



Belgium

partner in development

Newsletter of the Belgian Cooperation in and with Rwanda Impact and realizations - July 2021



Electricity access for all p.5



Dear readers,

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2021, with the usual focus on the cooperation of Belgium with Rwanda, which is implemented in the framework of our official country program and also by numerous NGO-led initiatives. As I will soon be leaving Rwanda upon completion of my assignment, this Newsletter also offers me the

occasion, while bidding farewell, to express my deep gratitude for your continuous support.

During my four-year term in Rwanda, I have seen the positive impact of our partnership with Rwanda. This is why we choose to focus this newsletter on the impact and realizations of our development projects, while giving a voice to the beneficiaries.

In the first part, we will focus on our bilateral cooperation, which is implemented by Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency. Six Enabel projects, three from our current program and three from our previous program, will talk about the impact of their project in different sectors (Health, Urbanisation, Agriculture and Energy).

In the second part several NGO's, funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation, will take the floor. Each project and program has its own impact on the lives of many Rwandans. Through some short testimonies, we are exposing the positive effect of each one of them in their own sector: education, health, agriculture, culture, social protection,...

I hope you will enjoy this newsletter: comments and suggestions are most welcome!

Wishing you all the very best.

Benoît Ryelandt, Ambassador

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Baramé: Towards a long and fulfilling life across generations

Baramé means « long life » in Kinyarwanda. Through Baramé project, Enabel aims to ensure a long and fulfilling life across generations. Started in July 2019, this project contributes to improve maternal, neonatal, child, adolescents, sexual and reproductive health among 7 districts of Rwanda namely Gakenke and Rulindo in the Northern Province, Karongi, Nyamasheke and Rusizi in the Western Province, Gisagara in the Southern Province and Nyarugenge in the City of Kigali.

Baramé project, together with Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) – Ministry of Health seeks to (i) improve the **quality and the use** of maternal, neonatal, child, adolescent sexual and reproductive **health services**; (ii) develop a comprehensive model focusing on **sexual and gender-based violence, teen-age pregnancies and drug & substance abuse**; and, (iii) **empower the community** for its self-reliance (knowledge, attitudes, practices) regarding to their sexual and reproductive health.

Many activities regarding the objectives have been implemented last year and some of them are presented below.

Contributing to improve the Rwanda health services delivery



Baramé contributes to reduce maternal, neonatal and child morbidity and mortality rate in the supported districts by improving the management of obstetrical and neonatal complications: early detection/referral, standard quality management of case without delay and with right treatment and equipment at the right place.

During the first year of implementation, the Baramé project has realized an impressive progress in the construction and renovation of health infrastructures with, among others, the construction of a new maternity for Marembo health center in Rulindo District (see picture).

In terms of equipment, ultrasounds are provided to health facilities and Isange One Stop Centers and this is accompanied by training the staff. The providers improved the follow-up of pregnant women, could verify the good position of the Intra Uterine Device and managed adequately cases of victims of gender-based violence.

A trained nurse said: *“Since we received ultrasound we can detect pregnancy complications and take appropriate actions, including referral to hospital or we can exclude complications avoiding unnecessary transfers. On the other hand, our clients/mothers are happy to receive ultrasound services without incurring any financial burden like transport costs to hospital”.*

Many other activities are related to a mentorship program at all levels regarding capacities of hospital staff to manage Emergency Obstetric and neonatal care are ongoing as well as activities related to the supply chain of essential “life-saving” drugs.



Contributing to reduce sexual and gender-based violence, teen-age pregnancies and drug & substance abuse

Baramé is developing strategies targeting adolescents to encourage them to adopt a positive attitude with their general health and with their reproductive health in order to reduce the incidence of STIs, the prevalence of HIV and unwanted pregnancy and the use of drugs.

Regarding (S)GBV, Baramé provides active support to improve the comprehensive management of the victims of (sexual) violence at Isange One Stop Centers and at health centers. At community level, prevention, awareness, and reintegration of the victims are in the pipeline.

Contributing to empower the community

Baramé is also developing strategies and partnerships so that the community has access to accurate and readable information to make informed decisions for their own health.

Urban Economic Development initiative (UEDi): Investing in infrastructure quick wins to ensure an effective economic development of Secondary Cities

In Musanze District, the Agakiriro handicraft center has reached 70% of its completion and will soon welcome entrepreneurs from various productive chains to work together in cooperatives: carpenters, ironworkers, plumbers, furniture producers, tailors and others will have the opportunity to share not only storage, warehouse, showroom, equipment, but also financial and administrative support. At the same time, the project for the old handicraft center rehabilitation is moving to create the new youth center with its FabLab and incubation center for young entrepreneurs.

In Rwamagana and Rubavu, the construction of tarmac roads and drainage around Agakiriro and newly achieved Mbugangari handicraft centers are already over half constructed. These infrastructures will upgrade the cities, and both increase the value of their center and the productivity of local workers, as mentioned by direct benefitting citizens:

“The road will ease my work, especially during the rainy seasons, when I am not be able to pass to the other area to look for goods”, Kubwimana Epiphanie, fruits local seller, Rwamagana.

“The road is of great importance because transport is now easy and fast. Also, during the rainy season, it was difficult for me to work because the road was very muddy”, Eric Habiyaambere, bicyclist, Rwamagana.



Dual learning apprenticeship in construction trades to reinforce workers skills and MiR materials use

The first 144 trainees enrolled in a cooperative modern double training programme in masonry, plumbing, welding electricity and carpentry have already benefitted from a three-months Technical and Vocation Educational Training (TVET) in Ecole Scientifique et Technique Busogo, Saint Martin Gisenyi and Saint Kizito Musha schools. After having acquired relevant theoretical and developed basic practical skills, students have now joined construction workplaces companies across Rwanda where they are supported by competent technicians to enhance their hands-on skills and workplace attitudes. Motivated and courageous, apprentices are learning numerous practical skills and some of them are already considered by the company's trainers as workers.

“I am grateful to have such chance of being trained through the dual learning program, I trust I am no longer a burden to my family. Skills I got here will help me to build my future and my parents are happy to see me becoming independent. Many thanks to my school as well as in-company trainers.” Jean Paul Nsabimana, 24 years old, Nyagatare District.

