



A Working Visit Back Home

By Jimmy Ndishokubwayo
2024 Humphrey Fellow, Burundi
ndishokub@msu.edu

During the '24 winter break MSU Humphrey Fellow, Jimmy Ndishokubwayo, flew from Michigan to his home country, Burundi, in East Africa. Jimmy was pleased to visit his mother and siblings and enjoy his hometown. Though his time was limited, he was able to complete professional activities related to his work at the nonprofit child and family services, [Tabitha Community in Action](#).

During his stay in Bujumbura, Jimmy met with public institutions and organizations to conduct a community needs assessment and organize gatherings. He was thrilled to visit his former campus at the University of Burundi and discuss the possibility of a partnership between Burundi University and Michigan State University via the Alliance for Africa Partnerships. He was also received by the USAID Burundi Team and engaged in a working visit to strengthen existing relationships and explore opportunities for collaboration. Following, Jimmy met with the Education Advisor at the Burundi US Embassy to share his experiences at Michigan State University.

Community Needs Assessment

Together with a team from Rotary Club Bujumbura, "Umucio Club" and Tabitha Community in Action, a hybrid formed to conduct a **Community Needs Assessment** identifying the specific needs and challenges faced by the capital region's community. This helped identify stakeholders' perspectives and gain understanding regarding future interventions and support.

The Bujumbura Province has been affected by repetitive wars and conflicts that faced Burundi a few decades ago. As such, the following issues were identified by community leaders and villagers as major socio-economic challenges to be addressed.

In Bujumbura Province, there are limited economic and learning opportunities, food insecurity and malnutrition, gender inequalities, and limited awareness of resources or other opportunities. The most affected populations also tend to be children and women. According to the local administration and annual report, with a population of 5.000 households,

8,600 children are malnourished, 689 girls dropped out from their studies due to unwanted pregnancies, and 1,297 dropped out due to poverty and conflicts. The numbers continue to grow. Addressing this, Jimmy helps mobilize resources and distribute them to various nonprofit organizations and individuals to help further the project [FEED THE COMMUNITY](#). This project aims to improve the food security and nutrition skills of approximately 600 female youth



and women as well as six pilot schools from rural communities.

Ultimately, it is hoped this also helps promote social cohesion within the communities. Results are still being compiled; however, it should be noted that the community needs assessment revealed that 80% of households in the village live below the poverty line, with an average income of less than \$1 per day. To learn more about this project and other ongoing initiatives in Burundi reach out to Jimmy at ndishokub@msu.edu or donate at www.tca-help.org/donate



Finally, as Jimmy is currently leading the YALI Alumni in Burundi - [Young African Leaders Initiative](#) (initiative of Barack Obama, former U.S. president), during the winter break, he organized a cultural-community gathering. This event helped to provide a platform for dialogue and engagement, allowing for the exchange of ideas, concerns, and aspirations between the YALI Alumni and community members. YALI Burundi is currently composed of about 270 young leaders trained by the YALI Regional Leadership Centers in Nairobi and Dakar. It is a US Government fully founded program to empower young African leaders and inspire change across Africa. Selected young leaders are trained in the above-mentioned regional centers in civic leadership, public management, and business and entrepreneurship. After the completion of the program, they come back to their respective country and integrate the YALI Alumni Country Chapters.

By January 9th Jimmy returned to East Lansing. In the new year, readers can find Jimmy focused on his Humphrey Professional Affiliation at the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP).

LEAP focuses on economic development by growing, retaining, and attracting businesses in the capital region. At this placement, Jimmy will gain practical experience, develop community and economic development skills, and continue to build his professional network.



During the fellowship, Jimmy took the leadership for community sustainability and developing strategic business courses, along with the Humphrey Seminar every Friday. The program offered fellows various trips and the Global Leadership Program in Washington DC. "I will never forget the day I entered the White House; it was a dream come true. Visiting all memorials in Washington DC and being invited to the Voice of America Radio, surely all those make the trip to Washington DC my favorite trip," he said.

In addition to the Humphrey Fellowship and building up his professional networks, Jimmy Ndishokubwayo has been meeting different people, professionals, educators, and community members and visiting nonprofit organizations based in Michigan. He has attended many speaking engagements and meets regularly with his new contacts. Jimmy strongly believes social capital is a key to success - globally.

Four months before the completion of his fellowship program, Jimmy feels optimistic for the future and is getting ready to apply his newly gained skills back in his hometown and abroad. He is also looking forward to furthering his education in Community Sustainability within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at MSU. "If people ask me how I found Michigan, I will be right if I say that Michiganders are kind, welcoming, and supportive," Jimmy says with a smile.



At the Center, faculty and staff will all miss Jimmy! Wrapping up his Humphrey Fellowship at the end of April, Jimmy is working to extend his VISA and developing a work partnership with the Refugee Development Center. Congratulations, Jimmy! Please come back and visit us...

###