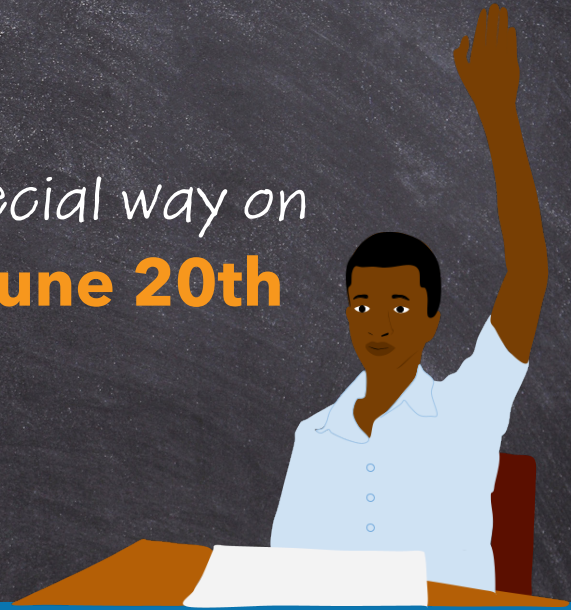




Honoring refugees in a special way on **World Refugee Day, June 20th**



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF REFUGEES | JUNE 2022

Rebels are Not Stronger than God

Written By Rafiki, Impact Hope University Graduate



Muraho (Hello)! My name is Rafiki. I recently graduated university through Impact Hope's sponsorship. I now work for The Center of Online Evangelism. I want to say thank you to everyone who supports Impact Hope. I can't begin to express how you have changed my life circumstances. I hope to inspire you through sharing my story of God rescuing me. He will help you too!

There is a saying, "In the time of peace, young people bury their parents, but in the time of war, parents bury their children." God rescued me from this latter fate.

I was the only boy who remained in my neighborhood. Other boys either joined the army or hid under the bed. My mother used to tell me not to leave the house.

I grew tired of staying inside. I wanted to take care of the potatoes that I was cultivating. The age of 14 was the time to build your own life, have your own house, or at least one cow. That is when you will be called a man.

The day was like any other. The sun rose on the top of Rukara mountain. Girls were playing in our compound, and cows were eating grass in the distance. With my mother out of sight, I walked out the door with my hoe on my shoulders.

On my way, I noticed a group of rebels walking. I used to run whenever I saw them, but now there was nowhere to escape. Their eyes were burning, and I started sweating. They were with their wives and children. I saw child soldiers carrying guns bigger than them. The group seemed like they had not slept for weeks.

Two soldiers demanded that I carry their mattresses. I put them on my head and followed. The only thing on my mind was if I would return home. I had seen many ugly faces of rebels, but these were uglier.

Along the way to my unknown destination, several kid soldiers put bullets the size of corn kernels in my pockets. The weight made my trousers fall. Two older soldiers came to me and asked me what was in my pockets. They shouted, "He has bullets!" (Continued inside)



“Your sponsorship opened the door to freedom. I am a university graduate with a job in digital marketing. I hope to do for someone else as you have done for me.

I felt the world was moving very fast. The soldiers beat me with their guns on my chest and back. The major of the military rank towered over me. He shot his gun in the sky, and all the beating stopped.

“Who do you work for? Where is the gun of the bullets?” demanded the major. I started trembling as I replied, “I don’t know what you are talking about.” The major irritably questioned me, “You don’t know? Who sent you?” With tears and sweat dripping down my face I answered, “No one sent me and I don’t know where the bullets came from, but someone put them in my pockets.” Then some of the soldiers shouted, “Let’s shoot him here if he is not saying anything!”

I closed my eyes and waited for the gunshot. The words of my mother were swirling in my mind. I was not going to get the opportunity to ask her forgiveness. Out of the blue, one soldier said, “Let’s kill him on the top of the mountain, out of the sight of our children and his people. The people here are not friendly to us. If we kill one of their people, they will call the other group of rebels and attack us.” My community was known for taking care of each other. The custom was “save the brother or die trying.”

