Our impact
BURUNDI
WHERE WE WORK IN BURUNDI

About the data

Baseline data in this report was collected by Send a Cow staff in March 2015 from a randomly selected sample of 263 households in 30 self-help groups in the two districts. Of those sampled, 70% were female and 30% male. Impact data was collected in December 2017 from a randomly selected sample of 265 households in 30 self-help groups in the two districts. Of those sampled, 71% were female and 29% male. This report also draws on the end-of-project evaluation report conducted by Venuste Muhamyankaka of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Civil Society Alliance, Rwanda, in January 2018.
Introduction
by Serge Nkurunziza,
Director General of Livestock,
Government of Burundi

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this report showcasing the tremendous success of Send a Cow’s first major project in Burundi.

Send a Cow Burundi has proved to have an excellent understanding of the potential of rural communities in our country. Its holistic approach, which tackles social issues as well as agricultural and economic ones, has helped farmers transform their lives.

Families supported by the project are now eating healthily. Farmers, mostly women, are diversifying their incomes and saving money. They are managing their livestock in a way that improves both welfare and productivity.

We are delighted to have built a mutually beneficial partnership. Send a Cow Burundi has trained Government extension workers, who have passed on new farming techniques and good practice to other communities. We have also shared learning at district level.

The project leaves an impressive legacy. By building the skills of Government extension workers as well as farmers, Send a Cow Burundi ensures that its work will continue.

Our hope now is that Send a Cow Burundi will be able to expand its programme, reaching more communities in other districts. On behalf of the Government, I look forward to continuing this fruitful partnership for the good of our country.

The Challenge

Many subsistence farmers in Burundi have nothing to sell and no income. Yet the land is full of agricultural potential - its soil is rich and many people keep some livestock. The country has two growing seasons, February to May and September to December, which means that some fast growing crops can produce three harvests in a year.

In 2014, Burundi was ranked as the ‘hungriest country in the world’ by the Global Hunger Index. While visiting households and conducting the baseline data survey, Send a Cow staff were shocked at the degree of poverty that they witnessed with many commenting that it was ‘the worst poverty’ they had ever seen. The problem lies in the farmers’ lack of skills, knowledge and confidence. Because of this, many farmers endure up to six hunger months a year. Any livestock they own is often unproductive. They live in poor quality housing. Women and girls are overworked but have little power in the home or the community.

The country has also suffered from years of political unrest, which resurfaced in 2016, causing food prices to rise and forcing some people to flee their land.

After assessing the needs of the communities in Mwaro and Bujumbura Rural, it was clear that Send a Cow could offer solutions to many of their problems and give farmers the skills they needed to transform their lives.

Source: UN/WHO/World Bank/UNicef
Some 93% of families in Send a Cow’s Jimbere project are now food secure – up from just 25% at the start of the three-year project. Women are taking up leadership positions. Families are making their farms productive and profitable.

These are just some of the successes from Send a Cow’s first major project in Burundi, my home country. Burundi has long been a byword for poverty, conflict and hunger. But I know it is changing – and I am delighted that Send a Cow is part of that change.

What has led to our success here? Of course, the dedication and insight of our staff and partners have been key. Our funders, notably UK Aid from the British people, have made it all possible. My heartfelt thanks to them all.

But most of all, it is thanks to the farmers for building their own resilience. Send a Cow found very fertile ground for our programme. I was delighted to see that:

- **People have a thirst for learning.** One farmer told Send a Cow’s CEO: “We learn in the morning, we apply in the afternoon.” For me, that is the motto of the programme.

- **Communities are determined to use every opportunity to get out of poverty.** People are grouping together and building their capacity. They are trying to help themselves. Community groups seize every opportunity that comes their way and strive to open up new ones.

- **Communities are overcoming ethnic divisions.** Halfway through our programme there was political unrest, which raised the ghost of the ethnic conflict that caused such turmoil in Burundi from 1993-2005. But it did not happen. Communities resisted attempts to divide them along ethnic lines.

- **Farmers are willing to change their mindsets.** They were ready to adapt their methods of farming, the livestock they keep, and their perception of women’s roles. This was reflected in the wider community, where people were eager to copy Send a Cow’s farming techniques, taking ownership of the project and making it work for them.

- **The Government is keen to work in partnership.** Send a Cow has worked directly with 800 families in Burundi. By training a network of Government extension workers, our programme reached a further 400. This approach increases our cost-effectiveness and sustainability, as well as embedding our work in the community.

