

# CONCERN worldwide

# NEWSLETTER

Concern in Burundi

NEW

Working with the world's poorest people  
to transform their lives

AUGUST 2015



[www.concern.net/where-we-work/africa/burundi](http://www.concern.net/where-we-work/africa/burundi)

## Concern Worldwide in Burundi

Concern Worldwide is an international NGO that has been working in Burundi since 1997. Concern's original focus was humanitarian work in emergency contexts, but now we are equally engaged in long-term development issues such as health.

Burundi is a small East African country that shares borders with Rwanda, DRC and Tanzania. It is among the three poorest countries in the world.

The electoral period of April to August 2015 has caused the security situation in Burundi to become unstable and unpredictable. Tensions and violence are particularly pronounced in Bujumbura, the capital. To date, more than 150,000 refugees have fled the recent violence in Burundi, according to UNHCR. Most of these refugees are now living in difficult conditions.

Concern's strategic plan for the short- to medium-term future is to expand its current work in Kirundo and Cibitoke Provinces and also to extend its reach to two additional provinces.

Concern Worldwide Burundi follows an integrated approach to address the root causes of poverty. We target those who do not own land and who depend on irregular sources of income such as occasional farm work, as well as extremely vulnerable

Concern Worldwide Burundi currently works in Kirundo and Cibitoke Provinces, the populations of which have been identified as particularly poor and vulnerable compared to other provinces. Concern has two programmes in each province: a social protection programme (also called the Graduation Model Programme) and a health and nutrition programme. Together, these programmes encompass a range of activities, including health, nutrition, social protection, resilience, education, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and gender-based violence (GBV).



Nduwimana Bélyse in the yellow dress with her friends in Kirundo province, Burundi. Nduwimana's mother is a beneficiary of Concern's "graduation" scheme. ©Irénee NDUWAYEZU

## Concern Worldwide's mission in Burundi

Our mission is to help people living in extreme poverty to make sustainable improvements in their lives through an integrated approach that addresses the root causes of poverty. We also respond to humanitarian emergencies when needed.

### Burundi map





Olipa Ningabiye, a Graduation Model Programme beneficiary, shows us the notebook in which she records her Income Generating Activities (IGAs) in Mugina - Cibitoke Province.

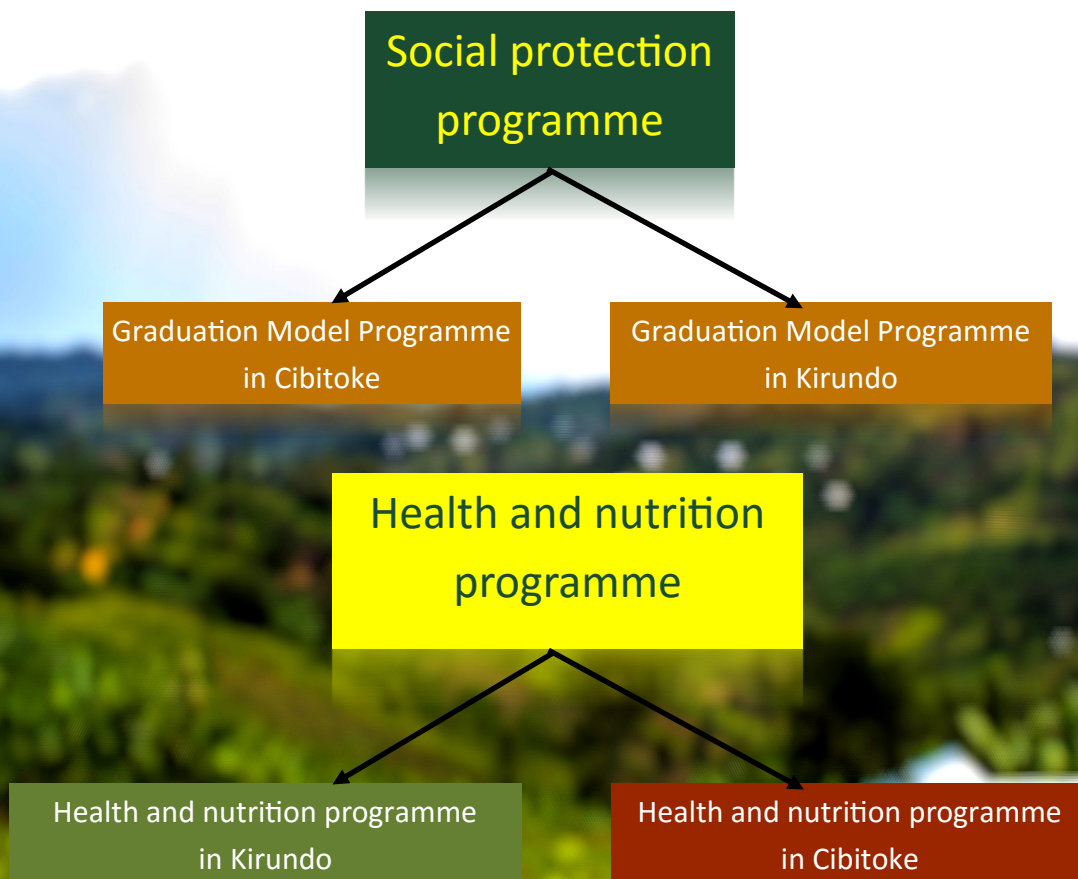
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# Where we work