The major ordered soldiers to tie my hands and arms behind my back. They continued beating me and treating me like an animal. As we hiked up the mountain, I begged God to save me. Psalms 23 flooded my mind, “Even though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” My mother used to say, “God can save and answer each honest prayer, but don’t ask Him how and when.” This gave me faith that God could save me, although it seemed impossible.

With each step closer to the top of the mountain,

my prayers grew louder in my heart. It was around 10 pm. I thought it was the last sunset I would ever see. Unexpectedly, it started to rain. At the top of the mountain, there was a protestant church. The officer ordered us to go to take shelter there.

The major’s wife looked at me with pity in her eyes as I sat in the corner of the church. I was crying from the pain of my arms that were still tied. Without saying anything, she ran to her husband.

My mother used to say, “God can save and answer each honest prayer, but don’t ask Him how and when.”

The major’s wife said to two young soldiers, “You are the one who put the bullets in this kid’s pockets. I saw you.” The two soldiers denied it. Nevertheless, the officer trusted his wife and started beating those two soldiers. After six strikes, the young soldiers admitted that they put the bullets in my pockets.

The officer said I was free to go back home. After traveling through the forest all night, I reached home in the morning. No one could believe what they saw because none taken by those rebels survived. When I saw my mother and the whole family, I wept loudly and thanked God.

My experience taught me that there is no situation that God cannot rescue you or me from. God provided a way out of the Congo for my family and He provided a way out of the refugee camp through Impact Hope. Your sponsorship opened the door to freedom. I am a university graduate with a job in digital marketing. I hope to do for someone else as you have done for me. Thank you.



2,000 and Beyond!

Since 2015, YOU have sent over 2,000 refugee youth to Adventist boarding school's in Rwanda. Rafiki's story reminds us that each Impact Hope student has their own unique story of survival.

Mindy and Hans Thygeson started Impact Hope because they saw an opportunity for these bright young people. Seven years later, the mission remains the same: to empower refugees through education and life-skills training.

Thank you for joining the Impact Hope family. For seeing these young people who live across the world and caring about them. Your support is changing lives!

Student Notes to You!

There is no illiterate doctor. There is no illiterate pilot. There is no illiterate inspiring writer. This is why our future is in education.

Gentile, Impact Hope Student

Your unconditional love and compassion has made it possible for me to behold the future, with sure hope for victory. You did not know me, but you chose me. You chose to love me. The education I am receiving has filled me with joy; not just to spend a few days here on earth but to live a life that is heaven-bound. I will spread this great love to the rest of humanity in my sphere of influence.

Mugabo, Impact Hope Student

My history had a period of darkness; a time of war and migration. The plight of a refugee, the time of hope lost in life. This was a burden of sorrow that I carried on my head. But ever since you have adopted me into Impact Hope, you have shown and given love that has been like the morning sunshine. The Light chased away the darkness in my heart.

Obed, Impact Hope Student



DOUBLE Your Impact this month!

In honor of World Refugee Day on June 20, a generous donor has kindly pledged to double your gifts! To sponsor a student or make a donation, call (503) 673-3905 or visit www.Impact-Hope.org.

SPONSOR A STUDENT

\$50 a month goes to providing a safe education at a Christian boarding school, medical coverage, and all living essentials.

DONATE

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

SHARE THE STORY

Invite your community to get involved. Give a church presentation, host a dinner party, or send out an email sharing why you support these young refugees!

Director's Message

I recently returned from visiting Impact Hope students in May. Each visit, I come back reaffirmed that education is the key to freedom.

At Impact Hope, we SEE the "forgotten refugees", those that still live in deplorable, crowded camps- for over 25 years. They have birthed and raised children in small mud houses. Many of these children are now our students that YOU support today. Other students remember the conflict of the Congo that drove their families to flee for safety.

Education provides our refugee students with essential skills and knowledge, and enables them to pursue a better future for themselves, and their families. We are excited to see students, like Rafiki and many others, graduate and begin their own careers.

In honor of World Refugee Day, I am asking you to consider supporting another refugee youth to a path of freedom. If you have not joined our sponsorship program, would you prayerfully consider joining today and making all the difference in one person's life?

With overwhelming gratitude,

Liz Thomsen
Director of Impact Hope