Now we want to build on our achievements so far. You will find details of our plans on page 18. We are eager to hear from new prospective partners who share our values and our belief in a brighter Burundi. Thank you for your support so far.

### Executive Summary

**By Andre Nsengiyumva, Country Director for Send a Cow Burundi/Rwanda**

The Jimbere project, which translates as ‘moving forwards’, aimed to enable 800 smallholder farming families (4,800 people) in 30 self-help groups in two districts to:

- Improve crop and livestock production
- Increase food security
- Increase income
- Create employment opportunities
- Increase women’s empowerment and gender equality.

In neighbouring areas, 400 additional families were given agricultural training from Government extension workers.
Send a Cow has a small team of eight staff who implement our programmes directly. They also work hand-in-hand with Government extension workers, as well as Send a Cow’s own network of peer farmer trainers.

The extension workers were trained in Send a Cow’s holistic approach. They then passed on this training to farmers in their communities, reaching a further 400 families. Feedback from the extension workers has been positive. Although they will no longer receive an allowance from Send a Cow once the project finishes, they say they will continue to teach the techniques.

Send a Cow also gives some farmers involved in the project extra training to become ‘peer farmer trainers’. This equips them to pass on their skills to other families, often by demonstrating how the techniques work on their own land. In addition, Send a Cow encourages all farmers to pass on their new skills informally, e.g. to neighbours. Many farmers take great pride in becoming teachers in this way.

By building the capacity of extension workers and farmers, Send a Cow increases the reach of its programme, embeds it in the community, and improves its sustainability.

Send a Cow values its partnerships and learns a great deal from them. However, we always remain accountable ourselves for the money that donors entrust to us. We manage our finances carefully, following strict auditing and anti-corruption procedures.
Land and livestock

Land

Send a Cow’s training covers sustainable organic agricultural and improved animal management techniques.

Farmers learn how to integrate and maximise all their resources, particularly by composting manure to improve the soil for growing vegetables. That means they can produce enough to feed their families and a surplus to sell, even on a small plot of land.

In 2016, rains during both growing seasons were shortened but extremely heavy. This was caused by the natural climate phenomena El Niño and La Niña, both thought to be exacerbated by climate change. This caused dry spells, as well as flooding, soil erosion, and the destruction of some crops. However, Send a Cow farmers reported their training in soil and water conservation helped them through these tough times.

Livestock

All families received good quality animals. Some were placed by Send a Cow; others were the offspring of those placements, passed on by their owners to other group members.

The original proposal was to give dairy cows, or goats and hens, depending on each group’s needs and capacities. When groups expressed a clear preference for pigs over goats (they produce larger litters with a shorter gestation period, so the financial benefits are more rapid) staff accepted this and changed the programme.

Pigs are also excellent ‘recyclers’ as they eat crop by-products in the fields. Some farmers reported that their neighbours helped them by bringing the pigs food from their own fields. Some groups were reluctant to accept pigs instead of dairy cows. However, most farmers were quick to change their mindsets once they saw from their neighbours how effective pigs could be.

FARMERS CORRECTLY CARRYING OUT FARMING TECHNIQUES

On average, our farmers knew five sustainable agricultural techniques once they had worked with Send a Cow, and seven at improved animal management techniques. This graphic shows the rate at which their knowledge improved.

Data based upon four or more agricultural techniques and three or more animal management techniques.
During the project, farmers earned and saved enough money from their farm that they were able to buy and/or rent additional land.

Send a Cow always works with community self-help groups, encouraging members to support one another both practically and emotionally. Elderly people and disabled people are always proactively included.

Our gender and social development training covers disability and age issues, while our agricultural training can be adapted to suit people’s abilities. For example, techniques such as kitchen gardens and raised beds can enable people with mobility issues to grow vegetables.

Some 30% of people in the sample describe themselves as having one or more disability (difficulty with walking, seeing, hearing, cognition, self-care or communication).

We have disaggregated the impact data from our Burundi project to examine how people with disabilities are doing. The sample size is too small to be statistically robust, and does not take into account different levels of disability. However, it does suggest that disabled people are making good progress, often at a similar rate to those with no disability.
In Burundi, men frequently seek work away from home. Farm and home work is left to the women, but is not always recognised as work. As women lack skills, their productivity is low.

