International Medical Corps

Burundi

International Medical Corps has operated in Burundi since 1995, implementing emergency and development programs to address the needs of vulnerable people, including those in areas of armed conflict.

We work in more than half of Burundi's 18 provinces, including Bujumbura, Bururi, Cankuzo, Gitega, Kayanza, Kirundo, Makamba, Muramvya, Muyinga, Rumonge, Ruyigi and Rutana. Our programs span primary healthcare, nutrition and gender-based violence treatment and prevention. In 2019, we also responded to a massive outbreak of malaria in the country, and contributed to national preparedness efforts to prevent the spread of Ebola from its neighbor, the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

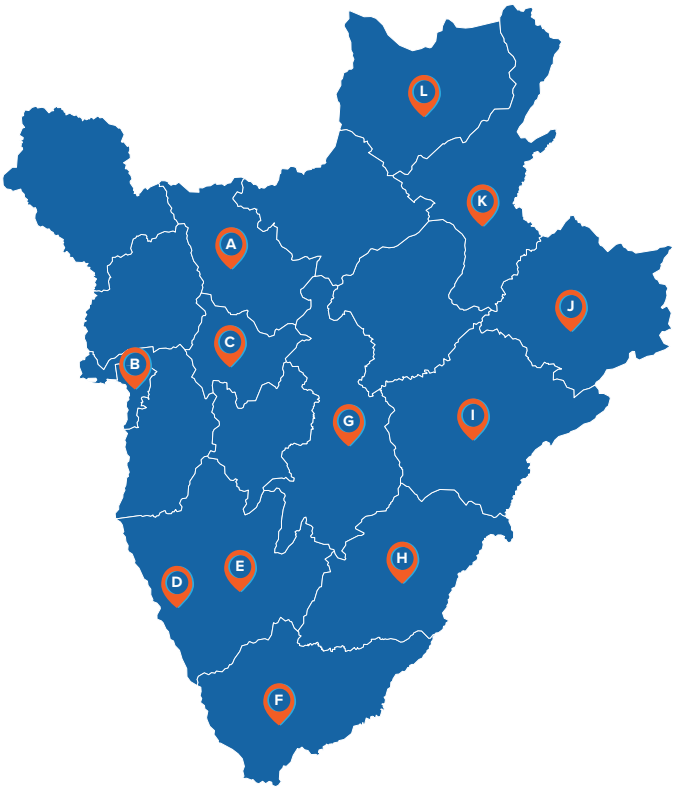
Throughout all of our programs, we work to strengthen Burundi's health system by supplying partners with medicine and medical equipment, and by offering the Ministry of Health the technical support required to develop effective national health strategies.

OUR APPROACH: STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITY AND BUILDING SELF-RELIANCE

International Medical Corps in Burundi works to move communities toward self-reliance. Through our interventions, we encourage communities to adopt best practices in health and nutrition. To achieve this, we engage local leaders, encourage the establishment of community-based organizations (such as health management committees) and train local health professionals and community health volunteers. We conduct activities, including home visits and local campaigns, to promote both the value of good health and nutrition, as well as the importance of proper hygiene and sanitation practices in achieving these goals.

All of these steps have one objective: ensuring that the skills and knowledge we provide through training remain a part of the community long after we leave, fostering a heightened level of self-reliance. If disaster strikes, the communities we assisted will have the capacity to be their own first responders because they now possess the tools, knowledge and confidence to face adversity.

WHERE WE WORK



- A KAYANZA
- B BUJUMBURA RURAL
- C MURAMVYA
- D RUMONGE
- E BURURI
- F MAKAMBA
- G GITEGA
- H RUTANA
- I RUYIGI
- J CANKUZO
- K MUYINGA
- L KIRUNDO

NUTRITION

DEVELOPMENT FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DFAP)

International Medical Corps recently ended a five-year food-security program designed to increase health and nutrition levels among communities in Burundi's northeastern Muyinga province. Our objective was to reduce stunting among children under 5 by 10%. To achieve this goal, we supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in its implementation of infant and young-child feeding (IYCF) practices and included MoH staff in our extensive training sessions designed for local health professionals. We also supported the MoH in its efforts to establish a long-term food-security and nutrition strategy across the country.

