



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF REFUGEES | FEBRUARY 2022

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You are Sending Out the Next Generation of Doctor's

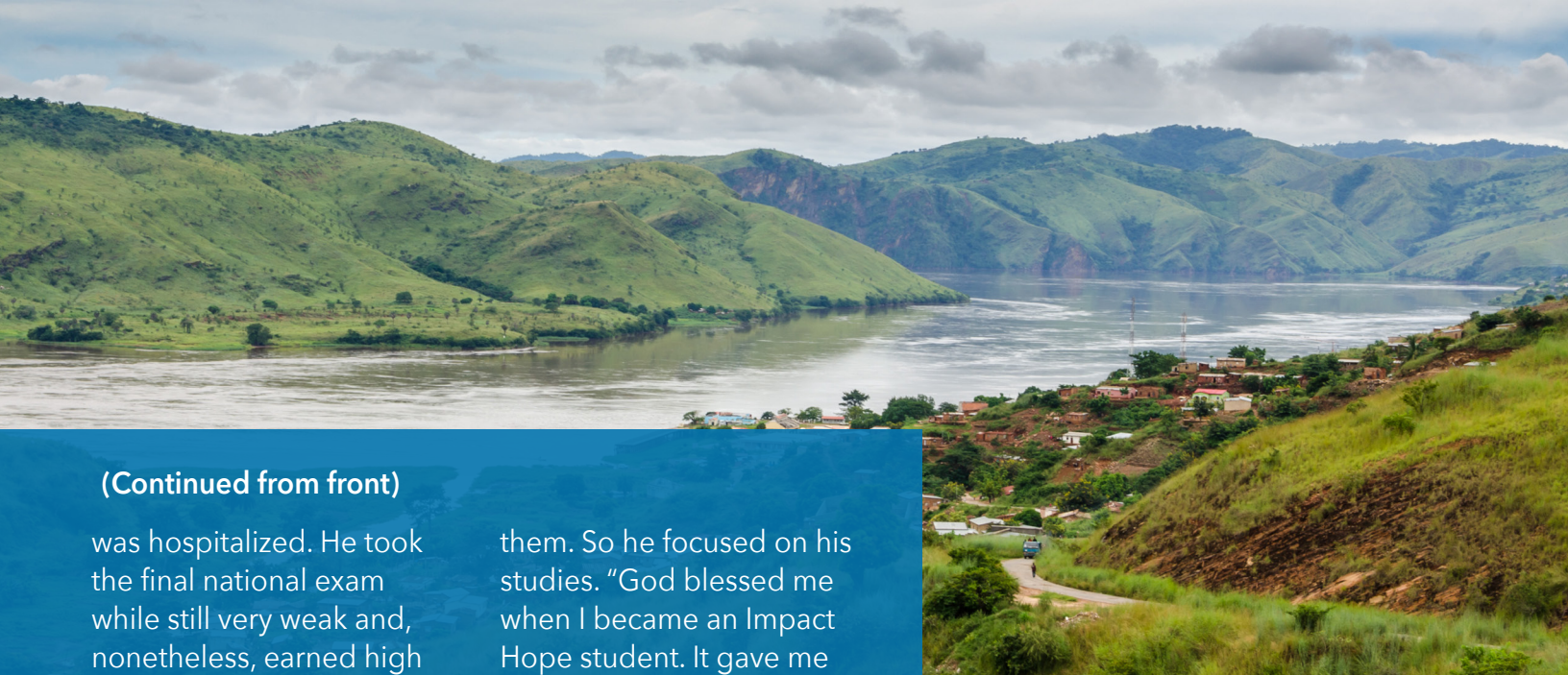
By Joan Oksenholt

Born in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it was on one of the beautiful green mountains that Jackson first experienced terror. A boy of 13, he was herding the family cattle up to their grazing area. The cattle stopped moving and Jackson walked up to see why. Suddenly he saw a ray of sun glinting on a machete and ran for his life. "God sent His angels to protect me from the rebel who wanted to kill me," he says. "It was God who guided my feet as I jumped across deep gullies and flew down the mountain to safety." A few months later the family and their friends fled in a car with 20 people stacked three deep. There was no time to stop; the rebels were after them. It took fifteen hours to reach the

border. In Congo, they had a beautiful home, plentiful food, and many cattle and crops. They were forced to leave everything to begin their lives as refugees in Rwanda. Jackson knew he had to excel in school. Although he had been the top student in DRC, classes in the camp were taught in English, a language he didn't know. He felt hopeless and prayed for God to give him enough strength to study for hours each day even when he was hungry. He learned English as he studied, completing two years of school in one year. He then excelled in his first national exams and was chosen to be an Impact Hope student. Near the end of his senior year, Jackson had a severe case of Malaria and (Continued inside)



Impact Hope graduates, Jackson (right) and Evariste (left), in their third year of medical university.



(Continued from front)

was hospitalized. He took the final national exam while still very weak and, nonetheless, earned high scores. He says, "Impact Hope rescued me from a very dark place and became the working hand of the Lord in my life."

