

Promote people's health



Empower poor communities!

FORCES DES UNIVERSITAIRES CONTRE LE SIDA ET PROMOTION DE LA SANTE

FIELD VISIT MISSION REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

FUCOS is a non-profit organization created in 2000 and legally registered in 2002. It has the mission to reach out to marginalized communities in Burundi with education, skills building and support. Also, FUCOS works to fight against HIV/AIDS and other STIs, to promote family welfare, and to find innovative solutions to counter gender based violence in youth, all with a specific interest in the underprivileged and marginalized communities of Burundi. It also works on gender equality and women's empowerment projects. Currently and since 2014, FUCOS works in partnership with BFI (Burundi Friends International) to build peaceful communities and empower underprivileged rural communities of Batwa in Burundi.

GIKOMA and SAKINYONGA are two of Matana commune's villages in Bururi province, where more than 2000 Batwa live; all genders together. Towards the end of 2018, FUCOS, under personal support of Dr Hubert NKAMICANIYE a student from Texas, in the USA, conducted a field visit to check with real situation in the two villages following the report by FUCOS antenna in Southern Region on the two Batwa villages namely GIKOMA and SAKINYONGA of Matana commune, Bururi province. FUCOS team, under the lead Leonard NGENDAKUMANA, Legal Representative, accompanied by Dr Hubert NKAMICANIYE, supporter of the field mission, met nearly 800 Batwa in GIKOMA and 1200 Batwa in SAKINYONGA. In terms of report of the field visit, the team has produced a Documentary CD which shows clearly the real life of Batwa from the two above-mentioned villages ([kindly visit this link that dully details the real life of the visited communities](#)). In the two villages that our team got in, there were visibly activities in the two communities especially for women practicing archaic pottery but according to what the community members said, this business is far to be rewarding as of today. Nowadays, Batwa women face two major problems in the pottery business: the lack of own land which implies that they do not have access to where to get clay for pottery. In addition, because bushes are protected by the environment rule to follow climate and environmental conventions, men are no longer allowed to practice hunting; they cannot cultivate without either lands or hoes, they are marginalized by the two other groups of people (Hutu and Tutsi) so they can't get any job from them. Across the community of more than 2000 persons, the team has been surprised to notice that no toilet could be found. When this question was

Promote people's health and empower rural and underserved communities!

asked, members of the community answered that all Batwa members in that community use the surrounding bushes thus this being another reason why Hutu and Tutsi disregard and hate Batwa so as they are the cause of environmental pollution. Sometimes, Hutu and Tutsi decide to chase them from the nearby because of their behavior which is very dangerous and in turn can bring different diseases such as diarrheal diseases. The Batwa community doesn't benefit from certain governmental support to people such as health insurance cards for the indigent. Batwa emphasized and pledged that the communal authorities do not consider Batwa as the other two categories of Burundian people (Hutu and Tutsi). Succinctly, Batwa are far marginalised and looked at with scorn and contempt.

II. During the Field Visit

When the team arrived at the field, a mass of people and some of local representatives from the village and surrounding area came to welcome the team. GIKOMA Batwa community village is made of more than 800 Batwa people, men, women and children included while SAKINYONGA accounts for more than 1200 people. In both the Batwa villages that were visited, the number of either women or children was visibly largely greater than the number of men. When asked the reason why the number of men was less, Batwa community members reported that Men naturally used to vacate for different regions hoping to get jobs from other people from the two other ethnic groups (HUTU and TUTSI), because those from the surrounding regions hate them, and cannot accept to give them jobs. The life of Batwa in either GIKOMA or SAKINYONGA Batwa village is miserable and in danger as shown by the video produced to report the field mission ([see the link](#)). We regretted and were surprised to notice that across the entire community made of more than 2,000 persons exists without either a house, toilet or potable water to drink (no food, water or where to sleep). Most importantly, one family has an average of from 6 to 10 persons. Due to the lack of support, Batwa are still giving birth in miserable conditions at home, some of them highlighted some heavy consequences to the fact of giving birth in hard conditions and sometimes, this leads to the new born or mother's death, sometimes to the death of both. During our visit, we brought them food support, but unfortunately, we were not able to cover the two visited villages. Therefore, we were obliged to choose one, GIKOMA, which will then serve our team as pilot village at the beginning of our interventions.