PROMOTION OF INFANT AND YOUNG-CHILD FEEDING (IYCF) BEST PRACTICES

In Burundi, chronic malnutrition affects more than half of all children. Promoting optimal IYCF practices is an essential part of International Medical Corps' community-based nutrition strategies, and is the cornerstone of our nutrition Interventions in food-security programs aimed at reducing stunting during a child's critical first 1,000 days of life. To achieve this, we worked with the MoH to develop national IYCF training modules and developed messages and posters designed to promote the benefits of IYCF and change behaviors around it.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS (SBCC)

International Medical Corps includes SBCC strategies in all of our Burundi programs. This entails conducting barrier analyses early in our programs, then using the results to improve the methods for educating communities on good health and nutrition practices, leading to adoption of these practices. We also use home visits and child care groups led by "lead mothers" who are trained in best practices. In a multi-year assistance program funded by the U.S. Agency of International Development from 2008–2012, we supported nearly 200 lead mothers, along with 1,440 community health workers, as they successfully promoted key health and nutrition practices in communities covering three provinces. As a result, we saw an increase in the number of children under 12 months of age completing the recommended immunization schedule, more mothers using fluids to rehydrate their children following episodes of diarrhea and a three-fold increase in the number of households using an improved toilet, from 6.8% to 21.5%.

EBOLA PREPAREDNESS AND PREVENTION

Following an outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August 2018—now the second-largest outbreak in history—Burundi was one of nine neighboring priority countries identified by the World Health Organization as vulnerable to the outbreak's spread. International Medical Corps is currently contributing to ongoing preparedness efforts to prevent the spread of Ebola in 10 out of the country's 21 priority districts. Our activities include training rapid response teams; implementing surveillance, reporting and isolation procedures at points of entry; and creating isolations rooms for suspected cases at five hospitals.

MALARIA RESPONSE

Burundi experienced a malaria epidemic in 2019, with more than 6 million new cases reported since January—a number equal to half of the country's population of 12 million. International Medical Corps is helping the MoH respond to the ongoing malaria outbreak in the four northern provinces (Kayanza, Kirundo, Muyinga and Ngozi), reaching more than 500,000 beneficiaries with improved malaria treatment and care services. We have also trained more than 2,000 community health workers and 403 healthcare providers from 269 health facilities.

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

International Medical Corps has trained local healthcare professionals, community-based health workers and community leaders in effective preventative and curative primary healthcare practices. Our teams teach community health workers to provide better nutrition and health for children by addressing the root causes of malnutrition and by educating mothers and caregivers about ICYF, with a focus on water, sanitation and hygiene, as well as on home management of common childhood illness. We have worked closely with other NGOs to support the MoH's implementation of child-growth monitoring programs and childhood-illness management at more than 60 health facilities at the community level. We have also implemented 12 pilot programs supporting child-growth monitoring—work that inspired the MoH to initiate an additional six programs.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

To strengthen the capacity of MoH service providers to help survivors of sexual violence and provide compassionate care, International Medical Corps has conducted training programs on medical support for victims and survivors of GBV, reaching more than 60 nurses from three provinces. We also have worked with community health workers to distribute community-level messaging that stresses the need to prevent any form of physical violence or harassment, and provided the MoH with financial and technical support to update Burundi's national GBV training module.

CAPACITY-STRENGTHENING

International Medical Corps is committed to strengthening the capacity of its partners at government health facilities in Burundi by training professional staff, providing equipment to hospitals and clinics, and building or rehabilitating healthcare structures. We have also worked to improve the supply chain of therapeutic milk and Plumpy'Nut paste—both of which are used to treat severe acute malnutrition in Burundian children.

International Medical Corps

www.InternationalMedicalCorps.org

A pre-eminent first responder for 35 years, International Medical Corps provides emergency relief to those struck by disaster, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions, working with them to recover, rebuild and, through training, gain the skills and tools required to achieve self-reliance.

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