Scarcely anybody at the start of the project said they were fully employed on their own farms. By the end, the vast majority of respondents were. This is especially important for women’s empowerment: they now have a status in their home and community, and can take pride in what they do.

Farmers are also beginning to employ others, mainly for seasonal work such as harvesting, but also for general year-round farm work.

The shift shown here has happened in just three years. We believe this is just the start: more and more employment is likely to be created as a direct result of the project in years to come, long after it has ended.

All farmers in Send a Cow projects are trained in record keeping and business skills, giving them a good basis on which to develop small businesses. As farmers become able to buy more goods and services, this will also create employment in the wider community.
The Jimbere project not only enabled smallholder farmers to be fully employed on their own farms, it also created more employment opportunities for people in the wider community.
The challenge

Burundi is one of the world’s hungriest countries. It is the norm for rural communities to experience hunger months: especially in September and October, but also possibly in February, March, April and November. As elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, families often rely greatly on starchy carbohydrates to fill them up.

Send a Cow’s approach

We train families in ‘farming for nutrition’ – growing a variety of crops and vegetables rather than just one or two staple crops. We teach them the importance of vegetables, and show them how to grow these in kitchen gardens. They also gain protein from their livestock: milk, eggs, and some meat. And by selling produce, they can buy food that they cannot produce on their own farms.

In 2016, Burundi suffered from poor harvests due to climate shocks. Political unrest also contributed to a rise in food prices. While this can be an advantage for farmers with food to sell, many subsistence farmers rely on purchased food during the hunger months. Nonetheless, thanks to their new farming skills and their savings, farmers in our projects reported that they had been less affected than their neighbours.

Our training also covers the importance of hygiene in food preparation. Farmers build drying racks out of locally available materials on which they can leave utensils to dry in the sun off the ground. They also make simple handwashers known as tip-taps.

We also train farmers in how to build fuel-saving stoves out of clay. These stoves lead to reduced deforestation, and less smoke in the home.
Burundi has one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in the world. Some 58% of under-5s are estimated to be malnourished.

Send a Cow hopes to launch a new project in Burundi with a focus on child malnutrition and women’s empowerment. This will draw on research we carried out into child malnutrition in the Jimbere project. We surveyed 50 under-5s in families involved in our projects, and 41 from neighbouring communities who were not involved.

The results show that children involved in Send a Cow projects are faring considerably better than other children in the neighbourhood. However, there are still high rates of child malnutrition in our projects, particularly among girls. This shows how necessary it is to tackle gender issues alongside food issues.

The data also shows that the over-three age group is the worst affected by malnutrition.

This suggests that we need to focus on children’s diets once they are weaned.

We believe that, as families in the Jimbere project expand their farms, produce more food and gain income, they will be better placed to give their children balanced diets.

Send a Cow Burundi has committed to fundraising for a new project that will tackle the issues head-on. We know from our work elsewhere that the key to improving children’s nourishment is empowering women with knowledge, skills, and the ability to make decisions about family resources. We are designing a project with this as a goal, drawing on our learning from Jimbere.

We will also collect data about child malnutrition in our baseline surveys, so that we can track how individual children are improving and therefore evaluate our own projects better.

58% of children under the age of five in Burundi suffer from malnutrition (source: Unicef)

This infographic includes children with a weight-for-age Z score of -2 or above, according to WHO definitions.
Bonaventure Mbayahaga and Séraphine Nyabenda at their home in Bujumbura District with the younger of their six children. At the start of the project, the family lived on Bonaventure's father's land in a small, poorly constructed house.

"Thanks to the project, we've been able to build a beautiful house paved with cement...the house is lit by solar panels. The next thing we want to do is build a house as good as the ones in town," says Bonaventure. "We are proud of our lives now," says Séraphine.

Bonaventure surveys his land. The couple owned none at the start of the project. They joined a group supported by Send a Cow, and learned agricultural skills. With money from their harvests, they were able to buy their own land. They now own four hectares, some of which they rent out. They employ one person permanently, and more on a seasonal basis.

"The training helped me change my mindset, and taught me new techniques," says Bonaventure. "We kept our spirits up, and waited for the time when we could realise our dreams."

Bonaventure tends the tomatoes. A basket sells for 30,000 Burundi Francs (£12; $17). These were the first vegetables he and Séraphine grew after their training. They now also grow maize, cassava, beans, green leafy vegetables, sugar cane, mango and avocado, as well as napier grass to feed their livestock.