Tech Access Forum international event to share construction best practices and scale up Rwandan companies' productivity

In order to boost Rwanda's construction sector, and through the strengthening of Made in Rwanda clay and stone value chains, Enabel will support the National Industrial Research Agency (NIRDA) with the holding of the Access to Technology Forum, taking place the 6th and 7th of July 2021 at the Kigali Convention Center. All products manufacturers, technologies sellers and processors, as well as sector contributors and regulators will meet during this event especially designed for Rwandan companies to acquire the necessary machinery and technology. The international Tech Access Forum will gather Public sector, Private Sector, Development Partners and Universities interested in the area of sustainable urbanization. More information and registration at <https://www.access-for-impact-events.info/>

Partnership to reform and transform the poultry, pork and animal feed value chains

PRISM is the Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Small Livestock Markets. The Rwandan Government through the Rwanda Agriculture Board (RAB) and the Belgian development agency (Enabel) are implementing PRISM, a multi-partner project (2019 - 2024) which builds on the achievements of the past bilateral cooperation in the agriculture sector.

Funded by the Belgian Cooperation, Enabel's PRISM aim is to contribute to the reforms and transformation of the Pork, Poultry and Animal Feed value chains in Rwanda, with emphasis on commercialization of poultry & pig value chains and strengthen the capacities of agricultural cooperatives across the prioritized 10 Districts, namely Rwamagana and Bugesera in Eastern Province, Muhanga, Gisagara and Nyamagabe in Southern Province, Gicumbi, Rulindo and Musanze in Northern Province, Rubavu and Rusizi in Western Province.

Farmer Field School (FFS) for improved husbandry practices and Farm Business School

A majority of farmers have been venturing into pig and poultry farming without enough knowledge on husbandry, costs and profitability of the business. Such a technical capacity gap limited improved poultry and pig productivity. In this light, the project has extended the Livestock Farmer Field School (L-FFS) for improved husbandry practices and Farm Business School (FBS) concept for entrepreneurial competencies of poultry and pig producers. Improved production and entrepreneurial skills together with innovations will catalyse a successful market-driven poultry and pig farming business.

Livestock Farmer Field School efforts have so far reached 213 farmer facilitators, who formed 426 groups to train their fellow farmers in return. In partnership with RAB, Enabel provided 62, 860 chicks and 200 pigs distributed in farmer field schools for demonstration.

The project also facilitated organized smallholder farmers to be linked to market systems for procuring inputs and selling maize and soya beans products. In this regard, 2,022 farmers were trained through Farmer Field Schools to become commercial soya beans and maize producers.



Ignacienne Mukakayiranga, 49, mother of 3, is one of the trainees. Farmers in her region have been experiencing difficulties in growing soya beans due to the lack of knowledge. *“As a result of this training, I am confident to produce more for the market and to increase my income and animal feed supply. I am expecting to apply the gained skills to increase my production at least to produce a total of 3 tons of maize and soya beans per year. To develop a sustainable production of maize and soya beans for the market, I will form and train a group of at least 25 farmer producers in my village”* she said.

“I was selected in my village to be a Farmer Field School facilitator. I appreciated the project for the skills I learned from the past months with RAB, I was trained on farm preparation, selecting appropriate seeds and fertilizer, farm information analysis, harvesting technologies, ... these skills will help me to increase the quantity and quality of produced maize and soya beans. Because of the training, The yield of maize had been increased from 3 to 6 tons per hectare in a cooperative where I have a membership due to application of gained skills. At the completion of this training, I will form 2 farmer groups that will be composed of 40 soya beans and maize producers.” Ndayisaba Eric, 43, professional farmer.

Engaged local leaders for sustainability of locally produced animal feed mechanism

Muhirwa Shaban, 45, is a Village leader in Umukamba cell, Ngoma District: *“I learnt that Farmer Field Schools project will improve the livelihood of small stock farmers through RAB in partnership with Enabel. Since then, I provided my contribution and participated in the selection processes of farmer field school facilitators in my village. So far, the project has created local opportunities, farmers are organized into groups and cooperatives, and they are able to produce quality animal feed locally and are linked to the market. Results from the project are now visible, for example members of organized group farmers are now paying their health insurance on time. I am sure the project will improve livelihoods of farmers as well as maintain food security at household level and with increasing and availability of locally made animal feed.”*

Livestock Farmer Field School, a “learning by doing” approach, has been serving increased locally produced volume of maize and soya beans to be supplied to Animal feed Companies and other smallholder farmers. In this regard, Enabel has partnered with Agriterro and the Rwanda Agriculture Board to enable farmers to have access to improved marketing system by engaging agricultural cooperatives into a marketing system.

Electricity access for all: Belgium's contribution

Given that electricity is essential for economic development, education, health and poverty alleviation, efforts to expand energy access remain critical in creating a more equitable society. In Rwanda, electrification is at the heart of its social and economic development goals. As of May 2021, the cumulative connectivity rate stands at 63%, with 47% coming through the expansion of the national grid and 16% through off-grid measures. Despite an incredible growth of electrification in the last decade, the current access rate still remains low for the Rwandan' development aspirations. Government of Rwanda has a target of reaching 100% electrification access by 2024, where 52% of connections are planned through on-grid interventions and 48% through off-grid connections.

BE EARP project, funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation with a 39 million euros grant-envelop, contributes to the very aspiration of improving reliable and affordable electricity services in the country by supporting the implementation of on-grid electrification projects through the Electricity Access Rollout Program (EARP) in partnership with Energy Development Corporation Limited (EDCL), a subsidiary of Rwandan Energy Group (REG).

Since the inception of BE EARP in 2014, Enabel and EDCL/REG have demonstrated a wonderful collaboration in the execution of several electrification projects that have managed to provide electricity access to over 150,000 Rwandans including hundreds of businesses and public institutions in the country.

The project has so far constructed over 1000 km of power networks particularly in the Eastern Province districts of Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma and Kirehe. In the process, the project has connected 25 schools, 11 health posts, 400 plus businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) among others. The project also funded the upgradation of 50 km power distribution network in Rubavu.