III. Perspective Master plan

After the field visit, FUCOS under the Lead of Leonard Ngendakumana, Legal Representative, and in collaboration with Dr Hubert NKAMICANIYE who is leading UBUNTU ENTERPRISE INTERNATIONAL, plan to conduct series of interventions in favor of our fellows, Batwa people in the limit of our possibilities. In several other areas, the Batwa communities got chance to have supporters whereas Batwa of GIKOMA and SAKINYONGA are still behind and continue to suffer. We also plan to set an advocacy plan to both administration and partners to seriously tackle issues faced by Batwa communities in the above sites.

Through supporting projects to Batwa, we plan to organize workshops and trainings to change their mindset related to their rights, modern trade, agriculture and livestock breeding.

IV. ILLUSTRATION PHOTOS



A family that we found hopelessly at home, Vulnerable man sitting in front of his wife and two of 7 children according to what he reported through our conversation. In their House, we couldn't find a sign of life such as food, water, bed or even cooking tools.



Activities in Batwa community is divided according to gender: women focus on pottery while men vacate for unknown journeys searching for jobs because their hunting life is no longer possible nowadays. This mutwa woman found at home sitting hopelessly beside some archaic clay – based products which naturally are hard to manufacture but can generate nothing as income.



One of Batwa typical house we found with no roof. Some houses are unbelievable, the family owning this house with nothing seemed to have shame to speak to our team. When our team arrived in the village,



BUJABA is his name, this is his house he lives in, it was difficult to believe if this man of eight children lives in this house. Asked where his wife and the 8 children as it has been reported by his fellows were, he simply responded that he

we found a woman with her 4 children in front of the house no equipment either in or besides, other Batwa delivered to our team that the woman lives in the house without a husband.



didn't know but he confirmed that he was sure that tonight they would be there and ready to sleep in the house above.



Leonard NGENDAKUMANA, chair of FUCOS got in the house with MAYABU and supported her joy. Who gave birth? MAYABU'S daughter: replies MAYABU. Does she have a husband? No: replied MAYABU. This is the situation in MAYABU's house

MAYABU, is the name of this old woman behind Leonard. In this house, a special and good news inside the house, a day before a new born in this house Oooh, what good news in Batwa community, They bring our team to visit specially and support the news.



Leonard NGENDAKUMANA, in MAYABU house. MAYABU lost her husband in 2016, and live in this house with 9 children, among them, RUFONYA Jacqueline who had given birth to a child at home in unbelievable conditions, no either food, clothes, water or where to sleep. 9 children are reported in MAYABU's small house.



Leonard NGENDAKUMANA brought out the new born to be celebrated by the entire of the organizing team. At one hand, the team enjoyed to see a new born; at another hand, we regret the conditions in which the child was born while being afraid that the child could die within days.



At the end of the field visit, the team provided food support to Batwa community from GIKOMA village, Matana commune. the visit brought hope to the Batwa community and hope to continue supporting the poorest and miserable but fellows Batwa.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the administration: FUCOS recommends the administration, from local to high level to reconsider the special status of Batwa community and take specifically care them. We recommend administration to prioritize Batwa community while selecting vulnerable groups for social support. Local administration to report about the true situation of Batwa communities to the high-level administration and decision makers.

To partners: Batwa is a needy population. FUCOS recommends partners to include Batwa communities in their key population to focus on in their planned interventions. To advocate for Batwa wherever they are, to mobilize efforts in order to save Batwa communities' problems as much as possible.

To Batwa people: to save their situation implies their mindset change, FUCOS recommends Batwa community members start changing their mindset, no intervention can be possible without their involvement by changing mindset, then they start struggling for their rights.

VI. CONCLUSION

The outcome of the field visit has been appreciated by both partners: **FUCOS** under the lead of Leonard NGENDAKUMANA and Hubert NKAMICANIYE who is leading **UBUNTU ENTERPRISE INTERNATIONAL (U.E.I)**. Both realized that it is not easy to save all fundamental problems of Batwa communities but however, there is possibility to intervene and help coming over little by little, the reason why both partners committed to start by reaching out GIKOMA village, so we can move forward and reach out SAKINYONGA village latterly and so on. On its end, FUCOS addresses its deep thankful feelings to Dr Hubert NKAMICANIYE for his support to fulfill its Commitment.