Bonaventure is now a peer farmer trainer (see p5), passing on the training he received such as composting.

"I have trained some members of my group. I have also given seedlings to one neighbour, and tomatoes to another. I feel very happy to help others."
Bonaventure and Séraphine were given a sow in 2016 that was passed on from another group member from Send a Cow. She has produced a litter of five piglets: two have been passed on to other group members, and three sold.

Bonaventure also buys bulls, which he fattens and sells on at a profit of around 300,000 BIF (£121; $168). Séraphine has bought goats, and sold kids to buy palm oil seedlings. The manure from all the livestock is vital for enriching the soil.

“We want a dairy cow, to provide more manure and milk for the children,” says Séraphine.

Séraphine prepares lunch. The family eat whatever they grow, and can also buy meat or fish two or three times a week. They enjoy eating and chatting together. After their evening meal, the children can do their homework thanks to light from the solar panel. Séraphine says:

“Before, the children did not have good food – just one meal a day. Their clothes were shabby, and their education was poor. Now they consume a healthy balanced diet, which means they can learn better. We can pay for their school equipment and uniform.”

Bonaventure teaches Séraphine sewing. With money from their farm, the couple bought a sewing machine for 350,000 BIF (£141; $196), and built a shop next door which serves as a tailor’s and a tea shop. Sewing now brings in 40,000 Burundi Francs (£16; $22) per month.

The couple plans to get loans from their group and a bank for their next steps.

“We want a grocery shop, and a motorcycle to use as a taxi... We hope our children will go on to university,” says Séraphine. “My wife and I have a good relationship,” says Bonaventure. “We discuss projects together, do the work together, and manage our income transparently. It’s the secret of our success.”
Burundi’s fertile soil means that when farmers apply their new skills, they get results.

At the start of the project, every person had an income below $1.25 per day – often well below. While Burundi’s economy is such that a dollar does go a long way, this still meant that people were living in appalling poverty. But by the end of the project, three-quarters of people were earning more than $1.25 per day.

Equally importantly, families now have a greater number of income streams. They are selling cassava, milk, piglets, coffee, rice and vegetables. This renders them less vulnerable to shocks such as harvest failure. Furthermore, their training is enabling them to see and seize opportunities. They are investing in their farms, for example, selling piglets to buy a bull. Many are buying more land to expand their farms.

Most farmers in our projects are women, and they now have some economic clout. They no longer have to wait for their husbands to buy essential items, but can do so themselves. This is a huge boost to their self-esteem, and they can command more respect in their homes and communities.

“I have used money that I saved in a savings association to rent land to cultivate. Even though I didn’t have much money, I know it is always good to save for the future as you never know what will happen.”

– Emelanie Niyonzima, farmer, Bujumbura

Income

Average Income per Day in US $

Baseline

Impact

$2.9

$0.3 or less

1.7 income generating activities

5.77 activities on farm, 1.15 off farm

Average Number of Income-Generating Activities

Baseline

Impact
Savings and assets

Send a Cow helps groups form Villages Savings and Loans Associations. These are simply structured and can be understood by people with little financial literacy. Farmers in Burundi took to this idea enthusiastically.

Some operate on a ‘merry-go-round’ system: group members pay in small amounts each month, then take it in turns to draw out a large sum.

Send a Cow also helps farmers access more formal schemes, such as bank accounts and credit institutions.

Groups also save communally. For example, one group is aiming to buy a machine to remove rice husks, so they can set up a business buying rice and selling it on at a higher price.

As well as saving money, farmers have made savings in kind. They have bought livestock, or the means to start a small business such as a sewing machine. These are all investments that can help them achieve their goals and improve their families’ futures.

Savings and assets are also essential for helping farmers build their resilience to shocks such as drought. They helped many farmers withstand the poor growing season of 2016, and shortened their recovery from this setback.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saving mechanism</th>
<th>% of farmers saving (baseline)</th>
<th>% of farmers saving (impact)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merry Go Round (Tontine / Ikimina)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Savings and Loans Associations</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal bank account</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile bank</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average number of saving mechanisms per family</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.73</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.36</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before the project, farmers earned an average of just $109 a year. By the end, they were saving an average of $110. This shows that farmers are not just earning more, but are also saving more.

**$110**

Average savings (impact)
“Before Send a Cow Burundi’s gender training, my husband drank a lot. Now my husband and I have a good agreement. We work together in planning and carrying out activities, and in managing our income in a transparent way.”

