



# NEXT GENERATION KIDS AND INTEGRATION



Save the Children



## PROJECT BACKGROUND

After political conflict erupted in Burundi in early 2015, Burundian refugees, including unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and children with special needs, entered Rwanda. While the majority live in Mahama Camp, a considerable population live in the urban areas of Huye and Kigali and reception centers in Gatore and Nyanza I continue to receive Burundian men, women, and children. The cluster approach to coordinate humanitarian interventions for the protection of children was launched under UNHCR and the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA), where Save the Children (SCI) was identified as the main partner in this sector and these locations. Knowing that urban refugees reside throughout Rwandan cities and suburbs, struggling to make a living on their own and in dire conditions, where children are most affected, there was an urgent need for coordinated child protection efforts. This motivated Save the Children and UNHCR with

to create conditions for their long-term integration into Rwandan communities by implementing the collaborative Next Generation: Kids and Integration project that aims to inspire necessary adaptations for the integration of refugee children into national child protection and welfare systems. This project combines respective expertise in the protection of refugees and in children's rights to provide safety, protection, and healthcare to children on the move in Rwanda. From April 2019 to March 2021, the project interventions were implemented in Nyanza and Gatore refugee reception centers and the cities of Huye and Kigali. The project is made successful with the collaboration of the Ministry of Emergency Management and UNHCR with financial support from Svenska Postkod Lotteriet.

! The **Bugesera Reception Center** is no longer receiving Burundian asylum seekers when the Government of Rwanda and UNHCR agreed to transform it into a Transit Center receiving **African refugees evacuated from Libya** under **Emergency Transit Mechanism** In October 2019.



## UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN IN MUKURA

Three refugee children in Rango Village in Mukura Sector were separated from their adult caregiver after the unidentified refugee woman abruptly departed. The woman leased a house in the community for a few months and after struggling to pay rent, left the children suddenly. The landlady, surprised to learn that the woman had packed her bags and gone without the children, decided to take them in. The children are safe and happy as their new landlady turned foster parent strives to ensure their basic needs are met.

When Save the Children started its interventions in Huye in early 2019 these children were among the first to be reached due to their vulnerable position and continued need to uphold their rights. Their caregiver was trained on positive parenting, child protection in emergencies, psychosocial first aid and child rights. Advocacy through referral pathways was made to stakeholders like UNHCR which later supported this family with financial assistance valued at approximately 350,000 Rwf to help start a small business.

SCI in its effort to protect refugee children continued to support the family with food, school materials, clothes, psychosocial services and advocate for their integration into national child protection and welfare systems. The children are currently in school and seem content in both the host family and community.





## NEGLECTED CHILDREN IN RUHASHYA

In 2019, three young refugee children in Ruhashya Sector found themselves in an unbearable situation caused by domestic conflict between their father and mother who later decided to part ways with each other and their children. Mucyo Isaac 12, Umukundwa Mamy Chelissa 10, and Gisa Frank fled Burundi in 2016 accompanied by their mother, Joseleyne Niyimbona. They met their father, Jean Pierre Nshimiyimana, who had come months earlier to evade threats in Burundi primarily directly at men and earn a living. Misunderstandings began soon after their family reunion in Rwanda when both parents accused each other of unfaithfulness. The couple did not consider the psychological consequences to their children and abandoned them.

Through the community-based child protection system, Save the Children was informed of the situation and stepped in to offer support in the best interest of the children and ensure they are placed with a foster family and have access to education and health services.

SCI has been supporting these children in through case management by providing regular psychosocial services, conducting home visits, and providing direct support like

food, clothes and advocating to local leaders to follow up on their biological parents' whereabouts. Through the support provided by SCI and monitoring visits, the children have regained a sense of hope and believe the future is bright no matter the circumstances.





## HOUSEHOLD WITH 6 CHILDREN IN KIGALI-GIKONDO

Some refugees who live in Kigali have tried to find ways to earn a living. However, the lockdown made it harder particularly now that borders are closed.

In 2015, 4 siblings, Abdoulkarim, 17, Julia, 14, Belkisia, 12, and Briton, 6, fled from Burundi due to political instability. The four children came to Rwanda with their mother, Sonia, and Aunt Salma but were separated when their Aunt Salma went to live in Mahama Camp. The family came together again, but not in happy circumstances as Sonia was slowly losing her fight against breast cancer. Sadly, Sonia passed away while in hospital in November 2020. Salma along with some friends managed to rent a small house and took on the responsibility of taking care of her nieces and nephew while also caring for her own children.

In these tough times with COVID-19, where most families have lost their jobs because of the pandemic, Salma also felt the effects. Salma, a refugee and single parent, struggled to provide for her family's basic needs. Save the Children, with financial support from Svenska Postkod Lotteriet, supported Salma and her family by delivering basic food products and other necessary non-food items. In addition, Save the Children provided psychosocial support to the children and advocated for the children to be relocated to Mahama Camp where they can access and benefit from other services offered in collaboration with MINEMA and UNHCR.





## FAMILY WITH CHILD HEADED HOUSEHOLD

4 siblings, Pamella, Cyntia, Rodrigue, and Annick, live in Tumba Sector. Their lives are challenging because they have to take care of household chores right after school while also fulfilling their academic responsibilities to revise their notes. When they started studying in Rwanda, they struggled to adapt, but now they have adjusted especially after receiving support and material assistance from Save the Children.







Muheto, 51 years old, is a father of 3 including his sister's child. Before 2015, he had a great job in Burundi, now he lives in Rwanda. After settling in Kigali, he began to rebuild their lives by working as a liaison for members of the Burundian business community traveling internationally to purchase merchandise. However, Muheto's clients were stopped from entering Rwanda in March 2020 when the land borders were closed due to COVID-19. He also received support from Save the Children through Next Generation: Kids and Integration.

## LESSONS LEARNT

- The engagement of local leaders (District, Sector, Cell) was fruitful in the integration process of refugee children.
- The presence of SCI in the lives of these refugee children and other vulnerable children have developed a certain level of resilience in them.



Save the Children continues to work with the Government of Rwanda and partners to protect refugee children and to ensure their incorporation into existing child protection and welfare systems for sustainable and holistic solutions.