

Empowering Women in Burundi: She Rises for Change's Transformative Impact



YALI RLC EA Cohort 8 alumnus from Burundi Janvier Manirakiza is impacting the lives of women in Butanuka village. His organization, Through the YALI Alumni Transformation fund, funded by USAID and implemented by Kenyatta University through YALI RLC EA, his organization Dreaming for Change is implementing She Rises for Change Burundi.

Over the past years, Burundi has experienced extreme political and social crisis, with many consequences for vulnerable populations including women, children, and the disabled and ethnic minorities. Many women took on the role of heads of the family (their husbands were killed during the war), but they were not able to have access to livelihood sustenance, they were tortured and had to leave their homes and lost their lands. Existing power structures, cultural norms, and history of violence and impunity have a disproportionately negative impact on women. Today, many women and girls have very little access to economic opportunities, basic services, and decision-making processes despite the very young demography.

She Rises for Change project is being implemented in 2 provinces that are historically and presently among the most affected by violence and insecurity: Bubanza and Bujumbura. women groups are being trained in soap making and sewing to become actively involved in saving groups for economic empowerment (through the Village Savings and Loans Associations approach).



To tackle cases of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) in the community, ABATANGAMUCO (those who shine a light) have been trained to eliminate SGBV cases in the community.

The “She Rises for Change” project focuses on the rights of women and girls by promoting gender equality and Employment of marginalized Women and girls through business entrepreneurship and vocational training in Bubanza and Bujumbura provinces.

Dreaming for Change extends its commitment beyond She Rises for Change, operating the Butanuka Community Academy—a Ministry of Education-approved school. The inauguration, graced by former U.S. Ambassador Melanie Harris Higgins, government officials, and the Butanuka community in Mpanda-Bubanza, marked a significant milestone.

This community school serves as a vital resource, offering preschool and primary education to Butanuka's children. Through a blend of virtual and face-to-face workshops led by early childhood education experts, the academy not only educates students but also enhances the skills of teachers. Furthermore, it actively involves parents, empowering them to play an integral role in their children's education.

Currently enrolling 150 children in preschool levels 1-3 and primary grades 1-2, the Butanuka Community Academy is a beacon of educational opportunity. In collaboration with the US Embassy in Burundi, Dreaming for Change has introduced the first American Shelf in a rural village, specifically in Butanuka. This unique space serves as a hub for knowledge, allowing the community, particularly young girls and boys, to expand their minds, nurture their ideas, and contribute to building a better and brighter future for Butanuka in the Mpanda-Bubanza Province.

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“Embarking on the YALI journey is like stepping into a crucible of transformation, where leaders are forged with the fires of knowledge, collaboration, and shared purpose. It's more than a program; it's a profound experience that transcends borders and cultivates a community of visionaries.

Through YALI, we don't just learn, we evolve. We don't merely connect, we build lasting bonds that bridge continents. As we navigate the intricacies of leadership, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement, the YALI experience becomes a catalyst, igniting the spark of inspiration within us. It's a transformative odyssey that propels us to break barriers, shatter limitations, and emerge as architects of change, not just for ourselves but for the collective progress of our communities and the world at large.

The YALI experience is not just a program; it's a transformative journey that turns dreams into action, passion into purpose, and individuals into change-makers for a brighter, more inclusive future.”

