



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF REFUGEES | August 2021

Philemon: A Story of Hope

"For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things."

Psalms 107:9

"He left his school, his friends, his house, his possessions, and became a refugee in the blink of an eye."

Philemon was 16 years old when he started his eighth grade school day like any other. He didn't know that at ten o'clock that morning his life would change forever. Gunshots firing in the nearby distance startled him and his classmates. The students quickly abandoned their lesson to see what the disturbance was. Rebels were beating citizens and firing guns in the street about 200 meters away.

Philemon, along with his classmates, frantically fled the classroom towards their homes. On the way, Philemon saw his father who was coming to get him. His father took him, his siblings, and his mother to a distant mountain for safety. After three days of waiting, his

father said their only option was to migrate from their home in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to Rwanda for security. They began the three day journey on foot towards Goma city with no water or food. When they arrived at the Rwandan border, the UNHCR assisted them to a temporary camp. Two weeks later, they moved to the Gihembe Refugee Camp, where they have lived for the last seven years.

The transition was extremely difficult for Philemon. He left his school, his friends, his house, his possessions, and became a refugee in the blink of an eye. At the time, the refugee camp offered school up until the ninth grade. *(Continued inside)*



(Left picture) Philemon sharing his story in Kigali with the Impact Hope team in May 2021. (Top picture) Students greet Impact Hope team with a traditional dance in May 2021.



Impact Hope graduates now attending Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA).

(Continued from front cover)
Philemon had to start his eighth grade year over, and switch from the French learning system in the DRC to the English learning system in Rwanda. ADRA Rwanda trained him and the new refugees in English for three months.

After his ninth grade year, Philemon's living conditions became even harsher. Living on 24 cents a day provided by the United Nations, he had no way to travel the nine mile round-trip journey to public school other than on foot. He woke up everyday at 5a.m. to

make it to school on time.

Wrestling with feelings of hopelessness, Philemon did not lose faith in God. He is a determined and persevering young man who dreams big! The launch for his dreams happened when he heard about Impact Hope and was overjoyed for the opportunity to receive education and practical training. Philemon explains, "Impact Hope moved me to a boarding school and paid for the fees. My family no longer had to struggle to pay for me, so you understand that the benefit from Impact Hope went

beyond me. It also reached my family."

Upon graduating high school, he received a scholarship from the Center of Online Evangelism to attend university at Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA). While pursuing his bachelor's degree, he is also running a successful bakery with several other Impact Hope graduates! The business supports them and they use the excess money to support other people in need. Philemon says, "God bless Impact Hope for being my stepping stone to my goals."

Impact Hope Team Visits Students in May 2021!



Students at Giakoni Academy



Student built his own house



Graduate at her tailoring shop



Liz and Aurea



Lots of smiles



Sabbath with Giakoni students



Mindy with culinary students



Sponsorship pictures!

From Impact Hope to Running a Successful Food Market



By Alyssa Johnston

Eric has only known life as a refugee. His family fled the DRC in 1996, when he was only one year old. He attended school up until his ninth grade year. At the time, the camp only provided education that far. However, Eric and a group of other young people were determined to change their situation through education. They had to do something. They decided to build a small room of sticks and mud, and they called it the "Hope School". They asked anyone in the camp who had an education before becoming a refugee and asked them to teach high school classes. Maybe someone could speak English, or someone knew algebra or physics. Eric and his friends finally had hope in something! Until 2015, when their hope crashed. The Rwandan government shut the Hope School down because it wasn't "accredited". The solution? Refugees can attend Rwandan high schools, a nine mile

round-trip. Eric was back to feeling stuck and hopeless, but there was hope around the corner.

Hans and Mindy Thygeson, co-founders of Impact Hope, heard the story of Hope School and decided to do something about it. Eric became one of Impact Hope's first students to attend an Adventist boarding academy in Rwanda. He recalls, "After being selected, I became so hopeful!" Eric went on to graduate high school and IPRC (a vocational training program). With the vocational training skills he learned, he is now the proud owner of a thriving food market in Kiziba. He sells all sorts of supplies such as sugar, salt, wheat, porridge, millet, and lotion. Your generosity supports students, like Eric, who become successful entrepreneurs! Thank you!

Your generosity supports students, like Eric, who become successful entrepreneurs! Thank you!

Staff Spotlight

She fled the DRC,
She worked hard for her education,
Now, she helps Impact Hope students succeed!



Meet our Country Director, Judith! Like our students, Judith was born and raised in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 1994, when she was 12 years old, her family migrated to Rwanda due to insecurities and civil war taking place in her home country. Judith knows what it is like to uproot and struggle getting an education because of school fees and many other challenges. Yet, she persevered and earned her bachelor's degree in Business Management. Judith has the belief that no matter where someone is born, no matter

where they live, they should be able to lead a thriving and successful life. Her belief is fueled by her own experience, with the support of others, she overcame her struggles and is living a rewarding life. In January of 2021, Judith joined Impact Hope, where she is focusing her efforts on the education of young refugees and working to create transformational change. In her spare time, Judith enjoys reading Christian books, listening and encouraging youth, spending time with her husband, and chasing their three young daughters.

REACH: New Sponsorship/ Donor Software

We are now using REACH, an online platform to manage our sponsorship program, which holds many benefits for you. With the new system, you will be able to:

- Edit your contact and payment information
- Review your donations
- Print your tax receipt documentation
- Manage your sponsorships and contributions
- View any students in need of sponsorship in real time



If you have not signed into your REACH account yet, check the email we sent on how to do so or use this QR code. **Use your primary email address given to Impact Hope, leave the password blank, hit submit, and an email with a link to click to sign up for your own account and password will be sent.** For any questions, you can call us at: (503) 673-3905.

Three Ways You Can Help

PRAY

Support Impact Hope as a Prayer Partner by signing up at:
www.Impact-Hope.org/prayer-partners

SHARE

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram, sign up for our email updates, or invite us to speak at your church or event.

GIVE

Sponsor a student, support our operations, or donate while you shop. Visit www.impact-hope.org.

