defuse food insecurity within the areas of intervention through modernized farming techniques and improved productivity.



*Mature maize plantation in Mwiruzi village*



Weeding works in developed swamp of Muvumu

The traditional region of Moso is endowed with significant assets favorable for the agricultural sector which is incontestably the foundation for national economy and for that of households in the country. Moso is a moderately fertile depression. Almost all varieties of crops used in Burundi can be grown, including different varieties of rice.

It occupies almost the whole of the eastern side of Burundi comprising parts of Rutana, Ruyigi and Cankuzo provinces, and is separated on the eastern part from the central plateau by an uninterrupted chain of mountains which are vital catchments for several rivers and streams that flow throughout the plain. Farmers can grow rice both on hills and in swamps and marshes.

From recent years, however, as in several other regions of Burundi, climate conditions have become increasingly erratic and, at times, inhibiting the growth of crops or destroying them before they are mature, including rice cultivated on hills.

It is in such context that LWF supported local populations in developing swamps for rice farming in the Moso region. One swamp was developed in Muvumu colline in the western part of Gisuru commune. It extends on 18 hectares. In fact, the existing marshes and swamps lied idle or were exploited in old-fashioned modes, while villagers were facing recurrent food shortages and some villagers simply had no land in the marshes. The local administration intervened in distributing farming

## Defeating Hunger through Swamp Development

swamp plots to lacking households.

The villagers who own arable lands in Muvumu swamp are confident that they will improve rice production. "Before LWF came, we planted rice on smaller pieces of land and we weren't able to divert water from the stream to the plots. But now, we have no difficulties in watering our farms. You yourself see how much the crops are lavish", says Lucia Kabura, who was weeding her rice plantation.

Mrs. Kabura said a large area of the swamp was not used until LWF helped them build a dam for irrigation. Lucia Kabura says the new technique will allow her to harvest

*"Before LWF came, we planted rice on smaller pieces of land and we weren't able to divert water from the stream to the plots. But now, we have no difficulties in watering our farms."*

enough rice to feed her family of eight.

The development of the swamp is therefore a significant achievement and will help the local population to shift from subsistence to even commercial agriculture and boost household income in Muvumu colline whose population is made up to over 90 percent of returnees.

The colline leader of Muvumu Mr. Elias Bagomwa is grateful to the LWF performance in his area given that the irrigation scheme adds to several other initiatives that changed the lives of the villagers. LWF had previously distributed different varieties of seeds such as banana seedlings (150 households), peanut, Irish potatoes (400 households) and goat (40 households); built houses for 100 vulnerable households and rehabilitated two primary schools.

According to Mr. Bagomwa, the village still faces a number of community development challenges, mainly the lack of safe drinking water.



Elias Bagomwa, Muvumu colline Leader



A section of rice crop in developed swamp of Muvumu

Despite the Government decision to make maternity services free for birth giving mothers, challenges remain that impede the full realization of the policy. Many areas still lack maternity facilities. There are health centers that have no maternity ward and in some cases compelling mothers to travel scores of kilometers to reach the nearest hospital.

Nyamugari village in Cendajuru commune in Cankuzo province was just like those areas a few months ago. A health center was operational since 2008 but lacked maternity ward. The structure could receive only one woman at a time, and there were no special waiting room. After or before delivery, mothers were admitted in the general admissions' rooms like any other patients, a situation that is naturally unsuitable. In cases of emergency, birth giving mothers were taken either to Muyaga at about 15 km or Cendajuru at 9 km through rough roads with risks of miscarriage that may cause disastrous consequences to them.

Currently, a maternity ward built on LWF initiative is already in place with basic equipment. It has seven rooms and mosquito nets for expectant and delivered mothers, a labor room and a duty room. LWF also helped the health center with an incinerator in order to sustain hygiene around the health post.

Mr. Jean Claude Nijimbere, the Nurse-In-Charge, said significant improvements have been achieved since the ward was built as they receive more mothers and offer better service to beneficiaries, "Now mothers are not mingled with ordinary patients. We have enough beds for them



An incinerator at Nyamugari health post

## Maternity Facility Relieves Nyamugari Mothers



*"Our husbands are also relieved because they are the ones who struggle carrying patients and birth giving mothers over long distances."*

and they have somewhere to rest while waiting for or after delivery."

The population in the area is grateful to LWF. "Think about the trouble that a mother can experience when she must move from Nyamugari to Muyaga or Cendajuru or elsewhere in delivery conditions. It is horrific. That is why we thank LWF for the great contribution. Now the odds of miscarriage have been greatly reduced," Jeanine Nijimbere, 22, testifies. She is a mother of one with a pregnancy. When she gave birth for the first time, she did not go to any hospital. She however remembers and witnessed a number of other women being moved to Muyaga or Cendajuru in difficult conditions as there are no buses or any other punctual means of transportation available.

"I am encouraged by the fact that I won't have to go far away for delivery. And so are the rest of the community, women and men alike. Our husbands are also relieved because they are the ones who struggle carrying patients and birth giving mothers over long distances," Mrs. Nijimbere appreciated.

And according to the Nurse-In-Charge of Nyamugari health center, maternity facilities anywhere in the country are much more significant because numbers of mothers

giving birth at health structures have considerably increased following the government's decision to subsidize maternity services.

Nyamugari health center still faces a number of operational challenges. Among them is the lack of sufficient electric power as the existing solar panel cannot generate enough power for the whole health post, counting also the maternity ward.