Concern Worldwide Burundi currently works in Kirundo and Cibitoke Provinces, the populations of which have been identified as particularly poor and vulnerable compared to other provinces.

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## Two on-going programmes...



## Impact of Burundian political crisis on our beneficiaries

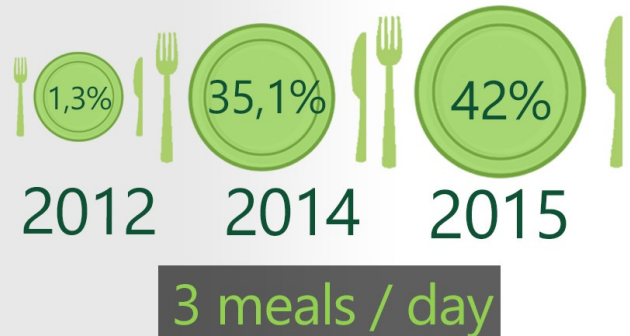
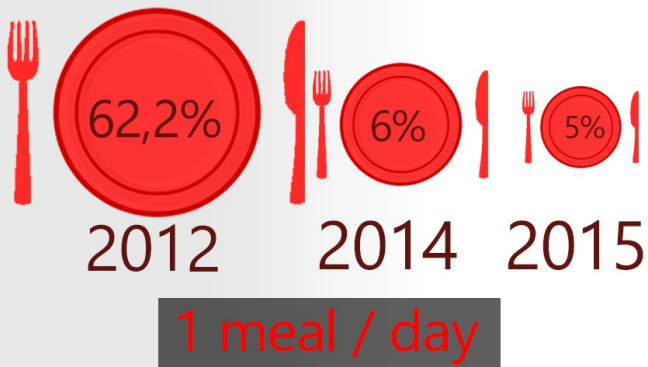
The political crisis in Burundi has slowed the development process of our beneficiaries. Economically, their income-generating activities have been hindered by the insecurity that has characterized Burundi, and especially Bujumbura. This is the case of Claver Nyabenda (pictured right) a Concern beneficiary in Cibitoke Commune-Mugina (social protection programme). Before he was among the poorest in his village. Claver now has a well-stocked shop, manufactures donuts and sells tea to his village and is doing much better economically. He deplores the crisis, saying that some people take debts and fail to pay then. Nyabenda is confident that he will take off again and has bought a new plot to raise goats and have a better life himself and his family.