Today, the stories of the beneficiaries reaping the benefits of BE EARP electrification funded projects have been amazing.

Evariste Tuyisenge, assistant manager of the Karama Health Centre in Kayonza district reflects on how electricity impacted the quality of health services since the center started receiving grid electricity. He recalls, *"Some laboratory appliances and the incubator were left unused because we did not have enough power to get them to work. We could not give patients the quality of service we wanted to give. For example, a mother would give birth at the Health*



Centre during the day. But if we saw the baby was coming during the night, we would refer the mother and baby to the district hospital. It once happened that we ran out of fuel and had to use torches to do a surgical cut and stitches. The patient would see us getting in a panic, screaming and shouting at whoever was closest to us, to bring a torch or some kind of light and, after the baby was finally born, we could not even put it in the incubator."

"When we got connected to the grid, we were very happy as we could provide our patients with more services. But then we needed more space! We builded new rooms and a fence around the Health Centre to improve security. We also bought laboratory appliances, another fridge and some mobile vaccine

carriers, as well as four new computers, three printers, a photocopier and two TVs. The TVs are in the reception, so people can watch them while waiting. We now have a night shift from 17.00 hours to 07.00 in the morning. Our staff numbers have increased to 27, and we can support around 25 to 30 patients staying overnight. These are mainly women who must rest after they have delivered their babies. Patients trust us more now, and they feel secure. Tuyisenge concludes: "Electricity has made our work easier, and we can offer better services. We do not have to refer so many patients to the District Hospital anymore."

Uwantege Grace, a mother of six children, from Rukira sector in Ngoma district, has an equally inspiring story to share. She has lived together with her children and husband in Rukira Sector since 1997. They farm for a living. They grow maize, beans, cassava and bananas.

Uwantege: *“Our first-born is in his first year in college, three of the other children are in secondary school and the two youngest are in Kindergarten. When they told us we would get electricity, we thought they were lying; we thought it was something impossible because of where we live. But now, here we are! It still took about two years before we finally got it, but even that was faster than we had imagined.”*

“Thanks to electricity, there is no difference any more between day and night” she starts to reply “night-time does not stop us doing what we want to do any more. We used to rush home to cook before it got dark, now we can cook at any time in the evening. Sometimes I wake up very early, and I can start sorting out and preparing seeds for planting. What I am most grateful for is that my children can all read and study in the evenings after school. That will benefit their school exam results and grades and improve their prospects in life.”

Stories of Grace and Tuyisenge are just some representative stories of transformation of lives connected by electricity.



For more info about the project and success stories follow [this link](#)

FMBE project closes. Beneficiaries tell more on its legacy

FMBE (Forests Management and Wood Biomass Energy Support Project) was one of the interventions of the Rwanda-Belgium Bilateral cooperation program in the Energy sector. The objective of this 4.5-year project (from 20th December 2016 to 20th June 2021) was to contribute in improving the production capacity and sustainable management of forest resources in Rwanda. The project was specifically designed to support the implementation of innovative approaches stipulated in the revised National Forestry Policy (NFP, 2018) and the 5-year Forest Sector Strategic Plan (FSSP, 2018-2023), as well as the newly developed District Forest Management Plans (DFMPs).

These key innovative approaches piloted by the project aim to foster the sustainable management of forestry resources in various categories, including:

1. The sustainable management of the public forests through concessions to private business-oriented companies.
2. Approaches of promoting sustainable management in private woodlots through Cooperative engagement of owners (PFMUs).
3. Sustainable management of roadsides/riversides plantations through establishment of community vigilance committees (VGCs).
4. Increase and sustainable management of trees in crop lands (Agroforestry) using the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) extension approaches.

The project intervened in 7 districts of the country, namely Rwamagana in Eastern province, Gasabo, Kicukiro and Nyarugenge in the City of Kigali, Gakenke, Gicumbi and Rulindo in Northern Province. In implementing the above mentioned innovative approaches, the project contributed to the country forests and landscapes restoration efforts by rehabilitating about 5,145 hectares of land under the following categories:

- Rehabilitation of degraded private smallholder forests on **873ha** through the PFMU approach, which consists in aggregating and consolidating neighbouring small plots of lands (0.5 ha on average per owner) into a commercial business unit of about 30 to 50 hectares put together and managed through the cooperative of land owners who come together to form a small to medium enterprise based on improved forest productivity and sustainable production. FMBE supported the formation of 18 cooperatives of forests owners established in three districts (Rwamagana, Gakenke and Rulindo).

(Read further on the next page)

Governmental Cooperation

- Plantation of Agroforestry trees on **3,494 ha**, with average of 100 trees/ha, under Farmer Field School approach.
- Plantation of **730 km (ha)** of roadside plantations in all 7 districts (with average of 600 trees/km), accompanied with the formation of community vigilance committees on every 5km distance of the road or river.

The PFMU approach struck loudly, and it was widely appreciated by the beneficiaries on ground, local leaders and high-level central administration.

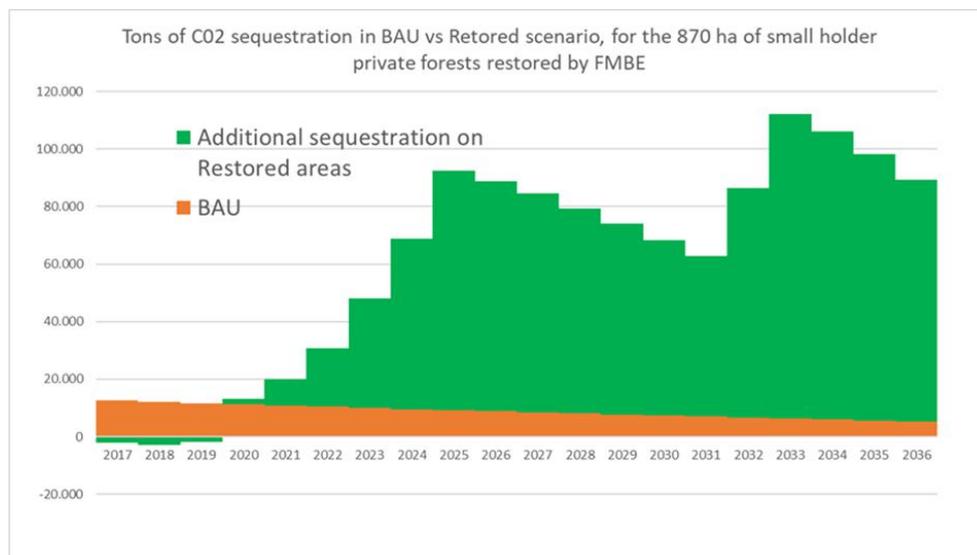
“Before we were harvesting individually each one on his own, in poorly managed forests with very little production, but now as our forests have been rehabilitated and we are grouped together in cooperative, we expect much higher production and increased income in the years to come”. Anastase Gatsinzi, COTAKA Cooperative leader, Gicumbi district