Cassilde Sindakira, farmer, Bujumbura
Women and influence

Gender inequality is a significant issue in Burundi. Most of the farmers in our projects are women, including many widows, and gender training is a vital part of our programmes.

Communities have reported that, traditionally, men control resources and decide how to spend money. Women have little access to money, and their status and visibility in the community is low. Girls may have to contribute to household and farm chores such as collecting water and firewood at a young age, disrupting their education.

Some communities also report that it is culturally acceptable for husbands to beat their wives, and that men frequently spend household income on alcohol.

Women attending our training report a rise in their self-esteem. As they start to make their farms productive, their status in the community also rises. By earning their own income, they can make spending decisions themselves.

Husbands are always invited to attend training with their wives. They learn to work together, and trust and respect one another. As their farms start to become more productive, men can often give up the other jobs – brickmaking, labouring on other people’s land etc – and instead become more involved in family and community life.
Send a Cow is pleased to have completed the Jimbere project: our first in Burundi. We are proud of what the farmers have achieved and the progress they have made, especially considering the climate shocks they experienced and the small size of the Send a Cow team. We know we can build on our learning and have a greater impact if we invest more into the Send a Cow team and build our capacity. Below you can see some of our key learnings from the Jimbere project and how we plan to strengthen our work in Burundi. We are in the process of designing new projects and are currently seeking new partners.

**Learning**
- Improved farming skills have led to greater food security and dietary diversity
- Farmers are adapting their mindsets and changing the way they manage livestock and the type of livestock they keep
- Farmers are leaving poverty behind and building their resilience by diversifying their incomes
- Farmers are gaining self-respect and status through their work
- Families are saving and investing in their futures
- Disabled people are included in the project and benefiting greatly from it
- Women are taking leadership positions, and are more confident in their ability to influence others
- Project farmers and government extension workers are passing on sustainable farming techniques to the wider community
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**Next steps**
- Increase our training in environmental protection to help farmers build their resilience to climate shocks
- Increase staff capacity to use a farm systems approach to integrate crops and livestock
- Work with partners to support them in their animal placement projects
- Develop community-run agrivet shops
- Help families maximise their existing livestock, rather than providing animals
- Improved farming skills led to greater food security and dietary diversity
- Help farmers develop entrepreneurial mindsets
- Support people in developing farming enterprises, particularly young people and those without land
- Help people access finance
- Help groups develop marketing cooperatives
- Train Send a Cow staff on the barriers to development for disabled people
- Forge partnerships with local disabled people’s organisations to improve our provision for disabled people and ensure nobody is left behind
- Learn from other Send a Cow projects which have had great success using tools such as Transformative Household Methodology to improve gender relations in the home
- Tackle child nutrition through women’s empowerment
- Build staff capacity to carry out community assessment to make sure our projects benefit all
- Continue to work with partners such as the Burundi Government to reach more people
“Before the project, my family and I usually took only one meal a day but now we have begun to take three... My vision is to have a taxi by 2020. This will allow me access to Bujumbura markets where I can get a higher price for agricultural products. In this way I will maximize the profits from my hard work.”

Pontien Tuhabonyimana, farmer, Mwaro

There are relatively few international non-governmental development organisations working in Burundi. In part this is due to political unrest, which in 2015 led to some violence and the large-scale displacement of people. For a time, it was hard for our staff to move around freely due to the risks posed. But they were never directly threatened themselves.

At the time of writing, Burundi is peaceful. We continually assess the situation and review our security plan. We judge the risk to our operations to be small, and are therefore keen to expand our work here. In 2016 we carried out a needs assessment in Mwaro District and found that no international NGOs were operating there. However, there were a number of community groups who had formed with the aim of collectively improving their situation.

We hope that the political situation in Burundi will continue to stabilise, and that more NGOs will seek to work with its dynamic communities. We are keen to find new development partners to complement our work in Mwaro District.

Above: approximate cost per person in the Jimbere Project

NGOs in Burundi
By Anna Campbell-Johnston
Programme Co-ordinator, Burundi

Number of people
4,800
Cost per person per year
£43
Cost of project
£621,576*
over 3 years

Cost per person
approx
£129

Cost per person
per year
£43

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Thanks to all the farmers, staff, volunteers, funders and partners who have made the Jimbere Project in Burundi a success.

Thank you to Anthony and Sandra Herbert for supporting this report.

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