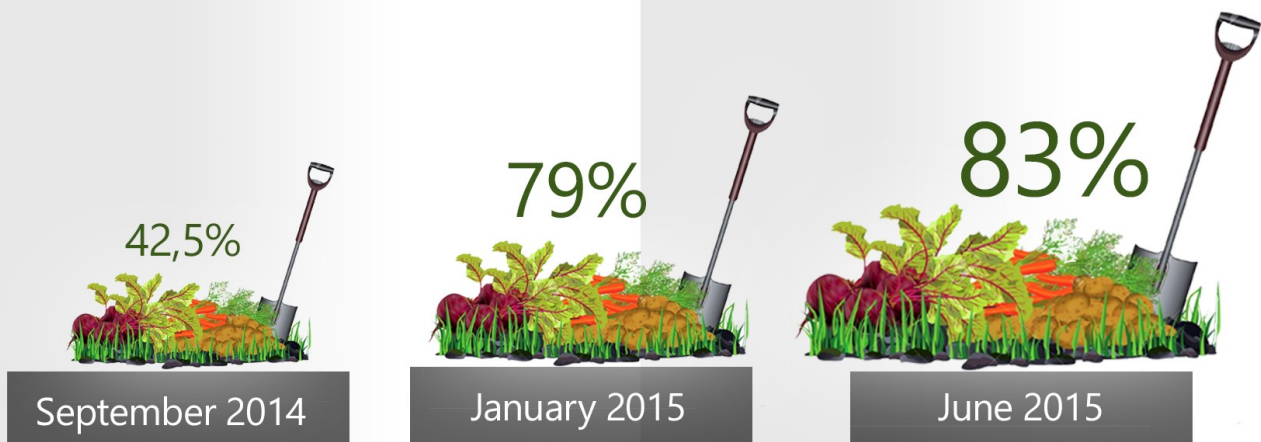
Claver Nyabenda in his shop (Cibitoke-Mugina) © Irénée NDUWAYEZU

Our social protection programme targets more than 10,000 people extremely poor to improve their living conditions. (Cibitoke and Kirundo)

### Number of meals/day for children's beneficiaries



### Percentage of households targeted with Kitchen garden



## Acute malnutrition among young children in Kirundo

In Kirundo Province, 82% of the children aged 6 to 59 months were screened for malnutrition by Concern, UNICEF and PRONIANUT (the Burundian government's national nutrition programme) between 15 and 19 June 2015. 97,444 children were screened in all. 6%, or 5,776 children, were diagnosed with acute malnutrition. 4.5% were identified as "moderately acutely malnourished" and 1.5% as "severely acutely malnourished".

The aim of the screening was to accurately assess the nutritional health of young children in the province and to provide a basis for taking preventive action against acute malnutrition in the province. It is a response to a report published by UNICEF Rwanda in May describing "alarming" rates of malnutrition among four Burundian refugee camps in Rwanda (Mahama, Bugesera, Nyanza and Nyagatare) in which 75% of inhabitants are people from Kirundo. The report suggested that 25% of children in the camps aged 6 to 59 months were acutely malnourished (15% moderately and 10% severely).

The elevated malnutrition rates in Kirundo and "alarming" rates in the refugee camps in Rwanda can be attributed to the political tensions that have affected Burundi since April, compounded by the fact that even during peaceful times Kirundo is one of the most food insecure provinces in Burundi.



Niyonyishu (2 years old) undergoing nutritional screening in Kirundo Commune ©Irénée NDUWAYEZU

## A testimony of sustainability of the health project with the cares group in Cibitoke

In Buganda commune (Cibitoke), a group of mothers in Rugwiza village (newly constructed village) have themselves felt the need to form care groups. They had seen the effectiveness in the nearby villages. They felt the need to care for mothers in their own village.

Claudine told us how this idea of care groups was welcomed by their neighbours. These mothers have warmly welcomed this initiative. This idea was not dictated by a health worker or an NGO or an authority. So it is a striking testimony to the sustainability of the "care group" model.