“I would say that the biggest achievement was to see the smallholder forests owners grouped together and working in cooperatives, the mindset change, and today we have better consolidated forests rather than scattered small woodlots.” Rajab Mbonyumuvunyi, Mayor of Rwamagana District



Showing the well growing forests under PFMU approach, case of Fumbwe PFMU, Rwamagana District

“Climate change, it is a direct contribution., carbon sequestration will always be there, because soils will not be erased as it used to be...” (Prosper Mulindwa, Vice Mayor, Economic Affairs, Rulindo District)



Projected impact of carbon sequestration in PFMUs restored under FMBE project support

Not only did the FMBE project support degraded forests restoration and implementation of new measures towards their sustainable management, but it also contributed to a build-up of the system of forests monitoring and evaluation (FMES) as well as the Districts Forests Management Plans (DFMPs Database). The project provided financial and technical assistance to update the National Forest Cover 2019, which revealed that 30.4% of national lands are covered by Forests as of to -date.

For more testimonies , please refer to the documentary video: [link](#)

In supporting collection of demand for solar panels, Enabel contributes to the poverty reduction and wellbeing of the population in rural off-grid zones

PSPE (Private sector participation in the generation of electricity from renewable sources), a technical assistance project aiming at supporting the Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD) to analyse renewable energy projects and creating pipeline for solar lighting, reaches the poor in the rural off-grid zones, for their wellbeing.

This was made possible through the initiative undertaken by BRD to de-risk the off-grid market in rural areas, using the services of Deal Originating Agents in creating awareness about the Renewable Energy Funds, channelled to Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) for solar panel loans to households in the rural off-grid zones. The core target was to contribute to the government of Rwanda goals of universal access to electricity by 2024.

With the support of PSPE project, 12 858 households have been sensitized and approached SACCOs to get loans to acquire solar home systems. As result, 2.254 panels have been installed on roofs of houses in rural off-grid zones. The financial contribution of the PSPE project for each installation is just €5 of incentives paid to the agents, but the change is twofold. Not only do people get electricity at their houses, but also the incentive paid to deal originating agents contribute to poverty reduction and their wellbeing.



Niyonsenga Janvier, agent from SACCO Kamubuga, in Gakenke District, after collecting demands from 44 households, used the incentive paid by the PSPE project to buy two pigs. Niyonsaba Eugene, a solar home system agent from SACCO Muhondo, collected demands from 55 households and the incentive paid was used to buy a cow. From these domestic animals, they will get manure much needed for their farming activities.

As expected, the Deal Originating Agent initiative has started making changes, in the life of people at all levels of value chain. BRD appreciates the contribution of this initiative in de-risking the on-lending to household through SACCOs as far as the demand collection and the installation of solar panel are concerned. In the middle of the value chain, SACCOs have increased the disbursement of REF credit line to households and solar companies have increased sales of solar home systems thanks to the work of Deal Originating Agents. For instance, Mr, Sebagabo Kagobora, Manager of SACCO

Twambutsanye Muhondo, reported that thanks to deal originating agents, his SACCO has provided solar panel loans to 495 households and 273 households are on the waiting list to get solar panel for their houses.

Members of households that received solar panel reported important changes in their life. In Gakenke District, Kamubuga Sector, the family of Nzumvayingoma Pascal, received a solar home system of 3 lights and TV. Mukandayisenga Oliver and Mukandayisaba Chantal, two daughters of Pascal at secondary school, reported that they are now able to do homework and revise lessons at home and can watch news on TV which, according to them, is an eye opener and the road to increased general knowledge.



The story from Mukagatare Immaculée, from SACCO Wisigara in Muhanga District. *“Before the solar panel was installed on our house, we used to go to bed as early as 7:00pm. Now we have time for longer family evening get-togethers, where we have the opportunity to discuss family issues and have cultural entertainment. Personally, I am taking advantage of lights from solar panel to handcraft traditional mats that I sell and the revenue is used to purchase other economic and consumer goods I need for the wellbeing of the family.”*

For more info on one of the previous projects, contact Enabel on representation.rwanda@enabel.be

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Civil Society and International Organisations

A glance at CIALCA's fifteen years' impact on sustainable livelihoods development in the great lakes' region through capacity building.



Since 2006, the Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA), an innovative partnership operating in Rwanda, eastern DR Congo and Burundi, has been working to improve the region's livelihoods mainly focusing on five areas of impact - gender, climate, poverty, nutrition, and environment - through research-for-development.

With funds from the Belgian Development cooperation and together with regional universities, CIALCA builds in-depth problem solving and analytical capacity across a variety of themes through three main pillars including, (1) partnerships and policies, (2) capacity development, and (3) innovation and scaling.

Throughout the history of CIALCA, the consortium has invested in developing and strengthening individual and institutional capacity to facilitate sustainable agri-food system transformation - funding more than 150 Bachelor, MSc, PhD students, produced numerous other innovative training modules. The beneficiaries and recipients testify a tremendous change in their lives as well as a promising future of research for development in their respective countries.

Walter Ocimati completed his PhD studies in the University of Wageningen in the Netherlands:

“This PhD study enabled me to fulfill my urge of looking at Banana Xanthomonas Wilt (BXW) in a more holistic agroecosystem-broad dimension. It was especially interesting to explore disease effects on a broad range of services obtained from our agroecosystems and explore with farm models alternative and more sustainable farm configurations. Studying at Wageningen University and Research in the Netherlands offered a conducive, competitive and multi-cultural learning environment. The PhD also involved working in several countries and networking with multiple and diverse people. The settings of the PhD demanded hard work; improved my ability to work independently, increased my professional links, and my ability to work in multi-cultural settings.”



