



**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

Write your Student!



We will be visiting Impact Hope students in March. Students LOVE receiving letters from their sponsor. Please have your letters mailed or emailed to the Impact Hope office by **March 3rd.**

It's a Great Thing To Change a Life

Written By Joan Oksenholt

The following story contains descriptions of violence and hardship. We share student stories to honor the resilience of young refugees and the challenges they've overcome. Your support brings them hope, healing, and a future through Christ-centered education.

“We lived on a small farm in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I was the youngest of ten children. My parents knew that education was important; I studied hard,” Fabrice tells me. “When the grades were posted at school, I had the highest scores in my class. The other students resented this and beat me because I was from a different tribe. I was a Tutsi.” Fabrice’s parents told him that school was important and he must keep going. His teacher tried to protect him, but many students continued to hit him when his back was turned.

“As I was leaving for school one morning, we heard gunshots,”

Fabrice continued. “My parents told us we had to run together to a friend’s house near the forest. As we ran we began to see many dead bodies. Then we ran into a group of rebels who pointed their rifles at us and told us we had to carry the bodies to the garbage dump. They had killed everyone in the small village and there was no one left to bury the dead. I was only nine. I was too little to lift up a body so I tried to drag one.”

Soon Fabrice had to stop to rest. The rebels pointed their rifles at him and shouted that they would shoot him if he didn’t take the body (Cont’d inside)



Fabrice, 11th Grade Student

(Cont'd from front) to the dump. "My mother came to my rescue - she told the rebels she would drag two bodies to help me. The rebels treated us as though we were nothing but machines, just arms and legs taking the bodies to the garbage pit. We had unknowingly run into the area they controlled; now it was our job to clean up the murdered victims for them. The rebels treated human beings like trash. When we had finished, the leader told us we wouldn't be killed; instead, if we came upon more bodies, we would have to hide them in the forest."

It took three days for the family to walk to the Rwandan border, concealing themselves behind bushes or trees whenever they thought rebels were near. They saw more bodies in some areas. "I can't forget that long walk and the horrifying scenes we saw along the way. It was devastating for me," Fabrice says. When the family reached the transit camp, they were hungry but were so traumatized it was hard to eat. The memories of what the rebels forced them to do made the family feel too sick to swallow food. They were still in the transit camp when they received the heartbreaking message that the two oldest sons had been killed. Hoping the violence in the area would stop, they'd stayed at the farm to try to save the cows and other possessions, but the rebels found them. "I cried and cried," Fabrice said. "They were my heroes."

Finally the family was moved to the Kigeme refugee camp. "The camp was crowded but we were safe," Fabrice remembers. "And I could go to school there. I studied hard and scored high on my national exams. **Then people from Impact Hope came and told me that I was chosen to be a student at Gahogo, a Christian boarding school!**"

Fabrice's sponsors are friends of Joan's. He was overwhelmed when she showed him their picture and told him about them. "Please tell my sponsors how grateful I am. They're



Impact Hope supporter, Joan, listens as Fabrice shares his story of courage and hope.

giving me a wonderful education in a school where I have great teachers, textbooks, supplies, and good food. My sponsors don't even know me! It's a great thing to change the life of someone you don't even know. I wish I could tell your children and grandchildren that I'm a part of their family. I know that we will share our lives together for eternity when Jesus comes. My sponsors will have a huge family of people they've helped! Fabrice loves Isaiah 41:10. "This verse transformed me. It makes me strong. God's

"My sponsors don't even know me! It's a great thing to change the life of someone you don't even know. I wish I could tell your children and grandchildren that I'm a part of their family..."

door is always open to me. He will always help. I will lack for nothing because of His love. I want to be a good light for others and have an occupation that allows me to be a leader someday."

Before Joan left Gahogo, Fabrice came back to ask her to thank his Impact Hope sponsors. **"Because of them, I'm no longer haunted by my past. Now I look forward to my future when I will help others as they have helped me. Thank you so much!"**



Lilian's a University Graduate: Thanks to You!

Written By Gad, Education Manager Impact Hope Rwanda

Lilian grew up in Nyabiheke Refugee Camp, a place where dreams can feel impossibly far away. **But thanks to your support through Impact Hope, her life has been transformed.**

When Lilian started high school, she knew it was the first step toward something bigger. With every lesson, she dreamed of what her future could hold. After finishing high school, she didn't stop—she enrolled in Culinary Arts at Integrated Polytechnic College. But her ambitions carried her even further, leading her to earn a Bachelor's degree in Hotel and Tourism Management from the University of Technology and Business Studies.

"It's been quite a journey," Lilian shared, her voice filled with both pride and gratitude. "But it's been worth taking."

"It's been quite a journey, but it's been worth taking."

In November 2024, Lilian stood at her graduation, her face radiating with joy. It was a moment she had worked so hard for, and you were a part of it. The Impact Hope Rwanda team was there, celebrating alongside her. She said, "I owe my achievements to Impact Hope for

believing in me and providing the resources to reach this point."

Lilians's dreams don't end with her degree. She's excited about the future and eager to give back. **"Now I can help my siblings and parents have a better life,"** she said with a smile. **"And this is just the beginning. I'm planning to pursue a Master's in Business Management to make an even greater difference."**

Lilians's story is a beautiful reminder of the power of education—and the power of your generosity. Because of you, Lilian has overcome incredible challenges and is now building a brighter future for herself, her family, and her community.

Thank you for believing in young refugees like Lilian.



Lilian with Wilson, Program Manager IH Rwanda.

Seven

ways you made an impact in 2024

1

Celebrating a Milestone

Impact Hope's first medical graduate, Dr. Jackson!



2

Sponsorship Grows

Over 1,191 sponsored students with high school education, university, vocational training and livelihood.

3

Expanding Reach

150 additional students from refugee camps joined IH programs in 2024.

4

Growing Support

Over 361 new donors joined us this year—thank you!

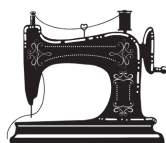
5

Sharing the Story

Launched a 13-episode docuseries sharing refugee stories (Scan the QR Code to watch).



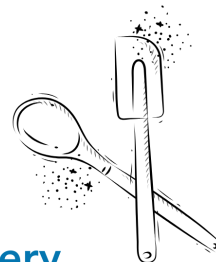
6



Tailoring Center

Together, we fully funded the Kigali Tailoring Center, empowering graduates with skills and employment.

7



New Bakery

Opened a new bakery in Northern Rwanda as a training site for Impact Hope vocational trade interns.

Ways YOU Can Make an Impact

SPONSOR A STUDENT

\$50 monthly provides a safe education at a Christian boarding school and all living essentials.

DONATE

Whether you make a monthly donation or a one time donation, 100% of gifts goes directly to the mission.

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