



# Journey

Walking with churches, leaders, and families in overcoming all forms of human poverty

by living in healthy relationship with God and His creation

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue 1 Spring 2010

**Brewing Success**

Coffee production affects nearly 50% of Burundians. FH is partnering with farmers to promote local ownership, and increase profits, quality production, and micro-lending. **Page 1**



**A Mother's Care**

Learn how Burundian mothers are gaining knowledge in child nutrition and training others in their community. **Page 2**



**Supporting Burundi's Daughters**

This Spring hundreds more children will be in school and receiving health care because of your sponsorship. Read how your gifts are impacting communities and making it possible for girls to stay in school. **Page 3**



**Burundi's President visits FH programs**

A visit from Burundi's president, Pierre Nkurunziza, brought excitement to communities in Ruyigi- where thousands of families have recently returned. FH is working here, in Burundi's Eastern province helping families rebuild their lives. **Page 3**

## Brewing Success

Coffee is Burundi's primary export, with an estimated 800,000 Burundian families gaining income from its production. That's nearly half of Burundi's population.

Over the last two decades coffee production has increasingly become privatized, with ownership moving from the government to private companies.

With increased privatization Burundian farmers hoped to get a better price for their coffee sales, however, most recently the opposite has been observed. Limited government spending in the coffee sector coupled with low prices for coffee farmers' beans has had a direct impact on the financial well being of Burundian families.

**FH involvement in the coffee sector**

Burundi has been measured as one of the poorest nations in the world, with the average Burundian



**With nearly half of Burundi's population involved in coffee production, business management training is essential for farmers and their families to benefit from sales.**

earning the equivalent of \$100 US dollars per year. According to a study completed by International Alert "Burundian farmers have always received much lower prices (for their coffee) than farmers in neighboring countries."

Since 2007, FH staff has been busy with local farmers in developing and testing a pilot coffee washing station which is locally-owned and

operated. Burundian farmers are working with FH staff to improve production quantity and quality, and complete business training courses. Currently, FH Burundi is working with 900 coffee growers in three cooperatives. By partnering through cooperatives, coffee growers have found that they are not only able to support one another in their work, but that they are able to provide micro-loans to each other, creating a group safety-net during times of economic hardship.

**What's next?**

During 2010 FH is looking to expand training in business management and marketing, which will increase productivity and promote successful local ownership. While most exported Burundian coffee is sold at auction, direct sales are also permitted. As FH business advisors continue to promote business management, it is anticipated that additional locally-owned coffee washing stations will develop- modeled after the pilot project. An increase in locally-owned washing stations will have a dramatic effect on Burundian farmers. As with our pilot project, direct sales will lead to more profit in local farmers pockets. This added income brings access to economic activity, education, and healthcare, allowing families to thrive.

# A Mother's Care

*Mothers are getting training in family health and nutrition and sharing all they are learning with their neighbors. Communities are growing healthier and children are growing stronger.*

*"Many of the things we need can wait. The child cannot. Right now is the time his bones are being formed, his blood is being made, his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer "Tomorrow". His name is "Today"." -Gabriela Mistral, 1948*

A child's first five years are critical to her development and future success. Adequate nutrition ensures proper brain development, strengthens immunity, promotes physical growth and strength, and develops good eating habits that will carry on to adulthood.

In Burundi, the World Health Organization has reported that more than one in three children under age 5 are underweight. Additionally, more than half of Burundi's young children are suffering from stunted growth due to poor nutrition. As malnutrition and diarrhea claim numerous children's lives, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has reported that Burundi's under-5 mortality ranks as one of the highest in the world, with 1 in 5 children dying before their fifth birthday.

These deaths are preventable. Burundian communities have demonstrated their resilience through years of violent conflict and displacement. Burundian parents have remained committed to love and provide for their children's well-being despite significant hardships. FH remains committed to walking alongside the communities of Burundi, creating programs that compliment their strengths. Together we have begun working with women who are mothers and leaders in their communities. These leaders receive education in health, nutrition, and household sanitation. As they gain skills in teaching community health messages, these "mother-leaders" become trainers for their community members and neighborhoods.

A simple program, such as this one, focusing on empowerment and local initiative can have dramatic effects. Research has shown health education focusing on home care to be highly successful, with significant positive impact on child mortality.

The mothers participating in the FH program call themselves Abitanga, or "people who give themselves". Giving of their time to impact the children of their community, the Abitanga recognize that the future of their children has already begun. Now, with their commitment to community education, that future is promising.

*(FH Burundi is celebrating the recent training of 73 mother leaders, who are now planning to train over 1000 mothers in their communities.)*



**Leader Mothers train others how to create and care for vegetable sack gardens**



## Supporting Burundi's daughters

### WORLDWIDE:

- 70% of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty today are women
- two-thirds of the world's 876 million illiterates are women
- two-thirds of primary school age children denied education are girls
- women produce nearly 80% of the food globally, but receive less than 10% of agricultural assistance

(Statistics from: CORD, 2010)

### WE WANT TO CHANGE THIS.

In Burundi, FH Staff asked school headmasters, "What do you hope to see in your school?" Some answered, "more toilets", others said, "more teachers", then the final headmaster interviewed resolutely declared, "Yes, but we need more girls".

Coming from a female headmaster, this was particularly meaningful to staff members.

Often girls begin primary school at age 5 but are then obligated to stay home and work, some as early as age 7, many never returning to school.

FH Burundi's staff members are working and living within the communities they serve, promoting and encouraging community leaders, pastors, parents, and political leaders in children's rights and child protection.

Your child sponsorships are not only investments in providing girls and boys with an education; they also help to support families and communities in livelihood development, agriculture, and income generating activities, ensuring that children will not only begin school, but graduate too.

**"Some answered, 'more toilets', others said, 'more teachers', finally one advocated, 'Yes, but we need more girls.'"**

## President Nkurunziza visits FH programs

Burundi's President, Pierre Nkurunziza, visited FH program sites in Eastern Burundi this past fall. Focusing on returnee reintegration in the Ruyigi province, FH programs aid in the comprehensive reintegration of families who are returning to Burundi after having been displaced by civil war.

Stress caused by violent conflict is often exacerbated by daily life challenges and environmental concerns, making for complex situations which require programs to address a myriad of issues. Burundian families who are returning home are facing challenges related to housing, health and nutrition, education, employment, and environmental concerns.

The Returnee Reintegration Program has multiple components which address many of these issues. School construction projects not only lay the foundation for education, but they also provide much-needed jobs. Tree nurseries bring employment and technical skills in agroforestry and conservation. Livestock programs help families to have natural fertilizer and more abundant crops. All of the programs benefit both returning families and resident families, promoting trust and reconciliation as they work together to rebuild their nation. The President's visit confirmed the successful results of these programs and we thank God for this.



**There are many ways you can partner with us. For more information, please contact your local FH office.**

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# Coming Together



*Hailing from all across the globe, our partners represent separate histories and different struggles, yet we share the same God, the same purpose. A shared future.*