The opportunity of capacity development of this sort has for instance allowed Mr. Yves Didier to discover the need for understanding farm heterogeneity, farming income and diet diversity towards improving child nutrition outcomes. “It was a great experience working with CIALCA in line with not only strengthening and improving my research capabilities but also supporting my institution (University of Rwanda) in conducting nutrition longitudinal studies. “Added Didier.

CIALCA is led by IITA, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, and FAO/IAEA and has a 15-year legacy of conducting agricultural research for development in Central Africa.



For more info, consult www.cialca.org

or contact Dr. Rhys Manners at R.Manners@cgiar.org

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Workplace Learning is changing lives of youth and companies



Since 2017, APEFE is supporting the implementation of the Workplace Learning Policy through the piloting dual training in partnership with the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) and the Private Sector Federation (PSF). The programme consists in supporting the capacity development of actors, like 2 chambers, 6 professional associations, 11 TVET schools and 120 companies to develop training plans and implement dual training in the sectors of food processing, fashion and beauty in 9 districts. Three cohorts of 474 apprentices in total went through dual training. Besides 50% of training in companies and 50% in schools, apprentices received a training in entrepreneurship, cooperative management and access to finance by RICEM (Rwanda Institute of Cooperatives, Entrepreneurship and Microfinance). Dual training had a very positive impact on the lives of young unemployed youth as 64% of the graduates of the first cohort created or found employment. It also had a positive impact in the companies that hosted apprentices.



Dual Training opened a new chapter in my life

"When I finished my secondary studies (A2) in Accounting, I was lucky to find a job in a construction company as a secretary, but I had to leave the job as I got pregnant and could not perform well. When my daughter was born, I could not cater for her nor for myself, neither couldn't I get any support from my family because they are poor. The IGIRA KU MURIMO programme came as a solution to help me study tailoring. After dual training, the company that hosted me during in-company training hired me to make facemasks. From then, I got some money and decided to buy a sewing machine. Today, I rent a workplace in a tailoring company in Kigali, Muhima. My young sister from Gatsibo District dropped out of school due to lack of financial means and joined me. I taught her to sew and bought two more sewing machine. Together with my sister, we produce different clothes for women, men and children as well as Made-in-Rwanda bags. I can save 60,000 Frw per month regardless very difficult working conditions due to Covid-19 pandemic. I am now able to cater for my daughter and basic needs. I also support my mother who has disabilities and who was left alone by my father. The IGIRA KU MURIMO Programme changed not only my life but also the living conditions of my whole family," says Angelique UWIMANA, one of dual training graduates in tailoring at NGARAMA TVET School in Gatsibo District.



Apprentices trained my staff



"I have been struggling with my staff of the bread production unit to comply with production standards. For instance, some of my staff could not understand why it is prerequisite to respect the required quantity of each ingredient. They sometimes used to approximate the quantity of ingredients without weighing them. When we started to host apprentices from IGIRA KU MURIMO programme, I observed that every single practice they perform complies with a set of production standards as per their theoretical knowledge and skills acquired at school. I finally realized that my company produced more and better bread from the same amount of ingredients that my staff used to use because no raw material was mismanaged. Dual training facilitates knowledge sharing between TVET trainers, in-company instructors and apprentices. As my staff supported apprentices to acquire more practical skills, apprentices also trained my staff in some practices that contributed to the increase of my production rate," says Charles NDUNGUTSE, the Company Manager of Butter Loaf Bread Bakery Ltd in Nyagatare District.

For more info, consult <https://www.apefe.org/> or contact bureau.kigali@apefe.org

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Since 2016, VVOB has been working with the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) and the University of Rwanda – College of Education (UR-CE) to strengthen the capacities of school leaders towards instructional leaders. Through two complementary continuous professional development (CPD) modalities – a one-year blended training diploma programme and participation in professional learning communities facilitated by

Sector Education Inspectors – school leaders are taken through the key building blocks of effective school leadership whilst also developing cross-cutting skills like gender-responsiveness, inclusive education, Monitoring and Evaluation and Information and Communication Technology.

So far, about 1,400 school leaders have been trained in 17 out of 30 districts. A recent external evaluation shows that the impact on the daily practices of school leaders is very promising. The CPD modalities are expected to scale up to the remaining districts so that all school leaders in Rwanda have what it takes to be effective instructional leaders.



Changes in leadership beliefs and practices

In Rwanda, school leadership is traditionally top-down, with teachers accountable to head teachers who are, in turn, accountable to their hierarchical superiors at the district level. Changing this mind-set and introducing *shared* leadership is an important element of REB's vision of competent head teachers. After taking part in the training program, school leaders have a better understanding of the value of *shared* leadership, and they change their perceptions towards it. Importantly, these changed that beliefs are translated into changes in practice.



Some school leaders make time in the school timetable so that school-based mentors can set up communities of practice of subject teachers and organise formal induction programmes for new teachers. Others create platforms for shared decision-making such as School Improvement Planning teams. As a result of this evolution towards shared school leadership practices, teachers, in turn, indicate having more decision-making power when it comes to school improvement planning and more autonomy in lesson planning and assessments. Teachers feel more valued and motivated and can approach their school leaders without fear of rejection or reprisal.

“I used to think that I am the centre of everything in the school, but after studying about sharing responsibilities, I learned that everyone is responsible for every activity in school. If something is not right, everyone in school has the right to comment about it or come to me and say ‘this is wrong, let us change it’ . . . I have become more friendly with the teachers due to this collaboration and working together.” Headteacher, Rwandan Secondary School.

“There are leaders who thought that evaluating a teacher means focusing on what they do wrong, and punishing them. But, after the training, they have understood that evaluating a teacher means to advise and guide, not to threaten.” School-based Mentor, Rwandan Secondary School.

