



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF REFUGEES | May 2021

You Gave Hope to Irumva!

"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you. I've called your name. You're mine. When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you. When you're in rough waters, you will not go down. When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end— Because I am God, your personal God, The Holy of Israel, your Savior."

Isaiah 43:2-3, MSG



Irumva, 20 years old, has only known life as a refugee. He lives in the Kiziba camp, one of the four Congolese refugee camps in Rwanda. His family fled their home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 1996 where the ethnic conflict is still to this day rampant.

Irumva grew up in a small house with a metal roof, water from rainfall would often leak through. At the age of seven, Irumva started primary (elementary) school in the camp. He often did not eat breakfast before school because he is one of seven in his family, and the 24 cents a day provided by the United Nations was hardly enough to sustain them. Learning on an empty

stomach felt nearly impossible to him. He begged his mother for shoes to walk to school too, even though he already knew the answer. Irumva is used to struggle. His patience carried him through his childhood years, but he occasionally asked his parents why all this happened to them, always to be retold the story of their exile.

A boy that was eager to learn, he successfully completed his 9th grade year in 2017. At that time, Kiziba camp only went to the 9th grade. Irumva felt overcome with sadness. He had no vision for his life, yet he continued to ask God to give him hope. In 2019, God answered his prayer when he (Continued on inside)

(Left picture) Irumva learned tailoring during the 2019 vocational training program at Rwankeri Adventist Academy.



"Umuganda", a day of community cleanup.



(Continued from front) was accepted to continue his highschool education at the Rwankeri Adventist Academy through Impact Hope. He is now in his junior year and loves to study math, computer science and economics. Irumva, well acquainted with the hardship that comes with being a refugee, is irrepressibly optimistic for a better life. He says all these troubles teach him a lesson of being on this earth. He believes that working hard and having a goal equals success. Irumva is grateful to be sponsored through Impact Hope because he knows this opportunity will lead him to create a successful life.

By Alyssa Johnston

Students Participate in "Umuganda"

I landed in the Kigali Airport late at night, excited to travel to Rwankeri Adventist Academy the following day, where some of our Impact Hope students attend school. As I exited the airport into the Rwandan night, I was met by a humid breeze. The city was bustling with activity and people were crowding the streets. To my surprise, I woke up the next morning to quite the opposite. It was quiet, no vehicles were on the roads, the shops were closed, and people were quietly at work sweeping the streets and picking up trash.

Aurea, Impact Hope's field director, explained, "Umuganda happens on a single morning

each month, when each and every neighborhood in the country gets together to volunteer and take on community improvement projects. When the work is finished, a meeting immediately follows to discuss news, challenges, and build a sense of community."

Umuganda enhances interaction between refugee and host communities through joint activities. Impact Hope students participate in the monthly umuganda in the camps and at the academies. This is one of the important ways Rwanda has continued its recovery after the genocide.



Land around Kiziba refugee camp

Your Impact Goes Beyond Students! Maureen's Story

By Joan Oksenholt

Persecuted by the Mai Mai*. Hounded from place to place. Shunned by neighbors who once were their friends. This is Maureen's story.

Her family had a peaceful life in Congo, plenty to eat, family, neighbors. Life changed due to the Mai Mai and the war they raged upon the innocent. They hoped "the bad treatment" would stop. Then family members were murdered. And their neighbors, influenced by the Interahamwe, turned against them. Eventually they reached a camp but the Interahamwe came and killed many in a place they thought was safe. UNHCR assisted them to safety in Gihembe camp. Maureen says, "We had freedom and security again. Although we

could only eat once a day, we had peace. No one was chasing us. Life began to have color again."

Maureen came to say thank you. Her daughter leaves Sunday to school in Gakoni. Maureen says softly, "The students supported by Impact Hope help our entire community. They are all our children. Thank you, Impact Hope, for loving our children. And for loving us."

**The term Mai Mai refers to any kind of community-based militia group active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that is formed to defend local territory against other armed groups.*



"Thank you, Impact Hope,
for loving our children.
And for loving us."

Maureen, mother of Impact Hope student

Staff Spotlight

Meet Liz Thomsen! Liz is our Program Director, leading our team in the US and Rwanda-from directing team meetings, planning and organizing workflow, trips, budgets, and events. Liz and her family live in Idaho; life has brought them all around this great land of ours and beyond its

borders. Liz enjoys traveling, helping people, the great outdoors, international cuisine, and creating adventures with family & friends.



Liz with her sponsored student!

Thank You for Your Support!

Introducing Something New!

It's spring, and we're excited to announce something fresh and new at Impact Hope! Beginning in May, we will be utilizing a new online tool to manage our sponsorship program, which holds many benefits for you, our valued supporter.

With the new system, you will be able to edit your contact and payment information, review your donations, print your tax receipt documentation, and manage your sponsorships and contributions. Additionally, you will also be able to view any students in need of sponsorship in real time.

We are thrilled to be able to serve you with this new donor portal, and will update you on how to access your account when the transition is complete. Watch your mailbox and inbox for more information in the coming weeks.

Student Words to You



“You have really helped me and I hope I will grow and can help others too.” Uwera, Impact Hope graduate

“I'm no longer hopeless. I'm no longer happy-less. Now I have direction through you. May God bless you. I'll achieve my goals through you.” Patrick, Impact Hope student

Donor Spotlight



Meet our donor Darci from Keenesburg, Colorado! She says, “I wanted to sponsor a student through an Adventist organization and I love the idea of teaching a person to fish rather than just giving money. Impact Hope is doing just that.” Darci is generously donating 20 percent of her profits from her online business, Defeating Dyslexia with Darci, to charities and has chosen Impact Hope as one of them.

Thank you for your kind support, Darci. And thank you for all you do to help others succeed!

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/give.