Evariste was born in the camp. Although his parents told him about the life of plenty they had in Congo before the rebels persecuted them, he grew up knowing only a life of hardship and hunger in the camp. Suffering was routine for everyone there. When he was older he realized that his family identity was lost entirely when they had to flee their country. They now were exiles far from home. The word 'refugee' was a label that stigmatized them all. Living life in refugee camps is a shaming experience for many, including Evariste, and it was very hard for him to have a sense of his own self-worth. His parents told their children that there was nothing but education and prayer that could help

them. So he focused on his studies. "God blessed me when I became an Impact Hope student. It gave me the courage to continue studying diligently. When I had high scores on my senior exam, IH made sure I had a sponsor so I could go to medical school. Now I know that being a refugee doesn't define my future or who I am. God has a plan." Evariste scored perfect scores in every section of his exams. "I want to give hope to my patients. 'I will be a voice for those who are voiceless in the camps,' he says. "And I will give hope to my patients." Evariste and Jackson roomed together, studied together, and prayed together in medical school. Now in their third year, they begin their clinical rotations at different hospitals. They say, "We want to emit God's divine light by healing the diseases that we saw in our terrible childhoods. Because of Impact Hope we now have bright futures that are better than anything we dreamed!"

"Impact Hope rescued me from a dark place and became the working hand of the Lord in my life."



Evariste in his lab coat at his medical university in Rwanda.



Joan, Impact Hope sponsor, with Evariste (left) and Jackson (right).

A Passion for Service



By Trenton Wilkens

I am a student missionary from Southern Adventist University. I have been serving in Rwanda for the past four months and will be here until May 2022. Before Rwanda, I was attending SAU as a Biology major on the Premed track.

Towards the end of the second semester of last year, I really wanted to do something that was not focused on me or my own personal success. I have always felt that to be in service of others is something beyond special and powerful if my own Savior spent most of His time serving others, rather than just preaching. I have also had family and friends go out as student missionaries, and hearing their stories moved me to attempt to go and serve.

Even though Rwanda was not my first choice initially, I trusted that God would open and close doors for me to get to where I needed to be. Even with the uncertainty of Covid, having a little over a month to raise over four thousand dollars, and getting the necessary paperwork for visas I made it to Rwanda.

I am now teaching Biology and English for Senior 1 at Gahogo Adventist University in the district of Muhanga. This experience has been a true blessing. From being able to converse in the classroom to playing volleyball and basketball, I have been able

to come to know and appreciate the authenticity the students here have about their goals in life.

Through interacting with the Impact Hope students I feel that I have learned more from them than they from me. They show this infectious love for life, kids who have gone through things that I can only imagine. But instead of being held down by what they have experienced, they pursue education and lofty goals in order to have a successful and meaningful life. Not just for themselves, but for their family and other refugees as well. This spirit can be seen throughout Rwanda with the progress that it has made in twenty years. A spirit of humbleness and generosity. By watching the students and everyone around me work to excel in their efforts, it pushes me to be exponentially more diligent in my work in order to support the students and staff at Gahogo Adventist Academy.

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Sponsorship Changed Jimmy's Life

22 Sponsorships Needed! Between the months of February and March, we have a goal of finding twenty-two sponsorships. Will you join us by sharing with your friends and families how \$50 a month can make a life-changing difference in the life of a young refugee, like Jimmy?

Meet Impact Hope Student Jimmy

Hi, my name is Jimmy. I am an Impact Hope Student at Gahogo Adventist Academy. I am in Senior 6 [high school senior].

What was it like moving from the DRC to the refugee camp?

When I fled, people were running. We ran under helicopters that were shooting above us, and there were so many bombs around. It was like hell, and if I remember correctly, I had lost my older brother that same year. My father was shot in the foot and unable to run. He told me to keep running, and I had to leave him behind. I became separated from my family. It was bad. I was in a crowd of people and so many of them were crying and bleeding. It was a wave of tears and blood. A memory that I have is that I was thinking that there would be no tomorrow, and I was asking God, "If I live today, I want to work for you forever." And now I am thanking the Lord that he has helped me. I remember I had no hope of a tomorrow. This was a terrible time because I had no one with me.



What did you do with your first days in the refugee camp?

The day I arrived was full of confusion. I had no plans of what to do because I was alone. No father, no mother, and not even my brothers. When I first arrived in Rwanda, I had not eaten in four days. I only had a place to sleep provided by the government of Rwanda. I remember during that week, I went to the Red Cross office in the camp to try to find my family. Miraculously, I found my younger brother, Wilson. It was difficult to find food, but I would go to the bus station and help passengers carry their bags in order to get money to buy food.

How did you feel when you became sponsored through Impact Hope?

When I first learned I was sponsored, I was very happy. That day is among the happiest days that I have ever had in my life. When I came to the camp, I had no hope, but now I am full of hope for a better tomorrow. It felt so good to hear that someone was going to help me. I am full of gratitude for my sponsor as well as Impact Hope and all the sponsors.



Read Jimmy's Full Interview: Scan the QR code or visit www.Impact-Hope.org/the-happiest-day-of-my-life

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.