[Download the midline evaluation of the ‘Leading, Teaching and Learning Together in Secondary Education in Rwanda’ for free.](#)

For more info, consult rwanda.vvob.org

or contact info.rwanda@vvob.org

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The School of Nursing and Midwifery (University of Rwanda, UR) in collaboration with the Artevelde University of Applied Sciences, University Ghent (Belgium), and the Medbook company implemented together a project named “The International & Digital Midwifery Workplace Learning Network: the first step”. This project was funded by VLIR-UOS (2018-2020) and aimed at contributing to the capacity building plans of the UR, specifically by improving the quality of clinical teaching in the midwifery program and in advancing research. This project contributes to Rwanda’s Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018/2019-2020/2023 (MINEDUC, 2018) to move towards digital teaching and learning in Rwanda.

Research

The team conducted different qualitative studies, interviewing students, supervisors and mentors from the King Faisal hospital and Muhima hospital in Kigali. The first study investigated the perceptions on the use of paper-based portfolio that has been used by the midwifery department of the UR since 2013. The second study explored the perceptions of the same group on the use of e-clinical portfolio from an internet-based platform (Medbook) brought by the research team from Belgium. The last one compared the effectiveness of the paper-based portfolio and e-portfolio in order to select which one fits better the purpose of clinical teaching in Rwanda. Although participants described both paper-based and e-portfolio as important tools that improved clinical teaching and learning, they preferred the e-portfolio to paper based portfolio as it was user-friendly, enhanced self-directed learning, improved clinical evaluation and monitoring of students’ performance.

The paper-based portfolio was perceived as time consuming with delayed feedback and high printing costs. In addition, the research team, UR instructional technology team and leaders appraised the e-portfolio tool but addressed the sustainability question for developing countries. Therefore, the team recommended to adapt the e-portfolio design to the local platform to enhance the sustainability.

Current situation & Future plans

The UR is moving the content of paper-based portfolio to exhibit e-portfolio using the Moodle based e-learning platform which is actually being used by UR. The e-portfolio will not only serve at the nursing and midwifery school level but the tool will be adapted at college level for all clinical practice related modules. It is planned to achieve this in the academic year 2021-2022.

Furthermore, the research team will continue to publish educational results, as Donatilla wrote: *“Another impact of this project is the improvement of writing skills mainly among Rwandans where different articles were published being on COVID-19, Blended Teaching and Learning in Nursing and Midwifery Education in Rwanda and on e-portfolio in collaboration with Belgium research team”*

Conclusion

The lesson learned through this collaboration is that international collaboration and benchmarking can bring successful and sustainable solutions to education.

More info on the project in our Newsletter of April 2018: [link](#).

The results were presented during a VLIR/UOS community talk: [link](#).

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The International & Digital Midwifery Workplace Learning Network: the first step
Implementing a competency-based and evidence-based workplace learning model in Belgian & Rwandan hospitals

Mission
"Strengthening Midwifery Globally"
International Confederation of Midwives

Fostering the quality of sexual, reproductive, maternal and neonatal health by better educated midwives and midwifery teachers.

Objectives

- Supporting the University of Rwanda to enhance the quality of clinical education.
- Implementing e-portfolio at the delivery wards in Kigali for all midwifery students between January and November 2019.
- Investigating supervisors, mentors and students' perceptions on the use of e-portfolio.
- The launch of an International and Digital Midwifery Workplace Learning Network.

Output

- 2019: successful e-portfolio pilot project at the delivery wards in Kigali for midwifery students, using Medbook ePortfolio via the internet.
- 2020: research and workshops during Covid-pandemic.
- 2021: follow-up project at the University of Rwanda, investigating the development of an e-portfolio in the e-learning Moodle platform of the University.

Output

- Investigating supervisors, mentors, and students' perceptions on the use of e-portfolio: 3 research articles, 14 accepted abstracts to present the project results at (inter) national conferences.
- Informal launch of an International and Digital Midwifery Workplace Learning Network is planned for the International Confederation of Midwives Conference in 2021.

2018 - 2019

2020

Project team: H. De Grave, M. Embo, D. Mukamana, G. Tengera, A. Muhayimana, J. Murekezi, L. Van der Jeught, S. Van der Stichele, M. Valcke
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To improve the care of people with epilepsy, Humanity & Inclusion (HI) continues to support health facilities by strengthening the capacities of health professionals on the management and treatment of epilepsy. Indeed, equipping them with in-depth knowledge gives them the capacity to provide quality care, through early detection, adequate treatment initiation, appropriate psychosocial support and referral in case of need.

So far, with the support of HI, through its Promotion of Maternal and Child Health and Fight against Epilepsy project, and with funding from the Belgian Development Cooperation, 367 health professionals have been trained on this disease in 85 health centers and 8 hospitals in the districts of Rubavu, Nyabihu, Ngororero, Rutsiro and Karongi, in the Western Province. They provide care for 2,277 people with epilepsy, including 2,117 who are accompanied in the 116 psycho-educational groups.



Mr Theoneste USHAGAWE, is among 34 health professionals who recently have benefited from a refresher training on epilepsy, from 27 to 28 May 2021, at Muhororo Hospital in Ngororero District. Theoneste is the Supervisor of the Community Health Workers (CHWs) at Gashubi Health Center. CHWs have the task of identifying people with epilepsy and referring them to health centers for treatment.



Theoneste USHAGAWE(right) with HI Staff (left)

Up to now, we have 14 persons with epilepsy at the Gashubi Health Center, whom we have treated, and who are making good progress. Among them were two brothers from the Rugeshi cell, a zone which is very isolated. The mother of these two children, who was desperate because of their condition, now feels very happy with their progress especially since the family is no longer making long trips to the hospital". He added.

Theoneste met HI in 2017 and received his 1st training in 2018. He testifies of the changes in the lives of people with epilepsy, who now have easy access to care even at the health center level. *"Before the arrival of HI in Ngororero District, epilepsy was not treated at the health center level",* he said. *"People with signs of epilepsy were referred directly to District Hospitals and had to travel many kilometers to get there. Today, services are more accessible for them, because the trainings we had enabled us to take care of them directly at this level.*

For more info, consult www.hi-rwanda.org or

contact Hortense Umuhoza, Psychosocial Advisor, on h.umuhoza@hi.org

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Belgian Red Cross Flanders brings safe water to rural Karongi and Rutsiro



Belgian
Red Cross

Travel with us to the beautiful Western Province of Rwanda, where the mountains touch heaven and lake Kivu meets Rwandan soil. We are in a small village named Kabuga, somewhere in rural Karongi. This is home for Florence Uwamaliya, a 39-year-old mother.