Nevertheless, the beneficiary population believes the existence of such facility brings a lot of health gains not only for them but also for people from neighboring collines of both Cendajuru and Bweru communes. Nyamugari health center is used by six of the nine LWF supported collines.



Mr. Jean Claude Nijimbere, Nurse-in-charge of Nyamugari health center

## Villagers Happy about the Multipurpose Meaning of Livestock Solidarity Schemes

In early 2008, LWF distributed 6 dairy cows and 1 bull in Rukoyoyo village of Cendajuru commune in order to expand modern livestock and help in the process of a progressive restoration of livestock that was devastated by the war. In addition, Rukoyoyo is one of those areas where almost everybody fled to Tanzania and who, even after repatriation, had very little chances to own a cow.

According to LWF Acting Program Coordinator, Mr. Isidore Ntirampeba, the cows are distributed among the community members through a defined pattern. Every preliminary beneficiary is required to pass the first calf on to the next beneficiary who will on his turn do the same for another household and so on.

All 6 dairy cows that were distributed in 2008 have already reproduced, what means that there are already 6 new beneficiaries. 7 improved cows and 3 bulks were also distributed during Phase 2.

The benefits of the new industry in Rukoyoyo village are many. Traditionally, it is a prestige for a Burundian to own at least one head of cow. It is linked to esteem from the rest of the community. And practically, cows offer many advantages including manure as a natural fertilizer and milk.

Joseph Masabo's family is one of the households who were able receive the



livestock assistance. His wife Virginie Ndoricimpa who was found feeding the cow says her family's livelihoods have significantly improved. The cow produced enough milk for her children. She also hopes that when the number of cows increases, they will even produce milk for sale and therefore procure for themselves revenues that will be used to meet various family needs and goals.

Given that the beneficiaries are also farm-



ers, they expect to produce enough manure that will help them fertilize their arable lands for various crops including maize, beans, and banana. Mrs. Ndoricimpa is also confident that her household is now sure it will be able to take care of the kids and also meet the expenses for their education. In the near future, they plan to build a more decent house and expand their crop farms to maximize income.

The villagers were sensitized about the best ways of cattle keeping. Cows are fed within the compounds and beneficiaries themselves have made it a shared responsibility between the first beneficiary and the next beneficiary. Moreover, regular training sessions are organized by LWF to acquaint the beneficiaries with basic veterinary knowledge and care.

Apart from livestock support, LWF has been using a participatory approach in other areas such as improved housing and women empowerment.

### LWF Program Objectives

The Program has three priority themes that were arrived at through wide consultation with stakeholders who included the focus communities, local leadership, development partners, funding partners and program staff. The themes respond to the challenges identified above as well as those raised by the Country Strategy. The Country Strategy identified the following three strategic objectives:

1. Displaced individuals are accepted and reintegrated into their communities of origin.
2. Communities engaged in the acquisition of sustainable livelihoods.
3. Structural barriers that inhibit effective participation in governance and realization of human rights reduced.

The Program operationalizes these objectives through a single objective, which clarifies the empowerment approach. The Objective is to **empower community to take charge of their own development.**

**ABOUT LWF BURUNDI**

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LWF—Burundi is a field program of the Lutheran World Federation/ Department of World Service (LWF/DWS). LWF/DWS has vast experience in the implementation of emergency response activities in the region, as it has been operating in the neighboring countries of Tanzania, Rwanda and DRC.

Established in 2006, the LWF—Burundi program currently implements the DanChurchAid/DANIDA—funded ‘Program for Peace in Burundi’. This program seeks to:

1. Promote a situation of unity and mutual acceptance between returnees and the receiving communities in the project area;
2. Engage community members in the development of their collines;
3. Improve access to basic social services and contribute to community welfare and integration.

Currently, LWF—Burundi works in Ruyigi and Cankuzo provinces. Implementation is done in close collaboration with the National Council of Churches in Burundi (CNEB) and the Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS) in Tanzania.

**The Merits of Participatory Approach for Development Initiatives**

Community development is an ongoing process. It never stops. That is the reason why LWF counts much on the sustainability of projects it initiates. And this goal cannot be achieved without full involvement of all stakeholders in general and the beneficiaries in particular.

People have to feel responsible for initiatives that are brought in their favor so that they become sustainable and lead to the achievement of intended goals.

The Acting Program Coordinator Mr. Isidore Ntirampeba says in all 9 collines of LWF current intervention, LWF emphasizes participatory approach in all stages: pro-



ject design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

LWF officers, provincial and communal officials, representatives of the beneficiaries and other community development stakeholders come together in defining project goals and outlining the best strategies to achieve intended objectives.

The development and implementation of LWF projects start by a series of discussions which allow for thorough identification of the community’s needs and available resources that will allow the realization of the projects.

Besides, beneficiaries of LWF initiatives have acquired vital insights related to the principles of planning and project management. Farmers have gained modern farming and livestock keeping techniques.

They also learn various ways of gaining income and responsible use of collective and household’s yields.

**Some Burundi Facts**

Burundi age structure. 0-14 years: **46.1%**, 15-64 years: **51.4%**, 65 years and over: **2.5%**. (CIA World Fact Book)

**93%** of the Burundian labour force is involved in agriculture. (CIA World Fact Book)

People not using an improved water source: **29%** (Human Development Report, 2009)

Adult illiteracy rate: **40.7%** (Human Development Report)