Claudine and Esperance (Left to right), Two « care group » volunteers in Cibitoke (Buganda commune) ©Irénée NDUWAYEZU

# Success-stories

## 1 "I will not lose the progress I have made"

**B**efore Concern Worldwide came into our lives...

"My five children and I led nomadic lives (...) In November and April we would go to Rwanda to wait for the harvest season back home," Béatrice Mukandagano says, adding that she used to be homeless and that of her five children, only two went to school.



Béatrice Mukandagano with her children (Kirundo Province) ©Irénée NDUWAYEZU

*"I owe everything that I have today to Concern Worldwide. Concern taught me how to start activities that can generate revenue."*

Béatrice is a beneficiary of Concern's Graduation Model Programme, which targets the most vulnerable individuals in a community. Support begins with an monthly cash transfer of 15 dollars, which allows Béatrice to alleviate the pressure of her immediate needs and to focus on her medium- to long-term future.

Béatrice was encouraged to use the money she received to participate in a community savings and microfinance group (SILC). "Thanks to the SILC system, I was able to buy a house with a corrugated iron roof," she says happily.

A second cash transfer of 95 dollars (delivered in three installments) allowed Béatrice to start a business in the production and selling of banana wine (or "insongo" as it is locally known). "With the profits from my little banana wine business I was able to buy some fertile land and a goat," says Béatrice. She was also able to earn additional income by selling 3 of the goat's offspring. Now, 2 years later, she owns 5 goats. What she is most proud of, she says, is that she no longer has to work as a farmhand in someone else's field.

Béatrice also does agricultural work. Before Concern Worldwide's intervention, she says that she worked on other people's farms for half of what she harvested, with the rest going to the owner. It was extremely time-consuming work, and despite her efforts, "we could only eat one meal per day at best". Now, she says, "we can easily eat 2 meals per day."

On top of the financial aid and business coaching, Béatrice also received training on family planning, HIV/AIDS, household conflict resolution and hygiene.

Now extremely confident in the skills she has acquired with Concern Worldwide, Béatrice declares "I will not lose the progress I have made. If you knew where I come from, you would understand that it would be impossible for me to fall back into poverty. Concern has taught me how to plan for and meet my needs."

# Success-stories

**1** Jacqueline Ndayisenga and her husband built a house with 3 bedrooms and a living room thanks to the Graduation Model Programme. "I bought each of the 22 corrugated iron sheets that make up the roof of this house one by one," Jacqueline says. "We bought a parcel of land on credit, and the Graduation Model Programme helped us to set up some income-generating activities that allowed us to pay back the loan in full."



Jacqueline Ndayisenga and her children (Kirundo Province -Bugabira) ©Irénee NDUWAYEZU

Jacqueline's husband is a fisherman in Rumonge, while Jacqueline trades flour, palm oil and fish ("indagala"). "These days I have no difficulties feeding my 5 children and sending them to school," she says.

## THE 5 FUNDAMENTAL STAGES OF THE GRADUATION MODEL PROGRAMME

**Targeting:** The programme identifies 2,000 extremely poor households using digitally collected data, selection criteria designed with community involvement, and other inputs from the targeted community.

**Household consumption support:** Each beneficiary receives a transfer of 15 dollars per month for the first 14 months of the programme to cover their essential household needs such as food and clothing. Transfers are executed via ECONET's Ecocash service in collaboration with the national postal system (la Régie Nationale des Postes).

**Saving:** As soon as beneficiaries are able to meet their essential needs, they are encouraged to start saving what they can via a community microfinance and savings group (SILC). This increases their resilience to disasters and shocks.

**Coaching and training:** Beneficiaries are trained on important topics such as income-generating activities (IGAs), literacy, hygiene and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). These trainings are reinforced by monthly coaching from case managers.

**Asset transfers:** Asset transfers (90 dollars transferred to the beneficiary in 3 installments) help the beneficiaries to set up a sustainable income-generating activity.