Kabuga is also one of the 23 villages in the Western Province which is benefitting from the water adduction systems built by Belgian Red Cross Flanders, bringing safe water and overcoming diseases to more than 2.311 households or 11.555 people.

The mission of the Belgian Red Cross Flanders is to help our partners supporting the most vulnerable, with evidence-based development programs that aim to achieve tangible positive impacts.

During a field visit to the water adduction system in Kabuga, we asked Florence, who was collecting water at one of our constructed water points, how the water system has brought changes to her day-to-day life. She responded with good energy: *“Before the system, our family’s hygiene was very poor and we had to walk long distances to collect water. Now our life quality has improved significantly. We used to go to the hospital every week, but now I only go once every 3 months for sicknesses not related to waterborne diseases. It takes away a lot of stress, and we lose less money on medical costs.”*



While we continue our walk in the serene Kabuga village, we bump into Sureiman Habimana, a 43 year-old father. He testifies that before the installment of the water taps he had very big challenges: *“There is a river close to the side of the school with a bridge. We used to fetch water from that river. We also drank from it. Now we are thankful because we have clean water from Red Cross.”* He demonstrates how the water taps are being maintained in the village. He explains that the community bought a lock to make sure the tap doesn’t get damaged. *“At 7 PM we lock the water tap. All villagers know that at 7 PM we, as the Water Committee, close the tap. Every day, at 6 AM I come back to remove the lock again. That creates great ownership of the system, motivating us as a community to protect and maintain our sources of life.”*



The Belgian Red Cross Flanders works closely together with Croix Rouge Belgique – Communauté Francophone on developing community resilience programs. All our activities, such as the construction of the water infrastructure, are implemented by our partner organization Rwanda Red Cross Society (RRCS). Working with RRCS enables us to have direct channels to the roots of the community and gives us a better understanding of the needs of the most vulnerable in Rwanda.

For more info, consult www.rodekruis.be/en/what-do-we-do/

or contact Katrin Bouwens, Country Representative, on Katrin.Bouwens@rodekruis.be

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and [@rodekruisvlaanderen](https://www.instagram.com/rodekruisvlaanderen) on Instagram



Since 2008, Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium (VSF-B) and its local partner Imbaraga support private veterinarians to develop a flourishing business within the rural areas of the Southern Province of Rwanda. All in the benefit of the local farmers.

In the Districts of Nyamagabe, Huye and Nyanza, it is hard for farmers to have proper access to animal health services in remote locations. Most veterinarians prefer to set up their business in more urban and populated sectors to ensure profitability. Since 2008, VSF-B and Imbaraga strive to change this paradigm by supporting the development of profitable veterinary businesses in rural areas.



Addressing vet challenges



Désiré Twahirwa, 35 years, intervening on a farm in Nyanza. ©Gael Vande Weghe

Transport is one of the major challenges veterinarians and veterinary technicians face. Very often, they must walk to the farms needing their assistance, which creates problems in case of emergencies. If they use a motorbike taxi, associated costs are integrated in the bill presented to the farmer. This is the reason why we provide a motorbike to each vet selected by our project. This enables them to provide a timely assistance to the farmers at a reduced price.

Our project package also includes bulk purchase of veterinary inputs. This reduces the overall price per item, which also helps reducing costs for the farmer. And this makes animal health services all the more accessible.

As selected vets receive technical and management trainings, their services are gaining in quality. Not only are they able to better run their business, but they are also better equipped: tools and knowledge allow them to provide a wider range of services, such as artificial inseminations.

A successful approach

Until now, 35 veterinarians have been supported. They have been carefully selected in close cooperation with the authorities and the Rwanda Council of Veterinary Doctors. We accompanied them to access credit in local micro-finance institutions, which guarantees their accountability and the sustainability of the approach.

The figures speak for themselves: with a reimbursement rate approaching 97% and a number of 31 vets still lucratively running their business, sometimes eight years after the end of the project support, the success of this approach is not in doubt.

Fifty new vets

Thanks to the PRISM project recently funded by Enabel, the approach is now scaled-up to the entire country. Fifty new vets from ten districts will be reinforced from July 2021 onwards, 22% of whom will be women.

By supporting women to acquire a motorbike, run a profitable business and thereby have a steady income, this project, besides improving animal health in rural areas, also empowers women.

Odette Mukandayisenga recently ranked in the top 5 during the selection process in her district. She operates in Rwaza Sector, Musanze District, where she already managed to buy three plots of land and has her own veterinary counter. However, she can't afford to buy a motorbike and has currently no other choice but to buy vet inputs in retail in Musanze. The support of the project is therefore crucial to Odette. Like the other 49 candidates, she is already looking forward to hitting the road of her new professional journey, driving her own motorbike.



Odette Mukandayisenga, during the selection procedure within the PRISM project, May 2021. © Olga Szczodry

For more info, consult www.vsf-belgium.org and www.imbaraga.org or contact at VSF-B: Olga Szczodry on o.szczodry@vsf-belgium.org or Expedith Musengiyaremye on e.musengiyaremye@vsf-belgium.org or at Imbaraga: Dr. Désiré BIMENYIMANA on dbimenyimana@yahoo.fr

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Africalia Cultural Management Programme in Rwanda 2020-2021: Empowering Rwandan Cultural Operators



Nineteen artists and cultural operators representing the Rwandan creative sector have embarked on a 12 months ambitious cultural management programme developed by Africalia with financial support from the Belgium Development Cooperation. The programme aims at supporting the structural growth and professional development of the Rwandan creative sector. The programme includes activities such as physical and virtual capacity-building workshops, mobility grants to support professional exchange and mobility as well as cascading grants for the beneficiaries to initiate and implement activities as part of practical learning process.