# Success-stories

2 *"The Care Group Volunteers are extremely important to us," says Diane Nzeyimana.*

**D**iane Nzeyimana, wife and mother of 3 children, values the behavioural change communication (BCC) messages brought to her community by Care Group Volunteers. "My youngest son Liévin is healthier than his older siblings were at his age," she says, attributing this to the work of the Care Group Volunteers in her community in Cibitoke Province.



Diane Nzeyimana with her son Liévin (1 year 3 months old) ©Irénee NDUWAYEZU

"The volunteers are extremely important to us because they help us to improve the health of our children," she explains. Convinced of the importance of the knowledge they bring, Diane has never missed a Care Group meeting. "Thanks to the volunteers, we know how to feed our children a balanced diet. I also know how to prevent my children from becoming ill through better hygiene. As a result, I can see how much healthier my son Liévin is today."

Concern Worldwide Burundi has identified Care Groups as a powerful way of mobilising communities to change their behaviour and improve their children's health and wellbeing. Efforts to promote good practices focus on the leading causes of child mortality in Burundi: malaria, malnutrition, diarrheal diseases and respiratory infections.



# Success-stories

3

*"I was able to build a house with a corrugated iron roof"*



Vénantie Kamatamo's new house and a solar panel (Bugabira Commune, Kirundo Province) ©Irénée NDUWAYEZU

Vénantie Kamatamo's house before joining the Graduation Model Programme ©Irénée NDUWAYEZU

## *Vénantie Kamatamo tells us about her progress*

Vénantie Kamatamo, a widow ("mutwa"), is a Graduation Model Programme beneficiary in Bugabira Commune, Kirundo Province. Before joining a community microfinance and savings group (SILC), Vénantie and her 5 children lived in a house with a thatched banana leaf roof. After joining her SILC, "I was able to build a house with a corrugated iron roof," she tells us. But that was not all the programme helped her to achieve, she continues. She also received a solar panel with which she earns money by charging her neighbour's mobile phones, as her village is not connected to the national power grid. "I can earn more than 1 dollars per day," she reveals, noting that this is enough to allow her to send her children to school. In addition to this income-generating activity she also works on the plot of maize and beans that she shares with her neighbour. She is happy that she no longer has to work in other people's fields for meagre sums. She says that she is now able to meet her own needs and no longer has to borrow money to send her children to school as she once did.

# Success-stories

3

**C**laudette Sabimbona is a beneficiary of Concern's Nutrition Programme's PD/Hearth (Positive Deviance) scheme. She says that at 12 months her daughter weighed only 6 kilos.

"My daughter was very weak and had no appetite. Three months after receiving the micronutrient powders, my daughter started to regain her appetite. She is now a year and a half old and weighs 9 kilos." During the PD/Hearth session, Claudette says that she learned how to choose the right foods for her child and how to cook them without decreasing their nutritional value. As a result, she has observed a clear improvement in her daughter's health compared to her older siblings.



Claudette Sabimbona and her daughter Solange CIZA 1 year 6 months  
©Irénee NDUWAYEZU

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Geneviève's "Kitchen Garden" ©Irénee NDUWAYEZU



Geneviève's neighbour, surprised at how productive her Kitchen Garden is.  
©Irénee NDUWAYEZU

## *The "Kitchen Garden", a mini-farm with high yields*

"I cultivated this little farm. I planted some vegetables, especially amaranth," says Geneviève. "Since I started harvesting, the yields have been coming for 5 consecutive months. I have also planted some leeks next to my Kitchen Garden."

A neighbour and client of Geneviève's tells us that he had no idea that such a small plot could produce so much for so many months. "When she started working on this garden, we thought she was wasting her time," he admits, adding that he would also like to know how to start one.

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Concern Worldwide is an international humanitarian NGO dedicated to reducing suffering and eliminating extreme poverty in the world's poorest countries.

Vision: Concern Burundi believes in a world where no one lives in poverty, fear or oppression, and where everyone has access to a decent quality of life and to the possibilities and choices necessary to lead a long, healthy, creative life. Concern believes in a Burundi where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where the most vulnerable have the means to earn a sustainable living.

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