International experts from Benin, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Burkina-Faso, Bulgaria and Ghana together with local experts are mobilised to cover learning topics related to cultural management such as design and development of cultural projects, principles of financial management and reporting, cultural entrepreneurship, the cultural economy and policy as well as digital cultural marketing and intellectual property. Talking about her experience as participant, Sonia Uwimbabazi, visual artist and cultural entrepreneur said, *“This program was for me good news and a good learning program during the pandemic when all my projects were frozen. It will help me to continue working in difficult times”*.

Ferdinand Munezero, the chairperson of the Rwanda Art Council and also one of the participants, testifies: *“The program is very important and I am more than ready to recommend it to other people as it turned me into a different person, understanding the weight of my artistic power when it comes to economic and social transformation.”*

The programme takes advantage of the position of Rwanda as a growing economy in East Africa, and of its capital Kigali, as a hub for digital transformation, to explore on the application of new technologies for the development of creative entrepreneurship. 16 participants out of 19 said they particularly enjoyed the workshop sessions on creative entrepreneurship and intellectual property issues. The programme activities are expected to end in August 2021 with a thematic symposium and networking event where participants will share their learning outcomes and will also present their individual funded projects. Some keynote speakers, including Rwandan public authorities and African experts, will be part of this symposium to contribute to a more viable Rwandan creative sector.



Africalia

CREATIVITY IS LIFE

Africalia is a Belgian organisation active in cultural cooperation between Belgium and Africa. Our mission is to support, collaborate with structure and build networks of artists in order to put culture and creativity at the centre of economical innovation and social transformation in Africa. In Rwanda, we will continue from 2022 to 2026 through a partnership with local creative and cultural operators with focus on consolidating and innovating the Rwandan creative and cultural industries.

For more info, consult www.africalia.be or contact africaliarwanda@gmail.com

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We Social Movements (WSM) and its partner organizations in Rwanda: realizations and impact.



WSM is a Belgian NGO with as core mission promoting social protection and decent work. In Rwanda, WSM collaborates with four local organizations that, together with others, gathers in a national multi-stakeholders network named Synergie-Zamuka, a dynamic space of advocacy and exchange of experiences.

Studies and many other evaluation reports in various areas of social protection are followed by advocacy campaigns that help sensitising the public opinion and Government decision-makers on actions to be taken for more social protection. These campaigns contributed to pension increase and the establishment of a Long Term Saving Scheme in 2018; legal recognition of workers in the informal economy, several reforms in the technical and vocational training sector; promotion of equal opportunities and treatment between boys and girls in technical and vocational training; enriching of knowledge and debate at the national level concerning social protection and decent work, etc.

The Rwandese Association for Retired People (ARR) with the financial support of WSM, together with other local organizations of elders, advocated since a some time for the National Policy for Elders in Rwanda. The Policy was recently adopted by the Cabinet. It will mainly contribute to mitigate the intergenerational fracture, to appropriate health care services and to the improvement of the socioeconomic well-being of elders.

With a special financial support from WSM, ARR helped its 672 affiliates who were facing difficulties in feeding themselves and in obtaining necessary medicines, due to the Covid -19 pandemic. Hygienic kits have also been distributed to elders in need. The beneficiaries highly appreciated that action of solidarity.



With the financial support of WSM, COTRAF, a trade union confederation, provided legal aid to 951 workers during the last 4 years. COTRAF assisted them to face employers in their respective companies, labour inspection offices in districts and the courts of law when necessary. Workers rehabilitated in their rights gained 154,183,488.00 Rwf (134,658.06 Euros) of fine against employers who violated their working rights.

Also, 1485 COTRAF affiliates have been trained on workers' rights, social security schemes, how to conduct collective bargaining, security and health at workplace, etc. With WSM, COTRAF and CESTRAR affiliates negotiated and concluded collective labor conventions in SORWATHE and ASSOPTHE, two major companies in the tea sector. Following the conclusion of the two instruments, workers rights have significant improved in the concerned companies.

For more info, contact *Séraphin GASORE* on baseraphin@yahoo.fr or arr-rwanda@yahoo.fr

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Rwanda Red Cross tackling poverty caused by COVID-19 with cash transfers

CROIX-ROUGE
de Belgique



Cash transfers have become an increasingly important method of helping the most vulnerable communities to fight against poverty and recover their livelihood disrupted by the pandemic.

The Belgian Red Cross communities joined hands to support the Rwanda Red Cross Society helping Rwandan communities to recover from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has largely affected the business sector and the whole community at large.

With a budget of 1 Million Euro deployed in recovery efforts. Rwanda Red Cross developed a plan to support vulnerable people whose businesses and livelihoods were largely affected by the pandemic in 4 districts (Kayonza, Ngoma, Kirehe and Nyagatare) via a Cash transfer program.

The Rwanda Red Cross supported 400 vulnerable people who tested positive on COVID-19 with 20,000 Rwf each to buy Food items and basic needs and 180,000 Rwf were disbursed to small business owners whose income were affected by the measures to stop the spread of the pandemic. The amount was deposited to every person's mobile money account in two installments of 30,000 Rwf to buy basic needs, and 150,000 Rwf to resume business activities based on selected projects. Besides, the recovery funds, other Covid-19 prevention equipment was donated to the same beneficiaries to combat the transmission of the virus. To qualify for the project, the households were asked to explain their projects in detail to the organisation.

Part of the recovery fund was also used to pay for the health insurance of vulnerable people located in the Nyagatare district.

Beneficiaries give their testimonies. Karema Jean Claude living with disabilities testifies: *"Before I was working for a Betting company. Since COVID-19 arrived in Rwanda, such businesses haven't yet restarted. Look today I'm very happy: with this support, I'm going to reinforce and improve my poultry farming"*.

"I'm very happy because Rwanda Red Cross has noticed our problems. I'm determinate for realizing my project as planned. We hope leaving the category of those who are helped to become those who help others", said Umutesi Safina.



Linking the relief, recovery, rehabilitation, and development phase in the aftermath of disasters is in the centre of the Rwanda Red Cross community resilience approach.



The most vulnerable are empowered with livestock, help with terracing, erosion control, income-generating activities and water supply. Such achievements are more highlighted in Karoni, Rutsiro, Nyabihu, Ngororero and Gakenke districts. Similar activities are also observed in refugee camps of Mahama, Nyabiheke and in the host community.

For more info, consult <https://action-internationale.croix-rouge.be/>

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